

New report pinpoints most dangerous drug

A British research team has quantified what should have been obvious by now: The most dangerous drug, the most costly to society from abuse, is the one that's legal nearly everywhere and can be bought at the corner store.

Not heroin. Not crack cocaine. Not methamphetamine.

But booze, good ol' alcohol.

In a study published online Monday, the team of experts evaluated how addictive each drug is and how it harms the human body, plus the environmental damage it causes, the cost to society and the harm it does to families.

And alcohol won, hands down.

It might not be as addictive as heroin or as bad for you as crack, but alcohol is everywhere, easy to buy and cheap, and nearly impossible to eradicate. Its damage to families is legend; its cost to society enormous.

The research team admitted that its alcohol's widespread use that makes it the worst of the nasty three, all considered quite deadly.

"When drunk in excess," one report said, "alcohol damages nearly all organ systems. It is also connected to higher death rates and is involved in a greater percentage of crime than most other drugs, including heroin."

So what do we do now? Return to prohibition?

The experts says no.

"Alcohol is too embedded in our culture and it

won't go away," one said. He advised targeting problem drinkers, much as successful drunk-driving programs have done.

And the lower-ranking drugs, including marijuana and LSD?

One of the report's authors was fired from a British government job after he criticized an increase in penalties for marijuana violators, but opposition to legalization seems to be fading, at least in the U.S.

Already, many states have legalized "medicinal" use of pot, which harkens back to the widespread use of "medicinal" alcohol during our failed fling with prohibition. A headache or a bad cough seems to qualify most users.

True, federal law has not changed, but it is not being enforced and seems to be unlikely to hold back the tides of change for long.

Then maybe society, here and abroad, can focus on the real issues: people with a drug problem of any kind. Maybe we can find a way to save at least some of them, to help them help themselves and put some pressure on those who won't.

The sooner society recognizes the truth and changes the law and government policy to address the real issues, the sooner we can do something about rampant drug abuse. This is an issue whose time has come.

— Steve Haynes

Creepy crawly doesn't wash

So, there I was minding my own business. I was putting a load of laundry in the washing machine when I saw it. It had beady little eyes, eight hairy legs and must have been 10 inches across. The spider was perched on top of the load, waiting I'm sure, to leap onto me.

Water was rushing in and I had already added the soap. (I like to add my detergent before I put in the clothes so the soap gets mixed evenly into the water.) That's another story. Back to the spider. I spied him. He spied me. I screamed. Jim came running. When I pointed to the murderous arachnid, Jim said, "You mean this little guy?" while, at the same time, reaching into the washer and grabbing for the beast. Missed. He tried again. And again. And again. Each time the creepy, crawly thing avoided Jim's clutches.

Finally, Jim closed the lid on the machine and said, "Let the laundry take care of him." Great! I knew I was going to have little spider body parts all over my clean clothes.

When the washer shut off I cautiously opened the lid. At least no wet, mad and dizzy spider attacked me. The old Whirlpool must have a powerful spin cycle, because I found no remains. And believe me when I say I inspected each item carefully before tossing it into the dryer, not a trace remained.

— ob —

I think Jim and I may be having a technology meltdown. This week we upgraded our cell phones to ones with every bell and whistle available. We, now, have the ability to text, take pictures, download pictures and send emails. I think we can even talk to people. I'm not sure, though. I haven't got to that part in the manual yet.

Just like with Facebook, our



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
quality-pro@webtv.net

grandchildren kept urging us to "get with it." So, here we are: Two senior citizens trying to operate phones that can turn sideways and have the screen turn, too; figure out how we activated the speaker phone without meaning to; and how to use our thumb to roll our contact list at a speed we can actually read.

We are determined, though. We WILL keep up.

— ob —

Have you ever seen so much corn before? No matter what town you drive through, big or small, there is a mountain of grain piled somewhere, often more than one. The crazy thing is, harvest isn't over. Some estimates say it's only about half done.

Where are they going to put the rest? Talk about being blessed with

an abundance. I wondered aloud if most of it would be going to ethanol plants. It's hard to imagine starving people in the world when we see so much in this country.

— ob —

Our little 4-year old granddaughter, Ani, is so precocious. Her mother, Jennifer, is an authoritative woman. When she speaks, she expects to be obeyed. That's why during our recent visit at Jennifer's home we had to learn how to control our laughter.

One night Ani kept asking for a piece of candy. Finally, Jennifer said, "I said no." Ani, shrugged her shoulders, lifted her little arms and said, "But I say yes."

Grandkids are great payback, aren't they?

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.

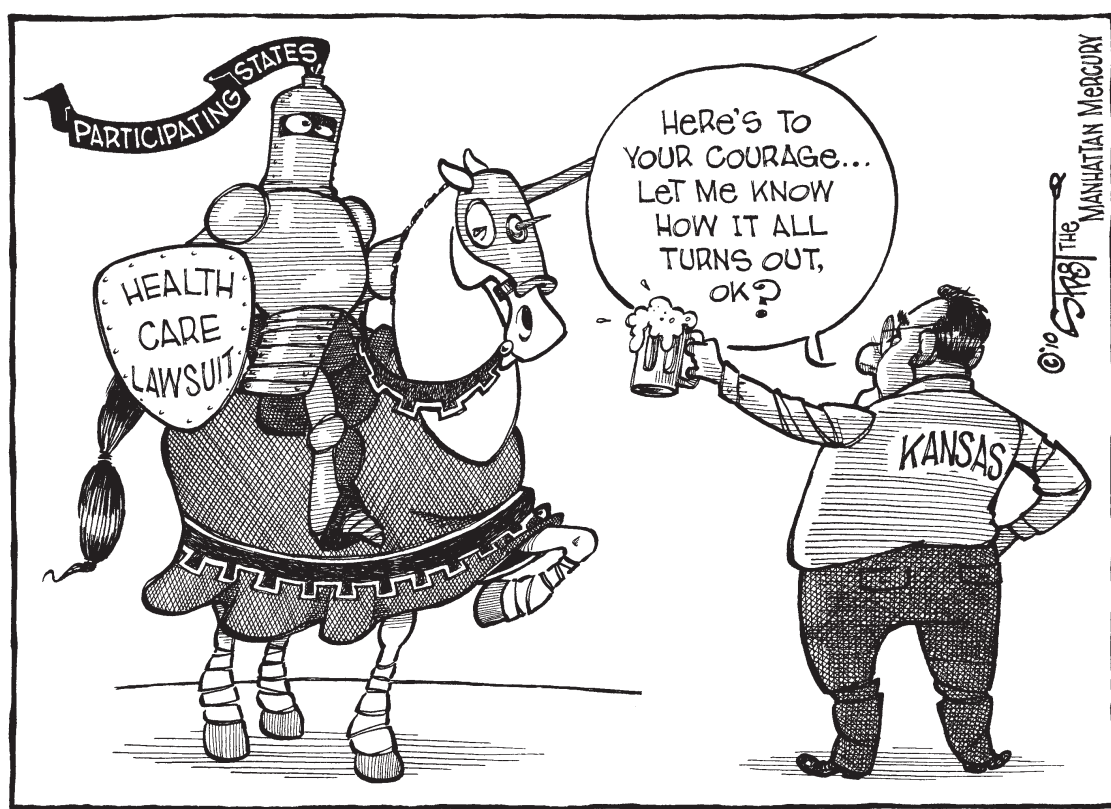
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Kids cook to different recipes

Nothing tells me that my children have grown up and gone off on their own like looking around their kitchens.

My kitchen has a coffee maker, toaster, blender and microwave on the counters. There's a knife block with an assortment of mismatched blades and salt and pepper on the stove. I also keep Nature's Seasoning and Lawry's Seasoning Salt close at hand. These plus some garlic from my garden are the spices I use 90 percent of the time.

Visiting the girls in Georgia, I discovered that they don't cook like mother.

Oldest daughter and her husband just upgraded to a home in Old Town Augusta. It's got lots of windows and trees and is just six blocks from Felicia's office downtown.

Their kitchen sports a fancy fridge with an ice maker and water on the door. This is a big upgrade for them. Their old house had an apartment-size fridge that was always so overstuffed you couldn't find anything.

Their new stove is a glass-topped electric like mine. I love my stove. They are planning to switch theirs to gas as soon as they can afford it.

On top of their stove are four kinds of pepper — white, ground cayenne, crushed red and whole peppercorns; peanut oil; gumbo filé; dried tomato sprinkles; garlic powder and salt; paprika; Mrs. Dash and something called Chef



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
c.haynes@nwkansas.com

Paul Prudhomme's Magic Seasoning Blends.

On the counter, they have an all-purpose toaster-oven and a microwave. The blender must be hidden.

Over at youngest daughter's, who lives in the suburbs with husband and baby girl, you can find four kinds of cereal on top of the fridge.

Spices are all put away, but there is an amazing variety of baby food items sitting out. It seems that youngest is making some of her own baby food. Granddaughter, we are told, adores squash and will be trying peas next week.

Both girls have hanging baskets with fruit, onions, garlic and potatoes. I have those things, but in my kitchen they clutter up the counter or kitchen table in wicker baskets I got with a gift basket at some convention somewhere.

Son is the minimalist in the family. He's a bachelor who works at two fancy restaurants. There are no spices on his counters. His fridge has a minimum of necessities. I know he cooks at home, but he tends

to eat out a lot, too.

Whenever we visit, I try to take him an ice chest filled with frozen food — chili, green chili, swiss steak, steak soup and so on. Things I make in large batches and have in my freezer.

When we visited this last week, I noted he still had a lot of containers in his freezer. They are all chili, he said. He's waiting for cold weather to have that.

Different styles for different folks. At oldest daughter's we had a Cuban dish with hamburger, green peppers, garlic, olives and raisins over rice. At youngest daughter's, we will have fried chicken. She doesn't make it much, but her husband adores it.

We took son out for barbecue.

When they come to visit us, we'll cook a steak on the grill and finish off the meal with twice-baked potatoes and green beans. The boys don't always get that at home, either, but for us, it's a family tradition.

One thing for sure, it's all good, and I'm not losing any weight this week.

Visiting can be just alarming

We were visiting the granddaughter last week. Oh, and the daughters, too. They all live in Georgia.

I could write all day about how cute she is, but you'd be bored. Instead, a cautionary tale about visiting your city kin.

Not that Augusta, metro population 539,154, is a big city, but it is a Top 100 market (No. 95 in the U.S.). And more than 200 times larger than Oberlin, where we live.

Crime is more of an issue. Burglary is not a rare occurrence, but more of a statistic, or a way of life.

So when the kids moved from a smaller house in a supposedly better neighborhood to a bigger one near downtown, they got an alarm system. Why they needed one when they have two huge dogs — one of whom starts barking when a stranger is a block away — is beyond me, but they do like their electronics.

Anyway, the alarm took some getting used to, they say. Us, too.

On arrival, we were instructed not to go out without disarming the alarm. Taught the secret code that would silence it. Reminded that it would be armed at night.

The next morning, Cynthia the morning person was up before the household. The dogs wanted out. Wanting to let the kids sleep, she let them. The alarm sounded. She could not remember the code. The kids got up.

I slept through the whole thing, but got a blow by blow later.



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
s.haynes@nwkansas.com

A couple of days later, though, we were reading on the screened-in porch — it's still September down here — when Cynthia decided to turn in, leaving me to do some editing.

Sometime after midnight, I decided to call it a night. I realized what had happened when I opened the living-room door and the lights were all out.

"Skreeeeeeeeeeeeeee. Open door. Front porch. Skreeeeeeeeeeeeeee."

I remembered the code, ran for the controller at the back door, punched in the numbers. Nothing.

"Skree."

Felicia ambled down the steps, rubbing her eyes and laughing when I explained.

"You have to hit 'off,' Daddy." Well, nobody told me that.

When we arrived, I was instructed not to go out at night unaware. Children, we lived in the city for 10 years. Give us a break.

Of course, we both got robbed during that time.... So, when we wanted to go for a twilight walk, we took the aforementioned dogs.

One is a huge Lab, the other, half rottweiler and half something else, either great Dane or maybe wolf.

I soon learned that if someone was near the sidewalk, you should not let your dog head their way. It causes panic.

We passed two guys with a black Explorer, the same car the kids drive. The Lab just naturally tried to get in and go for a ride. The men jumped, but I explained that a good licking was the worst fate they faced. Then the other dog came around the front of their truck.

"Oh, you must feed that one steak," one of them said.

"Anything he wants," I replied.

"Anything he wants."

From the Bible

And when I shall put thee out, I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light.

Ezekiel:32 7

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Phone: (785) 475-2206

Fax (785) 475-2800

E-mail: oberlin.herald@nwkansas.com

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STAFF

Steve Haynes editor
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Reader commends news coverage

To the Editor:

We just received *The Oberlin Herald* of Oct. 13. I would like to commend you for the coverage of homecoming.

It is so good to witness from afar all the excitement and school spirit of students and adults of the community. Your coverage of sports

and academic achievements are a real compliment to our hometown newspaper.

The kids are "our future," so it's

good to keep track of all the good things they are involved in.

Lola Diederich,
Cape Coral, Fla.

Honor Roll

Welcome and thanks to these recent subscribers of *The Oberlin Herald*.

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