



Other Viewpoints

Sour grapes flavor biodefense lawsuit

It's hard to see a Texas lawsuit over the selection of a site for a new national biodefense laboratory as anything but a case of sour grapes.

Manhattan was selected in December as the site for the new National Bio- and Agro-Defense Facility, and Texas officials, who claim their San Antonio site was next in line for the lab, aren't happy. So, ... they filed a lawsuit in federal court claiming that Kansas gained an unfair advantage through its political connections and because of rule changes late in the process.

The remedy they seek is simple. The lawsuit asked the court to declare the selection of the Kansas site "illegal and therefore null and of no legal force and effect, and direct the Department of Homeland Security to name the Texas Research Park as the site for the NBAF."

This is typical Texas bravado. They aren't asking the courts to order a new selection process; they just want the court to cancel the process and its result and make Texas the winner. Game over.

The lawsuit calls the selection of the Kansas site "arbitrary and capricious in that it resulted from improper and unfair political influence." Kansas used "unfair political influence"? A former Texas governor named Bush was in the White House when this decision was made. How do you get more federal influence than that? ...

Texas officials also are complaining about a Homeland Security request in March 2008 for additional incentive offers. Other states were able to meet the end-of-the-month deadline for those offers — Kansas put up an additional \$105 million — but Texas was able to offer only a promise to try to get \$56 million approved when its Legislature reconvened in January....

The Texas lawsuit also seeks an injunction that would block any progress on the project in Manhattan. It's unfortunate that a questionable lawsuit may delay construction of a laboratory that will play a key role in protecting the nation and its food supply. Hopefully, the court will quickly dispatch this matter and let the project move forward.

— Lawrence Journal-World, via The Associated Press

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Is finals week a test in sleep deprivation?

As much as I love doing homework, taking tests and eating in the cafeteria, I'm ready for a break.

I have three weeks left of my first year at Multnomah University. This means that my week of finals (known as "Dead Week" to many students) comes in two weeks.

Finals week for most students means all-nighters, coffee or other caffeine-related beverages, piles of junk food to last throughout the night and a long playlist on their iPods.

As beneficial as this may sound, I know from experience that it can be more detrimental than good.

I remember my first semester in college when I took World Civilization. Even though I like learning about history, I am by far one of the worst test takers I know. It's not that I can't remember facts, dates, people or places. But if a teacher gives me a piece of paper covered in questions and he labels it a test, I'm a failure.

Knowing this about myself, I was more than apprehensive about the final exam. When it was two days away, I realized that I needed to do some serious cramming. So within two days, I studied for 16 hours, going without a break for eight hours. On top of that, I was getting 4-5 hours of sleep at night.

When it came time for the exam, I felt only somewhat prepared. Actually, my attitude was more, "All of that studying better pay off!"

I got a solid C. I could point out several flaws in how I approached that test, but let me give another ex-



Michelle Myers

• A Moment with Michelle

ample.

The following semester, I took a class that required a 12-page exegetical paper. (Before taking that class, I didn't know what exegetical even meant.) The day before it was due, I still had over half the paper to write. I decided, along with other fellow students, that I would spend the whole night finishing the paper.

This time, I got an A, but my body suffered for the next few days.

My head pounded and my body felt wasted due to sleep deprivation. My hands were shaking from an overdose of caffeine. My eyes were dried out and bloodshot. And my stomach hurt from sporadic and unhealthy eating choices. I was incredibly miserable.

If you still don't believe me, here's a little story about one of my professors. Instead of taking care of his body during his college years, he said, he overloaded it with caffeine and slept so little that he now has a mechanical valve in his heart. Though he is a brilliant man, having written books and widely-known in the Evangelical Theological Society, his body suffered too much in college. And now he has to

pay the price.

So what is an alternative?

I have discovered something that I believe is the most important, healthy and effective approach to a week of finals: Sleep. And not just from 3 a.m. to 6 a.m. I mean at least seven to eight hours of sleep, nine hours being an ideal amount for young adults.

Several benefits come with getting a good amount of sleep at night:

First, it improves memory. In fact, it's good to study right before you sleep, because your mind will make connections, process facts and help you remember things.

Second, researchers are discovering that getting quality sleep can reduce a person's risk of being overweight or even help someone lose weight. That's because sleeping will balance hormones that affect your appetite. Not sleeping can disrupt the process.

And third, if you find yourself struggling to stay awake, take a short nap. On the few occasions that I get only six hours of sleep, instead of drinking a cup of coffee, I lie down to get re-energized. It helps me clear my mind, which is another key factor to doing well on exams.

I'll review: Sleep, nap, clear your mind.

Now doesn't that sound better than a pounding headache and bloodshot eyes?

Michelle Myers, a Colby native, is a student at Multnomah University in Portland, Ore., majoring in Bible and journalism. She enjoys the 32 Starbucks found within five miles of her campus.

Roundup a ritual for 'government man'

It was about this same time 17 years ago. Conditions in Kansas cattle country were dry — no pond water and little if any growth in the pastures.

I had traveled 245 miles west on U.S. 24, from Manhattan to Seguin, to visit my folks. I arrived home Friday evening Dad told me he was going to help the "Reverend Ottley" move cattle in the morning. He asked me to come.

The Reverend, as my Dad called his closest neighbor, was anything but a man of the cloth, but he was a good neighbor and a long-time farmer and rancher in northwestern Kansas. He lived about two miles southwest (as the crow flies) of our home.

His real name was Arnold Ottley and he had several aliases, including "Baldy." He said he had lost most of his red hair by the age of 25.

I hadn't seen Arn for nearly four years, but while I was growing up, I saw him several times a week. Because of the dry weather and no grass, Arn was going to liquidate his cow herd. He'd been a Hereford man for 50 years.

That morning as Dad and I ate breakfast, he told me this was probably going to be "Bandy's" last roundup. Before I could ask him why, he volunteered the following:

Arn was fighting four different cancers — one in his jaw, one in his stomach, one in his brain and the other in his colon. Dad figured he'd never feed another cow or pull another calf once his herd was hauled away that day.

After we arrived at Arn's farm, Dad and I crawled out of the pickup and walked over to help. Arn was seated atop his 560 IHC tractor, preparing to move some squeeze chutes next to the corral.

I walked up to the tractor ready to shake Arn's hand but before I could he greeted me with the words, "Thanks for coming, Johnny.



John Schlageck

• Insights

Kansas Farm Bureau

I'm glad you're here."

That was welcome enough for me. It was time to go to work.

Another neighbor, Vernon Reitcheck, had also come to help sort the cows from the calves and load them into the two semis that were on their way.

I hadn't worked cattle for nearly 10 years, although as a youngster I had done my share, as any self-respecting farm and ranch kid has. Back then, I'd looked forward to working cattle and felt right at home sitting in the saddle.

There's a certain modern-day mystique that goes along with working cattle, but believe me, I'd forgotten how hard stockmen work. While I could vaguely remember separating a 1,000-pound mamma cow from her bawling baby calf, I soon received a wake-up call.

As we started sorting, a thin layer of dust hung in the air. The early-morning quiet had been replaced with bellowing critters.

Working inside a corral of cattle, if you don't stay on your toes, you're going get hurt. A cow will hook you with her head, step on you with her hooves or run you over if you're in her way.

The key is to be in the right place at the right time. That's usually means to the side, and slightly behind a mamma cow. While you can manhandle a 150-pound calf if necessary, cows don't cooperate.

A couple hours later, all the calves were sorted off from their mothers and the two semis were loaded. The diesel engines roared to life and the trucks headed down the road. It was time to take a breather.

I pulled up a seat on the nearest feed bunk, took off my hat and wiped the dirt and sweat from my eyes. Dad and Vernon did the same.

But not the Reverend Ottley. He walked over, and looked at me with his toothless grin.

"You know, you did pretty good for a government man," he said in a gravelly voice scared by 50 years of smoking Camel unfiltered cigarettes. As soon as the words left his lips, he raised his head and laughed. Vernon and my dad joined in.

We spent the next few minutes talking about the cow that stuck her leg through the corral fence, another cow that narrowly missed knocking me into the bunk and how bone-dry it continued to be in a place that is almost always dry.

As we departed, I shook hands with the Reverend for the last time. He died later that year.

While there are many stories I will recall about Arn Ottley, I will never forget the time he forever labeled me a "government man."

Even though it was his way of kidding me about moving away from home and the wide-open spaces while taking up an office job inside, I knew he was dead serious when he said, "You did pretty good for a government man."

Like the precious rains that so rarely fall in this part of our state, compliments are extended only when they are earned. For me, it was an honor to be included in this select community of stockmen who had lived their entire lives running cattle on the High Plains of western Kansas — even if it was only for one day and came with the title, "government man."

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

