

from our viewpoint...

Chipping away at your online privacy

So, you've just applied for a job at the XYZ Company. During the interview, you are told that, as part of the background check, you are required to give them the passwords to your Facebook and Twitter accounts. Do you?

This is no hypothetical question. Employers around the country are beginning to demand exactly that of existing employees, job applicants and even students. And in the current economy, most are getting away with it.

But just because something isn't illegal doesn't make it moral or ethical. This is just plain wrong. In the same situation, would you give an employer the keys to your house so they could snoop through your drawers and computer? Let them eavesdrop on your personal phone conversations or read your diary?

Most of us would say not only no, but heck no. Looking over your shoulder while you access your own account is no better. Even being asked by an employer to make them a Facebook friend, so someone can monitor your social activities, is no different from being asked to put a microphone in your home.

Some may say that your home is not private, since any number of friends and acquaintances may come and go, but the difference is huge. You invite and control who comes in – it's not arbitrary.

Companies that make such a request of your electronic accounts apparently have no respect for personal privacy or personal freedoms, and are both morally and ethically bankrupt.

Some who have been asked for such access have simply said, "I won't work for a company that would make such a request." But these days, especially if you've been out of work for several months, you may not be able to afford the luxury of refusing.

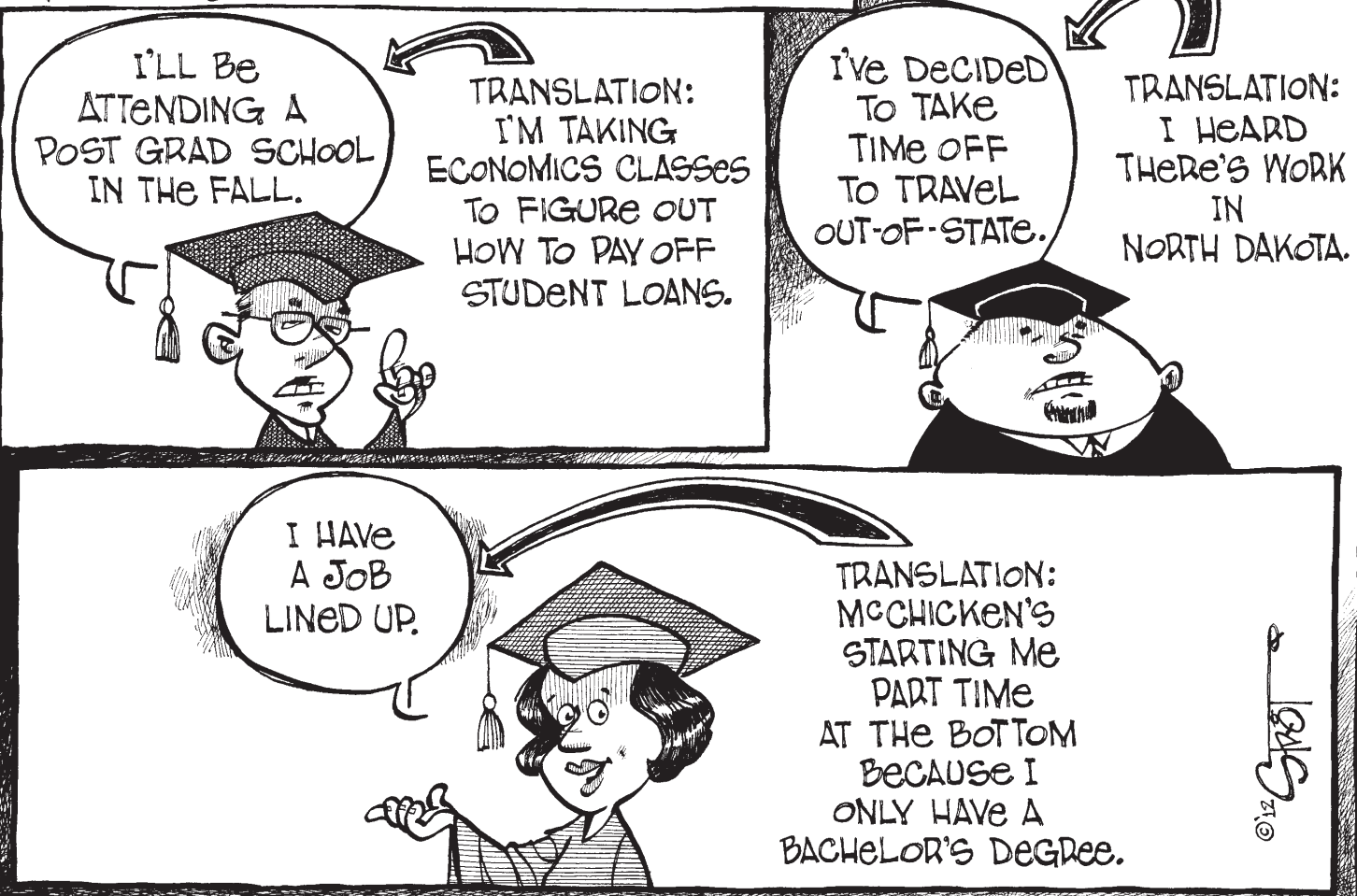
The problem is significant enough that a bill being considered in the New York legislature – the Social Networking Online Protection Act, or SNOAPA (no, I'm not making that up!) – would make it illegal for employers to require social-account access as a condition of employment or application for a job. And it has teeth – a \$10,000 fine per incident. Maryland passed a similar law earlier this year.

Just because it is not illegal – yet – doesn't make it right, which is why Kansas should be at the forefront of the movement and pass its own bill. Don't wait and be the 49th state.

We have little enough personal privacy these days. Let's try to keep what's left.

– Evan Barnum

Speaking Kansas Graduatlese



Summer means good baseball

We went to a baseball game last week. It had all the stuff you could want in a nine-inning game: foul balls bouncing off the stadium, singles, doubles, home runs, foul balls off the roof, double plays, walks, a hit batsman, foul balls off the playground, clutch hits, great plays in the outfield, stupid blunders and foul balls off the parking lot.

We munched hot dogs, cold beer and pop and peanuts from great seats just two rows up from the visitors' dugout.

OK, this was low-A ball. Minor league.

The Augusta Greenjacks were playing the Greenville Drive, and oldest daughter and her husband have season tickets. Since they had missed a couple of earlier games, they were able to get us in on their tickets. We sat a row closer than they usually do, but they said they like their regular seats better because they're a little closer to the center of the action.

As season ticket holders, they each got a free blanket. It was warm at the beginning of the game, nice in the middle and cold at the end. Those blankets weren't very thick, but they were wonderful.

It was "Thirsty Thursday," and beer was



cynthia haynes

• open season

just \$1 a cup, which always pulls in a good crowd.

The biggest crowd, however, stayed mainly in the concession area, mingling, drinking and preparing for a big night at the bars. The stadium was only about half full.

The Greenjackets have the worst batting percentage in the South Atlantic League, according to the Augusta Chronicle, but on Thursday night, the boys were hot and balls were flying everywhere. Some of them even went into the outfield and a few, over the fence.

Mostly, it seemed, we ducked. Foul balls are common in baseball, but these guys fouled off enough to provide balls for all the baseball and T-ball teams Goodland will field this year. Most of the balls went onto the roof and out onto the concourse. However, a few went into the street and one wayward bat flew into the

seats to threaten the spectators.

The man sitting behind us said that at the last homestand, he and a buddy were in line for tickets outside the stadium. A foul ball hit his buddy directly on the top of the head. The poor man had to be taken to the emergency room and put in intensive care after he developed swelling on his brain.

He was fine by Thursday, his buddy said, but he didn't want to go to the game.

The big play of the night was a two-out grand slam home run in the sixth inning by the home team. Going into the bottom of the sixth, the score had been tied at 2.

Augusta sent 10 batters to the plate that inning. One reached base on a throwing error and the next two walked. With the bases loaded, the pitcher hit the next man, forcing in a run and putting Augusta ahead 3-2.

With the bases still loaded, the next batter hit it out of the park for a grand slam. Augusta added two more runs to win 9-2 and we headed home, excited, fed and safe from the wildly flying foul balls.

It was fun, but next time, we hope we'll be watching the game at Coors Field in Denver.

Sad to see great musical acts end

It's always a big let down when a musical act you like exits the stage.

It can happen for many reasons, be it a death, or the band breaking up or a favorite musician pursuing another career, but it's a sad realization that your favorite act isn't going to be cutting records anymore. Don McLean knew it, after all that's what "American Pie" is all about.

What brought it to my mind was the recent death of Adam "MCA" Yauch of the Beastie Boys. I was never a huge fan of the Beastie Boys, but they were on the radio quite a lot when I was in high school, and I've always enjoyed their song, "Sabotage," and the hilarious 1970s cop show parody video they made for it.

However, there have been plenty of bands over the years that I've been sorry to see go like Audioslave or a A Perfect Circle. I seem to find bands far too late in their life-cycle, so there's been quite a few times when I've started listening to numerous bands after they broke up or after they lost a core member. I started listening to Alice in Chains years after the death of singer Layne Stanley, something I only discovered after researching the band on the internet.

The one that really affected me though came about a year ago when I heard that singer Roy Khan had decided to leave Kamelot. Khan, a Norwegian singer whose full name is Roy Khantat, is a classically trained opera singer, and had spent the last 14 years as the frontman for Kamelot, an American symphonic metal band. He is to my mind one of the world's most incredible singers, and Kamelot is one of my all-time favorite bands. Khan has an unparalleled ability to project emotion through his voice. He's also a favorite of mine, because I can sing along with most of songs, although he has a much larger ranger than I do.

So when I heard he was leaving the band due to health issues, it was a depressing moment. Will Kamelot be as great without him? I hope so, because it wasn't only him that made the band great. The rest of the musicians in the band are top notch, and I hope they find a news singer.

Some of you may be asking, what is symphonic metal? Well, it can mean a lot of different things, but in essence it means a metal band – loud, heavy guitars and hard driving drums – with classical music elements, and usually some kind of operatic singer, rather than the "death grunts" of some traditional



kevin bottrell

• simple tricks and nonsense

metal bands. It isn't a style of metal that's prevalent in the United States, and it took me a while to discover it.

I'm sort of strange when it comes to music. I've never really followed what was popular at the time. When I was a kid my parents listened to "oldies" on the radio, so that's what I listened to. My CD case was full of Beatles albums or the soundtrack to Forest Gump, which remains a favorite. I could sing along with The Rolling Stones or Herman's Hermits or Credence Clearwater Revival, while at that time all my friends were listening to Tupac or Nirvana or Britney Spears.

When I got into high school I played in the jazz band and in the salsa band that our percussion instructor put together. So I listened to a lot of Miles Davis, Tito Puente and Arturo Sandoval.

It was only very late in high school that I started listening to "modern" rock bands. I was attracted to sort of dark, heavy sounds, but a lot of metal bands, but I didn't like the kinds who just yelled as loud as they could into the mic. Of course by that time the only thing any suburban white teenager listened to was gangster rap, so I was still "out of touch."

Then I heard a new (at the time) band called Evanescence. They're old hat now, having been overplayed on the radio in the extreme, but when I first heard them I was floored. A

beautiful, clear female voice backed up by heavy distorted guitars. To me it sounded like a match made in heaven. You see I liked heavy metal, but I often couldn't listen to it because the singers had no sense of, well, music. A lot of them pretty much just scream, and for someone with a musical background like me (modest as it is), that just didn't fly.

Once I'd listened to Evanescence so much I could recite their songs from memory, I went looking for similar bands, but in America, there really aren't any. It took me years to learn this, but the female-fronted metal band has actually been a staple of the music scene in Europe for decades. Why it hasn't caught on here, I don't really know. But once I stumbled on bands like Lacuna Coil, Nightwish and Epica, I knew I'd found my music heaven, and they call it symphonic metal. Kamelot was one of the few to have a male lead singer, which made it all the better because I could sing along without having to try and match from a lower octave, something I can do though thanks to my high school band teacher, who insisted we be able to sing any music we played.

I'm always looking for more interesting music. I recently discovered folk metal, an amazing blend of celtic or northern European folk music and metal. There's really and endless amount of metal genres, but I don't like most of them. And it's not just metal either. I find songs I like everywhere, be it bluegrass, 80s hair bands, classical or 60s music. Just another chapter in my eclectic musical tastes that are rarely, if ever, in tune with what's popular.

But one thing is certain, none of these bands or artists will be around forever. The silver lining is that new musicians always step up to take their place.

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