

Kansas can't seem to realize we can't win war on drugs

Kansas continues to dig its way deeper and deeper into the drug war. But like kids digging for China, we just have no concept of how deep this hole can get.

The latest news is that the state has received a \$2 million federal grant to hire more drug agents and chemists, remodel a KBI lab and buy testing equipment, all aimed at ever-growing methamphetamine bootlegging in the state.

The \$2 million is just a drop in the bucket compared to the \$15 billion to \$18 billion this country throws at the drug war every year. Still, it won't go far toward curbing Kansas' meth "problem."

No one denies that meth is a nasty little drug, but then so is alcohol. And like alcohol, meth can be made in your kitchen sink ... or more commonly, in your neighbor's basement or in the back of his old van.

Meth production is dangerous. Meth cooks use hazardous materials and a meth lab can blow a house sky high. Fumes from the cooking can kill. But the process is easy and profitable, so much so that it seems like every outlaw and fast-buck artist in the state is making a batch.

How are we doing against meth? Agents busted more than 500 labs in 1999 and expected to hit more than 600 last year. Despite their efforts, though, meth manufacture and use continue to grow.

As we found out with gin, there really isn't any way to prevent people from making something

that's so easy to do and so much in demand. But we seem to be willing to spend any amount of money trying.

What should we be doing?

If we had any sense at all, we'd be doing something different. While we have proven we can't win the war on drugs, we don't really have a program to replace it. Like the war in Vietnam, it keeps growing, consuming money, careers, lives, and producing no results. But we're stubborn. We keep on fighting because we've been told drugs are killing our country.

That's not exactly true, though. It's the war on drugs that's killing our country. It's the war on drugs that makes drug lords rich. That focuses law enforcement away from crime. That fills prisons with people who haven't hurt anyone while violent criminals are set free.

It's the war on drugs that corrupts our whole society, and not just ours, but those of nations around the world.

We're all losers — except for the drug dealers.

The drug lords are the only ones who benefit from this insane war. As long as drugs are illegal and in relatively short supply, they make huge profits. In effect, the drug cops and the drug kings are partners. They exist to serve one another; without the other, they'd all be out of a job.

And neither side is likely to let go unless the rest of us come to our senses.

— Steve Haynes

Resolutions are better kept hidden

Out of curiosity, I went back in my files to the first column of last year. Mainly to see if I had made some outrageous New Year's Resolution that I would be ashamed to admit to having not kept. Whew! I was safe. No such incriminating evidence. Mentally, I always make a few resolutions. But, at least, I'm smart enough to keep them to myself. That way I don't have to listen to any "do-gooders" remind me of how miserably I failed.

Last year, at this time, we were breathing a sigh of relief because all the horror story predictions of Y2K had NOT come to pass. Some people are still living off their stockpile of C-rations, bottled water, gasoline and toilet paper.

On the other hand, some believed the second millennium didn't, officially, start until this year, 2001. I wonder if they're disappointed that the world banking system didn't shut-down or VCRs go crazy?

—ob—

Last year I was also lamenting the humongous task of taking down the Christmas lights. Ha! That was nothing compared to what's looming out there this year. You don't dare walk through our backyard at night. It's an "extension cord nightmare". You would get "clotheslined" in any direc-



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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tion. However, that's what makes the lights so pretty. They cover up the "ugliness" you see in the daylight.

FYI: Jim is leaving the plane up 'til the end of January.

—ob—

A couple of industrious ladies in town thought it would be fun to have a community New Year's Eve party at the old school here in town. The invitation was put out via posters and the town newsletter. That's all it took, and they had a party on their hands. Everyone brought in potluck, so we had great food. Some brought games, so we had entertainment. Everyone brought their sense of humor, so we had a great time. The perfect way to end the year. With good food and good friends.

—ob—

A trooper was giving testimony in a drunk-driving case. When he was asked if he had his blue and red lights

flashing when he stopped the defendant, he answered in the affirmative. Next the attorney asked the trooper if the defendant had said anything when she got out of her car.

"Yes," the trooper replied, "She wanted to know which disco she was at."

From the Bible

And the Lord thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good: for the Lord will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers. Deut. 30:9

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THE OBERLIN HERALD

Serving Oberlin and Decatur County since 1879

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Published each Wednesday by Haynes Publishing Co., 170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan. 67749. Periodicals mail postage paid at Oberlin, Kan. 67749.

Steve and Cynthia Haynes, publishers

Official newspaper of Oberlin, Jennings, Norcat, Dresden and Decatur County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, Colorado Press Association, Nebraska Press Association and Inland Press Association.

Subscriptions: One year, \$25 (tax included) in Decatur, Norton, Rawlins, Sheridan, Thomas and Red Willow counties; \$29 (tax included) elsewhere in Kansas; \$32 elsewhere in the U.S. Foreign subscriptions, \$20 extra per year (except APO/FPO). POSTMASTER: Send change of address to 170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan. 67749-2243.

Office hours: 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Mon. - Fri. (Also open most Saturdays when someone is in.)



Odds and ends make column stew

As the year drew to a close, I noted several items that didn't have quite enough material for a whole column.

Added together, however, they make a patchwork of fun.

THE FRY GUY

Daughter Felicia and Nik went to New Orleans to meet his sister, Kelly, and go to the Saints-Denver Broncos game last fall.

New Orleans, Felicia said, is the only city she has ever been in where they serve liquor on the street. Most places, she observed, you can only buy drugs on the street corners.

After an evening of partying downtown, the trio wasn't ready to get up in the morning for breakfast.

When they finally staggered into a fast food place on their way to the game, they found that they had chosen the slowest fast-food place in Louisiana. It also had the dumbest help.

The manager had to figure out their hamburger and drink order and then Kelly didn't get her fries. When she mentioned this, the clerk said "the other guy must have gotten them," went over to a table where the man who had been in front of them was sitting, grabbed the fries he was eating and plopped them down on Kelly's tray.

Grossed out, Kelly got fresh fries.



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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And the man, who had been eating them, followed them all the way to the stadium. They named him "the fry guy."

RESTROOMS AND MEN

Have you ever noticed that women seem to use restrooms more than men?

When Steve and I were dining at a nice restaurant in Denver this summer, I noticed a lady asking the waiter the way to the restroom. He pointed to an area behind me.

Later when Steve asked the way to the restroom, the waiter pointed in the same direction. However, when Steve stood up, the waiter immediately pointed to an area near the entrance.

"Oh," he said. "The men's room is over there."

GORILLA SLIPPERS

We wore some pretty strange clothing when I was in college in the '60s, but the kids today have us beat by a mile.

When son woke up for a 7:30 a.m. final at 7:30, he grabbed a T shirt and his coat and headed for class in his pajama bottoms and fuzzy slippers.

The slippers were some I bought him a couple of years ago. They are brown and black and made to look like gorilla feet. Since he wears a size 12 shoe and the slippers are the kind with the fat sides, he had huge brown and black fuzzy feet.

He said that it isn't unusual, however, for students to show up for 7:30 a.m. classes, especially finals, in their pajamas.

Still since there was six inches of snow on the ground in Lawrence that week, I imagine fuzzy slippers were a little more rare.

Church, IRS fighting over cash

The Internal Revenue Service is trying to figure out how not to seize a church in Indianapolis which owes the government \$6 million in back taxes.

\$6 million? Most of us will never see that much money, let alone owe it to the government. So how did this church wind up so far in the hole?

It seems that, in a fit of religious libertinism, they stopped withholding Social Security and income taxes from employee paychecks in 1984.

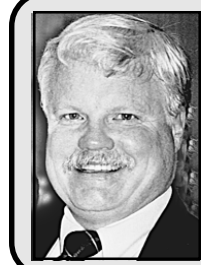
And the government has been messing around trying to collect the money ever since. A few of people I've known wish IRS had been so generous with them.

But of course, the IRS does not want to look like the bad guys. It doesn't look good, seizing churches.

That's what the government says it will do to the Indianapolis Baptist Temple. Agents say it's just another building to be seized for back taxes.

Leaders of the church do not agree. "If we lose," said one, "it will mean that we no longer have religious liberty in America."

And while you might have thought that Jesus settled this a couple of mil-



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
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lennia ago, you would be wrong. Asked whether it was right to pay taxes, you'll remember, He pointed to a Roman coin and asked whose face was on it.

"Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's," he said.

The IRS it not trying to tax this church. It just wants Caesar's share of church employees' wages.

But there is a strong undercurrent of anti-government, anti-tax sentiment among the far right wing in this country. I've known people who refused to have either a driver's license or a Social Security card on religious grounds. There are thousands of them out there, quietly protesting.

Quietly, because if they make noise, the highway patrol will bust them, haul them off to jail and make them get a li-

cence. Or leave town.

It's a free country, sort of. If you follow the law. Pay your taxes. And, when push comes to shove, do what the government says.

So church members have been waiting, taking turns in a vigil against the IRS. They think the government will break down the doors, arrest them and carry them off. They seem to be looking forward to the martyrdom.

The government has a court order to take the church, but it hasn't been in any hurry to look bad. It probably will act, though. It can't afford to let \$6 million get away. And it doesn't want to stir up the radical right any more than it has to.

But most of all, the IRS doesn't want the rest of us getting any ideas about not paying taxes. Does it?

Woman worries about unmade call

To the Editor:

Lately my husband and I were out of town on business for a very short time. When we returned and were home some 15 minutes, a nice lady called and asked me what I wanted, as she told me that my phone number was on her caller ID.

We could NOT have made that call as we were NOT at home. So I called the local dispatch. The reception I received was, "I thought that you did

NOT want anything to do with us anymore?!!". The lady did ask if I wanted her to send an officer up to my home. I said, "That would be fine!"

The officer came up and I told him the story. He informed me that the business with my caller ID happened to a

lot to other people! I suggested we go outside and look for footprints. He was in agreement. There were some footprints in the snow. And would you NOT know that our backyard is fenced completely in?

Elsie Wolters, Oberlin

Letters to the Editor

Writer sees freedom slipping away

To the Editor:

Over time, countless people have made great sacrifices to create and preserve the freedoms we enjoy in this country. Unfortunately, our lawmakers are incrementally chipping away at our great freedoms. I believe this can be seen in many places including, environmental extremism, excessive government involvement in our lives and federal disregard for the Constitution of the United States.

The principals stated in the Bill of Rights are inalienable rights and fundamental cornerstones of freedom. Because these are fundamental principals, they do not change overbearing and oppressive government. With the

approach of the New Year, I hope you will become active in defending the Constitution against all enemies, be they foreign or domestic.

Reader glad she didn't pay taxes

To the Editor:

The Oberlin Herald is definitely a tool for educating the public. Every week I am bombarded with new information. This newspaper is certainly worth at least half of the subscription price.

It was a big surprise and a moment of pure elation to read that for the last 15 years I've had a free ride when it

comes to paying taxes. Hopefully, many area residents will find time to thank you for reminding us of our good fortune.

Rachel Wurm, Oberlin

