

from our viewpoint...

Health privacy act costing us billions

There's not much good about HIPPA, the Health Insurance Portability and Privacy Act, unless you're a bureaucrat or a privacy freak.

It's costing us billions of dollars as the health industry changes everything to meet new federal regulations, but there's little benefit to the average consumer.

And there are some real problems created by this whacked-out law. As usual, when Congress changes things, it's the unintended consequences that come back to haunt us.

Preachers can't find out who they need to visit in the hospital. Newspapers can't get lists of hospital admissions, so friends don't know when people are laid up. Hospitals lose their connection to the community.

One of the more esoteric dangers has been little remarked, though, and that's the threat to the integrity of professional and amateur sports.

It's been the tradition, for many years, for sports teams to make full public disclosure when an athlete is injured. That puts the information out in the open and creates a level playing field for information.

With the new law, though, that's not happening anymore, at least in college and school competition. Many schools are afraid they will run afoul of federal law and are no longer releasing information on injuries.

The University of Kansas, for instance, has never said why quarterback Bill Whittemore missed three games this year. Whittemore went down under an avalanche of purple in the K-State game. All the school would say was that he couldn't play. News accounts referred to "a possible shoulder injury."

That's dangerous. It creates a situation where insider information might become so valuable that gamblers will corrupt sports teams to get it. It's happened before.

While we don't like to admit it, there is a lot of gambling on sports, even though it's illegal in most states. Any time an illegal operation generates a lot of cash, corruption can't be far behind.

It'd be easy to say that we shouldn't concern ourselves with the problems of gamblers, but that's not quite the case. Illegal gambling is run by crooks who'd think nothing of spreading bribes around to gain an edge.

Some might scoff, but gamblers have shown over and over, from the Blacksox scandal to Pete Rose and friends, that the potential for corruption is never far away.

Sports information needs to be run like the stock market: the facts need to be out in the open, and everyone needs to have access to the same set.

Athletes, from high school through the pros, should agree when they join a team that they give up any right to privacy with respect to injuries or illnesses that might affect performance. There's nothing wrong with that.

Joining a team is a voluntary act, and there is no God-given — or constitutional — right to play football.

Players ought to be able to control their own information and waive their privacy rights. But if necessary, Congress should change this law before a sports scandal shows us just how wrong it is.

It'd be folly to wait until after the fact to see what's happening here. — *Steve Haynes*


The Goodland Star-News

(USPS No. 222-460. ISSN 0893-0562)

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Published every Tuesday and Friday except the days observed for New Year's Day and Christmas Day, at 1205 Main Ave., Goodland, Kan. 67735. Periodicals postage paid at Goodland, Kan. 67735; entered at the Goodland, Kan., Post Office under the Act of Congress of March 8, 1878. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Goodland Star-News, 1205 Main Ave., Goodland, Kan. 67735. TELEPHONE: (785) 899-2338. Editorial e-mail: star-news@nwkanssas.com. Advertising questions can be sent to: goodlandads@nwkanssas.com

The Goodland Star-News assumes no liability for mistakes or omissions in advertising or failure to publish beyond the actual cost of the ad. SUBSCRIPTIONS: In Sherman County and adjacent counties: three months, \$20; six months, \$38; 12 months, \$72. Out of area, weekly mailing of two issues: three months, \$30; six months, \$45; 12 months, \$80. Mailed individually each day: 12 months, \$115. (All tax included.)

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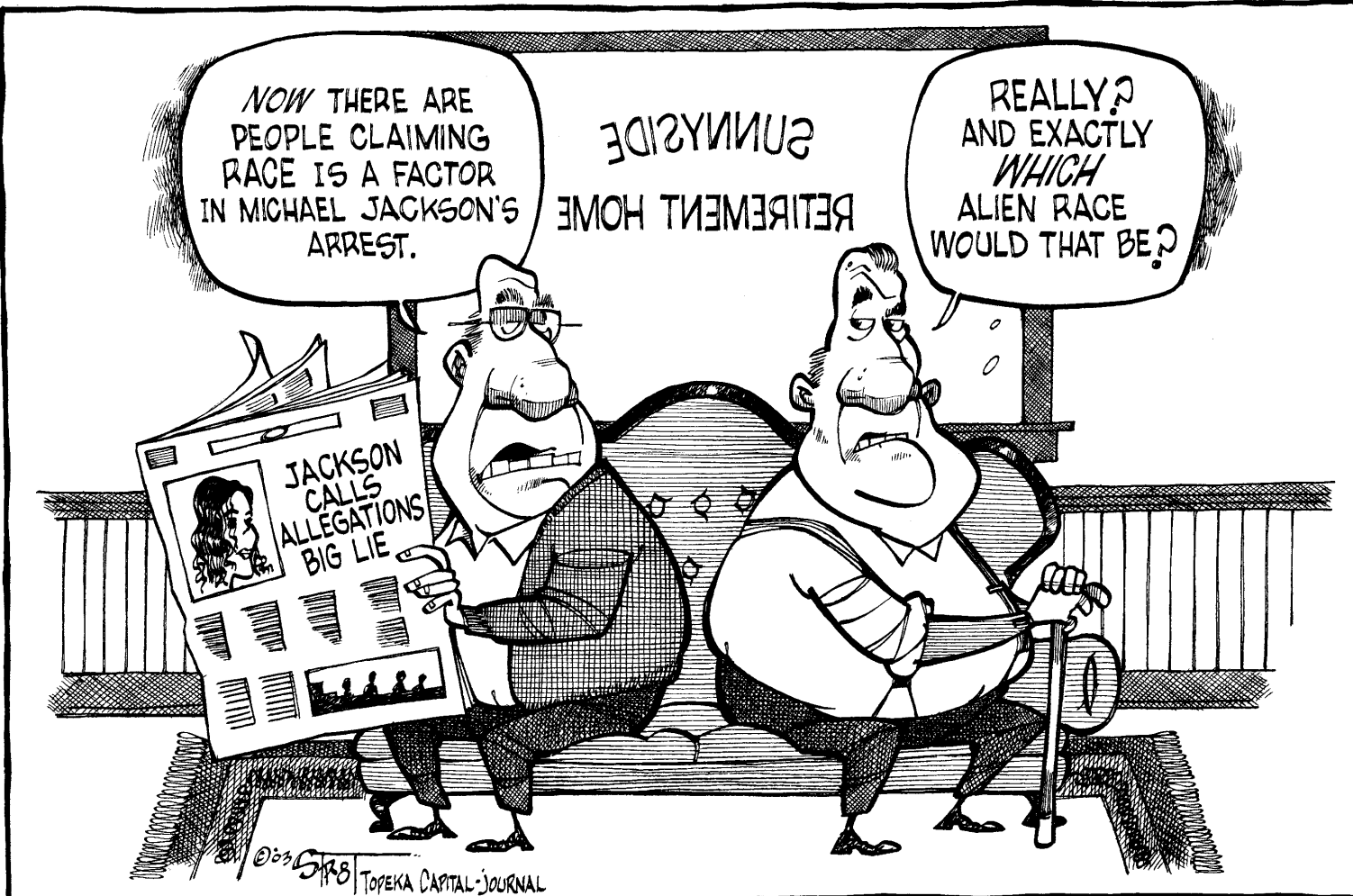
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Time seems to be moving faster and faster

I don't know about you, but time is moving faster and faster and faster.

I guess life is truly like toilet paper. It disappears faster toward the end of the roll.

Time. Have you ever considered it: How it's measured? How much of it we waste? How much of it you have left?

I have wondered what life would be like if we didn't have our memories.

They are almost like little increments of time that have frozen, so we can re-live them. So I guess it's important to enjoy every moment of the present, so that our memories will not only be pleasant, but will be accurate.

Time is one of those nebulous things in life. We know it is a reality, but we have a hard time describing it. We can't touch it, but it touches us.

We can't see it, but it certainly shows on us. Yet even with its being so elusive, we feel its effects.

I talk a lot about being busy, yet I know, truthfully, I have a lot of spare time. Just the other day I was wishing to have back all the time I've



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wasted in the past. I hate to admit: it would probably add years to my life.

As much as I know I need to make the best use of my time, I know also that I don't.

There are times when I just sit. I'm not afraid to do that; I'm not driven to be busy all the time. Hopefully, those quiet times are when I give God the chance to talk to me.

As I grow older, I tolerate peace and quiet better than when I was young. It's okay to NOT turn on the television; it's perfectly acceptable to have no radio or stereo playing.

I sometimes wonder why I have two TVs, four radios, two stereos and a piano.

How much music or noise can a person tolerate simultaneously?

'Day of infamy' deserved screaming headline

Growing up in the newspaper business, I came to know extra special events as red letter days.

The term was used when there would be very large headlines on the front page, and with the ability to run color, that usually meant the headline was in red ink.

Those days were rare, reserved for extremely important events such as the declaration of war, the end of the war or the death of a president. Sometimes the headline would be in black ink, but it would be a screaming headline like the one we ran on Nov. 22, 1963, JFK DEAD.

Sunday brought to mind one of those events — 62 years ago — when the Japanese Imperial Navy, following a brilliantly conceived plan, but a faulty timetable, opened World War II with the attack on Pearl Harbor.

There have been suggestions President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, members of his cabinet and the Joint Chiefs of the armed services actually knew the attack was to take place and delayed notifying the military commanders to enrage the American public into unified action against Japan and Germany.

Like the conspiracy theories surrounding the death of President John F. Kennedy, there are enough pieces to make a case. However, it seems unlikely anyone would deliberately put thousands of troops at risk in such a manner.

There had been repeated warnings about attacks not only at Pearl Harbor, but other American bases in the Pacific, for weeks before the events of Dec. 7, and the bases had been put on alert time and time again.

Had the attack on Pearl Harbor come as Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto had planned — after a message had been delivered to Secretary of State Cordell Hull — it would still have caused the same kind of clamor for action and determination. The fact the message was delayed simply made it worse.

When Yamamoto learned the attack had pre-



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ceded the delivery of the message, he knew there was no way Japan would ever be able to win the war. In his original plan, the attacks on Pearl Harbor, Guam, Wake and other American bases in the western Pacific were designed to give the Japanese a major foothold. If the attack had sunk the American aircraft carriers rather than just the battleships, it may have lengthened the war by years.

The Japanese admiral felt his plan would give his country a measure of immediate advantage, but knew the industrial might of the United States could diminish that advantage given enough time. In his plans, he said the first attacks would give the Japanese time to build up their reserves, and he felt the advantage would give them a year to find a way to reach a peace agreement with the United States.

He knew when the attack came before the official message from the Japanese govern-

ment, there would not be any chance of a peaceful resolution, and that the Americans would fight until there was total surrender.

"I fear all we have done is to awaken a sleeping giant," he is reported to have said when he was told about the mistake. Through the wonderful efforts of WMAU in Washington, I enjoy listening to old time radio programs — through the Internet — such as Fibber McGee and Molly, Gunsmoke, Jack Benny, The Lone Ranger and others as part of a weekly program called "The Big Broadcast." Sunday, the four hours featured programs about Christmas, but included the Jack Benny Show that was broadcast on Dec. 7, 1941, complete with war bulletins. The broadcast included the complete speech of President Roosevelt that was made to a joint session of Congress on the next day when he uttered those famous words, saying the attack would be known as "a day of infamy."

No, I was not alive during World War II, but I am a product of the aftermath as a baby boomer, and as a history buff, it is interesting to look back and wonder if Yamamoto was right that had it not been a "sneak attack," we would not have had the stomach for a long war against Japan.

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