

Students' metaphors amuse English teachers

A friend sent me an e-mail that I found highly amusing. Last year must have been a tough year for English teachers. I hope you enjoy this as much as I did:

Every year, English teachers from across the country can submit their collections of actual analogies and metaphors found in high school essays. These excerpts are published each year to the amusement of teachers across the country.

Here are last year's winners:

1. Her face was a perfect oval, like a circle that had its two sides gently compressed by a Thigh Master.
2. His thoughts tumbled in his head, making and breaking alliances like underpants in a dryer without Cling Free.



sharon corcoran

• just for fun

3. He spoke with the wisdom that can only come from experience, like a guy who went blind because he looked at a solar eclipse without one of those boxes with a pinhole in it and now goes around the country speaking at high schools about the dangers of looking at a solar eclipse without one of those boxes with a pinhole in it.

4. She grew on him like she was a colony of E. Coli, and he was

room-temperature Canadian beef.

5. She had a deep, throaty, genuine laugh, like that sound a dog makes just before it throws up.

6. Her vocabulary was as bad as, like, whatever.

7. He was as tall as a six-foot, three-inch tree.

8. The revelation that his marriage of 30 years had disintegrated because of his wife's infidelity came as a rude shock, like a surcharge at a formerly surcharge-free ATM machine.

9. The little boat gently drifted across the pond exactly the way a bowling ball wouldn't.

10. McBride fell 12 stories, hitting the pavement like a Hefty bag filled with vegetable soup.

11. From the attic came an unearthly howl. The whole scene had an eerie, surreal quality, like when you're on vacation in another city and Jeopardy comes on at 7 p.m. instead of 7:30.

12. Her hair glistened in the rain like a nose hair after a sneeze.

13. The hailstones leaped from the pavement, just like maggots when you fry them in hot grease.

14. Long separated by cruel fate, the star-crossed lovers raced across the grassy field toward each other like two freight trains, one having left Cleveland at 6:36 p.m. traveling at 55 mph, the other from To-

peka at 4:19 p.m. at a speed of 35 mph.

15. They lived in a typical suburban neighborhood with picket fences that resembled Nancy Kerrigan's teeth.

16. John and Mary had never met. They were like two hummingbirds who had also never met.

17. He fell for her like his heart was a mob informant and she was the East River.

18. Even in his last years, Granddad had a mind like a steel trap, only one that had been left out so long, it had rusted shut.

19. Shots rang out, as shots are wont to do.

20. The plan was simple, like my brother-in-law Phil. But unlike Phil,

this plan just might work.

21. The young fighter had a hungry look, the kind you get from not eating for a while.

22. He was as lame as a duck. Not the metaphorical lame duck, either, but a real duck that was actually lame, maybe from stepping on a land mine or something.

23. The ballerina rose gracefully en Pointe and extended one slender leg behind her, like a dog at a fire hydrant.

24. It was an American tradition, like fathers chasing kids around with power tools.

25. He was deeply in love. When she spoke, he thought he heard bells, as if she were a garbage truck backing up.

When should business complaints be filed with attorney general?

Dear Attorney General Kline: I do my best to be a well-informed consumer, but occasionally I run into a problem with a product or a business. I have been able to handle these situations on my own, but at what point should I consider filing a complaint with your office?

Dear Kansas Consumer: I'm very glad to hear that you are trying to be a good consumer, and hopefully this weekly Consumer Corner column provides some guidance and assistance to you and all Kansas consumers.

My Consumer Protection Division handles thousands of written complaints each year and processes about 150 written complaints each week. The primary aspect to con-



phill kline

• attorney general

sider when filing a complaint with my office is whether or not deceit or fraud was committed.

If you feel you have a potential violation of the Kansas Consumer Protection Act, it would benefit you to file a complaint so that we can look into it and possibly seek a resolution to your problem.

Some of the most common types of complaints we receive are no-call violations, e-mail scams and car

problems, just to name a few.

Your complaint begins with the filling out of a complaint form. You can get a form by stopping by our office at 120 SW 10th Avenue in Topeka, on the 4th floor of the historic Memorial Hall, by calling (800) 432-2310 during normal business hours and asking that a form be mailed to you, or by pointing your Internet browser to www.ksag.org and downloading the form.

Submit copies of all billing statements, contracts or other supporting documents of interest with your complaint. When you send in your

complaint (by mail or delivery service, not through fax or Internet), keep a copy of everything for your own records.

Every complaint we receive is logged into our searchable database. Only a fraction of the complaints received result in enforcement action.

Many, but not all, of the complaints are assigned to a special agent for an investigation. Every complaint we receive is read by our Intake Review Committee, which consists of four deputy attorney general, assistant attorneys general and special agents.

It is also very important to understand how the Consumer Protection Division differs from the private

bar. We are not a private law firm representing individual Kansans but rather a statutorily-created public interest law firm established to act for the good of all Kansans.

It is for that reason that we consider more than just the facts of your particular case when your complaint is analyzed, and for that reason, your complaint is handled in a different manner than would a private attorney.

Our review causes us to first and foremost consider the public harm allegedly being done. Some are disappointed to learn that we are not an alternative to the private bar, but such is the limited jurisdiction the Consumer Protection Division is granted under the Kansas Con-

sumer Protection Act, a limitation which ensures that the Division works for the well being of all Kansas taxpayers and not just a privileged few.

Attorney General Phill Kline offers this public service to help you avoid becoming a victim of consumer fraud. Although some of the details have been changed, the cases appearing in this column are based on actual complaints or questions.

For information or to file a complaint, write Attorney General Phill Kline, Consumer Protection Division, 120 SW 10th Ave., Second Floor, Topeka, Kan. 66612, or call the toll-free Consumer Hotline, (800) 432-2310.

Web site wades through health insurance options

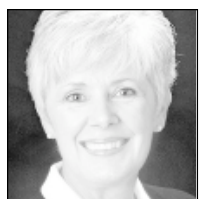
Health insurance has become increasingly complex and expensive. A maze of options and cost considerations, from Health Maintenance Organizations to Health Savings Accounts, now confront consumers.

The better you understand your health insurance options, as well as your share of the costs for premiums, co-pays and deductibles, the better you'll be able to plan for health-related expenses.

To help individuals clear up the confusion and gain a better understanding of the costs of their coverage, useful information about health insurance — all organized by life stage needs — can be reviewed on a new consumer education web site, www.InsureUonline.org.

Recent research indicates that cost and confusion regarding health insurance are significant issues for consumers across all life stages, even for those with access to health insurance through their employers or government programs like Medicare. According to the research:

- More than half of respondents from established families said they did not understand the terms under which they can elect to continue their health coverage from their old employer if their employment ends, as provided under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act. Specifically, they did not understand they had to pay the full cost of their premiums or that their coverage would end after 18 months.
- Only 12 percent of older Americans thought they were very likely to need long-term care, but data indicates that 60 percent are likely to need long-term care at some point.



sandy praeger

• insurance comm.

In addition, those seniors surveyed underestimated the cost of long-term care by 100 percent — they thought the expense would come to around \$35,000 a year when the national average is actually closer to \$70,000 per year.

• Of those who have purchased medical discount cards (which typically provide a discount off fees charged by participating doctors), 18 percent said their experience had been "very" or "somewhat" negative. Discount health cards are not insurance plans and therefore aren't regulated by the Kansas Insurance Department.

Tips to Help Consumers Lower their Health Insurance Premiums

Health insurance, whether provided by an employer or purchased by individuals, is expensive. Following are some ways you can control your costs.

• Married couples in situations where both spouses are offered health insurance through their jobs should compare the coverage and costs (premiums, co-pays and deductibles) to determine which policy is best for the family.

• Stay in-network when possible, making sure to get referrals and pre-certifications as required by the plan.

• Keep all receipts for medical services, whether in- or out-of-net-

work. In the event you exceed your deductible, you may qualify to take a tax deduction for out-of-pocket medical bills.

• Consider opening a Flexible Spending Account, if your employer offers one, which allows you to set aside pre-tax dollars for out-of-pocket medical expenses.

Health Insurance Tips for Different Life Stages

InsureOnline explains the different types of health insurance and gives focused tips to consumers based on their likely needs in different life stages. For example:

• Young singles who may not yet have a full-time job that offers health benefits should be aware that single adult dependents may be able to continue to get health coverage for an extended period under their parents' health insurance policies even if they are no longer full time students. You should refer to your policy or contact your agent for details. Some colleges also offer graduates interim coverage for a limited time between completion of college and finding employment. Young people who may not be able to afford the health insurance offered by their employers should consider a lower cost, high-deductible medical plan to cover catastrophic medical costs.

• Young couples expecting a child should make sure they notify their health insurance provider of the pending birth just to ensure there are no surprises. A phone call to their company health plan or insurance company if they are covered under

a plan in the individual market, will be time well spent. They should also review their health plan to see whether prenatal and neo-natal screening and tests, prenatal vitamins, delivery costs (Cesarean and traditional) and what level of pediatric care are covered.

• Established families with children should consider Flexible Spending Accounts if available to help pay for common childhood medical problems such as allergy tests, braces and replacements for lost eyeglasses, retainers and the like, which are often not covered by basic health insurance. All workers who lose or change jobs should know their rights to continue their health coverage for up to 18 months.

Before purchasing any kind of health insurance, you should protect yourself against scams by taking a few minutes to call the Kansas Insurance Department toll-free hotline at (800) 432-2484 and confirm that the company offering the policy is legitimate and authorized to sell insurance in Kansas.

Sandy Praeger, Kansas Insurance Commissioner, oversees the activities of the Kansas Insurance Department, which is headquartered in Topeka. Her objective is to protect consumers and help maintain the financial stability of the insurance industry.

The department regulates and monitors the activities of 23,000 resident agents, 48,000 non-resident agents and 1,684 insurance companies licensed to do business in the state. It offers financial, actuarial, legal, computer, research, market conduct and economic expertise. Visit for more information.

Conflict, fear of rejection a part of all relationships

Regardless of how much two people love each other, conflict and fear of rejection will always be a part of any relationship.

However, it seems that men and women handle the inherent stress of an argument differently says an April study in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology (Vol. 90, No. 4).

In this study, 124 couples that had been together for at least two months filled out questionnaires about how they respond to feelings of anxiety and rejection. The couples then spent 15 minutes talking about an issue that caused heated and unresolved discussion in the past month.

The researchers collected cortisol samples (cortisol is a hormone released by the adrenal glands when a person is under stress) before the conflict, throughout the conflict and during a 40-minute



high plains mental health

• plain sense

recovery period.

The researchers found that although both men and women have a physiological response to relationship conflict, the response is much more pronounced in men than in women.

In fact, men who described themselves as being generally anxious seemed to get the most stressed during the argument.

Studies like this one reveal that the stress a person perceives before, during and after a recurring argument with a partner is not only "in their head" but in their body as well.

Therefore, it is important to remember some general stress management strategies when arguing with your partner:

1. Do not debate feelings. Feelings are not necessarily logical, but they are real.

2. Remember to be as respectful and kind as possible while arguing. The argument will hopefully end in a compromise, but the relationship is supposed to endure.

3. Try to stay focused on the actual issue of the conflict. Do not start arguing about other items or throw in statements that are just designed to hurt your partner.

4. If an argument is getting too intense, agree to take a break. No one is at their best when under too much stress.

Contributed by Ken Loos, Consultation and Education Department. The views expressed here are those of the individual writer and should not be considered a replacement for seeking professional help.

Mail questions to High Plains Mental Health Center, Plain Sense, Consultation and Education Department, 208 E. Seventh, Hays, Kan. 67601. Internet site: www.highplainsmentalhealth.com.

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SHERMAN COUNTY KANSAS TREASURER'S QUARTERLY REPORT	
July 31, 2006	
Total Cash in the Treasury as at the above date	\$5,128,545.95
FUND	FUND BALANCE
APPRAISER'S COST	\$60,665.21
AUTO MOTOR SPECIAL	\$24,709.31
BOND & INTEREST	\$133,926.93
NO FUND WARRANTS	\$31.54
COUNTY HEALTH	\$56,118.41
DIRECT ELECTION	\$78,909.68
TRASH HAULING	\$236,632.94
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	\$388,024.94
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS HEALTH RESERVE	\$173,692.40
EXTENSION	\$8,120.74
GENERAL FUND	\$843,276.83
HOME MAINTENANCE	\$13,652.44
LANDFILL	\$75,000.00
LOGAN CO FIRE #1	\$12.88
LANDFILL EXCAVATION FUND	\$87,890.60
NOXIOUS WEED	\$36,108.56
REGISTER OF DEEDS TECHNOL	\$20,461.59
OUT-DISTRICT TUITION	\$17,513.94
OVER & UNDER	-\$57.61
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY	\$27.84
PROS ATTY (DIVERSION)	\$8,263.03
ROAD AND BRIDGE	\$760,662.95
SALES TAX	\$9,062.59
SC RURAL FIRE DIST #1	\$150,360.11
SHERMAN CO SPILL CONTROL	\$304.70
SOLDIERS MEMORIAL PARK	\$14,806.06
SOLID WASTE FUND	\$532,310.08
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND	\$169,000.00
SPECIAL PARKS & REC	\$1,709.85
SPECIAL MACHINERY FUND	\$200,071.00
TORT LIABILITY	-\$683.35
JAIL COMMISSARY	\$11,537.90
SECRETARY OF STATE	\$2,368.80
NOXIOUS WEED CAPITAL OUTLAY	\$7,745.16
SPECIAL PRAIRIE DOG	\$1,783.28
SC RFD #1 EQUIP RESERVE	\$72,315.66
HERITAGE TRUST FUND	\$747.75
SHERIFF DRUG SEIZURE FUND	\$16,153.92
COUNTY HEALTH CAPITAL OUTLAY	\$25,830.15
HEALTH CARE SERVICES	\$224,765.87
COUNTY REDEMPTION	\$28,813.79
CURRENT TAX	\$226,462.53
DELINQUENT PERSONAL TAX	\$16,759.49
RECREATIONAL VEHICLE TAX	\$1,796.62
MOTOR VEHICLE TAX	\$137,467.01
RENTAL VEHICLE EXCISE TAX	\$422.18
SEVERENCE TAX	\$1,093.20
MICRO LOANS	\$27,583.08
SHERIFF REWARD DONATION FUND	\$234.82
911 WIRELESS	\$14,384.34
SCRFD #1 SPECIAL FUND	\$3,903.49
911 TELEPHONE SERVICE	\$49,965.12
SUSPENSE FUND	\$13,681.19
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	\$139,762.72
TOWNSHIPS	
GRANT/GENERAL	\$0.74
IOWA/GENERAL	\$2.79
LLANOS/GENERAL	\$15.03
LOGAN/GENERAL	\$0.74
MCPHERSON/GENERAL	\$51.01
SHERMANVILLE GENERAL	\$80.48
STATELINE/GENERAL	\$3.80
WASHINGTON/GENERAL	\$15.53
USD #352/GENERAL	\$1,111.93
USD #314/GENERAL	\$959.62
CDBG	\$100.36
TOTAL ALL FUNDS	\$5,128,545.95
STATE OF KANSAS SHERMAN COUNTY ss.	
I do solemnly swear that the above statement is complete, true, and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief, so help me God.	
<i>Iris Scheopner</i> Iris Scheopner, County Treasurer	
Subscribed and sworn to before me this 3rd day of August, 2006	
 County Clerk - Notary Public	
My commission expires January 1, 2009	
Published in The Goodland Star-News Tuesday, August 8, 2006.	

Classified ads work! 899-2338