



## Other Viewpoints

### Story of boxer offers life lessons

Victor Ortiz could have turned out like so many troubled youngsters who grow up without a sense of direction. Abandoned by their parents at a young age, Ortiz and his siblings ended up in foster care. Ortiz already had gravitated to the sport of boxing (the result of being bullied), and had the good fortune of being mentored by the legendary Bucky Avila at the Garden City Boxing Club, and others along the way. Ortiz also benefited from the attention of a Garden City couple, Sharon and John Ford, local educators who opened their home to a youngster in need of guidance and support. Today, the 24-year-old Ortiz is at the top of his field. Ortiz won the World Boxing Council's welterweight championship in April with a unanimous decision over previously unbeaten Andre Berto. On June 7, the 147-pound boxer known as "Vicious" in the boxing world received a hero's welcome in Garden City, with special recognition by the City Commission and a show of appreciation from fans eager to greet the star athlete. Ortiz also shared plans for a fight that will be the biggest of his career. In September, he'll battle boxing superstar Floyd Mayweather Jr. — an undefeated, six-time world champion — for the welterweight crown. For Ortiz, his meteoric rise to fame and fortune wasn't a surprise. Even as a youngster growing up in Garden City, Ortiz told anyone who would listen that he would one day be a world champion. Many children have big dreams. Ortiz never let his dream slip away. His rise from troubled past to boxing champion is the stuff of movies, and Ortiz acknowledged Tuesday that there has been talk of such a production — one that would be inspirational for a number of reasons. The champ has set an example that should give at-risk youngsters a reason to believe they can achieve great things. His story also should compel those in position to help youngsters in need find their own happy endings. Congratulations to Ortiz and his supporters for a success story that should hit home in Garden City and beyond. — *The Garden City Telegram, via The Associated Press*

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- U.S. Rep. Tim Huelskamp**, 126 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715 or Fax (202) 225-5124. Web site: [huelskamp.house.gov](http://huelskamp.house.gov)
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Colby, Kan. 67701 fax (785) 462-7749

Send news to: [colby.editor@nwkansas.com](mailto:colby.editor@nwkansas.com)

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THE COLBY FREE PRESS (USPS 120-920) is published every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, except the days observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, by NorWest Newspaper, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701.

PERIODICALS POSTAGE paid at Colby, Kan. 67701, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Colby Free Press, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701.

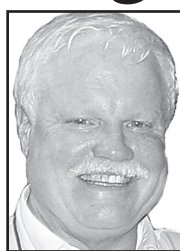
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### Fenway Park gets a l-o-o-o-ng look

I'd never been to the 14th-inning stretch before, but I can tell you, by that time, you really need another stretch. We were high in the bleachers in deep center field, just east (right, looking from home plate) of the fabled Green Monster, the left-field wall at fabled Fenway Park in Boston. Fenway, along with Wrigley Field in Chicago, is the last of the old city ballparks of a century ago. The fabled stadium celebrated its centennial in April, though it's a creature of many parts, built up and around over the decades, and jammed in among stores, bars and shops. But there we were, sitting three or four rows down from the top of the bleachers, where only a chain-link fence kept fans from falling into Lansdowne Street, with its bars and burger joints hard by the park.



**Steve Haynes**

#### • Along the Sappa

And we were sitting there for a good reason. If we'd felt rich, we could have had tickets for the standing-room-only terraces atop the Monster itself, or atop the right-field pavilion, or down in the box seats by first base. But tickets that would cost \$35 in Denver go for \$110 and up in Boston, so we settled for \$55 bleacher seats. Baseball is expensive at Fenway, maybe because the seating is limited, or maybe because the park is so famous. I was beginning to wonder if it was our

got there, but the manager had to drag him away, cussing and screaming. And we'd thought the game was all but over, a routine win for the Sox. Ha! Both teams scored in the 10th, leaving the game tied at 8. It wasn't until after we sang "Take Me Out to the Ballpark" for the second time that the Red Sox broke things open. Right fielder J.D. Drew, after coming in as a pinch hitter in the 10th, and striking out twice, singled to right, driving in the winning run. And just like that, the game was over. By that time, we'd "upgraded" our seats, moving down to the lower 10 rows as others went home so we could actually see the plays. From on high, the ball was pretty tiny. We filed out, happy with 11 innings of baseball and a long, loving look at a piece of history. We've only been to eight or nine of the 30 major league parks, but it's a hobby we could get more involved in, I think. Cynthia was happy, having snared an 18-inch stuff doll of the Red Sox mascot, an, er, green monster named Wally. Next year, maybe the kids can take us to Wrigley, which won't be 100 until 2014. Brad's from Chicago, after all. Steve Haynes is president of Nor'West Newspapers. When he has the time, he'd rather be reading a good book or casting a fly.

### Isn't 500 millirems an awful lot?

In hearings set to establish compensation for exposure to radiation when Pacific nuclear test fallout drifted over Rongelap Island, a lawyer for the residents responded to the measured radiation level: "500 millirems? 500 of anything is an awful lot, isn't it?" Today's widespread confusion over radiation amounts reflects a lack of understanding about how radiation is measured and what normal levels are. But it may take several hundred million nanoseconds to explain.



**John Richard Schrock**

#### • Education Frontlines

Since alpha, beta and gamma rays are not felt by our senses, workers who may be exposed to higher-than-background radiation wear radiation "dosimeters." This include nuclear power-plant workers, doctors using radiotherapy, researchers in labs using radionuclides. Hazmat teams working with radioactive materials and astronauts. Damage to the body can involve a quick acute dose, but is usually related to the total dose received over time. The "rem" (Roentgen Equivalent Man) is a unit of measurement of ionizing radiation that produces the same effect on humans as one roentgen of high-voltage x-rays. It takes a thousand millirems to make one rem. To echo the simple-minded statement about a half-rem (500 millirems) made at Rongelap: "Half of anything isn't much, is it?" A publication from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT Tech Talk Vol.38 No. 18) "Radiation, how much is considered safe for humans?" describes the various dose levels. With little experience with radiation, the federal occupational limit during WWII was 25,000 millirems per year. This was lowered to 15,000 millirems per year in 1950 and 5,000 millirems in 1957. A limit were established for minors of 500 millirems per year. Our average natural background radiation is 300 millirems per year. In Denver, the Mile-High City, natural background is 400 milli-

rem. An airline pilot who spends much time at 35,000 feet gets even more. And "... it is recommended that the exposure of a fetus be limited to no more than about 50 millirems above background levels per month."

That's because radiation has greater potential to damage rapidly growing cells where the DNA is a condensed target. This is the reason radiation poses more danger to rapidly growing cells; mutations caused by radiation can result in cancer. But since cancer cells are more rapidly growing, radiation can be used as a treatment to kill cancerous cells. And it can be used to reduce the number of normal cells when tissue is too active, as in hyperthyroidism. A radioactive drink is used to deliver radioactive iodine, up to 10,000,000 millirems, to the thyroid, but the dose to the rest of the body is low. Radiation beamed at a cancerous tumor can deliver six million millirems to the tumor, but again the whole-body radiation exposure is kept low.

From research in the aftermath of the atomic bombing at Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, "... half of the people died whose entire bodies were exposed to 450,000 millirems of radiation from the atomic bomb. All persons died whose bodies were exposed to 600,000 millirems of radiation." These are acute doses over a short time. Today's safety levels for radiation have been set dramatically lower than levels that cause

radiation sickness. Thus, when the media proclaim levels slightly above the safety threshold be "dangerous," they broadcast their utter lack of understanding of radiation. And they spread unnecessary fear. A final factor is distance. If you move twice as far from a radiation source, you receive one-fourth the dose. If you move five times further away, you receive one-25th the dosage. Exposure drops dramatically with distance from a source. If humans are ever to journey to Mars, the public must have some common sense about radiation levels. We cannot shield astronauts from cosmic rays. NASA's Mars Odyssey spacecraft carried the Mars Radiation Environment Experiment. Data indicate a Mars crew will receive 120 millirems of cosmic radiation each day of their voyage. That is far below lethal levels but well above our conservative "safety levels."

Can we stand a dose of common sense? John Richard Schrock, a professor of biology and department chair at a leading teacher's college, lives in Emporia. He emphasizes that his opinions are strictly his own.



### Mallard Fillmore

#### • Bruce Tinsley

