

Marijuana laws affecting Kansas law enforcement

OK, we get it. Colorado may have changed its law on marijuana, but the stuff is still illegal in Kansas.

But there must be some better way to do things than hauling every person caught with just a little bit of green, leafy substance into court, slapping them in jail and making them pay exorbitant collect-call charges to look for bail money.

Or for the worst case, take the case of 58-year-old Brenda Sewell and her sister, Joy Biggs, of Kansas City, Mo. The women were stopped by the Kansas Highway Patrol for speeding, then arrested when a trooper found a small amount of marijuana in their car.

Three days later, still in the Sherman County Jail without making bond, Ms. Sewell died of undetermined causes. Her sister claimed that jailers did nothing to help her when she became ill. An investigation by the Goodland Police came under suspicion after it was disclosed that the detective who did the work was married to the undersheriff in charge of the jail.

Things like this will do nothing for our state's reputation, and we should be asking ourselves, why?

We're not saying that Kansas should make marijuana legal just now. We move slowly on these things. It was nearly half a century after prohibition ended before our state fully legalized liquor by the drink. That gives us a target date of, say, 2050 to open up pot bars.

We're not saying to ignore drug dealers and couriers. They know the risks they are taking. Let them go to jail. Let them rot there, for all we care.

But must we treat every person who crosses the state line with a little maryjane like a common criminal, cuff them and lock them up until they either find someone to bail them out or a judge fines them?

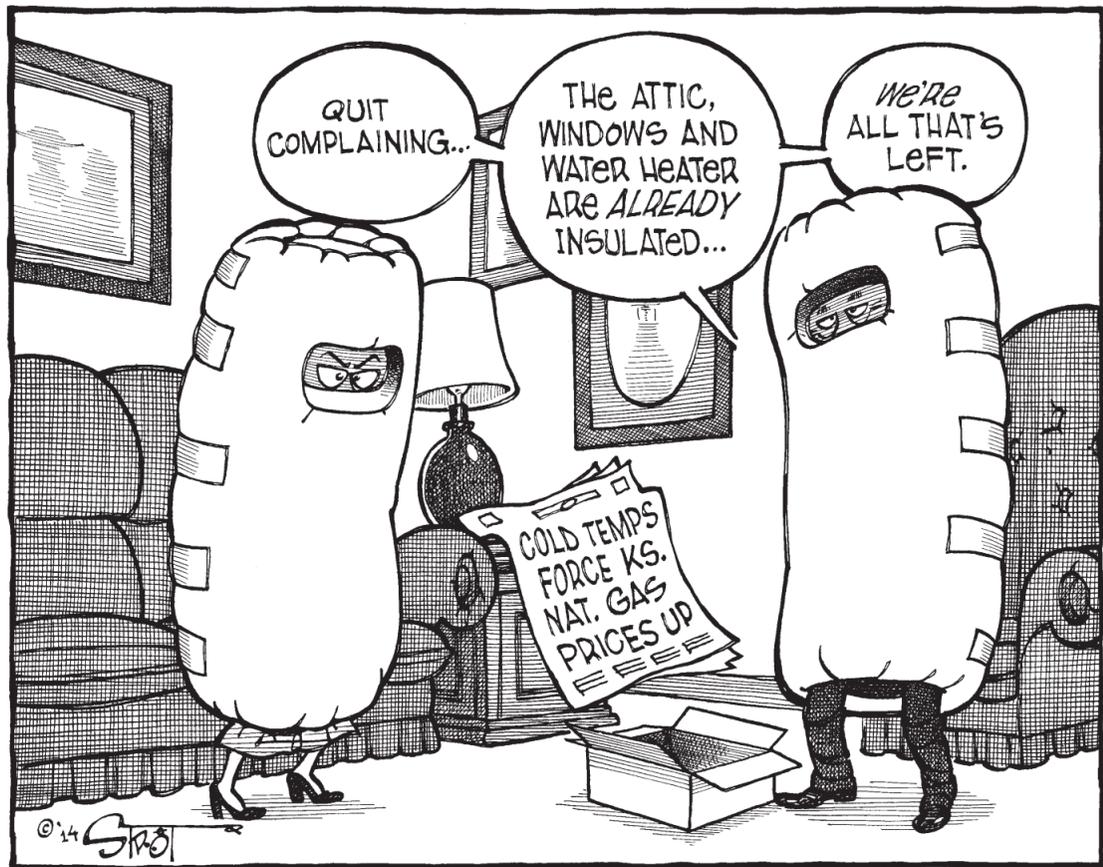
It's not just that it would make us look foolish in a nation where views are changing, but it's just no way to treat people, especially guests in our state.

Why not just give them a ticket, let them pay a fine and send them on their way?

Save the tough treatment for people driving without a license or driving under the influence.

No one would think Kansas has gone soft on drugs. The Highway Patrol could put more effort into looking for speeders and drunk drivers. Jails would have room for people who need to be there.

And Kansas would be a better place for the change. — Steve Haynes



What is done in private should stay private

I have yet to figure out the profile of some in the Republican party. For instance, they claim to want less government and yet every time I turn around there is one more aspect of our private lives they feel compelled to control. What is it about the word personal they don't get? Jack always says the same about the initials PC. It stands for personal computer, as in mine. I feel the same holds true with our private lives. My body is personal, my lifestyle is personal, and so is yours.

The Kansas House has passed, and now sends to the Senate, House Bill Number 2453. Under the auspices of religious liberty, the bill would allow employees, both government and private, to refuse to serve anyone they feel violates their personal religious beliefs about marriage. No matter what you want to call it, it is discrimination.

Some use the excuse it protects

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



small businesses from being sued in civil court. Someone could refuse to serve a gay couple because of their own religious beliefs. It would use religion, i.e. their God, as their excuse. Thank heaven, Kansas legislators weren't on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho.

One would think the Legislature would want to concentrate on the critical issues facing our state, as in education. Evidently more hormones are generated if you focus on those issues which control people rather than educate.

If I sound angry, I am. When my life becomes so insignificant that I have to try to bring down others because I fear their way of life, then I am in a sorry state (as in mental, not physical...however maybe it is both). I don't care if you think it is chosen or a birth defect or just another part of our humanity, accept people for the contributions they make to society. Someone else's lifestyle does not diminish mine and fortunately God did not pronounce me, or any of us, judge. Don't worry about what you think the person is doing wrong, let's move forward with what they are doing right.

Perhaps Paul Newman said it best, "There are so many qualities that make up a human being... by the time I get through with all the things that I really admire about people, what they do with their private parts is probably so low on the list that it is irrelevant." mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net

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Tell those that you love how you feel today because you may not have tomorrow!

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Environmental concerns are here to stay

Some people have the mistaken idea that farmers and ranchers are harming our environment. You hear it everywhere: at the coffee shop, church, public forums, even in the grocery store where people buy the food farmers and ranchers produce for us to eat.

Children arrive home from school and tell parents about "harmful" practices farmers use. It's easy to understand why folks think the way they do about today's agriculture.

Few businesses are as open to public scrutiny as a farm or ranch in the United States but the only picture many have of agriculture is what they read in newspapers or see on television. Even fewer people have set foot on a modern farm.

The fondest wish of most farmers and ranchers is to pass their land on to their children. They work years to leave a legacy of good land stewardship. Most farmers learned about conservation and respect for the land from their parents.

Today's farmer and ranchers are doing their part to protect and improve the environment. They use such practices as early planting, pest control, good soil fertility conservation tillage and many other innovations that help grow more food while protecting the land, water and air.

Farmers adjust practices to meet individual cropping conditions. Such

Insight John Schlageck



practices can vary from farm to farm — even from field to field.

As in any other business, farmers and ranchers must manage their operations on a timely basis and use all the technology available to improve quality and productivity. If they don't they will not be able to stay in business for long.

Today's farmer has drastically cut chemical use during the last couple of decades. Many no longer apply chemicals before planting. Instead, as the crop matures, farmers gauge potential weed growth and apply herbicides only if needed.

Farmers handle chemicals with care and according to instructions on the label. They realize they can be toxic or harmful to people and the environment, and they are the first to come in contact with them.

From planting through harvest, farmers battle weather, weeds, insects and disease. Efficiency is their best defense against unstable world markets, political barriers and fringe

groups who may attack their farming methods.

Yes, farmers and ranchers must live in the environment they create. They know all too well the importance of keeping the ground water clean. More often than not, farmers drink from wells on their land. They understand that their family drinks from the water they pump from the ground every day.

Farmers and ranchers can and will do more to improve their environment. They can continue to rely less on herbicides, insecticides and fertilizers. Agricultural producers can also conserve more water, plug abandoned wells, monitor grassland grazing and continue to implement environmentally sound techniques that will ensure preservation of the land.

Production agriculture works, and will continue to work because it is flexible enough to accept and adapt to change. No agricultural system — or any other system for that matter, is perfect. Farmers and ranchers will continue to search for better ways to farm and ranch through research and education.

In the meantime, farmers and ranchers will continue to take their stewardship seriously. They've devoted their lives to safeguarding their farms and families, while providing us with the safest food in the world.



I want to give two thumbs up to the two young ladies who cleaned up my mess when I dropped my nacho cheese sauce at the basketball game Monday night. As an older person it is wonderful to know that there are wonderful young people out there! Emailed in.

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