

commentary

from other pens...

School cheating case is a good reminder

The Hays Daily News on plagiarism:

Some high school students in eastern Kansas practicing the old art of cheating have drawn statewide and even national attention.

The controversy at Piper High School erupted because the school board overruled the teacher who gave the students Fs on a project they allegedly plagiarized. The teacher subsequently resigned. ...

It started in December, when Piper High School teacher Christine Pelton discovered that 28 of her 118 sophomores had swiped sections of their botany projects from the Internet. ...

Pelton is to be commended for taking a stand on cheating and focusing national attention on this issue.

Even a sweeter victory in Pelton's defeat is the revelation that, even as students increasingly have more sophisticated means at their disposal, teachers have some new tricks of their own to catch them.

The Internet offers a place where students can download a research paper on virtually any subject. Getting by on the least effort obviously has evolved from Cliff's Notes. But the Internet also offers teachers tools to detect cheating.

Another positive outcome of this should be a renewed attention on plagiarism specifically. Some Piper parents honestly believed their children did not cheat or did so only unintentionally, perhaps out of some confusion over how much research material should be rewritten to count as original writing. ...

And finally, through the missteps of the Piper School Board, maybe other school board members will understand what it does to a teacher's authority in the classroom when they micromanage their decisions.

The Topeka Capital-Journal on highway patrol pay:

The flashing lights of a Kansas Highway Patrol car may not be the most welcome sight if you are the one being pulled over for speeding, but in an emergency nothing could look better.

In Kansas, the troopers patrol 133,962 miles of highways, enforcing traffic laws, investigating accidents and assisting motorists...

A patrol officer never knows what he will confront when he pulls a car over. Most of the time it's an embarrassed and apologetic motorist, but sometimes it's an angry, confrontational driver who may be armed.

Officers have been killed making routine traffic stops...

Such selfless dedication to duty deserves adequate compensation, which is a matter of dispute at the Statehouse. The troopers say they are underpaid and want a series of raises over the next three years so their pay reflects the professional services they provide...

The state, ducking behind the budget shortfall curtain and some questionable comparisons, says it simply can't afford to pay more right now. For their part, troopers aren't sympathetic ...

... In fact, highway patrol troopers should be the elite law enforcement group in the state, and their pay should reflect that.

An old adage says you get what you pay for. If Kansas fails to address the pay differential for troopers, they may find the officers moving to forces where their services are more highly valued.

where to write

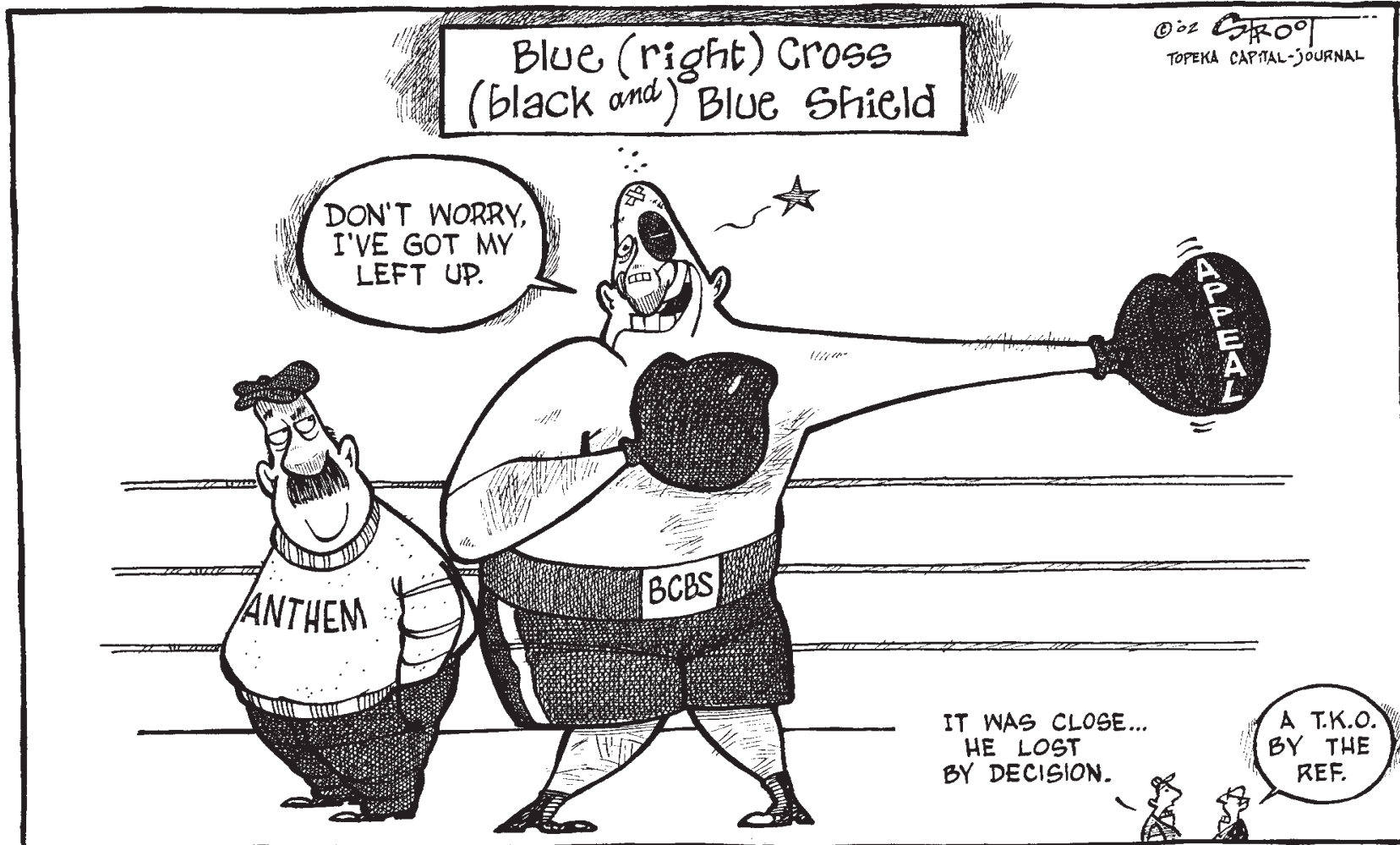
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Is Armageddon something to be feared?

The problems that have been in the news since Sept. 11 have had more than a few people talking about Armageddon.

The Bible refers to the time before Armageddon as "the last days" and describes things that will take place around the world at that time.

Matthew 24: 7 says, "For nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be food shortages and earthquakes in one place after another."

2 Timothy 3:1-3 says, "But know this, that in the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here. For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, self-assuming, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, disloyal, having no natural affection, not open to any agreement, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness."

These scriptures accurately describe events and attitudes that are becoming more common and more destructive. The Bible describes a time after these events when God will destroy the wicked. But does that mean the end of everything?

No! For the Bible says there will be survivors.



sharon corcoran

• use it or lose it

John 3:16 says, "God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life."

Revelation 7:9, 10, 14 says, "I saw, and look! a great crowd, which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, dressed in white robes; and there were palm branches in their hands. And they keep on crying with a loud voice, saying: 'Salvation we owe to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb. These are the ones that come out of the great tribulation.'"

What will happen to those survivors? They have a marvelous future to look forward to.

2 Peter 3:13 says, "But there are new heavens and a new earth that we are awaiting according to his promise, and in these righteousness is to dwell."

How will righteousness come to dwell on the earth? Only God can bring that about.

Daniel 2:44 says, "The God of heaven will set up a kingdom. It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite."

And who better to bring good conditions to the earth and bless mankind? The Bible tells of many instances in which God has given wonderful things to those who worship him, but the scripture at James 1: 17 says it best: "Every good gift and every perfect present is from above, for it comes down from the Father of the celestial lights."

As that scripture says, those gifts come down to us. We do not have to go to heaven to receive God's blessings. And we can have absolute confidence in his promises stated in the Bible for Hebrews 6:18 says, "In order that, through two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to the refuge may have strong encouragement to lay hold on the hope set before us."

Clinton and Enron old friends

I've been told to "get a life," "get over it" and "stop writing about ancient history." I've been told (repeatedly) to go on to something "new," and offered (consistently) the ever-so-helpful suggestion that "the Enron mess" is available for comment.

All this extremely constructive reader-criticism came my way after writing a column about the results of a congressional investigation into an ill-advised exercise in power-flexing known as "Giftgate." This little episode — as only ancient historians steeped in the progression of the Punic Wars could possibly know — was the quintessential Clinton scandal that last year transformed the White House into something resembling a busted pinata, with Bill and Hillary scooping up everything that wasn't nailed down or set in concrete, and filling their moving crates like goodie bags on the way out of town.

There. Now I've done it: mentioning Giftgate again, no doubt triggering a new round of primal screams — sorry — a new round of concerned letters from readers anxious to alert a chap to the futility of brooding over, or, much, much worse, mentioning the Clintonian past. Get a life! Write something new. Write about Enron. (Amazingly, no such missives have suggested the war as an apt subject.)

Writing occasionally about Bill Clinton a life — if "life" here is taken to mean something worth doing, despite the occasional bouts of queasiness. After all, the man was our president, among other things, for two entire terms, and his record — particularly the corrupting self-absorption that weakened a nation in the eyes of its enemies — has colossal repercussions to this day. And why do these letter-writers think discussing the Clinton era should be verboten? Because some precious piece of the present might languish unreported. (Unless you are a Tokyo textbook historian, this urge to relegate the more unpleasant bits of history to a black hole may not seem entirely logical.) "Write



diana west

• commentary

about Enron," they say.

What about writing on Enron and Bill Clinton? There's "ancient history" with a nouvelle twist. Sometime after Big Media concluded that, with Enron having spread the wealth around Democratic as well as Republican circles, the debacle wasn't the Bush administration scandal they had yearned for — in other words, that the scandal was more of a Wall Street story than a Bush White House story — a fascinating article appeared.

"The Clinton administration provided more than \$1 billion in subsidized loans to Enron Corp. projects overseas at a time when Enron was contributing nearly \$2 million to Democratic causes," the Washington Times reported on Feb. 21. "In addition, the administration, which lauded Chairman Kenneth L. Lay as an exemplary 'corporate citizen,' granted about \$200 million worth of insurance against political risks" for Enron projects in political hot zones, including the Gaza Strip. These generous subsidies came courtesy of the Export-Import Bank and the Overseas Private Investment Corp., government agencies that have recently provided the Senate Finance Committee with documentation of their support for global Enron projects, including the notoriously defunct Dabhol power plant in India. (Worth noting is that neither the Reagan administration nor the first Bush administration granted any loans to Enron between 1985 and 1992; the first Bush administration provided insurance for an Enron project in Guatemala in 1992.)

You don't need a Greek lexicon to get the mes-

sage here about the Clinton administration's extremely helpful hand in the rise of Enron. But you might need one — or maybe a secret decoder ring — to unscramble this same story from other news accounts. According to the Media Research Center (<http://www.mediaresearch.org>), a conservative media watchdog group, only one network reporter — NBC's Lisa Myers, on Feb. 25 — has mentioned the Clinton-Enron connection, while the press has been barely more forthcoming.

The New York Times, for instance, presented the \$1.2 billion worth of government loans and insurance as having materialized from two agencies — namely, the Overseas Private Investment Corp. and the Export-Import Bank — and not the administration that set policy for them. Not until the fourth paragraph does the name "Clinton" get attached to this government largesse. The Houston Chronicle buried the Clinton administration's support for Enron even deeper, tagging the subsidies as having come from "Uncle Sam" until the 16th paragraph.

Given this scanty or indecipherable coverage, it's little wonder one of my pen pals told me to nix the Clinton columns ("past history") and turn to the real news of the day — such as the \$1.2 billion in taxpayer-financed loans and insurance Enron received, as the letter-writer put it, from "the Overseas Private Investment Corp." Someone should try to break it very gently that this is a Clinton story, too.

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