

Why would Kansas want vested interest in porn?

Of all the dumb ideas. The same people who have been trying to get grand juries to investigate porno shops down along I-70 now want the state to have a 15 or 25 percent tax on pornography. Excuse us. Wouldn't the state wind up having a vested interest in pornography, even as it has bought into gambling, liquor and other once-forbidden vices? And once hooked on the revenue, wouldn't the state then have to protect and promote its porn industry to keep the schools open? Get real. There have got to be better ways to raise money for the state of Kansas. Pornography supporting our schools? Wouldn't we have a hard time telling kids not to buy the stuff if it was good enough to pay their teachers? You have to wonder what kind of world we live in when people come up with that kind of stuff. We don't have much porn up here, and it's probably just as well. In the cities, and along I-70, though, it's a flourishing trade. Why porn shops appeal to interstate travelers is a mystery, but the highways in other states are loaded with them. Kansas has but a few. That's enough to offend some people around Abilene, who have been pushing county attorneys to investigate, call a grand

jury or just prosecute the stores. The Supreme Court has made it pretty difficult to prosecute porno dealers, though, and even grand juries are having a tough time finding any traction. Discouraged, perhaps, by the legal morass, the anti-porn forces came up with the tax scheme. It's similar to the way the anti-saloon movement gave up and proposed a stiff tax on liquor. You can't have it both ways, though. You're either against pornography, or you think it's a good revenue source. If the state taxes the stuff, it in effect becomes a partner with the makers. So Kansas winds up in bed with the porno industry? That's a funny place for the state to be. Our suggestion is that the state doesn't need money that badly. Let the porno shops alone. Keep them out on the freeways and out of towns, away from schools and churches. If people want to buy that stuff, in a free society, who are we to say no? But should the state have a vested interest in the porn business? No. It's not exactly clean money, is it? And Kansas has bigger fish to fry.

— Steve Haynes

Closing I-70 keeps travelers safer

To the Editor: We are writing in response to your recent editorial about the Kansas Department of Transportation's policy on closing Interstate 70 and other highways during snow and ice storms.

Before the ink dried on your recent editorial, our agency had already met with local law enforcement personnel, emergency preparedness managers, troopers from the Kansas Highway Patrol, and our own employees from all the communities from Hays to Goodland along I-70 to discuss this very issue.

On Oct. 20 and 21, we discussed our policies and heard comments from the local officials on how these policies affect each community.

You pointed out the frustration of local residents not being allowed through our snow gates in order to get home or work during a storm. Though it has never been our policy not to sort traffic, we realize some of the setbacks that have occurred in the past due to shortage of manpower or intense weather conditions. We addressed this situation during the meetings mentioned above. As a result of our discussions, troopers now have access to open the snow gates. In the future, the patrol and our local highway crews will make a coordinated effort in sorting local traffic.

Still, there may be isolated incidents when the gates will be locked and unmanned. It might be due to "white out" or blizzard conditions where no one — including the traveling public and our employees — could safely travel on a roadway. Or, it could be because of a shortage of manpower, due to our crews plowing, working, and clearing other roadways involved in a storm. But

Letter to the Editor

it would never be because we would "put up a sign and go home."

We understand the frustration you and other citizens and business owners feel when travel is temporarily affected due to our road closures. Please keep in mind the safety of the traveling public always has been and always will be our top priority in every storm and road closure situation.

This year's snow situation arrived on Oct. 10 and ushered in an early winter storm, dumping two feet of snow between Limon and Denver. While some may think that this storm should have been Colorado's problem by allowing traffic to pile up in Colorado, our policies and common sense suggest otherwise.

As a neighboring transportation agency, the department has the responsibility to make sure motorists are not allowed to travel into a situation, such as being stranded along the road in a blizzard, in which their lives could be at risk. We must balance traveler inconvenience with

the potential risks of traveling into a serious weather situation and the likelihood of finding food and shelter along the way.

Although snow was not a factor in Kansas during this particular storm, travelers who were headed west on I-70 would eventually run into a closure in Colorado. When we know the roads will be closed on any portion of I-70, a coordinated public message is relayed to the media, local officials, and we strategically place variable message boards as far east as possible. This allows the traveling public plenty of time to pull off the road, use an alternate route, and seek a room, since motels could be filling up farther west along I-70.

Chriss McDiffett, Norton District 3 engineer
Kansas Department of Transportation

Capt. Kelly McGuire, Hays commander, Troop D
Kansas Highway Patrol

Write

The Oberlin Herald encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of public interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author.

Mail letters to 170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan., 67749, or by E-mail to oberlin@nwkansas.com.

We do not publish anonymous letters. We sign our opinions and

expect readers to do likewise.

We do not publish form letters or letters about topics which do not pertain to our area. Thank-yous from this area should be submitted to the Want Ad desk.

Letters will not be censored, but will be read and edited for form and style, clarity, length and legality.



Pheasants hiding, deer visible

I think the deer know that it's the pheasants that are in trouble this week, not them.

Saturday just before sunset, we set out to walk in the country, and as we drove toward our favorite out-of-town park, we spotted a huge, beautiful buck.

He was a whitetail with a rack that would have made all a hunter's trigger fingers itch.

He was in a field just off the road, ambling slowly towards a group of trees.

Steve stopped dead in the road — not the smartest move I've ever seen, but U.S. 36 isn't the busiest road in the state — and we watched the beautiful ripple of his muscles as the buck picked his way among the corn stalks.

After about 30 seconds of watching the deer and peering in the rear-view mirror to make sure we didn't get rear ended, Steve honked his horn.

The deer turned his head and looked at us, and I could just imagine what would be going through his head.

"Oh people. Why are they making that horrible racket?"

Then he turned around and continued picking his slow way across the field.

We had to leave before he was



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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more than halfway across.

Now a deer that big has been around for a few years, and he's learned a thing or two, or he'd have been a hood ornament or venison in the freezer long before this.

He knew he wasn't in any danger. He knew he wasn't in season.

A week before that, as I was following a flag car through a construction zone, another beautiful buck ran across the road. He zipped in front of the flag car and down into the ditch on the other side.

I almost ran off the road trying to watch him and follow the flag car at the same time.

Those deer know, I tell you. They know they are safe. They know that they can strut their stuff for a little while more before disappearing into the trees as the rifle hunting season starts.

Pheasants, on the other hand, have disappeared.

A week ago, you couldn't drive down a road anywhere out here — from I-70 to a gravel lane in the county — without spotting dozens of birds. There were pheasants running along the ditches or sailing across the road in graceful arcs before disappearing into the fields.

Despite the disappearance of the birds from the roads, every hunter I've asked said they had a good time over the weekend and found plenty of birds.

One warned me, though, that it would be hot next summer because, he said, he shot a lot of holes in the ozone.

Hey, if he thinks that's bad, wait until Thanksgiving. My guys will be taking to the field to terrify hedge balls and give the dog a good run. In a dozen years of hunting, they've killed a single quail, but they always have a good time.

Judgement day a certainty

Wade Menezes could be a drill sergeant for Christ.

"I can't hear your Amen," he shouts.

"Amen!" the congregation yells back.

He's got 'em going now.

With the cadence and volume of an old-time circuit preacher, Father Menezes promises a good dose of Jesus and a stiff helping of Catholic orthodoxy at his five-day mission.

No moral relativism here. No need to figure out what's right or wrong.

That, he says, is the gray area between white and black, right and wrong, good and evil, the Devil and the Lord.

A lot of us live in there, he says, but the gray area is growing smaller by the day. One day, it'll disappear.

"And which side are you going to be on?" he asks. "On the white side, with the sheep, or the black, in with the goats?"

Good question.

The battle is set, he says, between the "culture of death," led by a host of those who lead us astray, and the culture of life. He calls on the congregation to reject death: war, abortion, the death penalty, contraception, drugs and sin.

The world may be listening to those who promote this culture of death, but for five days, Wade Menezes plans to breathe life into Oberlin's Catholic community.



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
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He talks about Madalyn Murray O'Hair, who became the nation's best-known atheist after her lawsuit got prayer banned from public schools. Everyone has heard of her.

What happened to her? Father Menezes asks. Only one hand goes up.

Murdered, chopped into pieces with a chain saw, along with her daughter and granddaughter, then buried on a Texas ranch, by an ex-convict who stole half a million from her group.

The wages of sin, you think?

Father Menezes, a missionary priest of the Fathers of Mercy based in South Union, Ky., credits Pope John Paul II with outlining the "culture of life." Any Catholic, any Christian, he says, ought to be concerned with this battle between life and death, between light and dark. Judgment is as certain as anything. Tolerance of sin, says Father Menezes, is no virtue.

The church, he says, can show the way with her teachings. It's a Catholicism writ wide and large: No

liberal, post-'60s ecumenical reformed faith, this.

No, it's come-to-confession-and-unburden-your-soul time. It's a dose of that old-time religion.

There'll be Mass each day at 9. Revivals each night at 7. Confessions in between.

Life and death. Light and dark. God and the Devil.

If you're interested, Father Menezes still has a couple of evenings at Oberlin's Sacred Heart Church this week. He'll be more than glad to explain.

Preaching starts at 7.

From the Bible

Go to the ant, thou slugard; consider her ways, and be wise: Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.

Proverbs 6: 6-8

Miss Kansas beautiful person

In my job as a reporter and photographer, I get to meet lots of interesting people and usually get front-row seating at any event.

Normally, I don't feel too much pressure to dress for the "occasion." We have a relaxed office where clean and tidy is the usual order of the day. But, it's not every day I get assigned to cover an appearance by Miss Kansas.

Oh, the pressure. What to wear? Will it be a good hair day? What color blush? The details are endless. Our conception of beauty queens is perfection.

Miss Kansas, Adrienne Rosel, is all of the above, but also a real person. My fears were foundationless. She was beautiful, funny, animated, clever and entertaining. She was speaking at a school and held the kids spell-bound for an hour. That's



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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not an easy trick.

I was impressed with our state's representative for the upcoming Miss America pageant. And, you know who I'll be cheering for.

—ob—

Speaking of our state: The Kansas Board of Education has put its collective neck on the line again. They came out with the bold stand of allowing a theory (and it's only a theory) to be questioned.

We should be proud to live in a state where controversial ideas are welcomed.

It seems like a no-brainer to allow the theory of evolution to be questioned in our schools. If supporters are so sure it's correct, they shouldn't worry about a few questions.

To all the evolutionists out there, your faith is a lot stronger than mine. Am I a creationist? Yes, indeed.

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