

from our viewpoint...

Barton coach probe exposes dark side

The sad spectacle of the Barton County Community College sports program has spilled out across the front page and into the court record, revealing the dark underbelly of college sports.

While cheating surfaces now and then in college athletics — and seems to be particularly rampant in recruiting young athletes — we like to maintain the fiction that our modern-day gladiators are “amateurs.”

While the Barton County case is extreme — seven coaches and the athletic director indicted, the college president out of a job — it’s nothing new.

What’s new — and welcome — is the willingness of federal prosecutors to go to court in a case that must send shivers down the spine of many on-the-edge operators in college locker rooms and athletic offices.

It’s not that we think college sports are bad. We all follow our favorite teams. We go to the occasional game. We like sports.

And college sports can be an avenue to success for kids whose families otherwise might not be able to get them an education. Sports can be wholesome, honorable, entertaining, enlightening, educational. Competition teaches us much about ourselves — and about life.

But one of the things we need to learn in school is to play by the rules. At Barton County, apparently, they made their own.

Junior colleges generally don’t offer full scholarships to their athletes. You’re doing well to get tuition and books.

At the Great Bend college, athletes were hooked up to make-work jobs paid for with federal work-study money. Coaches were accused of fraud and embezzlement for signing false time cards.

They also, allegedly, had helpers take correspondence courses to help sophomores graduate, then mailed falsified transcripts to four-year colleges. That brought mail fraud charges.

Maybe there is nothing new here. In big-time college sports, a coach can be caught cheating by the NCAA one year and get a bigger contract with a more prestigious school the next. Kansas universities have been known to hire some of these win-by-any-means characters.

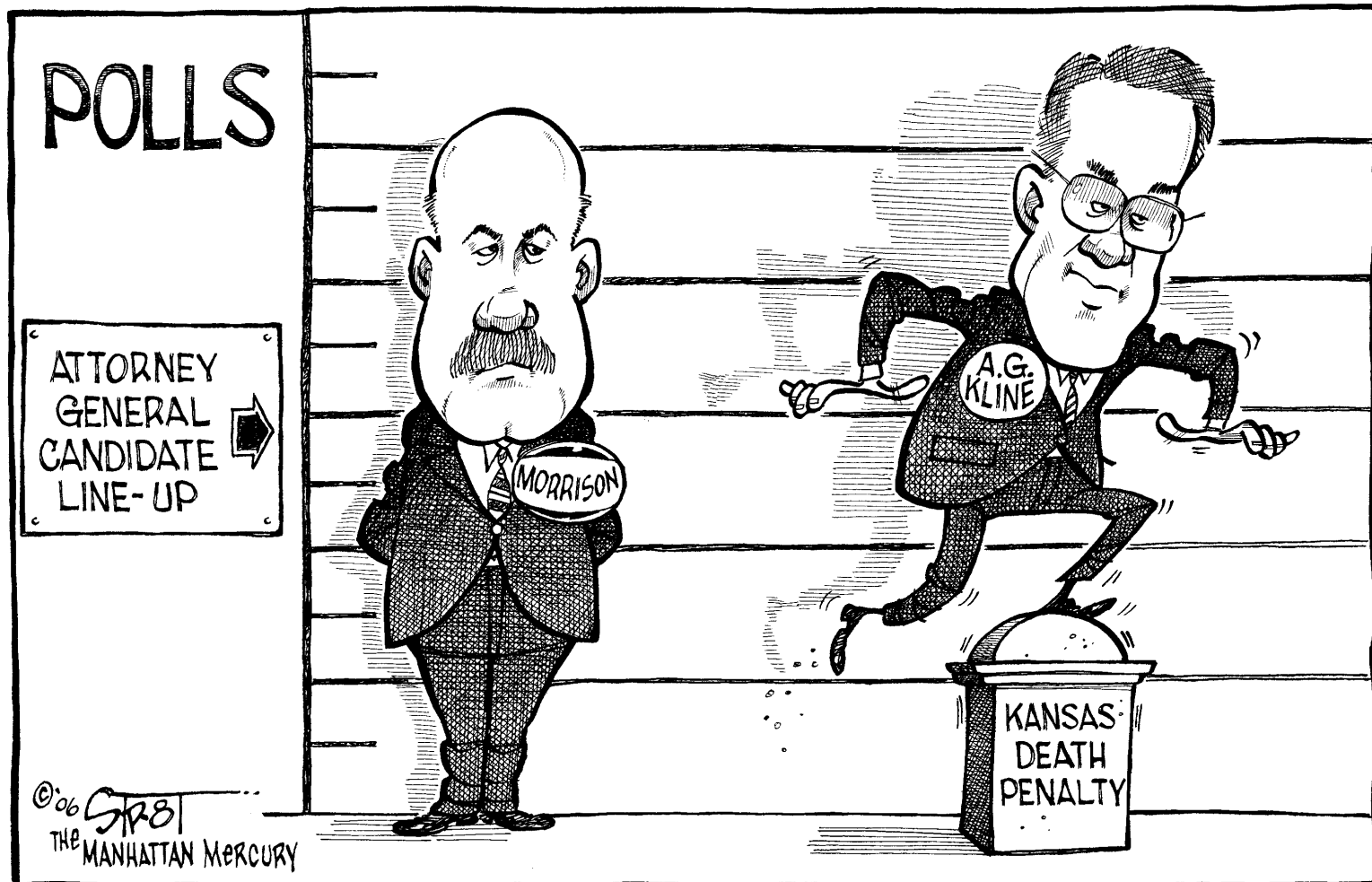
But sports, like academics, is supposed to be about honor, about winning yes, but winning within the rules.

As in real life, the athlete who leaves the field with honor should be the one we admire, not the guy who cheated at every turn and broke all the rules.

It’s as in business, we admire billionaire Warren Buffett, but not so the late Enron chief Ken Lay.

It’s good to see the feds taking after the nest of crooked coaches at Barton County. We hope their behavior is just an example of a few bad apples, not the tip of an ugly and embarrassing iceberg.

But if it is, we should clean it up. — *Steve Haynes*



It’s raining. It’s wonderful.

It’s raining. It’s pouring. It’s wonderful. Unfortunately, I’m on vacation in southern Colorado.

I shouldn’t say unfortunately; they need moisture out here as bad as we do. There are no forest fires going on around here right now, but one earlier this year burned hundreds of acres and caused traffic jams on the highway over La Veta Pass because of the smoke and ash.

The rain isn’t bothering us. We just wait for a break and run out for a quick walk. The rest of the time, we sit around and read, shop in town, work around the house, play cards and listen to baseball games on the radio.

The sun will come out. I’m sure of it. Then we’ll be able to get out into the woods to go for our walks, go fishing and do outdoor-type things.

The folks I feel sorry for are those who are



cynthia haynes

• open season

trying to camp out.

It’s just not much fun to be tent camping when its raining day and night.

Your clothes are wet. Your bed is wet. You can’t start a fire to cook and conditions are generally miserable.

You have to be really crazy to enjoy that kind of vacation.

The others I feel sorry for are the rich.

We went out to a posh guest ranch for dinner the other night. Steve owed me a fancy dinner out and this place takes a few folks from town in the restaurant along with their guests,

who pay about \$300 a person per day to enjoy the outdoor experience and three fancy meals a day.

The restaurant has a top-notch chef and the food was excellent, but the waitress told us that it had been raining every day for more than a week, which had made the horseback riding, backpacking, fishing and boating a bit dicey, not to mention damp, for the folks forking out the big bucks.

I was really amazed at the number of people, many from Europe — we heard at least three languages during supper — who can afford to pay that kind of money to take their families to the mountains for a week or two.

Back when we were young and took the kids to Colorado, we were the ones sitting out in the rain with no fire and wet clothes.

The kids loved it, but then I always said they were crazy.

Treason on West 43rd Street

You could call it “Treason Central,” or “al-Qaida West,” but no matter what you call it, the building housing the once-august *New York Times* at 229 West 43rd St. is a beehive of anti-American hostility where selling out the nation’s secrets has become the newspaper’s stock in trade.

This latest episode of *The Times* revealing information vital to the government’s ability to protect the American people from new 9/11s is just another example of the newspaper’s contempt for the security of the people of the United States of America in a time of war.

To say that they have no shame fails to indicate the depths of infamy to which *The Times* has sunk. What they have done is sheer and outright treason, and it’s the third time *The Times* has adopted Benedict Arnold as its role model, having blabbed about the monitoring of international phone call records and, prior to that, having told our enemies that their communications with their agents in the U.S. were being listened to by intelligence agencies.

What makes my blood boil is the arrogance of *Times*’ editor Bill Keller, and his fellow editors in flatly refusing the requests of the administration, the two former heads of the 9/11 Commission and even Rep. John Murtha — hardly a friend of the Bush Administration — that the newspaper refrain from publishing the details of the program tracking the international flow of terrorist money, a vital weapon in the war against terrorism, and a weapon they have now very probably disarmed.

Just who do these people think they are? What makes them think they have the right to endanger the security of the people of the United States? By their actions, they have repeatedly shown they have no shame and have not a shred of concern for the safety of their readers.

Rep. Peter King, R-N.Y., chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee, has said that “the real question here is the conduct of *The New York Times*; by disclosing this in time of war, they have compromised America’s anti-terrorist policies. This is a very effective policy. They have compromised it. This is the



michael reagan

second time *The New York Times* has done this. And to me, no one elected *The New York Times* to do anything. And *The New York Times* is putting its own arrogant, elitist, left-wing agenda before the interests of the American people.”

Rep. King told Fox News anchor Chris Wallace that *Times* reporters, editors, and publishers responsible for that story should be charged under the Espionage Act, which is punishable by up to 20 years in prison.

A lot of my listeners have called with the suggestion that Americans boycott *Times*’ advertisers while others agree with Rep. King that *Times*’ editors should be haled before a judge to account for their treasonous activities. Aside from the fact that boycotts of this nature seldom work, and the idea of indicting *The Times* for treason won’t fly because they have a right

to publish whatever they want, what this case demands is that they be shamed — to be made pariahs and held up before the nation and exposed for all to see as the traitors they are. And Americans should never be allowed to forget this.

The Times claims that under the First Amendment they have a right to publish anything it wants. That’s true, but they don’t have the right to engage in what amounts to treason, to giving aid and comfort to an enemy that wants to kill us all.

Keller defends his publishing of material damaging to the national security on the grounds that the public has the right to know. What he’s really saying is that al-Qaida has the right to know, and he’s going to do his darnedest to see that they do know all America’s secrets.

From now on, we should treat *The Times* as we would treat any skunk — hold our nose whenever we see it. After all, that odor we sense is the odor of treason.

Mike Reagan, the eldest son of the late President Ronald Reagan, is heard on talk radio stations nationally. E-mail comments to mereagan@hotmail.com.



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