

Time to dismiss the American Idol judges

The time has come. Well really, the time has come and gone but the distraction to the American Idol television program continues. The distraction, in this case, involves the judges.

Simon Cowell, Paula Abdul and Randy Jackson have outlived their purpose. They look like unruly kids acting up while the teacher isn't looking. Wednesday night's show was an insult, not only to the 10 finalists, but also to the viewing audience, not to mention those in attendance.

It's OK to criticize, but the judges have gone beyond that. They are demeaning some of the contestants. And at one point in Wednesday's show, Simon used his pencil to sketch a mustache on Paula's face. Now if that isn't kid stuff, what is? And we are to take their decisions seriously?

I don't know off hand the name of the fourth judge, but she at least comes across as credible. Her comments have substance, something lacking in the other three.

When a contestant's clothing outweighs the talent being offered, then something is seriously wrong. And whatever Paula and Simon's gripe is about one another should be kept off stage. And Randy has gotten stale with his comments, projecting a sort of "I wish this was over" attitude.

Yes, I can turn the channel if I don't like what I am watching, but I am watching the performers on stage and doing my own judging. And rarely — very rarely — do I agree with the aforementioned.

I hope if there is another American Idol season, there is a big change in judges. That's what's lacking and I think the show's producers know why the show's popularity and viewership has dwindled.

Ouch! The New York Times and like newspapers got put in their place at this week's presidential news conference. President Obama decided to go elsewhere for questions and some of the big print reporters were shocked that they weren't called on. I was especially pleased when the president recognized a reporter for The Stars and Stripes, a military-oriented newspaper that I enjoyed reading when I was in uniform.

And while on the topic of communication, a discussion I found myself in a few weeks ago centered around the negative attitude that seems to prevail in our country, and has been going on for quite a spell. I think if we give it a lot of thought we will come up with one common answer: the birth of cable television networks! They are either slanted toward the Republican cause or the Democratic cause. And they are

Let's Chat

Tom Dreiling



constantly extracting the negatives instead of looking for the positives.

I quit watching a lot of what FOX, MSNBC, and CNN offer. Their analysts know it all. Example: After the president's news conference, the channel I was watching said, in essence, that they will now bring forth the best political team on television to tell us what we just watched. What an insult!

Also, I hear that some newspapers might be looking to Washington for some of that bailout money. Forget it! The day newspapers start accepting handouts from Washington is the day Freedom of the Press dies. We're smarter than that...anyway I hope we are.

A little girl was diligently pounding away on her grandfather's word processor. She told him she was writing a story. "What's it about?" he asked. "I don't know," she said. "I can't read."

Won't be long and we'll be observing Easter Sunday, like on April 12. Of course you know I am going to ask, "Where has the time gone?" They say the older you get the faster time flies by. Do you ever wonder if we'll ever pass up time? Also, give this some thought: In just two days from now, tomorrow will be yesterday.

I hope you all enjoy the Working Women '09 special section in today's paper. Nice photos and feature stories of some of the working women in our county. And of course the section would not have been possible without the advertising support of 50 businesses. Enjoy. And if you need an extra copy or two, we have a couple hundred extras on hand.

I just couldn't pass up the following story: The fourth grade teacher asked her students to write down a sentence about a public servant. One little boy submitted the following: "The fireman came down the ladder pregnant." The teacher took the little boy aside to correct him. "Surely you know what pregnant means, right?" she asked. "I sure do," the boy said, "it means carrying a child."

Have a good evening! And I am at a loss to tie that story into attending the church of your choice this weekend.

Huh?! I just did!

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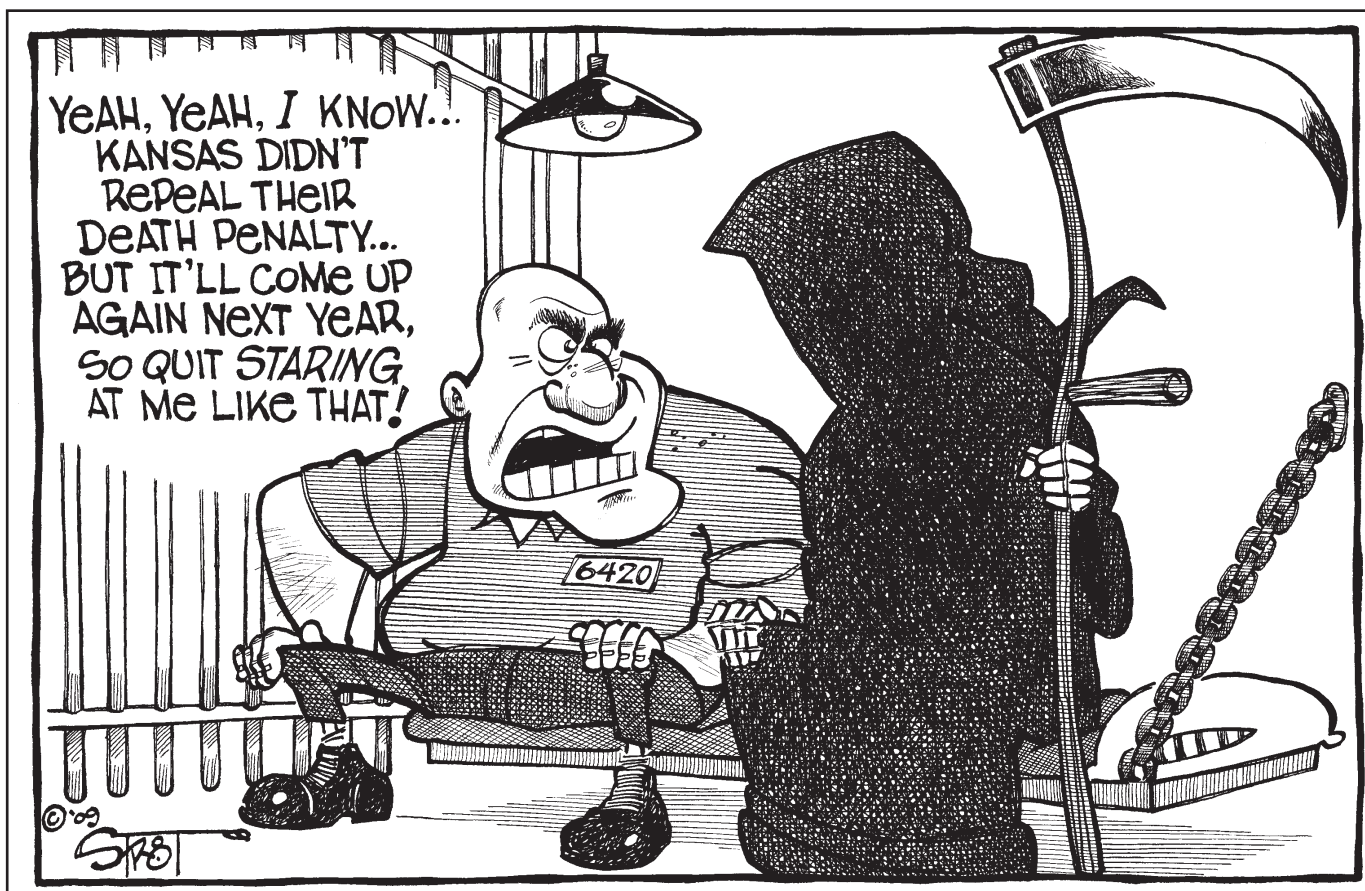
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Gifts of recovery are many

Where There's Hope

Carla Moore

I have been pondering the gifts of recovery recently. For as damaging as the disease of addiction can be to individuals, families and communities, recovery can heal the wounds and build stronger relationships in the process. I don't mean to say that and give the impression that all one has to do is quit drinking/drugging and everything will be wonderful. Nothing could be further from the truth. Many of us, in our active addictions, have slowly and meticulously damaged some of the closest relationships we have had in our lives.

One of my relationships that needed to begin the healing process was the one with my mother. We are a lot alike. That used to bother me — I didn't want to be what I deemed "dull". She was responsible, didn't drink, didn't swear and loved my father throughout their 65 year marriage and was always there for her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She also loved me throughout the 18 years that I was active in my active addiction. She had many sleepless nights and tears, a lot of fear that she would be awakened for that midnight visit from the city police or state patrol saying her daughter was dead and most painfully, rejection from me. And yet she continued to love me

and want the best for me.

My recovery began in September 1995. I began making amends to my mother by my actions — not showing up drunk or wired, attending meetings and taking care of the day-to-day responsibilities that most normal people do. It took about nine months before I was ready to make face-to-face amends to my parents. It was tearful but cleansing. Probably the most difficult part of the process was listening to my mother share with me what it was like to be the mother of an active addict. I wanted to tell her that I knew — thank goodness my Higher Power suggested I just "shut up and listen". I didn't know then what it was like but I would soon learn by going through addiction with my daughter. Knowing that my mother could go through the experience and learn and grow helped me through my own experience as a mother of an addict.

I continue to be amazed by my mother as I look back at my life with her

and what she has shared with me about her life growing up. She lived through the depression, went to college long before that was something that women did and then moved away from home to work. She met my father on an Air Force base and then spent the next 30 years following him from base to base, raising a family, being both mother and father at times without much complaining. It had to be difficult.

My mother was a trailblazer of sorts. She didn't believe that a person's sex made them more capable of doing a job, smarter or worth more money. She taught me to work hard when I was working for others, be early and give 100 percent. She also gave that same attention to my sister and me when she decided to step out of the workforce to become a full-time wife and mother. She continues to cheer us on in our chosen fields, even though sometimes it leads us to jobs hours from home for years at a time.

Today, I am thankful for the mother the Universe chose for me. I may not be the best daughter but I have been given the best mother. I am thankful recovery taught me to look for the everyday blessings we have a tendency to ignore. (moore@valleyhope.com. Namaste)

Things winding down at Topeka

Senate Doings

Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer



After next week, April 4, there will be very little legislation to pass or hold over until next year. The Senate passed a version of a mega-appropriation bill that was similar to the House version. The Senate was unable to pass or match the House's version addressing the below market wage problem. I was pleased that Senator Mark Taddigan, R-Clifton, was able to restore the \$355,000 to the state's pregnancy maintenance program that assists women in securing prenatal care.

This program was named after the late Senator Clark and was to be used statewide to provide women facing crisis pregnancies with a wide array of support services, including counseling or alternatives to abortion. More than half of the pregnant women served live at or below the federal poverty level, and because of this program, there are children alive today who otherwise would have been victims of abortion. In addition to that, supporting services that help prevent premature delivery and low birth weight, which cost the state millions through Medicaid, offers a good return for the state and its investment.

Senator Tim Huelskamp, R-Fowler, was also able to amend the mega-appropriation bill to make sure that Planned Parenthood and similar organizations which provide abortion services don't get any state or federal money in Kansas. I am proud to be a part of the coalition to get these two amendments added to the mega-appropriation bill.

The Small Home Owned Carnival exemption should be on the way for the governor's signature after the Senate concurs with the House position. I am disappointed that it took so long to pass this exemption, keeping everyone in suspense. The Labor Department had a lot of concerns and we just needed to work through those problems. Needless to say, Topeka now has a better under-

standing of the importance of Small Home Owned Carnivals!

House Bill 2134, In God We Trust license plates, is in a conference committee and should not have too many problems reaching an agreement. I have 2,000 signatures on my desk wanting one of these tags. Carmen Alldritt, Director of Vehicles, told me that with the governor's signature on the bill, beginning July 1, 2009 people would be able to place orders for these tags at their county treasurer's office. I would like to thank Francis and Geri Landry and John Bremenkamp for their patience and support while the bill was being worked.

This is no doubt one of the most popular tags that the Legislature has ever signed off on.

I appreciate the many contacts from home these past two weeks. Once again the session has flown by. After April 3, all that will be left is the Veto Session that should last from three to 12 days. As usual, I hope for a short closure.

Take care and God Bless!
(Sen. Ostmeyer represents the 40th District.)

To... New Age Industrial, for the design and creation of the new soccer goals for the U6 Division. (e-mail)

To... the Norton County Arts Council, for bringing the Free Staters to town. What a wonderful evening - both musically and educationally. (e-mail)

To... the community of Lenora, what a positive story on page 1 of Tuesday's Telegram. (called in)

To... Kathleen Schemper, on your "60th Birthday!" Enjoy the celebration. (e-mail)

To... Megan Menagh, for your continued interest in the triathlon in Tallahassee, Florida, sparked by the deteriorating health of one of your favorite professors. (e-mail/classmates)

(To render a salute, please e-mail tom.d@nwkans.com, call 877-3361 or 877-6908, fax 877-3732, write 215 S. Kansas Ave. 67654 or drop by the office. Thanks for your continuing input. - td)

