

U.S. drug policy destroys whole nations to south

Everyone decries the growing drug-gang violence in Mexico, especially when it starts affecting U.S. interests.

American media made a big deal out of the murder of an American woman who worked at the U.S. consulate in Juarez and the husbands of two State Department employees.

Shoot-outs between Mexican troops and the gangs garner attention, but in the U.S. we shake our heads, then cry out for better security at the border. No one bothers to ask why the violence is rampant in nearby Mexico, as it has been for years in far-away Columbia.

But if you want to know who's to blame, it's us.

American drug laws, founded on the fallacy that the failed and discredited policy of prohibition will somehow work a century later, have nearly ruined the peace, democracy and civil stability of Columbia. Now they threaten our neighbor Mexico. Why?

It's simple. What people want is what people want. Making it illegal does not change that, but it changes the economics of the business. Criminal gangs will latch on to supplying anything the government makes illegal, because if people want it bad enough, they'll pay.

That's what made the Mafia and other immigrant gangs of the early 20th century rich and powerful: prohibition of alcohol gave them a perfect opening to supply demand for a substance that many people saw as harmless.

As a nation, we recognized this mistake and moved on. We abandoned the idea of prohibition, except for our own kids. We figure it didn't work for us, but it would for them.

About the same time in our history, society began to recoil from the supposed threat of marijuana and other drugs, largely unregulated until the prohibition era. Even after repeal, the U.S. kept its drug laws despite a lack of proof that most of the substances weren't any more harmful than some legal items.

Scare tactics by early drug-enforcement types, aimed at building up their bureaucracy

as much as anything, and lurid movies from Hollywood fed public hysteria. Because drugs and drug users were viewed as weird, it was easy to outlaw them.

Fast forward to the 1960s, when a questioning generation defied their parents' advice and started trying the old drugs — and some brand new ones. Since then, the antidrug laws have grown apace, along with the number of Americans in prison.

The result? Nations nearly destroyed. Drug use in this country ever increasing.

The growing popularity of cocaine through the 1980s has made once-quiet Columbia a hotbed of radical violence, where assassination of judges and legislators became commonplace. Government officials were kidnapped, offices bombed.

Now, we have exported our home-grown methamphetamine and marijuana business to Mexico, with disastrous results. We made it much harder to make meth or grow marijuana here, so the Mexican gangs — long a minor cog in the cocaine trade — saw an opportunity.

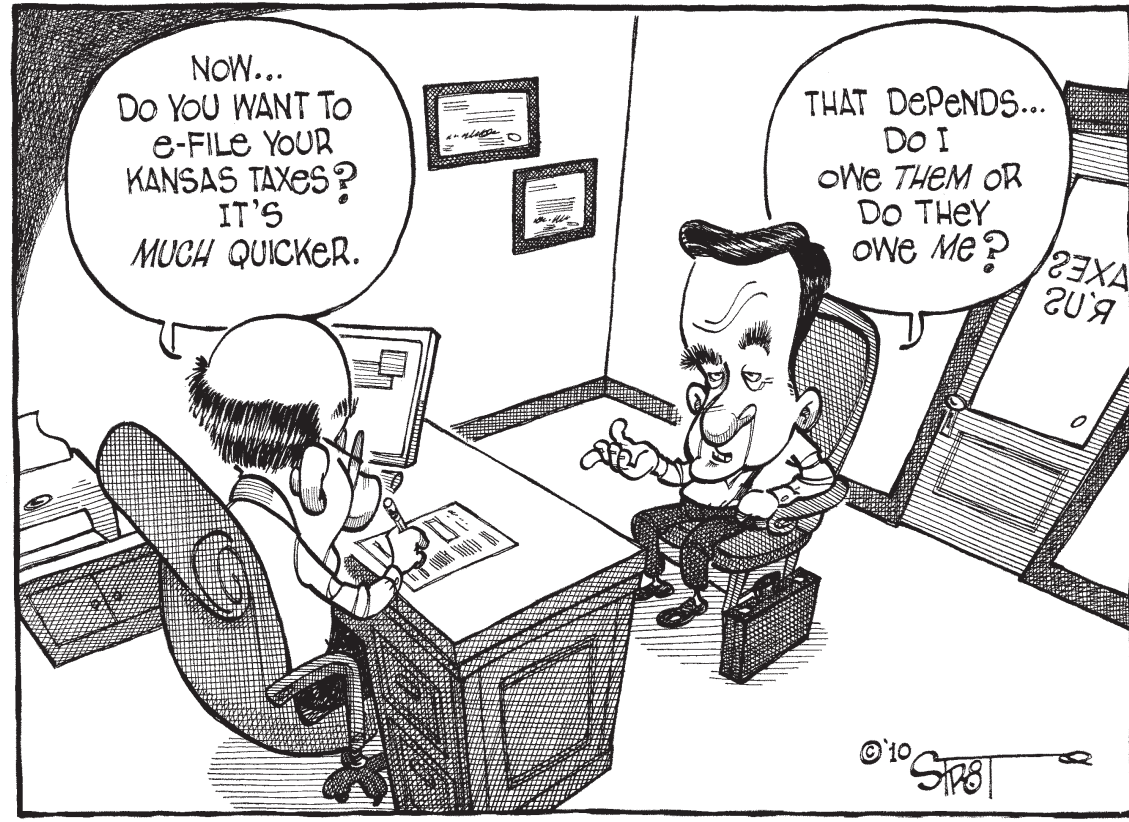
We backed the Mexican government in trying to suppress these gangs, but law enforcement alone just cannot end the drug "problem." That can only come from curbing demand, and only treatment can do that.

Interestingly, the Mexican Army has proved more effective against the gangs than some. Still, honest judges, police officers and public officials have to live in constant fear of murder — or worse. Whole families are wiped out.

Why? Because we still haven't learned that prohibition does not work. Because we still haven't learned to treat the problem rather than the product. Because we still believe in simple — if failed — solutions.

We spend billions each year to perpetuate the "War on Drugs," while each year the problem gets worse. The only ones who benefit are the drug-police bureaucracy and the gangs.

Whole nations lose their lifestyle in this game. When will we learn? — *Steve Haynes*



Being like mom isn't so bad

Over the weekend, I spoke at a women's salad luncheon about Mexico missions. A member of the audience caught me off guard when she said, "I sure miss Sunflower Sue."

All I could say was, "I do, too." Perhaps that is what caused me to admit this morning how much I am like my mother. I was putting away lunch makin' and noticed the mayonnaise jar was empty. Naturally, I reached for its full replacement, and then I reached for the rubber spatula.

How many times did she chastise me over the years because I might have left one fourth of a teaspoon of "whatever" in a jar before discarding it?

Yet, there I was, scraping out every last speck of mayonnaise from the old jar. I could almost hear my mother say, "If you take care of the pennies, the dollars will take care of themselves."

One of her other euphemisms was, "A woman can throw more out the front door with a teaspoon than a man can put in the back door with a scoop shovel." Which translated means: If you are not a thrifty homemaker, your husband can't make enough money to make up the difference.

I am constantly amazed by the growing number of young women who not only admit, but seemingly brag, about not cooking. Perhaps they don't know how, but I would think after a week of eating out, they



Out Back

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

would have to starve for the rest of the month. Even if they made semi-prepared and boxed food from the store, it would still be cheaper.

Used to be a woman knew the way to a man's heart was through his stomach. Now, she makes her own money, and if she wants to spend it on fast food, I guess she can.

When Jim and I were first dating, I overheard him telling a friend, "Not only can she cook, but she will."

— ob —

I haven't complained about my back for a week, and I'm not about to start now. Except to say that I'm trying not to overdo it pulling weeds and getting flower beds ready to plant.

The weather has been so beautiful, I can hardly stand it. I noticed that I have tulips blooming and the hosta I planted last year is pushing through.

Jim and I are talking about where to permanently plant some of the trees we have been nursing along for a couple of years. One is a blue spruce, so it needs lots of space. We also have ash, cottonwood and a weeping willow.

— ob —

While listening to news of the thwarted plot to bomb Times Square and the New York subway system, I immediately thought of my sister, Kathryn, who lives within walking distance of the square.

I called to see what her "take" on the situation was, but she was gone. Her son answered the phone and when I mentioned it to him, there was this long silence. Finally he said, "Didn't know anything about it. We hear that kind of stuff all the time."

That's just one more reason I'm glad she's moving to Florida.

From the Bible

The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.
Hebrews 1:3 (NIV)

Maybe sis can give advice

I've had a bad case of garden envy, so this year I'm going to do something about it.

My sister has the neatest garden. Her asparagus crop is enormous. Her tomatoes stand like sentinels, all neatly staked. Her zucchini don't even run all over the yard. They are neat, obedient plants that stay where they are supposed to.

Her worst sin, however, is she can plant a straight row.

I'm a crooked person. I can't draw a straight line with a ruler. The part in my hair is never straight. I use the whole lane when driving. And, worst of all, my furrows wander all over the garden.

Last year in disgust, I just planted my lettuce and spinach by broadcasting the seeds in the general area where I wanted to grow them.

That worked fairly well until it was time to put in the tomatoes and pepper plants.

My general philosophy is to get as much to grow in a square inch as possible, so I put the lettuce and spinach, tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers together.

That works well with rows. The plants go in between rows of lettuce



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
c.haynes@nwkansas.com

and spinach. It doesn't go well if there are no rows and no spaces.

I had decided that I would just pull out enough lettuce and spinach to accommodate the latecomers.

That didn't happen. I couldn't do it. I couldn't pull out healthy, productive members of my garden. I ended up putting the tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers in the odd holes. This made for a very messy garden. The vegetables were scattered around wherever there was an open spot. The odd spacing was especially noticeable in the late summer after the lettuce and spinach was all gone.

This year, though, I have a plan. I went out with stakes and twine and laid out my rows for lettuce, spinach and radishes. Then I carefully dug my furrows and planted.

When it's time to put in the plants, there will be space for them.

Now, if I could only figure out what to do about that odd patch of fall spinach that has come up in the middle of the garden. No matter what I plant around it, it's going to be in the way.

Logic says pull it. By the time I'm planting the larger part of the garden with corn and squash, my newly planted greens will be coming up.

But, I know in my heart of hearts that won't happen. I won't be able to mow down the lovely little plants that have provided me with salads in March and April.

I'll just have to figure out how to plant around them.

Maybe, I'll call my sister for some advice. Her garden is always so darned neat.

Conclusion wasn't correct

Rusty Addleman called last week and questioned whether, as *The Herald* reported in the March 24 issue, he had asked for the resignation of City Administrator Austin Gilley.

The story, written by the editor, who was filling in for the regular reporter, said Mr. Addleman had been among a group, mostly airport supporters, who has asked for the administrator's removal.

A quick review of the Dec. 23 paper showed that wasn't exactly the way it was, or the way it had been reported at the time. That story put him among a group that "aired complaints" about the administrator.

It reported that Mr. Addleman said "it's time to settle down and get to work on the airport project" after voters approved a longer runway by a 3-1 margin. Mr. Addleman advocated taking the project out of the administrator's hands and turning it back over to the airport committee.

"Hopefully, we can move forward with this and let someone oversee it who can get things done," the story reported him as saying.

The December story did not in any way imply that Mr. Addleman ever said the administrator should resign or be removed. Another airport supporter at the meeting did make that suggestion.

What that amounts to is that the editor goofed when he assumed



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
s.haynes@nwkansas.com

Mr. Addleman had been among those at the meeting calling for the administrator's ouster. That's not the way the December story reads, and a quick review of the original would have shown that.

The story lumped Mr. Addleman in with others at the same meeting, an unfair comparison. The fact is that none of us who reviewed the story before publication thought to question the statement is no excuse.

The story was not fair to him or Mr. Gilley.

Perhaps it illustrates the danger of generalizing about any person or group. Just as not everyone who goes to a "tea party" is a far-out right winger (though the media seem to focus on those who are), not everyone who goes to the City Council to talk about the administrator is in league with those demanding his head.

By lumping Mr. Addleman in with those who did ask for Mr. Gilley's removal, we tarred him with a

broad brush. That wasn't fair, and it should not have happened.

The boys are back

The buzzards returned to Oberlin's water tower sometime the last 10 days of March.

I know they had not arrived when we left for Georgia on March 19, and they were on the tower when we got back on March 31. Maybe someone, perhaps a bird watcher, noticed the date.

One town in Ohio, I think, has an annual festival when its vultures return. Others prefer not to celebrate these disdained, yet majestic, birds. They are nature's rendering service, performing a valuable function in the world, after all, and they are marvelous to watch in flight.

On the water tower, I admit, the sight of 40 or 50 of them lined up can be a little creepy. I don't know of anyone planning to picnic on the grass up there, but if you do, I wouldn't take a nap.

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170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan. 67749-2243

E-mail: oberlin.herald@nwkansas.com

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STAFF

Steve Haynes editor
Kimberly Davis managing editor
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Joan Betts historian
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Good Shopper at your grocery

To the Editor:

Have you noticed the free stickers and "Good Shopper tip cards at the grocery? I hope so. Your store is implementing the Good Shopper activity in April for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Month; participating in this program helps parents focus on the positive while shopping with their children.

Stickers are available in the grocery for children who have displayed positive behavior. Parents get Good Shopper tip cards that give suggestions on how to have a positive shopping experience with their kids. The tip cards also offer ways children can participate in

shopping at any age. Good Shopper is a way to celebrate the good things children do while out in public. Please reward a child with a sticker at your grocery and talk about the child's good behavior. Giving a sticker to a child may seem like a small step to an adult, but to a child it is a big deal.

Good Shopper is just one way to prevent child abuse and neglect in your community by focusing on healthy ways to include children in shopping. Shopping with children can be an exhausting and a trying

Letter to the Editor

experience. Good Shopper helps give parents the tools to have a positive shopping experience with their children.

While you are in the grocery, pick up a blue ribbon to support the efforts of Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect. For information about programs please contact me.

Paige Campbell, director
Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect
140 W. Fourth St.
Colby, Kan. 67701
(785) 460-8177