

We need to give our kids information about drugs

It should come as no surprise to anyone that the so-called "designer drug" ecstasy has shown up in Oberlin.

Although it has become wildly popular among teens across the nation, it has not gotten much attention here. A chemical relative of the more common methamphetamine, which is epidemic in Kansas, ecstasy is thought by many to be safer and more fun.

It's not, of course, and it's just as illegal, but history suggests that neither fact will keep kids from trying it. While state figures show meth use, for instance, to be "high" here, at around 2.4 percent, it isn't really much — yet. Older, more accepted drugs are still the "choice" in our town.

The simple fact is that, in a society where nearly all the adults use some kind of drugs — alcohol, tobacco, marijuana or chemicals — kids are going to try them. And since they're all illegal for teens, the law doesn't seem to make much difference to them.

It would be hard to pick the "worst" drug, but next to heroin, certainly alcohol is the most dangerous. It causes far more problems in our society than any other drug, but because it is legal and available, it often gets less attention than the more elaborate chemicals.

No drug is good for kids or adults, of course, but since lots of adults use one or more of them, the real question is, how do we minimize the damage, to society and to individuals?

Education and "prevention" efforts, like those under way in Oberlin today, are positive if they aim at showing kids the dangers and pitfalls of drug use, including arrest and a criminal record, of course. Telling teens to "just say no" seldom works.

But kids need to know that drugs can kill. Ecstasy may seem exotic and dangerous, both to users and worried parents, but the fact is, thousands of kids die every year from alcohol abuse, in wrecks and overdoses alike. Kids need to know all of this.

Law enforcement may be part of the answer, but overall, it isn't working. The more we spend on drug enforcement, the higher drug use gets. Teaching common sense might be the best answer.

Most Oberlin teens know by now that you can get in a lot of trouble for taking a bottle to a school dance. Pills ought to be right up there, but of course, no one who does something like that thinks he will be caught.

Knowing the score, knowing the dangers, ought to help guide kids through this minefield. And having parents and other adults set a good example wouldn't hurt, either. We all can be a part of that.

Then, finally, there needs to be (and in Oberlin, we suspect there will be) consequences when kids screw up. Drugs of all kinds are here, and it's our kids who have to make the choices to survive and become adults.

Let's help them.

— Steve Haynes

It's fun to review old rules, laws

Sometimes a legislator is asked to explain legislation to the Senate in an area of law that rarely is reviewed and last week was such an occasion for me.

There is a fascinating, arcane and obscure body of law in the Kansas Statutes relating to Drainage Districts enacted between 1905 and 1911 in response to a devastating flood in the Kansas River Valley in 1903. There are over 200 statutes that apply to a variety of drainage districts, very few have ever been amended and less than 10 percent of the original statutes have been repealed. There are many interesting provisions in some of these districts:

All meetings shall be open to the public and the board shall not at any time go into executive session. (KSA 24-416)

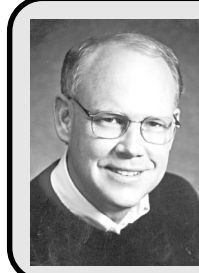
Each acre of land in the district shall represent one vote. (KSA 24-605). Many times, I wish this was the case when voting in the Senate.

No discrimination shall be made on account of sex (KSA 24-507). Remember, these statutes were written before women got the vote.

An engineer shall prepare plans (KSA 24-513) and submit them to the school of engineering of the state university or state agricultural university for correction and approval, and all work done by the engineering school shall be free of cost. (KSA 24-515)

Each member of the board shall be paid \$3 for each day's service (KSA 24-648).

The board shall make an order requiring a railroad or street-railroad company to raise or elevate its tracks, specifying the height and fixing a reasonable time when it shall be completed. Upon failure of such company to perform, the board shall be entitled to a writ of mandamus to compel performance and the court shall award to the board a reason-



Letter from Topeka

By State Sen. Stan Clark
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able attorney's fees. (KSA 24-437).

Subject to the superior jurisdiction of the United States over navigable waters, the governing body shall have the power to widen, deepen, establish, regulate and maintain the channels of all natural watercourses. Construct and maintain levees, detention dams and reservoirs. [KSA 24-407(4)]

Mr. Chairman, turning to the House Bill 2246. In Finney County, west of Garden City, there is a low-lying area and over 50 years ago a drainage district was formed. The district, because it was farmland, was formed and the landowners were assessed taxes based on the benefits they received on a per acre basis. The area today is almost entirely industrial and because the area has changed from cropland to cement, asphalt and steel buildings, the runoff has increased and in some areas, after a good thunderstorm, water backs up into some of the businesses. Additionally, other property owners that want to be included in the drainage district.

Section 1 of the bill allows the board of supervisors to determine what land they want to annex to the drainage district and submit a petition to the county commissioners. A hearing will be held and the County Commission, by a 75 percent vote, can vote to allow the annexation.

Section 2 details the powers of the board of supervisors. The key point is that taxes of up to 5 mills will be al-

lowed on the assessed value of all tangible taxable property. The House amendment requires the approval of the chief engineer of the Division of Water Resources before starting construction of levees, dams and other water obstructions.

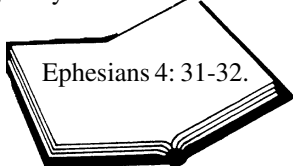
Section 3 basically allows the board to enter into agreements and assess fees with owners of land outside of the district allowing water to be drained into the drainage system of the district.

Mr. Chairman, I will stand for questions.

Please feel free to contact me on any issue. I can be reached by writing to Senator Stan Clark, 205 U.S. 83, Oakley, Kan. 67748; by calling 785-672-4280; by FAX at 801-457-9064; or by e-mail at sclark@ink.org.

From the Bible

Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.



High costs force papers to cut back

It really wasn't the \$8,000 gas bill that got us going on our austerity program.

I knew the minute I opened the January bill from Midwest Energy for the Colby Free Press and read \$8,174.79 that it was a mistake.

I was almost sure it was a mistake. It better be a mistake, I thought, or I'll have to take out a loan to pay my utility bills this month.

The month before, the bill had been \$583 — high but not off the charts. This one was outta sight.

A quick call to the gas company confirmed my suspicion that someone couldn't read when they looked at our meter.

The final bill came in at about \$500 — still high, but I wouldn't need a second mortgage to pay it.

What really got us going on austerity was the February bills.

Not only was the gas, electricity and phone bill up, but newsprint and mailing costs were about to send me looking for my friendly neighborhood banker.

We buy newsprint by the ton and ink by the barrel. When these two items go up, they really go up, and we use about 20 tons of paper a month. That's a bunch of trees.

It was time to do something. Time to



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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look over the operation and see where cuts could be made.

All operations were asked to turn their thermostats down to 60 degrees at night, not use any electric heaters and keep the temperature at 68 degrees during the day.

In Oberlin, we hired a man to put weather stripping on the doors, close off a vent in the back room and put in a cat door between the office and storage area.

It was suggested that we move Tigger's cat box and food to the bathroom but, we decided that we would prefer to invest in a cat door and keep the smells in the back of the building.

Of course, Tigger couldn't use a cat door — the carpenter measured him before ordering. Tig required a medium-size doggie door — and a new diet.

In St. Francis, we built a partition

between the old press area and office area several years ago, but it only went to the false ceiling and cold air still got into the work area. So we got the partition taken on up to the real ceiling.

In Colby, a quick walk-through of the building revealed a heater on in the store room and a hot water heater going in a dark room we haven't used since we got digital cameras.

In Goodland, a vent by the front door was covered and we cut the color pictures from the papers most of the time. To get good color pictures takes a lot more paper and ink, since the ink flow has to be adjusted while the press is running.

Nobody is really fond of the austerity program, but spring is in the air and soon we'll be able to turn off the heat and open the doors so Tig won't have to use the cat door — which he doesn't like very well. He claims it's too tight.

Roommates vie for print time

My daughter says I should write more columns about her.

I write too many dull columns about politics, she says. Her roommate's father writes columns about her, my daughter says.

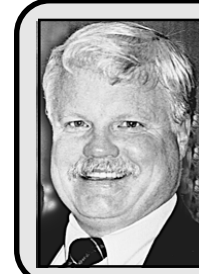
My first impulse was to call her roommate's dad and chew him out for making me look bad. He's the editor of the paper in Osawatomie, where they have a huge picture of crazy John Brown on Page 1 every week. Ol' John, apparently is the most famous person ever to live in that town.

Anyway, Rebecca's father wrote a column, I'm told, imploring Roy Williams to win a basketball title before Rebecca graduates from college. She's a senior, he noted, and that means Ol' Roy needed to be quick.

That column, my daughter says, is the main reason why the 'Hawks moved up in the NCCA tournament, and though the impact did not last long, it does sort of put me behind the curve.

Once wrote a column predicting that KU would go to a major bowl game while Lindsay was in school, but that hasn't worked out so well.

They went to the Orange Bowl when my father was there in 1948, and again when I was there in '68. They haven't been back since, and it stands to reason



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
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that they were waiting for another Haynes. Maybe a 5-foot blonde education major wasn't what they needed, how should I know?

My daughter and her friends are all basketball fanatics, anyway.

It's the thing to be if you go to KU these days. It's pretty much the reverse of things in my time. They had some fair basketball teams in the '60s, of course, and a couple of Final Four appearances under Ted Owens in the '70s.

But that Orange Bowl team was something special.

We weren't under any illusions that Lawrence was about to become a football mecca the likes of South Bend, State College or Austin, but the '68 'Hawks could play any team in the nation that year.

They beat Penn State in the Orange Bowl, before the officials called back

their last-minute two-point conversion.

But not this year. Not any year soon. This year, Lindsay and her friends had tickets lined up for the first round of the NCAA tourney in Kansas City. Then the team lost to Oklahoma in the Big 12 tourney and wound up in Dayton, someplace in Ohio. They didn't feel like driving that far, and she couldn't go to San Antonio the next week. They were supposed to get tickets for Minneapolis, if Ol' Roy's star had really been shining.

I won't say they're crazy about their 'Hawks. Just crazy. There isn't a one of them that wouldn't make a road trip at the drop of a hat.

So, there you go, girl. A column for you. My last column on politics, dull as it may have been, got me in more trouble than I really needed anyway.

PS: Say "Hi" to Buckles.

Resident enjoys living in apartment

To the Editor:

My other letter to the editor would not be complete if I didn't relate the other benefits we receive here at Wheat Ridge, some very important, basic ones:

We get up to an hour's housekeeping every week, which includes vacuuming, mopping kitchen and bathroom floors, cleaning the shower, lavatory and stool, cleaning the kitchen range, sink and work areas in the kitchen.

On laundry day, housekeeping will launder our sheets or any other flat lin-

ens. If we want to do our own sheets, we have help re-making our beds.

There's a trash room, so we don't have to take our trash outside.

We have the use of the fully equipped kitchen and beautiful dining room for family gatherings. We can have guests to eat with us by just telling our direc-

tor.

In the spring, we can plant flowers in flower boxes.

I think I have covered most everything, except to say that walking the halls from end to end makes for fairly good exercise.

Eva Bryan
Wheat Ridge Terrace

Letters to the Editor

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