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PLAYING WITH FIRE

Weekend habits have life-long affects

BY MALORY WHITE
The Booster Redux

Students may think that choices made on the weekend will not follow them to Monday morning. However, partaking in certain risky behaviors may in fact have life-long lasting consequences.

At approximately 21 years old, the brain becomes fully developed, meaning any brain damage before this age could be permanent. Because of underdevelopment of the brain, teenagers are especially at risk when drinking alcohol and popping pills.

According to greenwichtime.com, prescription drug abuse and alcohol consumption can start when an

individual is experiencing mental or emotional problems and seek relief through numbing their feelings by drinking and taking medication.

"I initially started drinking because some of my buddies and I were hanging out and they were drinking and they said, 'Hey man, why aren't you drinking?'" senior Joey Smith* said. "I told them I don't drink but they gave me a beer and told me to drink it. One chug just led to another and another."

According to the Area Substance Abuse Council (ASAC,) each year, five times as many teens die from an alcohol overdose than from any other drug, legal or illegal. When teenagers engage in alcohol use, minor or fatal damage can occur in the liver, pancreas, brain, reproductive system and stomach.

Long-term drinking can damage the liver, which is the organ mainly responsible for breaking down alcohol. Extensive alcohol use also has the potential to put teens at significant risk for oral, esophageal, laryngeal, breast, and stomach cancer.

Alcohol poisoning is also a serious repercussion of drinking large amounts of alcohol in a short period of time. Consuming an excessive amount of alcohol can affect breathing, heart rate and gag reflex and could potentially lead to coma and death.

Accordingly, teenagers are among the

largest group with prescription drug abuse and alcohol use problems. Many feel that since prescription pills were prescribed by a physician, they are less likely to be addictive than illegal drugs.

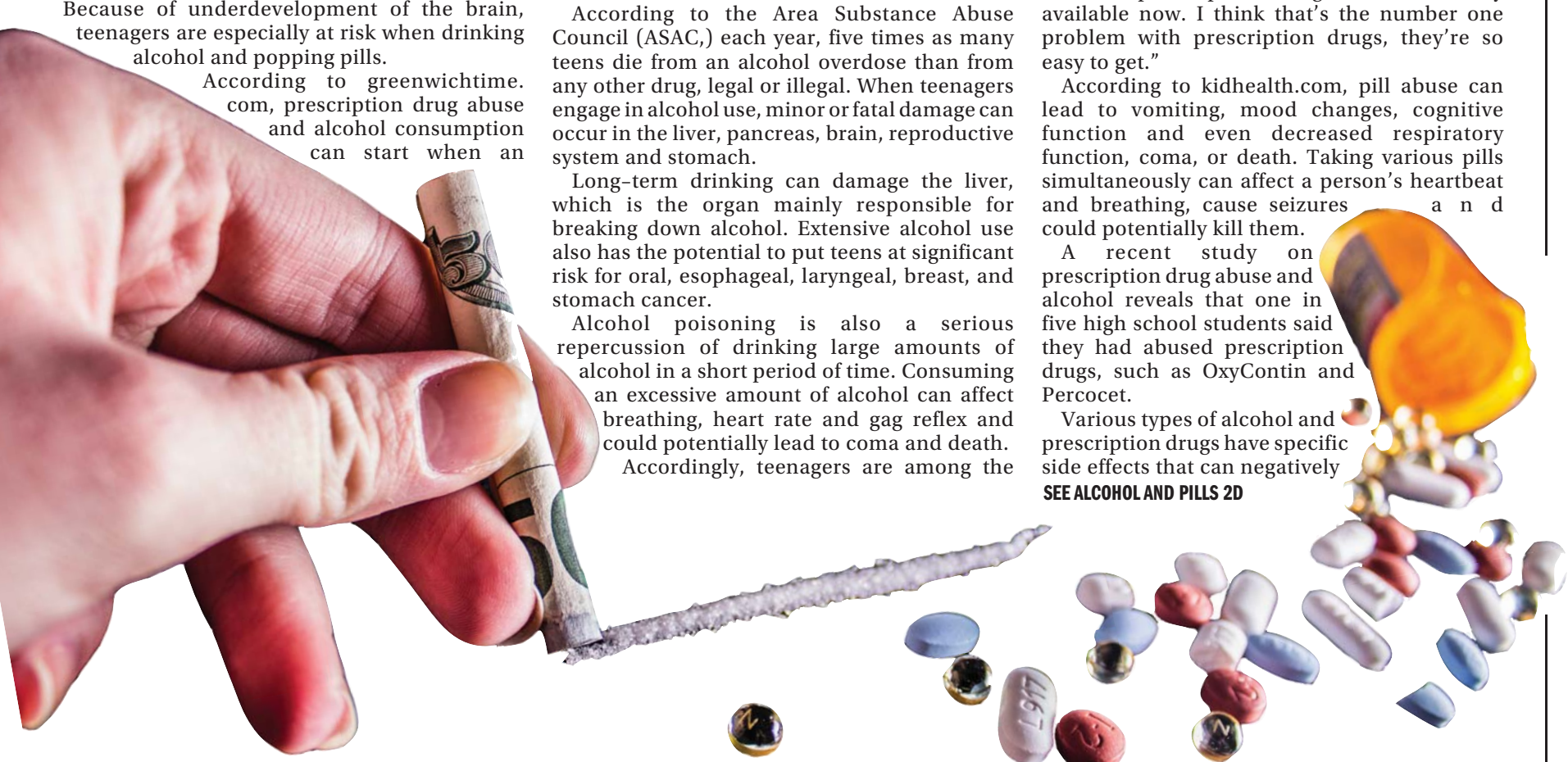
"You see kids taking them for peer pressure, just to try it, or they've had it themselves and they have a dependency on them," said School Resource Officer, Mike Reese. "Just like with alcohol, prescription drugs are so readily available now. I think that's the number one problem with prescription drugs, they're so easy to get."

According to kidhealth.com, pill abuse can lead to vomiting, mood changes, cognitive function and even decreased respiratory function, coma, or death. Taking various pills simultaneously can affect a person's heartbeat and breathing, cause seizures and could potentially kill them.

A recent study on prescription drug abuse and alcohol reveals that one in five high school students said they had abused prescription drugs, such as OxyContin and Percocet.

Various types of alcohol and prescription drugs have specific side effects that can negatively

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Government class has a day out on the town Students visit various municipal agencies

BY MICHAELA WAGNER
The Booster Redux

On Wednesday, March 27, twenty of Gary Wolgamott's AP Government and Politics students travelled to Memorial Auditorium to experience the annual event of Government Day sponsored by the local Pittsburg Elk's Lodge.

All southeast Kansas schools were invited to the event. Each school was allocated 15 slots to their government students, and over one hundred represented the schools. Wolgamott had to talk to the Elk's Lodge coordinators and request five more slots so he could take his entire AP Government and Politics course: this is the first year that Wolgamott has had to do that.

"I think it's wonderful that I get to take this many kids, I'd like to take more, but [the Elk's are] kind of, limited on the space and transportation," Wolgamott said.

When students registered, they requested to be involved in a certain cluster group. There were eight groups to choose from; four at the city level, and four at the county level. The cluster groups consisted of Public Safety, Parks and Recreation, Public Utilities/Public Works, City Administration, Medical Interests, Law Enforcement, and General Government 1 and 2. The students who attended these clusters visited and toured one to three places in a three hour time frame.

Shortly after the students arrived, an announcement was made to search under their seats for an envelope. Many were surprised to find envelopes filled with gift cards under 20 percent of the seats. Throughout the rest of the event, prizes were dispersed. These ranged from gift cards donated or funded by sponsors of the event, to a package deal of school supplies.

"I won a \$10 gift certificate to the movies and a free meal at the Mall Deli by chance," senior Derek Scholes said. "I had an envelope under my chair, and they called the number on my name tag, I was so happy."

Senior Gracie Spencer also received a door prize, but was excited to do so.

"I won a gift can for a free sandwich and drink at the Mall Deli," she said. "I had just got done telling [senior] Andie [Casper] how unlucky I was and how I never win anything when they called my number. I was so excited."

Along with the prizes, the Elk's Lodge



Senior Lizzy Willis listens to a member of the Fire Department during a tour. Seniors visited various organizations during the Elk's Lodge Government Day. PHOTO BY HAYDEN PARKS

distributed 12 \$500 scholarships. Two of the recipients were from PHS; seniors Lauren Geiger and Lizzy Willis.

Students had the chance to tour different buildings that had to do with aspects of city or county government. The fire department, the ambulance barn, the register of deeds office, and the parks and recreation department were among the areas that were toured by the students.

Senior Haylee Moore toured the register of deeds office as a part of the cluster General Government 1.

"I learned that the department of

deeds has kept records of property owners for Crawford county in giant, handwritten books since the late 1800's," she said.

Moore learned something that she did not already know, and so did another fellow senior AP Government student.

"I visited the county court, commissioner's office, treasury commission, and the clerks commission," senior Bryan Stebbins said. "I felt it was an eye opening experience that showed me the complexity and organization of the county government."

Crusin' for a bruisin'

Joe White shares his story about teen drinking

BY EMILY BADEN
The Booster Redux

With prom and graduation just around the corner, students tend to be less focused on work and more on enjoying their time left in high school. However, some students idea of fun could lead them to making a decision that will impact them the rest of their life.

On Thursday, March 14, junior and senior students were given the privilege to listen to Joe White's story.

White's story begins on his senior homecoming night in 2006. According to White, after consuming alcohol, he and friends thought it would be fun to attempt a remake of Jackass: The Movie which is a reality film with the tagline "Do not attempt this at home." It is a riskier continuation of the stunts and pranks done by the various characters of the MTV television series Jackass. As a result of trying to recreate this film, White made the choice of jumping out of a car going 35 mph. He hit his head on a curb and suffered traumatic brain injuries along with paralysis on his right side.

"I was foolish, I was so stupid, drinking and everything, but it has all come clear; I have one arm and one leg, but that is all I need with my mouth," White said. "But remember, never give up. Never give up. What does not kill me makes me stronger."

According to Abbie Eli, White's assistant, when White jumped out of the car they think he tripped over the curb and hit his head, which formed a blood clot about the size of an egg in his brain. He now has partial paralysis resulting in no movement in his right arm and little in his right leg. He has to have assistance and has an auditory process disability from that "one split-second decision that has now changed his life forever."

White says he has been given a second chance at life after defying the odds and is using that second chance to prevent others from making life-altering mistakes.

"Joe tells people you can start all over again," Eli said. "I don't care what you did last weekend, what you planned on doing tonight, whatever it

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