

Melanne Verveer

for eternal happiness

DARE

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

Youth Development/After School/
Violence

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

Melanne Verveer

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MT. VERNON

Register-News

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Our View

We must not give up

It is sad to see that several major U.S. metropolitan areas are considering giving up on the Drug Abuse Resistance Education program. The question that has arisen in Spokane, Wash., and other cities is one of cost-effectiveness.

Under the program, law enforcement officers and children interact in an effort to show 1) that officers are the friends of children and 2) that peer pressure to keep away from drugs can counter peer pressure to experiment with them.

We have supported the DARE program and other educational programs to teach young people the dangers of using and abusing substances that can cause addiction and long-term health problems.

We have cautioned, at the same time, that drug education can not be the only basket into which we place our anti-drug eggs. We must continue interdiction, stopping imported drugs at our borders, uprooting illegal crops, arresting drug dealers, particularly kingpins, and making it uncomfortable on drug buyers.

It is easy for adults to caution children against using drugs, but it is harder to get children to pay attention to adult entreaties when they see their parents and other adult leaders using other addictive substances that are dangerous to human health.

The tobacco and alcoholic beverage industries have become, legally, rich selling their temporary-feel-good-but-with-dangerous-side-effects products to American consumers. Alcoholic beverages were, for a time, outlawed, but the market — during prohibition — was so strong, organized gangs found the danger of arrest and prison a worthwhile gamble when compared to the amount of money that could be made and power that could be accrued.

Does that history lesson from the past sound familiar in today's context? Giving up and legalizing drugs is not the answer, though it is hard to justify that some health-damaging substances are legal while some are not.

DARE, or a similar program with local ideas carried out by local volunteers, is one of several thrusts that should be made to control the drug problem. We must not give up.

Grandmother, 89, now away from everything

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[Mt. Vernon Register-News, Tuesday, October 8, 1996]

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