

Play by the rules, or serve the time

The sad spectacle of the Barton County Community College sports program has spilled out across the front page and into the court record, revealing the dark underbelly of college sports.

While cheating surfaces now and then in college athletics — and seems to be particularly rampant in recruiting young athletes — we like to maintain the fiction that our modern-day gladiators are “amateurs.”

While the Barton County case is extreme — seven coaches and the athletic director indicted, the college president out of a job — it’s nothing new.

What’s new — and welcome — is the willingness of federal prosecutors to go to court in a case that must send shivers down the spine of many on-the-edge operators in college locker rooms and athletic offices.

It’s not that we think college sports are bad. We all follow our favorite teams. We go to the occasional game. We like sports.

And college sports can be an avenue to success for kids whose families otherwise might not be able to get them an education. Sports can be wholesome, honorable, entertaining, enlightening, educational. Competition teaches us much about ourselves — and about life.

But one of the things we need to learn in school is to play by the rules. At Barton County, apparently, they made their own.

Junior colleges generally don’t offer full scholarships to their athletes. You’re doing well to get tuition and books.

At the Great Bend college, athletes were hooked up to make-work jobs paid for with federal work-study money. Coaches were accused of fraud and embezzlement for signing false time cards.

They also, allegedly, had helpers take correspondence courses to help sophomores graduate, then mailed falsified transcripts to four-year colleges. That brought mail fraud charges.

Maybe there is nothing new here. In big-time college sports, a coach can be caught cheating by the NCAA one year and get a bigger contract with a more prestigious school the next. Kansas universities have been known to hire some of these win-by-any-means characters.

But sports, like academics, is supposed to be about honor, about winning yes, but winning within the rules.

As in real life, the athlete who leaves the field with honor should be the one we admire, not the guy who cheated at every turn and broke all the rules.

It’s as in business, we admire billionaire Warren Buffett, but not so the late Enron chief Ken Lay.

It’s good to see the feds taking after the nest of crooked coaches at Barton County. We hope their behavior is just an example of a few bad apples, not the tip of an ugly and embarrassing iceberg.

But if it is, we should clean it up.

— Steve Haynes

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- **Governor Kathleen Sebelius**, 300 SW 10th Ave., Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-3232
- **U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774; fax (202) 224-3514
- **U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback**, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521
- **U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran**, 2443 Rayburn HOB, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715; fax (202) 225-5124
- **State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer**, State Capitol Building, Room 262-E, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-7399
- **State Rep. John Faber**, 181 W. Capitol Building, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-7500

Reminders:

Friday is ‘Thumbs Up to...’ day
Share your thoughts with a letter

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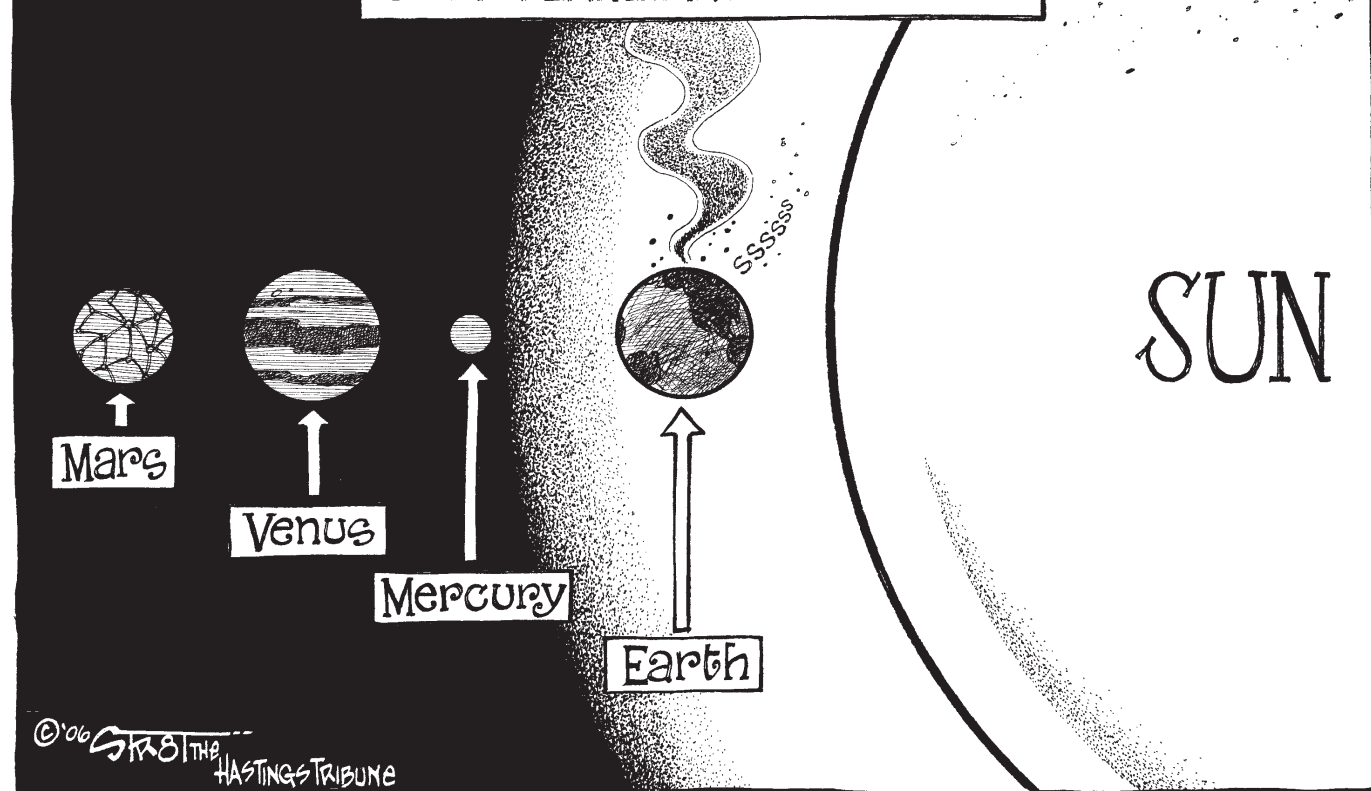
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JULY PLANETARY ALIGNMENT



Not near enough time to complete the list

Music lessons: check. Cheer leading camp: check. Horse show: check. Sunday School: check. Swimming almost every day: check. Do her chores: check.

Taylor’s time with us is almost gone and I am amazed at all the things we have done. But, I realize, too, some of the things we did not accomplish. We haven’t been out to the farm, and her mom really wanted her to do that; we didn’t get to Jim’s sister Mary’s place and see all the baby horses; and we never got out to my brother, Dick and Donna’s to jump on the trampoline and have homemade ice cream with Aunt Donna’s, special hot-fudge topping. Well, we have four days left, there’s still time.

With a county fair this week, though, I’m not sure where we will cram it all in.

They say we become like our parents when we age. It must be true. Anyone who knew my mother probably knows the story about the time she put her purse on top of her car and drove off. Or the time she got into the wrong car. That’s why it bothers me when I do things like that, too.

We are a “connected” family. Jim and

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



I enjoy the Internet. We e-mail friends and family almost every day. But, especially, we like our cell phones. We have our “circle”, and are proud of it. Jim and I have unlimited calling to each other and we probably check in ten times a day.

That’s why I was perturbed when one day last week, I realized I did not have my cell phone with me. Mentally, I back-tracked myself to determine where it might be.

“H-m-m-m-n, I remember taking a box of nails to Jim at his jobsite. I remember opening the trunk. I must have left it in the trunk or on the bumper of the car.”

A call to Jim produced no results. He searched the area where I had been. Nothing. I turned the car inside out. Dumped my purse. Still nothing. Finally, I resigned myself to the fact that it was gone. A stop

by my local cellular store produced a loaner to use until I decided what to do. It didn’t have all my numbers stored in it; it didn’t have that cute little camera; and it didn’t flip up. I still felt lost.

The next day Jim called me at work. “Do you remember getting that box of nails out of the back of my little pickup,” he asked. “Of course, I do,” I answered. “Maybe, you remember laying your phone on the back of the truck, then too,” he so-smugly said.

So, that’s where it was. I breathed a sigh of relief. It’s like one of the kids came home. All is well.

Our daughter, Jennifer, called last night and we about jumped out of our seats because we thought it was “The Call.” We’ve been waiting to hear she has gone to the hospital to have our newest grand-child.

But, no. She just called to say, “Aniston will come out when she’s good and ready.” Perhaps little Aniston did not check the calendar to see that she was supposed to be here by July 22.

Now, I know why expectant fathers pace.

Maybe we need to stop, look and listen

We often hear the phrase “history repeats itself”. And, it would seem the happenings of recent days verify this. One thing that is a given in this world of ours, both now and in the past, is conflict in the Middle East. The sadness is the lack of understanding many in power have of this truism. The senior President Bush withdrew from Kuwait earlier than some military personnel would have liked, but he knew the importance and value of maintaining a certain balance of power in the region. Apparently, his son, George W., the current president, is unfamiliar with this and with pursuing his “war on terror” has opened a “can of worms”.

No, I’m not blaming the current status of Israel and Hezbollah on our president, but I do believe our actions of ignoring the U.N. and their proposals with regard to Iraq put us in a weakened position of promoting diplomacy for Israel. Asking Israel to maintain the infra-structure of

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



Lebanon while bombing Hezbollah will be listened to as much as we listened to any of those countries and the U.N. when we were asked to use diplomacy and patience before waging war on Iraq.

Along with this comes the recent missile launchings by Kim Jong Il of North Korea. And now we are basically ignoring this madman. One doesn’t ignore a madman. Just ask police departments around the country when they are pursuing a possible serial killer. Am I advocating an attack on North Korea? Of course not, but he demands being heard and we

would be well advised to keep his name on the top of our enemy list or perhaps Bush would prefer to wait until he attacks U.S. territory so he can launch another war.

And then along with all of this we have the far right wing fundamentalists waving their “end of the world” banners. Anything to get attention and money and control. They certainly don’t want to miss an opportunity to use scare tactics.

What we hope for now is that “history (will) repeats itself” and emotions and war will cease as we try to understand each other better. Empathy, self-restraint and perseverance are the necessary components we now must exhibit. These do not come easy, but they are our only hope in a world of nuclear weapons, power mongers and extremists on all sides. The problems facing our country and world at this moment are potential extinction level events and we would do well to listen.

FROM THE MAILBAG:

Let’s make sure on Aug. 1 that a majority decides

To the Editor,
July 4 we celebrated another year in this great country, The United States of America. We have friends and relatives fighting in battles around the world to keep our freedom. We all know our freedom comes at a cost. A major freedom we have that too few citizens exercise is our right to vote.

August 1 is the primary election. It comes during a busy time of county fairs and family vacations. Some believe that the primary is not as important as the general election in November.

There are several positions for which the primary will determine the candidate on the ballot in November. The Republican candidate for the Kansas State Board of Education District 5 will be determined by the primary election.

Connie Morris is running for reelection. During her term she has been the center of controversy and held positions that most voters do not agree with based on news articles and editorials over the years. Sally Cauble is a moderate Republican

running for this position, who believes in teaching all students as the law requires and will listen to content experts when reviewing content area state standards. Republican voters have an important decision to make in this primary election.

Voting in the primary is easy. A registered voter has three ways to vote: 1) He or she can go to the assigned voting place between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. on Aug. 1. 2) He or she can go to the county clerk’s office in the courthouse during business hours now through July 31. 3) He or she can request a mail ballot from the county clerk’s office and mail the completed ballot by Aug. 1.

The direction of public education as guided by the State Board of Education will be affected by primary elections as half the seats on this board are up for election.

The elected candidates do not represent the majority when they are elected by less than 50 percent of the registered voters. We allow that to happen when registered voters do not take the time and effort to

vote.
Let’s honor our soldiers by getting out to vote in the primary now and in the general election in November. Let’s truly elect candidates with a majority vote of the registered voters.

Bernadine Samson

Ludell

‘Save the State Street Trees’ cry continues

To the Editor,
The letter from Harriett Gill printed in the July 18 edition was well researched and explains how I and many others feel about the removal of the downtown State Street trees. I hope every citizen will express their desire to preserve the trees and planters. Beautification always takes extra time, but is well worth the effort.

Sincerely,

Norma Browne
Norton