

# PIONEER



Rob Kenyon, now in recovery, began using opioid medication at age 14 and was soon addicted. *Aaron Cardenas/Pioneer*

## Fighting Oklahoma's opioid epidemic

**DEREK SCARSELLA**

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On October 8, 2002 at age 14, Rob Kenyon was hit by a car. He suffered 13 broken ribs, collapsed lungs and lost nearly a liter of blood. Doctors put two rods and five pins in his right leg. He was in a coma for six weeks.

For the pain, doctors prescribed him an assortment of opioid medication. This was the beginning of Kenyon's relationship with drugs.

By age 15, he was hooked.

"Once you get on them you build a tolerance," Kenyon said.

Eventually, he said, his prescriptions alone couldn't do the job anymore.

Before his accident, he says he had never even smoked marijuana, but it wasn't long before Kenyon began to immerse himself in the drug culture.

He said drugs were a coping mechanism and a way for him to escape the physical and sexual abuse of his own mother. Soon he was mixing different medications; Fentanyl, Roxycotin, and Dilaudid with cocaine and alcohol.

"The way I was using, I just didn't give a damn anymore. If I die, I die," He

said, "I've cheated death so many times, I've lost track."

According to a 2009 study by the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, Oklahoma ranks first in all age categories for the consumption of nonmedical pain relievers. The same report indicates that 83 percent of drug overdose deaths were attributed to pharmaceutical drugs.

Oklahoma City Community College Health Professions Lab Assistant and former Paramedic, Harvey Parker, says that when it comes to addressing the state's drug overdose problem, nursing and EMS students are trained on the use of Narcan.

"Narcan basically works in the body to block opioid receptors. This can be problematic for us because for someone who has intentionally overdosed or is an addict trying to get high, they can get really combative when they come out of it," he said.

A report from the Oklahoma Policy Institute, an independent think tank, shows the state has been disproportionately affected by the opioid crisis. Oklahoma ranks 44 in the country for health. Chronic pain related to sedentary lifestyles, poor dental health, and work-related injuries contributes to Oklahoma's opioid use.

See OPIOIDS on page 8

## EDITORIAL | THANKS FOR EVERYTHING

## A close-up portrait of a young woman with vibrant, wavy red hair and striking blue eyes. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight, pleasant smile. She is wearing a black and white checkered or gingham top. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting an outdoor setting with foliage. The lighting is natural and soft, highlighting her features.

—SOPHIA BABB  
EDITOR

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## COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

## 100 years of jazz with the queen

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The tinkling sound of an old stage piano riding on the bellows of the bass flows from my earbuds.

As I close my eyes, I hear the trumpets sounding the arrival of the Queen of Jazz herself.

You can call her “The First Lady of Swing,” or “The Queen of Jazz.”

I’ll call her Ella.

Known around the world as one of the greatest jazz musicians of all time, Ella Fitzgerald would have celebrated her 100th birthday on Tuesday, April 25.

Memorials from National Public Radio and the New York Times were scattered throughout the mainstream media. Focusing on her contributions to jazz, singers such as Tony Bennett and Tom Jones praised her as one of “the greatest damn voices that ever sang the music.”

There’s only a handful of voices that are distinguishable from the rest of the pack of people. That swaying, sweet voice that danced on the tunes of America’s Songbook is classically original.

In an age of music full of club beats, repetitive chords and the occasional musical theater number, it is the sound of swing and jazz that take me to a time often forgotten. Where romance was relished and clubs would gather to hear real sincerity in a voice with a soul as soft as her sound.

With more than 200 albums and over 2,000 recorded songs, Ella Fitzgerald has been one of the iconic idols of music throughout history.

Ella has been a musical influence for many up and coming jazz musicians. From the time she started to modern times, her voice has been one of purity and soul. As a former OU student and jazz musician Victoria Heath said, “She’s such a jazz goddess.”

“I’d say that it was middle school when I first heard her scatting in “It don’t mean a thing it if ain’t got that swing” and I was amazed,” Heath said. “I was so inspired by, and in awe of her ridiculous talent.”

Heath went on to mention that she played the drums for her jazz band for 10 years, but that singing has been her passion since she first heard Ella sing.

Ella’s success didn’t come without a price tag, however. The unfortunate aspect about a life fully lived is that the depths of human despair are just as familiar as the heights of the gods above.

Born on this day in 1917, Fitzgerald was raised in a troubled home in Newport News, Virginia. Shortly after her mother separated from her father, they moved to Yonkers, New York. Trying to make sure that her family could survive, Fitzgerald worked odd



Ella Fitzgerald. Photo from Gettyimages.com

jobs, including a position as a messenger and briefly as a lookout for an underground brothel.

In 1932 her mother died, sending her world spiraling out of control.

Fitzgerald moved in with her aunt. She embraced her rebellious teenage years and skipped school. Eventually, this landed her in a reformation school. By 1934, she was deemed homeless. As the weight of an unforgiving world crumbled around a young girl, she clung to her long-lived aspirations to become a singer.

The Apollo Theater in Harlem was hosting an amateur singing contest. Various prospects filtered in to win the first-place prize of \$25. Little did she know that when she entered the contest, she had stepped into the threshold of what would be her future.

As fortune often has it, Fitzgerald met prominent members of musical history such as Chuck Webb, Benny Goodman, Louis Jordan and the Ink Spots.

Though she sang of times of wine and beauty, her life was riddled by the love and losses of romance. After two marriages and two divorces, she was familiar with both the bright and dark sides of holy matrimony.

In a career that spanned from the early 30’s to the 80’s, Fitzgerald earned her fabled nicknames; “First Lady of Song” and “Queen of Jazz.” She worked with musical figures like Louis Armstrong, Frank Sinatra,

Count Basie and Cole Porter, who only shined the gold of her gilded figure.

At the same time, she was plagued with her self-inflicted insecurities.

Due to criticism of her weight and her health, Fitzgerald was often conflicted by her public image. What she wasn’t able to comprehend is that none of her personal faults influenced how most of the musical world saw her.

Though every musician has gone through their own form of criticism, Ella was one of her harshest critics. According to the New York Times, she was quoted saying, “I thought my singing was pretty much hollering but [Chuck] Webb didn’t.”

Influencing musical icons such as Beyonce, Adele, and Michael Buble, it was her voice that convinced people that true love and happiness can exist in this uncertain world.

She received the National Medal of Arts in 1987 by President Ronald Reagan, as well as the Commander of Arts and Letters award and numerous honorary doctorates from Yale and Dartmouth.

On June 15, 1996, a prominent voice of jazz was silenced.

Even in death her influence on music and life must not be forgotten.

That is the key with most music shops nowadays. In order to make sure that the musical voices of the past never fade to the turning times, the public has shops such as Guestroom Records.

This record shop on the corner of Western and 36th houses many artists, but among the classics of the section labeled “Jazz/Blues,” Ella sits prominently.

Aaron Walton, one of the cashiers at Guestroom records, is typically selling rock and alternative indie music to the public, but records such as Fitzgerald’s always seem to make a comeback.

“There’s a fair amount of Ella Fitzgerald and artists like her being sold every week,” Walton said. “Probably a few a week. The age demographic is typically not what I expect when they come up with the record. Anywhere from mid- 20’s to 40’s; that’s where her music can be found.”

Ella’s timeless songs of romances lost and summertime in Europe are sounds of a generation being lost to time but never lost to our hearts.

Fitzgerald, through her hardships, turmoils and successes, inspires us to keep moving. The voices of the past will forever echo through her music and allow for any and all to become one with her.

To quote the Queen of Jazz herself, “Just don’t give up trying to do what you really want to do. Where there is love and inspiration, I don’t think you can go wrong.”

# Sex offenders have low recidivism rates

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When a person thinks of the term “sex offender,” they probably feel put off. Most people associate violence, risk, and even pedophilia with the status. Those words are easily equated with a bold warning of danger.

In states like Oklahoma, the words “sex offender” are printed in bright red letters on the driver’s license of a habitual or aggravated offender – sex offenders who were charged with rape, incest or sexual assault of a minor.

If you are on the sex offender registry list, your information is public to anyone. In some states, even after you are deceased, your name remains on the list – branded, forever.

When I began this research, I found that I was among the majority of the public who believe something widely accepted as fact, but nowhere near accurate. Jill Levenson, sex crime researcher at Lynn University, found that the average person believes that 75 percent of registered sex offenders will reoffend.

Recidivism rate is the likelihood that an offender will reoffend. A study by the U.S. Department of Justice shows that the recidivism rate for every sex offender released in nearly 15 states for three years was only 3.5 percent, nowhere close to 75 percent. The same numbers have been verified in following studies in states like Maine, South Carolina, Alaska, Iowa, and Delaware, and they all found average rates between 3.5 and 4 percent.

Ninety three percent of all sex crimes are perpetrated by an offender known by the victim prior to the offense, meaning that “stranger danger” isn’t the biggest issue we should concern ourselves with. Having to register as a sex offender and abide by residential restriction laws increases the fear of community members, and alienates a registrant from normal day-to-day life.

Derek Logue is both an activist and a registered sex offender. Since being released from an Alabama State Prison in 2003, Logue has experienced unemployment and homelessness due to the complications that come with being a registered sex offender.

Because of his status on the registry, he is excluded from a number of pro-



Photo illustration by Aaron Cardenas/Pioneer

grams that assist the poor. For example, the “Cincinnati Works” program, designed to help people with criminal records obtain gainful employment within the city, will not accept sex offenders such as Logue into the program.

Logue had found a sleeping room for \$150 a month, but was forced to move in 2006 when the local sheriff’s office claimed that he was too close to a vocational training school for students ages 16 to 24. It took 131 phone calls for him to find a residence. In addition to housing and employment issues, Logue faced harassment both online and in person.

“One local anonymous crime blogger posted a very threatening article about me, which included a picture of my ex-wife,” Logue said. “Other online trolls had posted my mother’s physical address. When my mother passed away, anonymous trolls found my mother’s obituary online and made disgusting comments and even made a mockery

of her name, implying that she was burning in hell. I have experienced the occasional anonymous death threat and 3 a.m. phone call. One person told me in very graphic detail that he would behead me and then sodomize my corpse.”

Being an already extremely introverted individual, it is hard for Logue to muster the desire to participate in many functions of society. According to him, his life revolves around the single issue of being a registrant.

“Although I have suffered throughout my life from major depression, borderline personality disorder, and generalized anxiety, being on the registry exacerbates an already existing problem tenfold,” he said.

Logan said he has contemplated suicide a few times and has even resorted to self-harm.

“I live in a sort of parallel world where the rules that govern my life are different than the rules governing

everyone else’s. Yet, because most sex crimes occur in the home, by someone the victim knows, and by somebody with no prior criminal record, none of these laws make any degree of sense,” said Logue.

Many registrants, like Logue, feel that public registry is a scarlet letter, and that registering each year is a lifelong punishment after already having served their time in prison.

What are the facts?

Supporters of the registry requirements argue that it’s a well deserved consequence of a sexual offense, and that it keeps potential victims out of harm’s way. The facts say otherwise.

In 2004, the Colorado Department of Public Safety tracked over a dozen sex offenders who reoffended, and found that residency restrictions neither prevent sex offenders from reoffending, nor make anyone less likely to be

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# Registrants: Justice system lacks rehabilitative effectiveness

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a potential victim.

In fact, studies in the Journal of Law and Economics have shown that sex offender registry laws can backhandedly push registrants farther to the fringe of society, resulting in poverty and homelessness, which can lead to a higher likelihood of reoffense. A study by J.J. Prescott of the University of Michigan and Johan Rockoff of Columbia University found that making sex offenders register with police may reduce the chance that they will re-offend, but the same research also found that making the registry information available to public can backfire, leading to higher overall rates of sex crimes. An additional study by Amanda Agan, University of Chicago Ph.D. student, found no evidence that sex offender registries are at all effective in increasing public safety.

An online survey by Richard Tewksbury of the University of Louisville collected data from 584 different family members of sex offenders. The study found that employment problems and subsequent financial hardships, like Logue experienced, were the most pressing issues according to family members.

Residential restriction laws add housing crises on top of the other challenges. The result is residential instability, usually pushing offenders to rural areas with less probationary supervision or access to specialized treatment. This gets in the way of effective treatment, which inadvertently causes more recidivism and re-victimization.

Daniel Silverman has experienced ongoing job insecurity and hardship due to his registry status.

"Being on the registry means that anyone can look you up, hassle you, and cause issues. It means that certain jobs are never going to be available to you. And I am not talking about jobs where you work with children. I mean just about any job that is not manual labor or working at Subway," Silverman said.

"Some people on the registry are highly skilled and educated. Despite this, getting a job in their qualified fields is nearly impossible. As a result, people who once could make good money and contribute to society are subjected to lower-skilled, lower-paying jobs. When you were once able to support yourself and, perhaps your family, and now find that nearly impossible, it definitely

adds stress."

Silverman created a novelty photo company a few years ago that works with comic, sci-fi, and other conventions where he creates photos of people, places them in environments, and adds special effects. He had been running the company for almost five years, which grew from barely supporting him to making him nearly \$80,000 in income each year in that time. That all changed when someone began to report to convention owners that he was on the registry.

"It didn't matter that these people knew me. It didn't matter that there had never been an incident of any kind. To them, it was a PR nightmare. In 2016, I lost over \$40,000 in contracts alone. Then this year, someone who runs a

this event made me hate for the first time in a capacity that I had never felt before. Not for the man who raped me, but for the ones who were to protect me and serve justice who did not. My rapist is still out there. He is a threat to society. What will it take, another woman, another attack on me? The pain and suffering I deal with is something I would not wish on anyone."

While Hamilton still struggles with her experience, she believes in forgiveness and second chances. As a rape victim, mother of a registrant, and a friend of someone who committed suicide as a result of false allegations, Hamilton sees suffering from all sides.

"Those who have paid their debt to society should be allowed to live in that society. Registrants are not all the

and without hope, what is the point of trying?" Rozek said.

When it comes to rehabilitation, effective therapy and support are essential. "Those who are actually predatory and harmful need a research-based treatment program. Circles of Support and Accountability is [a group] that is excellent," Rozek said.

Circles of Support and Accountability are volunteer groups supervised by professionals that support registrants as they are reintegrated into society after being incarcerated. In 2005, the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers completed an extensive evaluation of 60 sex offenders who had received intervention from CoSA and 60 who had not. The study results showed that the registrants who had received a circle of support from CoSA had an 83 percent reduction in sexual recidivism and an overall reduction of 71 percent in all types of recidivism in comparison to the matched offenders.

Abandoning the one-size-fits-all approach is the first step towards a better system. The Center for Sex Offender Management, a research group funded by the Department of Justice, identified 20 practices that are most effective when dealing with offenders after their release. These practices include providing more housing options and better treatment programs. Unfortunately, the thousands of sex offender bills passed by legislators in the past decade have been geared toward harsher penalties.

In early 2013, Missouri state lawmakers passed a bill to remove those who committed sex offenses when they were 18 or under from the state registry's website. The bill passed the House 153-0 and the Senate 28-4. According to Missouri News Now, supporters of the bill said that public registries leave a permanent mark on adults who may have been convicted as teenagers for consensual sexual activities with younger juveniles, and that they deserve a second chance outside of the public spotlight.

Governor Jay Nixon vetoed the bill that summer, hindering progress and keeping juvenile offenders publicly marked in Missouri for life.

This has to change, Silverman said. "The current system is one in which the 'price' for the crime can never be paid. A person convicted of a sexual crime simply trades their physical bars for digital ones," Silverman said.

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“The rules that govern my life are different than the rules governing everyone else’s.” - Derek Logue

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geek blog called "Nerd and Tie" wrote an article about my company, warning people that I am a sex offender. This had a cascade effect and frankly, I do not know if my company will survive the year. I am also now afraid to work the conventions that will still have me because I fear people attending will have read the article and someone may attempt to do something to harm me," said Silverman.

Logue and Silverman's experiences are common among registrants, and they pose some urgent questions:

How do we effectively reintegrate registrants back into society?

How can registered citizens like Logue and Silverman lead a stable life?

Lori Hamilton is the executive director of OK Voices, a statewide non-profit organization dedicated to advocating for the civil rights of individuals convicted of sex-related offenses through education, legislation and litigation.

Hamilton has been busy working on a case in the Tenth Circuit regarding the words "sex offender" on registrants' drivers licenses, but took the time to speak about why she is involved with the cause.

Hamilton shared that she was a victim of a violent rape. It is difficult for her to discuss it without breaking into tears, she said.

"I am not one to hate," she said. "But

same but are lumped into one category. I have great compassion for the sufferings of others, perhaps because of the depth of my own sufferings, and having heard the tragic stories the world has never heard. A registrant is an assumed pedophile. I choose to help the people who are trying to function and move beyond the mistakes of their past in a world that makes it impossible to do so. Residency restrictions and difficulty gaining employment impact their rights to pursue happiness," Hamilton said.

A policy approach

Sandy Rozek, communications director for the National Association of Rational Sexual Offense Laws, believes a better system could be developed to prevent pushing registrants further from living a normal life. According to NARSOL's website, the organization envisions "effective, fact-based sexual offense laws and policies which promote public safety, safeguard civil liberties, honor human dignity, and offer holistic prevention, healing, and restoration."

Rozek's ideal system is a private law enforcement registry that a registrant would be removed from completely after years of leading a law abiding, offense free life. More focus on treatment and less on punishment after sentencing would be a positive change, said Rozek.

"Public registration removes hope,



A comedic retelling of Alfred Hitchcock's classic film

# 'The 39 Steps'

(Left) Miranda LoPresti as Pamela Edwards. (Right) Taylor Reich performs as "Clown 1," a role that consists of playing several of the play's characters. Reich is pictured again as another character (bottom left).

(Bottom right) Marshall Stringer and Rachel Dawson.

*Photos by Aaron Cardenas/Pioneer*







(Above) OCCC President Jerry Steward (left) and Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett (right) listen to Thomas Friedman's presentation from the stage. *Victor A. Pozadas/Pioneer* (Below) Jerry Steward and Thomas Friedman. *Aaron Cardenas/Pioneer*

# Thriving in the age of acceleration

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**B**estselling author and three-time Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, Thomas Friedman, visited Oklahoma City Community College on Thursday as part of his national book tour.

Friedman lectured about his book, "Thank You for Being Late: An Optimist's Guide to Thriving in the Age of Accelerations," which was released in December 2016.

OCCC President Jerry Steward welcomed Friedman and thanked him for visiting the college. Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett presented Friedman with a key to the city.

Friedman is a New York Times columnist on foreign affairs, and his books include "The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century" and "From Beirut to Jerusalem."

Covering globalization, climate change, and Moore's Law (the idea that microchips will become smaller and more powerful every two years), the book is a manifesto written for the ever-accelerating world we live in.

The lecture opened with Friedman describing an encounter with a parking attendant who was a regular reader of his New York

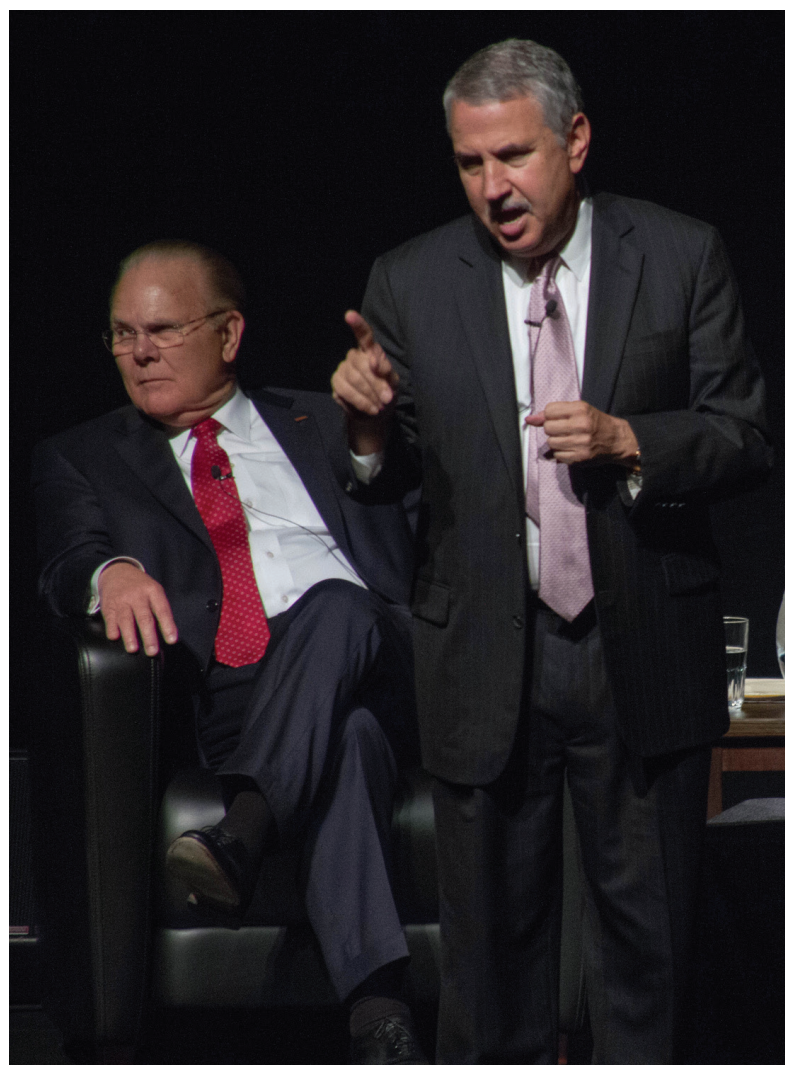
Times columns. Friedman then shared a short guide on how to write columns, citing his goals of heating up his reader's opinions and bringing light to where there wasn't light before.

He went on to describe the tech boom of 2007, which included the historical release of the first iPhone. Throughout his lecture, Friedman emphasized the importance of being a lifelong learner to survive in our fast-changing world.

"We're at a point where technology is now moving and changing faster than the average human being and society can adapt," he said. "The challenge is to learn how to learn faster and adapt better so more of us can live at a higher level of acceleration."

He continued his lecture with a discussion about global warming and climate change, highlighting the pressing need to embrace resilience and adaptation.

Friedman ended on a sharp note, saying that the message of "the golden rule" was more important now than ever. "Everyone needs to be in the grip of values. Good parent to good child, good government to good citizen, good teacher to good student, these things have to remain old and slow. The faster the world gets, the more those old-time values matter more than ever."





# Opioids: Drug abuse on the rise in Oklahoma

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The National Institute on Drug Abuse indicates the increase in opioid drug use is the result of an increase in the number of prescriptions written and dispensed by doctors, greater social acceptability of prescription drug use, and aggressive marketing programs by pharmaceutical companies.

The same study shows that efforts by law enforcement to curb this behavior through the use of a national database to track drug users has created an unintended consequence. As the availability of legal prescriptions has decreased, those addicted to opioid medications are looking for other sources. Heroin is often easier and cheaper to procure than medicine.

On March 27, 2017 the Oklahoma Health Department issued a syphilis outbreak warning. More than 75 people ranging in age from 14 to 47 have been diagnosed with the potentially fatal sexually transmitted disease. The most common risk factor was intravenous drug use.

According to Oklahoma City Community College's annual crime report, between 2013-2015, there were 12 reported cases of drug related crimes on campus.

Oklahoma Attorney General Mike Hunter announced on April 26, that he would lead the formation of a commission to combat the state's opioid crisis.

"From the information and statistics I've seen, we haven't even started to see the worst of it yet," Hunter said during a press conference.

Hunter said that in the last three years, Oklahoma has seen 2,684 opioid related deaths. He stressed that this number may not be an accurate reflection because not all deaths require an autopsy or toxicology screening. Opioid-induced death may resemble a heart attack.

Jane, whose name has been changed for this article due to a pending legal matter, described how opioid addiction damaged her family.

"My aunt used to be a well-respected teacher before her addiction got really bad. She spun down into this rabbit hole where she thought everyone was out to get her. It got really ugly."

As a teenager, Jane watched her cousins suffer physical and mental abuse at the hands of her aunt. Her aunt's addiction, coupled with a borderline personality disorder and paranoia, made it impossible to communicate with her any longer.

Jane's aunt wasn't always like this. It started with a knee injury and legally prescribed medication. Soon she began stealing morphine from her own mother.

"My grandmother couldn't sleep or walk because she was in so much pain," she said.

When Jane's family learned about the stolen medication, they contacted Adult Protective Services to help. The organization stepped in on their behalf and removed Jane's grandmother from the situation.

"It infuriated my aunt that we did this," she said. "To this day she still doesn't talk to us."

Today, Jane works as a health professional. She deals with patients suffering from physical disabilities and injuries. As a result of her personal and professional experiences, she is a proponent of medical marijuana



Rob Kenyon. Aaron Cardenas/Pioneer

in the treatment of chronic pain.

A study from the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) finds that for certain patients suffering from chronic pain, some types of medical marijuana effectively reduce the person's need for opioid painkillers. A second study from JAMA finds that across 13 states that have allowed for the use of doctor-prescribed medical marijuana, the number of opioid related deaths saw a substantial 24.8 percent decline.

On April 17, Governor Mary Fallin signed a bill that reclassifies the definition of marijuana to exclude CBD. CBD is a component extracted from marijuana that has shown to be effective in the treatment of seizures, anxiety, tumors and pain. One stipulation of this new bill is that the CBD substance must be approved by the Federal Drug Administration.

To date, no such substance has been approved by the federal government.

Former state Representative Joe Dorman is also an advocate for medical marijuana reform because of what he has seen in medical studies and from speaking to constituents. He believes that the majority of citizens are ready to pass a bill regulating the use of medical marijuana. However, Dorman also says that there are still those who oppose marijuana reform.

"Law enforcement is worried about how they can police it. The pharmaceutical industry is worried about the loss of revenue. That's when you have to look at the science to see if helps. The science is becoming more developed every day for why we should look at its use under the care of a doctor," he said.

Public Information Officer for the Oklahoma City police Dept. Paco Balderrama disagrees. He says that when it comes to the use of marijuana in treating chronic pain, "The jury is still out. Yes there are a lot of studies that show some medicinal advantages to using marijuana oil extracts, but at the same time you also have some statistics that show the numbers of violent crimes committed by people who are under the influence of marijuana."

Balderrama believes that the public is misinformed on the dangers of opioids and the progression of addiction. He stresses the importance of comprehensive education in fighting the issue.

As a former instructor in the D.A.R.E program,

a national drug awareness initiative aimed at K-12 students, he feels the program has become dated and is ill-equipped to educate students on the dangers of opioid addiction. No replacement program is currently in place, but Balderrama says it is in the early stages of development.

Drug and alcohol counselor Terry Simpson agreed. "From where I'm sitting, it's really hard for me to trust what they are calling research. Marijuana has got some medical benefits but there are other medications out there that do the same thing. They have really only just begun testing marijuana for its benefits."

Simpson says that addiction professionals will only begin considering marijuana as a pain management option when there is consensus in the medical community about its indications.

"Until then we view marijuana as a really rotten thing," he says.

Simpson feels that the best course of treatment for those suffering from addiction is through residential treatment programs like the one he currently works for at St Anthony's Hospital.

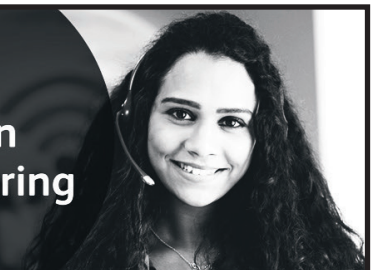
Today, Rob Kenyon is clean with a wife and baby on the way. He looks forward to being a dad for the first time and his new responsibilities. He is serious about his sobriety because he knows that as a dad, he is not the only one affected by it.

Jane has finally begun to find some normality in her life. Recently married, she is working to build a strong foundation for her daughter.

For others the effects of opioids and finding affordable treatment are still a struggle.

If you or a loved one is suffering from a drug or alcohol addiction you can contact Single Point of Entry at St. Anthony's Hospital at 405-272-6216 or 405-713-5980. Oklahoma City Community College also offers two licensed counselors for students and an online list of community drug and alcohol treatment programs.

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# Ending the normalization of sexual abuse

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Many people are aware of how harmful the initial act of rape is. But it is less commonly known just how seemingly inconsequential statements, questions, or jokes have the effect of re-victimizing someone.

Rape culture is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as “a society or environment whose prevailing social attitudes have the effect of normalizing or trivializing sexual assault and abuse.” In my personal experience, examples of this would be joking about rape or victim blaming or shaming instead of questioning the motives of the offender.

When I was 16 years old, I was given some type of drug and raped by a family friend.

I was in and out of consciousness for twelve hours. The bits and pieces I don't remember will forever haunt me.

I am now 29 years-old. I deal with crippling anxiety and battle near-constant depression.

Rape culture is awful everywhere, of course, but my hometown seemed to pride itself in being the best at victim blaming.

You may remember the name Daniel Holtzclaw. He is a former law enforcement officer who was convicted of multiple sex crimes in 2015. My hometown is a small town outside of Enid, his hometown, and he is around my age. Throughout his trial, I could barely get on social media because so many people I once considered friends kept voicing their support of him and saying horrible things about the victims--multiple women I consider braver than myself because they were able to come forward while I remained silent.

Anytime I tried to open up to someone about my situation, I was told what I should have done differently instead of given options for how to move forward. I was asked what I was wearing,



why I was out so late, or why I didn't know better.

I had a friend with a father on the police force. One night I gained enough courage to give him a call. I poured my heart out, after which I told him I wanted to press charges. I wanted to keep it from happening to anyone else. I will never forget what he said before I hung up the phone because I felt I had no more options: “Are you sure you want to ruin a man's life over this?”

The most horrible part of it all is that I am not alone in this. In an interview with Mackenzie Masilon, the Prevention Coordinator for the Oklahoma Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault and also a Rape Advocate for the YWCA, said reactions like this are far too common. They are so common, in fact, that their coalition has an advocate who will accompany victims to the police department or court proceedings “so that they are not bullied or blamed or harassed by any members of the police department.”

Mackenzie also stated that rape culture can continue to make the life of a victim of sexual assault more difficult. She said, “Rape culture is constantly re-traumatizing and re-victimizing the victims, and it reinforces the beliefs and ideologies of individuals in society that say it's okay to blame the victim--that they had it coming or asked for it.”

She also said that we don't treat most victims of other crimes this way. “The blame is always put on the perpetrator, whereas with rape it's the exact opposite.”

The National Sexual Violence Resource Center, or NSVRC, says that “rape is the most underreported crime,” and that 63 percent of sexual assaults are not reported to the police. There are some arguments against rape culture that say victims are asked so many questions about their actions because so many people file false reports. The data, however, does not back up that claim. The NSVRC said that the prevalence of false reporting is between two percent

and 10 percent, which is comparable to the amounts of false reporting of other crimes.

Mackenzie said she believes the reason so many rapes and sexual assaults go unreported has a lot to do with the pervasiveness of rape culture. Because so many rapes are committed by someone who knew the victim, she says the reason an overwhelming number of victims are afraid to come forward is that they don't want to ruin the perpetrator's life. She always reminds the victim that the perpetrator “didn't have that thought process when they did this to you.”

According to the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network, which is the nation's largest anti-sexual violence organization, one out of every six women will be a victim in their lifetime, and one out of every ten rape victims is a male. The chances increase if you are LGBTQ and inflate even more so if you are at the intersection of LGBTQ and being a person of color.

RAINN also mentions that “94 percent of women who are raped experience post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms” following the attack. At least 33 percent of victims contemplate suicide and 13 percent actually attempt suicide. Most victims experience moderate to severe distress and do not need to feel as if their assault isn't worthy of law enforcement's time. They need the support of the community in their time of need.

If you or someone you know has been a victim of rape or sexual assault and is struggling, please call the Oklahoma Safeline at 1-800-522-7233 or the RAINN Hotline at 1-800-656-4673. You can also contact your local YWCA, through which you can receive free counseling. For legal advice or assistance you can contact the Oklahoma Coalition against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault at 405-524-0700 or visit their website, [ocadvsa.org](http://ocadvsa.org) for more information.

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# Gardner named VP for Academic Affairs

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Greg Gardner, Oklahoma City Community College's Acting Vice President of Academic Affairs since May of 2016, has been officially named to the post, college president Jerry Steward said.

Gardner pointed to three values that he used in order to earn his role at OCCC and maintain it: honesty, integrity and hard work.

"There's three people that have made a major impact in my life. The first is my father," he said. "He was my personal best friend and really taught me integrity, goals and how to move forward in business, industry and your work ethic."

Gardner also credits a former Murray State College president who first allowed him to become a college administrator.

Lastly, Dennis Toews, "He probably taught me more about higher education than any other single person that I have had the opportunity to work with," Gardner said. "He really taught me how to think as a college administrator and what's important for us, the difference between needs and wants. We all have things that we want but we always have to focus on what we need to make students successful."

Ultimately that should be at the core of every institution of higher education, student success. "It's not just enough to start college, it's about finishing college. We need and will give the support net that students need to do that," Gardner said. "We want to



Vice President for Academic Affairs, Greg Gardner.  
*Photo provided.*

see more of the students who begin with OCCC to complete OCCC. That's the real life-changing event, when you complete that program of study."

An academic administrator for over fifteen years,

Gardner began his work in education as a professor. He previously served as Dean of Arts and Sciences and later the Vice President of Academic Affairs at Murray State College.

"I enjoy providing opportunity for students to excel," Gardner said. "That's really our mission as administrators, to facilitate the learning environment so students can excel. I get a lot of joy out of that and it's something I look forward to every day."

Facing a state budget crisis, OCCC and its leaders continue efforts to improve education for its students. In the fall, OCCC will start both an anesthesiology program and a Honda Professional Automotive Career Training program. These programs will be provided in an effort to produce productive, work-ready graduates from OCCC.

"We're looking at what is available for students so that they can go out and be contributing members of the workforce in Oklahoma City," Gardner said. "The two curriculums are expected to do just that. The future of Oklahoma City Community College, even in a challenging time, is going to be very positive for the students and the employers of Oklahoma City."

Gardner said he believes OCCC's future is bright.

"I look forward to working with the students, the faculty and the staff at OCCC over the next few years because I think we are positioned for challenging times but we are going to make a difference and we are going to move forward for the students, the staff and the community of Oklahoma City as a whole," he said.

## Students celebrate release of collective literary work

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A celebration of literature, photography and art was hosted over jazz and hors d'oeuvres by the Editors of the Absolute Literary Journal.

Students and faculty gathered in CU 1 and 2 to observe the writings and awards given to the writers featured in the Absolute in 2017.

The Absolute Literary Journal is the oldest publication at Oklahoma City Community College starting in 1972. It is comprised of student essays, poems, fiction, art, and photography.

Student editor Kiana Lysinger said, "We try to take in as many stories as we can and make everything diverse. We try to mix up emotional stories, light hearted stories, and poetry so people can find interesting things to read."

Student editors of the Absolute introduced all the winners of the Absolute 2017 Critic's Choice Awards and handed them each a certificate.

The Critic's Choice Award for Fiction went to Alexis Cummings for her story "Stars," and the Honorable Mention for Fiction Award was awarded to Lydia M. Rucker for "Baking Lessons".

Sabra Estill won the award for Critic's Choice Award for Nonfiction her essay "Both Snakes and Kittens Hiss," and the Honorable Mention for Nonfiction Award went to Christopher Seeds for "Death for Honor".

Critic's Choice Award for Poetry went to the poem "Her Yard is Her Chapel" by David Guest, and the Honorable Mention for Poetry went to the poem "Muddy Water" by Amani Rashaad.

Some of the student writers of the Absolute read their writings to the crowd of students and faculty members. Critic's Choice Award for Nonfiction Sabra Estill read her piece and spoke about how important sacrifice is in our lives.

"I really enjoyed the essays," said Jesse Hosein, mechanical engineering and business major. "They were profound and drew me into the scenarios."

"They presented thoughts and ideas that I had not

considered and I am grateful that I took the time to attend," he said.

"Art is important and it should be celebrated," said Marybeth McCauley, faculty advisor. "We have very talented students here at OCCC."

Student Editor Stephane Shorter said writing a piece for the Absolute is a great experience. Shorter wrote the story "Playing by The Rules" because she thought the musical Hamilton bullied King George III and she wanted to show his character some kind of compassion.

Student Editor Philemon Kurian said "The Absolute is a chance for anyone to get their work published."

"A cool thing about the Absolute is that you do not have to be a student at OCCC to submit pieces," he said.

For any students wanting to submit work to the Absolute, it must be submitted by December 1, 2017. Students can submit their writings by filling out a submission form located on the Absolute Literary Journal page at [occc.edu](http://occc.edu).



CLASSIFIEDS

LAST ISSUE’S SOLUTION

T	R	A	P		C	R	I	C	K		L	O	T	S	
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We are hoping to expand our family through through open, semi-open, or closed adoption. Considering adoption is an amazing act of love for your child and we want to honor your wishes of finding the right adoptive family.

[rachelandnateadopt@gmail.com](mailto:rachelandnateadopt@gmail.com) | [facebook.com/RachelAndNate](https://www.facebook.com/RachelAndNate)  
attorney: 918-599-0100

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### WEEKLY CROSSWORD

**ACROSS**

1. Fall color  
6. Corporate image  
10. Constellation bear  
14. A watery discharge  
15. Frozen  
16. French for "Black"  
17. Stop  
18. Storm  
19. Fecal matter of animals  
20. Subsequently  
22. Brother of Jacob  
23. Abominable Snowman  
24. Incursion  
26. South American country  
30. Religious sister  
31. Barley bristle  
32. Computer symbol  
33. Blah  
35. Jumps  
39. Overshadow  
41. Attack  
43. Look closely  
44. Motherless calf  
46. Not false  
47. Poetic dusk  
49. Delivery vehicle  
50. Metal fastener  
51. Reluctant  
54. Carve in stone  
56. Puts on  
57. Uninhibited  
63. Decorative case  
64. Bobbin  
65. France's longest river  
66. Flippant  
67. By mouth

**DOWN**

1. Killer whale  
2. Cook  
3. Warmth  
4. Ploy  
5. Manicurist's board  
6. Tied together  
7. Egg-shaped instrument  
8. Neuter  
9. Black Sea port  
10. Beneath  
11. Get out of bed  
12. Egyptian peninsula  
13. Bicker  
21. Meanders  
25. "Wise" birds  
26. Multicolored  
27. Behold, in old Rome  
28. Somersault  
29. College  
34. Frivolity  
36. Emanation  
37. Add  
38. Stair  
40. P P P P  
42. Synchronizes  
45. Overindulge  
48. Brain cell  
51. Highly skilled  
52. Elector  
53. Habituate  
55. Serf  
58. Roman emperor  
59. Gown  
60. Contends  
61. At one time (archaic)  
62. D D D D

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As a Healthcare & Insurance  
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Apply at <http://bit.ly/2ptYo68>

### HELP WANTED

City of The Village  
is accepting applications  
for part time employment  
in the Code Dept.

General maintenance, mowing,  
painting, ability to lift/carry 50+ lbs  
is required.

Valid Okla. Drivers license,  
drug screening and  
back-ground check required.  
\$9.50 per hr/ 20+ hours per week.

Apply online  
at [thevillageok.org/aboutus](http://thevillageok.org/aboutus) or  
The Village City Hall  
2304 Manchester Dr.The  
Village OK. 73120



# OCCC's Got Talent

Students performed at the college's annual talent showcase on April 20. (Above left) Sydney Stout. (Above right) Andi Marie (Right) Kyami Rai. (Bottom left) Supersonic Love Club. (Bottom right) Kristen Rutherford who won the 2017 talent contest. *Photos by Victor A. Pozadas*

