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It is interesting that the wearing of the kilts was deemed disruptive, interfering with education, etc and yet when apparently some female students were allowed to wear clothing that is equally "disruptive and interfering with education process" it was not addressed.

To say the two kilt wearers are "rebellious" and yet there obviously are some teachers not enforcing the established dress code, would seem to me to hypocritical. To me, those teachers NOT enforcing the dress code are the ones being "rebellious."

I agree with the earlier editorial in Monday's paper, a chance for real education of our youths was missed.

Joe Simpson
Crawfordsville

Cigarette tax hike key to preventing future smokers

To The Editor:

There is no greater need right now than to improve the health of Indiana, and it will take strong leadership. We have that leadership in Governor Daniels, who has proposed to increase the cigarette tax by at least 25 cents. This increase will lead Indiana to having 26,100 fewer future smokers. Ultimately, it will improve the health of our state, as well as lowering the \$1.9 billion in healthcare costs that Indiana faces today — which are a barrier to attracting the types of jobs Indiana needs in the future.

Compelling research shows us that increasing the price of cigarettes can prevent youth from trying them and becoming daily smokers. I read in the *Indianapolis Star* (Jan. 13, 2006) that Bridgett McDaniels started smoking at age 12. If the cigarette tax had been higher when she was 12, her chance of smoking would have been less. I am very happy Bridgett quit smoking. By doing so, she has increased her chances of living a longer, healthier life. However, I wish even more that she had never started.

Smoking is the number one preventable cause of disease and death. It not only causes lung cancer, but also cancer of the mouth, throat, kidneys, pancreas, and cervix. Smoking does not just stain teeth, raise blood pressure, and cause higher rates of respiratory illnesses like colds, bronchitis, and pneumonia. It also increases the risk of heart attacks and stroke, contributes to kidney failure, and can block the blood flow to the legs. I have cared for patients who developed gangrene and had to have their legs amputated because they smoked. It also greatly increases the risk of a miscarriage and the delivery of lower birth weight babies. With rare exception, my patients tell me they wish they had never tried that first cigarette.

Every adult needs to ask if they want their children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews to start smoking.

If you would like to help 12-year-olds avoid the addiction of cigarettes and untimely disease, please contact your legislators and ask them to be strong leaders and do what is right for Indiana's health.

Judy Monroe MD
Indiana State Health Commissioner
Chair, Executive Board, Indiana Tobacco
Prevention and Cessation

the prices as they are and no prescription insurance, we were struggling to maintain. The help has been a Godsend. We wish to thank all of those involved again for the many hours of work and sacrifice they gave in our cause.

The truly incredible thing is the impact this event has had on Susan spiritually. She is so proud of everyone involved. It is a spiritually uplifting moment for her in her battle for life. It came at a time when she was feeling most vulnerable. The love and kinship she felt from everyone has given her strength and encouragement to fight on. We thank you all.

It truly is refreshing to see the goodness of human nature converge from so many different paths. The power of the human spirit is miraculous, especially in numbers.

It is Susan's desire, and mine, to be there next year to help organize the second benefit music jam to help somebody else in need. Let's find a cure.

Eric & Susan Barr

A challenge to conserve energy

To the Editor,

There has been a lot of talk lately about gas prices. Though there are "many factors in the world economy that determine the price of fuel," it is absolutely possible to guess what will happen in the future. As gasoline becomes more difficult to process from the crude oil that becomes more difficult to find and pump from the earth the price will rise. This is the very basic concept at the heart of what is called Peak Oil or sometimes, the peak oil crisis. We are reaching or have already reached the peak of production for cheap oil. It is that simple. Yes there is still oil in the ground, and yes we are still producing gasoline from that, but we have begun the steep decline in the ease with which this can be done. It is becoming a more difficult and costly process. Does this sound like overwhelmingly bad news?

It is, but if we start wrapping our minds around it now we can all make the transition from a gas powered culture a little easier. To begin that process we must start thinking not in terms of what has gone wrong and how bad that could be, but in terms of what can go right and how many alternatives there are. For the next two Saturdays of January the Indiana Energy Conference being held here in Crawfordsville at the Vanity theatre explores these issues and alternatives. There are also countless books, web sites, pamphlets and magazines delving into these questions and some of the ways to answer them.

It is not easy and there is no simple answer but there are plenty of simple steps that we can take together to find a common solution to so many problems we are faced with. This involves but is not limited to; driving less, carpooling more, buying locally, knowing your neighbors and the place you inhabit, knowing where your fuel and water come from, making wise decisions based on the future for yourself, your children, grandchildren...

I challenge us all to find ways to come together around the many solutions to these problems.

Madeline Bachner
Graduate Student in Environmental Education
with the Audubon Expedition Institute

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