

LETTERS YOUR VIEW

Go vegetarian for Lent

To the Editor:

This Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, the 40-day period proceeding Easter when Catholics and other Christians would abstain from meat and dairy products in memory of Jesus' 40 days of fast and prayer before dying on the cross. With religious devotion yielding to self-indulgence, this devout tradition gradually gave way to meatless Fridays, and eventually, to no dietary restriction at all. Yet, Jesus' powerful message of compassion and love for all living beings applies to our time more than ever.

It's a time when animals are raised for food under abject conditions of caging, crowding, deprivation, drugging, mutilation and manhandling. When they are trucked to the slaughterhouse for days without food or water, then bled, skinned and dismembered while still conscious. It's a time when wastes from factory farms foul the water we drink and the air we breathe. When meat production accounts for 18 percent of greenhouse gases responsible for global warming. When most chronic killer diseases are linked to consumption of animal products.

Let's show our respect for the teachings of Jesus by refusing to subsidize these sins against nature and humanity with our food dollars. By embracing for Lent and beyond the traditional, wholesome, non-violent diet of vegetables, fruits and grains first mandated in Genesis 1-29. For more information, visit <http://veg4lent.org/>.

Eddie Tyler
Edmond

What's the excuse?

To the Editor:

Kudos to the Oklahoma City television stations that went ahead with the digital TV conversion despite the deadline change to June! We have had two years, two government vouchers worth \$59, numerous irritating reminders and live tests.

Despite all of the above, some are complaining! What is your excuse? What else have you spent about \$55 on in the past two years that would have bought you two converter boxes using the government coupons?

Despite health problems and being off work at intervals, my husband and I have made this a priority so we can receive important news and weather plus our beloved television shows. It is all about being a responsible adult!

Kay Klein
Edmond

HOW TO CONTACT

YOUR STATE OFFICIALS

Here's how to keep in touch with Edmond's elected officials:

STATE SENATE

• Sen. Clark Jolley, R-Edmond, 2300 N. Lincoln Blvd., Rm. 152 Oklahoma City, OK 73105
E-mail: jolley@oksenate.gov
Phone: 521-5622

• Sen. Todd Lamb, R-Edmond, 2300 N. Lincoln Blvd., Rm. 513A Oklahoma City, OK 73105
E-mail: lamb@oksenate.gov
Phone: 521-5632

STATE HOUSE

• Rep. Marian Cooksey, R-Edmond, District 39 2300 N. Lincoln Blvd., Rm. 409 Oklahoma City, OK 73105
E-mail: mariancooksey@okhouse.gov
Phone: 557-7342

• Rep. Ken Miller, R-Edmond, District 81 2300 N. Lincoln Blvd., Rm. 408 Oklahoma City, OK 73105
E-mail: kenmiller@okhouse.gov
Phone: 557-7360

• Rep. Lewis Moore, R-Edmond, District 96 2300 N. Lincoln Blvd., Rm. 329-A Oklahoma City, OK 73105
E-mail: lewis.moore@okhouse.gov
Phone: 557-7400

• Rep. Jason Murphey, R-Guthrie, District 21 2300 N. Lincoln Blvd., Rm. 408B Oklahoma City, OK 73105
E-mail: jason.murphey@okhouse.gov
Phone: 557-7350



Insurance mandates need closer look

It's practically an article of faith that mandates to cover specific conditions, drugs and treatments increase costs and lead to a greater number of uninsured. What's often overlooked is that mandates may, in the long run, save money.

Oklahoma has required insurers to cover the cost of diabetic testing and treatment since 1996. The cost of covering diabetic supplies pales in comparison to the cost of caring for diabetics who haven't managed the condition.



Jeff Raymond

Guest Opinion

Consider breast cancer: A mammogram costs \$50 to \$150. The average cost of breast cancer treatment is more than \$20,000, according to the National Cancer Institute. Catching tumors early saves considerable money later, not to mention women's lives. In 2006, according to state Health Department data, 67.7 percent of Oklahoma women older than age 40 reported having had a mammogram during the previous two years. In 1996, 59.5 percent reported having had a mammogram during previous two years. In 1988 the number was 42.9 percent.

Required coverage of mammograms has been on the books in Oklahoma since 1988. The increase in mammography rates has come about because of many factors, including better education and increased availability. But we owe it to ourselves to consider the effect of requiring the procedure to be covered.

Oklahoma's mandate count, 36, falls in the middle. Requirements range from hearing aids to well-child care.

Interestingly, some states that have far more mandates have more affordable insurance and/or a lower rate of uninsured.

Opponents of mandates focus on their aggregate cost. Yet pinning down the cost of mandates is notoriously difficult; estimates are unreliable, as the wildly varying estimates of the cost of autism coverage have shown.

We should begin looking at mandates as a reflection on the high cost and disappointing quality of health care rather than their cause. If health insurance companies would serve policyholders rather than block the care they seek, average Oklahomans wouldn't seek redress through the legislative process.

Insurance companies' routine refusal to cover common-sense medical care, especially cost-saving preventative care, has led to mandates. It's time for Oklahomans to look at mandates as a way to improve health care for much less cost than ultimately caring for the sick.

The huge shift in political support for mental health parity illustrates this. Many researchers now accept that it's cheaper to treat someone for mental illness than suffer lost work and productivity.

The National Association of Health Underwriters claims the more groups demand specialized mandates, the more "the train gets a full head of steam" and can't be stopped. Disease- and condition-specific lobbies will queue up and demand coverage as well.

The organization slips into old scare tactics. With health-care premiums for an Oklahoma family increasing by 62 percent from 2000-07, requiring more in return isn't asking too much. Because coming up quickly with tens of thousands of dollars is impossible for most of us, the end result of requiring insurance companies to do less is to shift the cost to taxpayers.

Opponents of mandates argue that nothing is free. They're right: Someone pays for health care. It's just a question of whom — taxpayers or insurance companies.

JEFF RAYMOND is executive director of OKWatchdog, a nonprofit consumer and patient advocacy organization.

SUN SPOTS

SHARING YOUR THOUGHTS WITH OUR READERS

QUESTION:

This is National Snack Foods Month. What is your favorite snack?

Question asked at Hafer Park.

Have a question you'd like us to ask?

Submit your question to: news@edmondsun.com and we will give you credit.



'Broccoli.'

Kalie Soller, 11
Baumholder,
Germany



'Cheetos.'

Maya Lathim, 2
Edmond



'Chips.'

Zach Lathim, 5
Edmond



'Teddy Grahams.'

Aerick Creekmore, 3
Oklahoma City



'Chips.'

Riley Ellison, 2
Edmond



'Cookies.'

Dylan Scott, 6
Edmond

Steve Paterson
Publisher
Ext. 122
spaterson@edmondsun.com

Lisa Shearer
Managing Editor
Ext. 110
lshearer@edmondsun.com

Karan Ediger
Advertising Director
Ext. 107
kediger@edmondsun.com

Alice Duree
Classified Manager
Ext. 105
aduree@edmondsun.com

Mark Gilliland
Commercial Print &
Composing Manager
Ext. 144
mgilliland@edmondsun.com

Richard Foster
Circulation Director
Ext. 161
rfoster@edmondsun.com

Todd Short
Production Manager
Ext. 150
production@edmondsun.com

Business: (405) 341-2121
Fax: (405) 340-7363

Classifieds: (405) 340-7355

Fax: (405) 341-6327

Our mailing address
P.O. Box 2470
Edmond, OK 73083-2470

Our shipping address
123 S. Broadway
Edmond, OK 73034

Our Web site
www.edmondsun.com

Frequently called departments
General Information: Ext. 100
Photography: Ext. 102
Business Manager: Ext. 104
News & Editorial: Ext. 110
Sports: Ext. 116
Commercial Print: Ext. 144
Display Advertising: Ext. 107
Creative Services: Ext. 120
Circulation: Ext. 163
Legal Notices: Ext. 203
Archives, photo reprints and back issues available.

The Edmond Sun (ISSN 1522-5828) publishes a paid newspaper daily Tuesday through Saturday except Monday and Sunday and all legal holidays at 123 S. Broadway, Edmond, OK 73034-3899.

POSTMASTER: Send change of address to: *The Edmond Sun*, P.O. Box 2470, Edmond, OK 73083. Periodicals postage is paid at the U.S. Post Office in Edmond, Okla. Entire contents copyright. Reproduction without permission is prohibited.

Correction policy
As a matter of policy, *The Edmond Sun* will publish corrections or clarifications of errors in fact that have been printed in the newspaper. The corrections will be made as soon as possible after the error has been brought to the attention of the newspaper's managing editor.

Subscription rates
Single copies
Week day.....50¢
Saturday.....\$1.50

Member
Oklahoma Press Association
Southern Newspaper Publishers Assn.
National Newspaper Association
U.S. Suburban Press Inc.
The Associated Press

We welcome letters to the editor. Submissions must be signed, addressed, and must include a daytime and an evening phone number. Please limit submissions to 350 words. We reserve the right to edit and correct all submissions, although every effort will be made to retain the intended meaning of the submission.

Members of The Edmond Sun's Editorial Board are Publisher Steve Paterson, Managing Editor Lisa Shearer, News Editor Drew Harmon, *Sun* employee Dagmar Peery and community members Keith Weber, Chris H. Palmer and Mark Nash.



TODAY'S VERSE
A SELECTION

'Never be lacking

in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.'

Romans 12:11