Opinion



Other **Viewpoints**

Controlling drugs at Kansas University raises privacy issues

Kansas University is in a tough spot when it comes to dealing with illegal drug and alcohol use by students in university residence halls.

As illustrated by two fatal incidents in recent months, the university often is blamed for not doing enough to restrict students' use of intoxicating substances. Yet, when the school considers a policy that would help them step up enforcement of university rules concerning drugs and alcohol in residence halls, it attracts criticism for infringing on students' right to

It's a difficult line to draw, but a new policy that would give residence hall officials the right to enter a student room if they have good reason to suspect university drug and alcohol rules are being broken doesn't seem out of line....

Over the years, the university has removed most of its parent-like restrictions on residence hall living either explicitly or through lax enforcement. But when student deaths are linked to behavior that is banned in KU residence halls, the university leaves itself open not only to criticism but potential legal ac-

It's true that university officials can't follow students everywhere. It's possible that more vigorous enforcement of drug and alcohol policies will drive more students to other locations to partake of illegal substances. Some students, however, might actually appreciate having the rules they agreed to abide

This is not a cure-all. If this policy is approved, residence hall officials probably will put it to use only in the most blatant violations of hall policies. However, if the university is going to be blamed for not detecting and punishing drug and alcohol abuse, officials need to have a reasonable opportunity to catch students in the act and take the appropriate steps, including notifying their parents. The proposed policy would simply give them a way to do that.

Lawrence Journal-World, via The Associated Press

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Learning is not just for schools

Some years ago, I saw a toddler, just learning to walk, practicing going uphill and downhill on a handicapped-access ramp between the sidewalk and a street that had been closed off for a ceremony. She would struggle to the top, turn around, and carefully head down again. Getting to the bottom, she grinned a big grin, giggled, and tried again. I watched her for about 15 minutes, and could almost see the learning happening. How to balance. How to balance on an uneven surface. How to walk downhill without falling on her face. She got an education that day.

Education begins coming to my mind a lot during the end of July. It's a strange time to think about school, you might think, though I spent enough time taking summer college classes to regard it as simply the end of an-

Yet the school board just reorganized for a new fiscal year, back-to-school sales are coming, and all over the place kids can be found running out of summer entertainment. (One thing I noticed in the police blotter was a car getting doused with chocolate syrup. That sounds like an end-of-summer itch to me.)

This week is the county fair. That speaks of a different kind of education, as 4-H kids show off their skills in everything from livestock to sewing. Rocketry, showmanship, gardening, drawing – a fair is a showcase for many kinds

It's weird, though. I'm amazed at how many



 Collection Connections

adults are under the impression that they should be done with education. If I ask my six-year-old granddaughter what she learned today, she's got an answer for me (though she might also say that it's summer vacation and she doesn't have to learn.) If I ask an adult what they learned, I'm far more likely to get a blank look. Given the rate at which the world is changing, that's a worrisome thought.

The fact is, everyone learns every day. The problem lies in what we learn. Do we learn something that helps us grow? Do we learn something that holds us back? That's right sometimes what is learned is negative, like:

• how to pass on the blame for trouble, rather than assuming responsibility;

• how to see what's wrong in every situation, the dark cloud in front of every silver lining; · values that place objects above people,

possession of things ahead of their usefulness. School is really just a place to learn how to learn. That doesn't mean I agree with those who think multiplication tables are redundant. I have learned that most of the things my

teachers made me memorize are in use every day – including multiplication tables, spelling, grammar and U.S. history. Sorry to say, I grew up in Nebraska and never studied Kansas history much. If I had, I would use that information, too. As it is, I'm always driving native Kansans crazy with questions that any sixthgrader should be able to answer.

Yet I got more out of school than memorized answers. I learned that the world doesn't end at the city limits – or the state border. I learned that different things are important to different people. There were a lot of people in my school I never would have encountered outside it. Even in a small town, there are different churches, different neighborhoods, different places where people gather to spend time. I grew up knowing teachers, farmers, business people. Others grow up knowing plumbers, carpenters, pilots and truck drivers.

How is your education coming? Have you learned about a new flower today, or how to be safe in a storm, or what it might be like to grow up in Guatemala? I hope the Thomas County Free Fair is a place where you can learn something new, and grow as a person this week.

Marian Ballard has collected careers as counselor, librarian, pastor, and now copy editor for the Colby Free Press. She collects ideas, which are more portable than other stuff.

Water reserves maintain delicate balance

As the Kansas population continues to shift to the eastern half or third of the state, the majority of us are dependent on the use of federal reservoirs for their drinking water.

Twenty of Kansas' 24 federal reservoirs provide some type of public water supply, according to Kent Askren, Kansas Farm Bureau water specialist. Two-thirds of the Kansas population is dependent upon stored public water including some rural water districts.

"Few people know or understand how tied we are to our federal reservoirs for our drinking water," Askren says.

In addition to drinking water, Kansas reservoirs also play a minor role in providing navigational support for the Missouri River downstream from Kansas City. During periods of drought millions of gallons of precious Kansas water may be released to support barge shipping on the Missouri and later Mississippi

Kansas has water storage space under contract in Milford, Tuttle Creek and Perry reservoirs which are under operational control of the Corps of Engineers. These three reservoirs are the only ones in Kansas currently authorized for supporting navigational releases to meet target flow on the Missouri River downstream of Kansas.

These reservoirs also provide water that is under Kansas control to meet the needs of public water supply and industrial customers in the Kansas River basin during times of low natural flow, Askren says.

"The Corps can utilize any uncommitted storage in these reservoirs by drawing down the lake levels as much as six feet each year to support downstream navigation," the water specialist says.

When lake levels are drawn down for Mis-



John Schlageck

 Insights Kansas Farm Bureau

souri River navigation, the probability increases that water reservation rights held by Kansans will be impaired. This could lead to curtailment of upstream water rights.

Milford Reservoir is particularly vulnerable because Kansas holds a reservation right with a priority date of 1974, Askren explains.

'As long as Milford remains susceptible for such use, the chances of regulating Kansas farmers upstream of Milford is elevated," he continues.

And while many who live west of Highway 81 would argue this might have little impact on them, that's not the case.

"When such weather events like drought occur, sending water out of our Kansas reservoirs can impact everyone who lives in the river corridors and also, those who live upstream from these reservoirs," Askren explains. "The water that eventually winds up in our federal reservoirs falls on fertile farmland miles and miles upstream.'

What may happen in the future is restriction of water rights above Milford, Tuttle Creek and Perry Reservoirs. Competition for this water is great and it must be managed to its fullest potential.

"Our dilemma in agriculture is to consider the present and future operations of our federal reservoirs in Kansas with regard to the in-state impacts, while at the same time examining our

steadfast support for Missouri River navigation," the Farm Bureau water specialist says.

Most farmers support inland water transportation because it represents the most energyefficient mode for moving agricultural com-

Another major consideration for this state is the necessity to prolong the life of Kansas reservoirs or find other options like building

"Either option is going to be very, very expensive," Askren says. "This is especially true today with our continuing state budget cuts and plummeting revenues.

John Schlageck of the Kansas Farm Bureau is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. He grew up on a diversified farm near Seguin, and his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.

Write us

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