

Opinion



Other Viewpoints

'Junior' colleges vital link in system

Eighteen community colleges may be more than Kansas needs, but in some parts of the state, they provide a vital link to the higher education system.

They also face some problems that state universities don't have, and that the state's public schools should try to address.

According to a report in *The Garden City Telegram*, leaders of three community colleges in Garden City, Dodge City and Liberal met last week to talk about how education could be improved by more collaboration, both among themselves and with both public schools and state universities.

First, let's applaud the fact that these three community colleges are having this conversation. The schools serve much of the southwest quarter of the state, an area that doesn't include a state university or four-year college. As the state budget tightens, the leaders of these schools see the need to better coordinate their services and eliminate duplication.

They also see the need to help students transition from high school graduation to university degrees....

A trustee of Garden City Community College referred to the "huge remediation burden" faced by the school. Figures the school received last month, he said, showed that more than 58 percent of its students were placed in at least one developmental class because they lacked the skills to succeed in a regular college class. ...

The college leaders said they were making an effort to communicate with area students as early as the eighth grade about college preparedness. Janie Perkins, a member of the Kansas Board of Regents from Garden City, attended the meeting. She indicated the regents also are working on the problem. Clearly, the state Board of Education also should be concerned and involved.

Community college leaders at the meeting said they weren't opposed to serving a remedial role, but providing those classes adds to the financial burden facing those schools and perhaps many other community colleges across the state.

Community colleges provide an important link to higher education but only if high school graduates are prepared to take advantage of it. It appears something is amiss in the state's education chain.

— *The Lawrence Journal-World*, via *The Associated Press*

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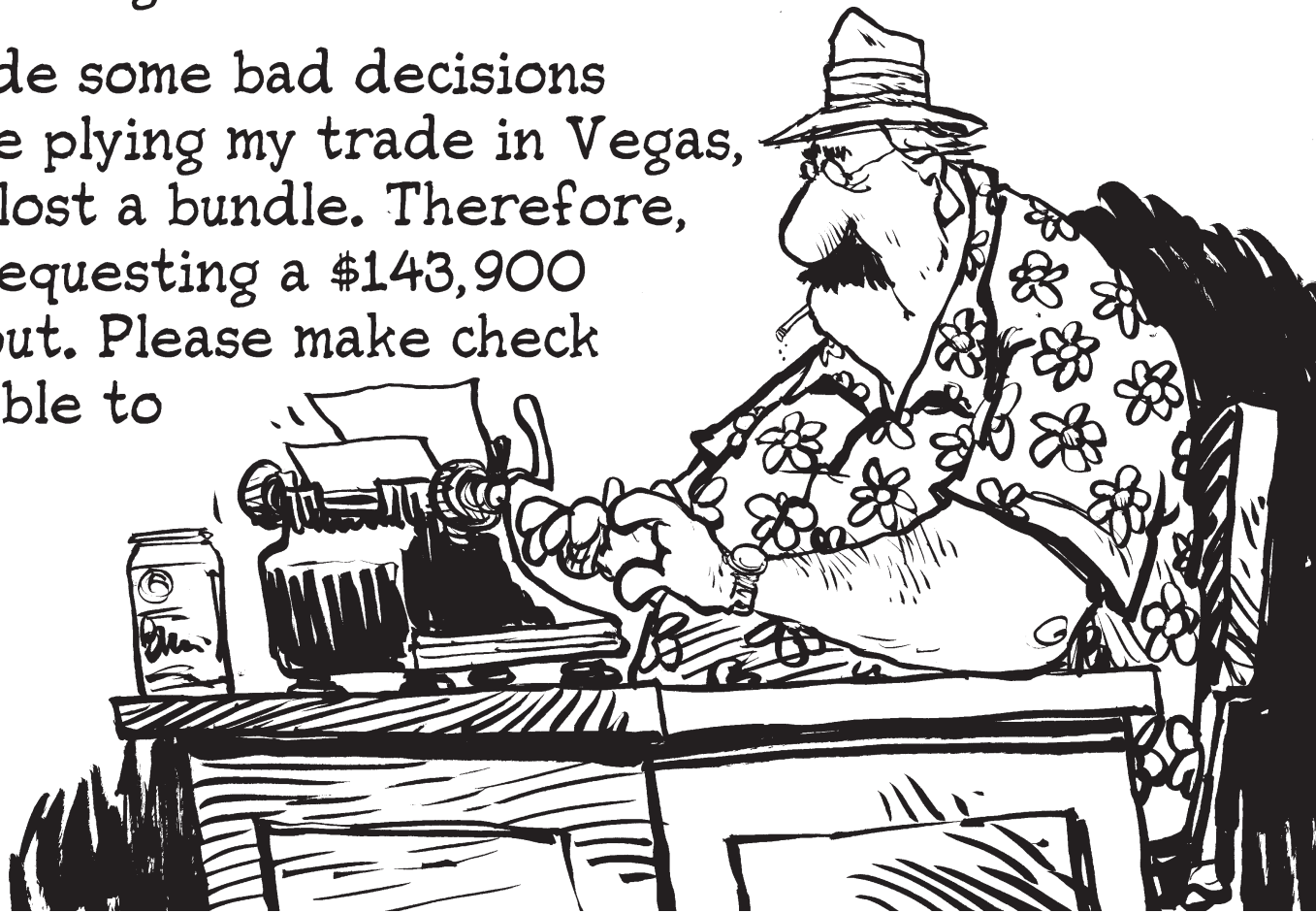
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RICHMOND TIMES-DISPATCH 11/08 BRACKINS

Sports a part of reporting experience

I'm not much of a sports fanatic. For those who haven't picked up on this yet from reading my weekly column, let me just clarify that I'm not a fan of sports.

I don't have a favorite football team. I don't quite understand the language of "stats." And I have never played for a team sport, unless tennis counts. But tennis was initially appealing to me only because the girls got to wear dresses.

So when my friend asked if I wanted a ticket to watch the Portland Trail Blazers, which I learned is an NBA team, you'd think that I would decline. But for some reason, it sounded like a fun idea.

Though I'm not a true Oregonian, I felt that having this basketball experience was a duty I needed to fulfill as a new resident. Plus, I find it absolutely amusing to watch this group of people known as sports fans interact with each other and the team that's playing.

So, on a Wednesday night, we loaded onto the Max (an above-ground "subway" system) and headed to downtown Portland along with about 12,000 other Oregonians. We arrived at the arena and made our journey up to the nose-bleed section. As humble college students, we had to be content with what \$15 tickets could give us.

As I watched the first quarter unravel, I remembered the first time I was given a sports story assignment for my college newspaper in Tennessee. After so many years of being able to avoid every sports story, my editor that year found out that my journalism experience was



Michelle Myers

• A Moment with Michelle

lacking. So I was assigned to report on the upcoming men's basketball game.

Though I informed him that he must be mistaken, he thought otherwise. He said something about me needing to be a seasoned and well-rounded journalist. After a couple of deep sighs, I accepted the assignment (not that I had a choice in the first place) and made plans to report on the next men's basketball game.

This may come as a surprise, but I was actually a very active basketball attendee. I especially enjoyed watching our Lady Lions play, as they averaged 100 points throughout the season. They were disciplined, aggressive and undefeated.

It was thrilling to watch the other team battle to their limit, trying to undo the Ladies' undefeated streak. I was even friends with a few of the players, which made it even more enjoyable to watch.

I got used to cheering when our team got the ball and made a basket. I clapped at the right times and booed with the best of them. I admit, after the first half, I would get distracted with talking to the person next to me, and soon the game received only a few glances from me un-

til the last minute.

But reporting on a game was a completely different story — literally. This time I had to pay attention to players and what they did, while keeping track of the score and how it corresponded with the clock that clicked off the seconds. Highlights of the game and the players involved had to be noted along with a rough idea of the team's strategy.

All of these things I never paid attention to in the past. So I had to humbly ask a friend to help me with this new territory in reporting. I was thankful for my friend's presence, as I obeyed whenever he said, "Umm...you might want to write that down," which I usually replied with, "Write what down? What happened? What did I miss?!"

Going back to the Blazers game, I watched this guy named Brandon Roy dunk the ball and I had to laugh to myself as I thought back to how stressful it was to write that sports story.

Simply attending the game was a nice break from my hectic schedule, as I got to spend time with friends who make me laugh, even though it was usually due to my ignorance of NBA basketball.

I think it's OK that I'm not a sports fanatic. After all, there's no way I'd be able to exchange my dresses for a jersey.

Michelle Myers, a Colby native, is a student at Multnomah University in Portland, Ore., majoring in Bible and journalism. She enjoys the 32 Starbucks found within five miles of her campus.

'Turkey Day' celebrates native species

How did the turkey reserve its place on our traditional Thanksgiving table?

That bird is what the pilgrims, our forefathers, feasted upon according to fact and fable. You've all heard how our ancestors hunted this bird. But here is the real story — the turkey scoop.

Seems our forefathers remembered to take their muskets that day, but forgot to take their ammunition. As the men marched toward the woods, they took along an Indian scout.

You guessed it. To take the scout along was tradition. Besides, the pilgrims needed someone who knew where the turkeys were.

As the story played out, the great white hunters spotted an elk. It was a fine animal for a Thanksgiving feast. It sported a trophy rack, no doubt.

Several hunters took aim, pulled back their triggers and clicked. They soon discovered their muskets had no shot. This made them sick to their stomachs.

What could they do?

What would they have for their Thanksgiving feast?

On what would they sup that night?

One wise, or unwise, lad suggested stewing their shoes. "I'll gobble them up," he said. Well, the rest of the hunting party was in no mood for jokes. One of the hunters threw the lad's musket into the field just as an old Tom turkey — who had heard the gobble — popped up his head.

The critter's fate was sealed. What senses he had were knocked out that day. The turkey was



John Schlageck

• Insights Kansas Farm Bureau

plucked, stuffed and roasted.

In exchange for his silence, the scout was invited to eat while the hunters boasted and embellished the story about the day's hunt.

They truthfully said, "We didn't fire a shot."

Those early-day hunters had no need for ammunition. That's why today, turkeys are raised on farms. To shoot them would break with tradition.

On a more historical note, Thanksgiving, or Thanksgiving Day, is a traditional North American holiday which is a form of harvest festival. Although this feast is considered by many to be the very first Thanksgiving celebration, it was actually in keeping with a long tradition of celebrating the harvest and giving thanks for a successful bounty of crops.

The date and location of the first Thanksgiving celebration are a topic of discussion, though the earliest attested was on Sept. 8, 1565 in what is now St. Augustine, Fla. Despite research to the contrary, the traditional "first Thanksgiving" is venerated as having occurred at the site of Plymouth Plantation, in 1621.

What foods topped the table at the first har-

vest feast?

Historians aren't completely certain about the full bounty, but it's safe to say the pilgrims weren't gobbling up pumpkin pie or playing with their mashed potatoes. It's a relatively safe bet that the only two items on the menu for sure were venison and wild fowl.

Today, Thanksgiving is celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November in the United States. Thanksgiving dinner is done in the evening, usually as a gathering of friends and/or family. At this time, you say all your thanks and wishes.

In our country, certain kinds of food are traditionally served at Thanksgiving meals. First and foremost, baked or roasted turkey is usually the featured item on any Thanksgiving feast table, so much so that Thanksgiving is sometimes referred to as "Turkey Day". Stuffing, mashed potatoes with gravy, sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, other fall vegetables, and pumpkin pie are commonly associated with Thanksgiving dinner.

All of these primary dishes are actually native to the Americas or were introduced as a new food source to the Europeans when they arrived.

Have a Happy Thanksgiving, and don't forget to count your blessings.

John Schlageck of the Kansas Farm Bureau is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. He grew up on a diversified farm in northwestern Kansas, and his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

