



Other Viewpoints

Guilty youth should pay fine

A Lawrence restaurant owner was fined \$500 for serving beer to a 20-year-old with a fake ID last year and now wants to sue the youth for the \$500.

It is beside the point that he hopes to have the case heard before television’s Judge Judy. (Or maybe he is hoping to get thousands worth of free publicity even if he loses the case.)

The man who scammed Doug Holiday at his Bigg’s BBQ last year during the NCAA tournament was Charles Miller. Miller was convicted of being a minor in possession of an alcoholic beverage and illegal use of a driver’s license. He paid \$452 in fines. But the fines Miller paid didn’t help Holiday a penny’s worth.

He should get the \$500.

Miller was asked for an ID and produced a driver’s license that wasn’t his — or was an altered copy of his. Miller got his beer.

Then, for reasons not explained in the news story, law enforcement stepped in, somehow demonstrated that the young man was a year younger than he said he was, and charged Bigg’s BBQ with the violation.

Well, wait a minute. The guilty guy here — the only guilty guy — is Miller. He deliberately violated the law. Holiday and his employees followed the law. They asked for proof of age and saw what they thought was the genuine article.

It is unreasonable to require bars and restaurants to investigate customers thoroughly enough to discover they are using false IDs before they serve them when the customers appear credible — as any 20-year-old pretending to be 21 would. In most instances, discovering fraud at that level would be impossible for a barkeep, waitress or cashier to accomplish.

So, sure, Miller should have to pay the restaurant’s fine, and the courts which handle such cases should be instructed from on high to come down hard on kids who cheat rather than extorting heavy fines from businesses trying to stay legal.

— *The Iola Register, via The Associated Press*

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Gone fishin’ or gone walkin’?

My desk is next to a couple of 20-something guys who seem to think a lot about fishing.

I threatened to steal their thunder and write a column about fishing, but all I can say on the subject is that it seems like a silly way to ruin a good walk.

Speaking of good walks, the rainy weather we’ve been having has been a boon to yards and gardens around town. All those green lawns are pretty, but it makes me tired just thinking about all the extra mowing.

What I really enjoy seeing, though, is the flowers showing their best side. In hot, dry weather, even the most pampered gardens have trouble shining. With our rainfall ahead of normal, though, even neglected areas are in bloom.

Roses seem to be a big favorite these days. Tea roses, especially, can be seen in all sorts of colors and color combinations. Both plants and blossoms seem to vary in size, from tiny miniatures to large bushes.

I have a confession to make, though. As pretty as all the rose gardens are, my favorite has always been those huge old-fashioned bushes of pink roses. I grew up with some in my yard, and the sweet scent they gave off more than made up for the short life of the blooms.

One of the most astounding displays of roses I have ever seen, though, came years ago when we had just moved into a very neglected ranch house. The yard – 20 acres or so around the house – was a mess. Old tractors were everywhere; some had even been retired. The hay



Marian Ballard

• Collection Connections

rake was designed to be pulled behind a horse – during World War II, a farmer took what he could find in the way of equipment.

Other equipment was just as interesting, including a 1948 Jeep pickup which was only used in the spring, when the gumbo mud got REALLY bad. The rest of the yard was full of engines and engine parts, pieces of equipment, tools, 5-gallon cans full of parts, tools, you name it. The lawn mower had four legs and gave milk.

One corner of this disaster area was particularly bad, a tangle of dead weeds and bushes. I had it on my list to clean out, but was slow getting to it, as it wasn’t right next to the house. Then one day shortly after a big rain, I walked down the hill and happened to glance at the corner. What a surprise! The mess was actually a patch of wild roses, and they had gone overnight from brown and dead to a prolific mass of yellow blooms. They cured my discouragement over all the hard work ahead, and showed me that beauty was sometimes just waiting to be discovered.

That’s not the only time that a rainstorm

and a neglected lawn has revealed a pleasant surprise. I’ve had snapdragons, surprise lilies, even peonies show up when a mowing or two was missed.

I’ve seen other things growing on my walks, of course. The buffalo grass now has tall, yellow stems on it – well, tall for buffalo grass – about four or five inches. At a glance, these look like seed stems, but I picked one to get a better look. Those funny little bumps are actually blossoms – the buffalo grass is blooming. It may not be as showy as a rose, but it’s just as important, and beautiful in its own way.

My home ground in Nebraska had a lot more pasture and rough country than you see around Colby. We would take visitors out for a drive in the country, and sometimes heard the refrain “there’s nothing to see.” No mountains, no ocean, no amusement parks. It always seemed to me there was plenty to see, as long as you knew what to look for.

“City folks” would look at a pasture and see grass. Natives would look at a pasture and see six different kinds of grass, a draw full of chokecherry bushes, a few too many yucca plants and a prairie dog town.

The guys in my office are still talking about fishing. I wonder how many of those quiet little miracles they will notice along the way.

Marian Ballard has collected careers as counselor, librarian, pastor, and now copy editor for the Colby Free Press. She collects ideas, which are more portable than other stuff.

Don’t forget your hat and sunscreen

I recently read a public-service ad circulated by the American Academy of Dermatology that lists five ways to die on a golf course: hit by a golf ball, run over by a golf cart, whacked by a golf club, struck by lightening and forgot your hat.

While none of these possibilities is pleasant to contemplate, the threat of skin cancer is real and should be considered carefully. This is especially true of farmers, ranchers and construction workers, who are in the sun much of the time.

Every year one million new cases of skin cancer turn up in the U.S., according to the American Academy of Dermatology. One out of five people in this country will develop skin cancer during their lifetime.

All across America, folks are gearing up for vacations with their families. Many of these trips include stops at the beach or outdoor amusement parks. Many others work for long hours in the sun during the summer months – farmers, ranchers, construction workers, amusement park attendants, and others.

If you spend several hours in the sun, protect yourself. Avoid the midday sun if at all possible. Cover up. Always wear a hat. Work in the shade whenever possible. And don’t forget to wear sunscreen.



John Schlageck

• Insights Kansas Farm Bureau

Melanoma is the deadliest form of skin cancer. One person dies every hour from this disease in the United States, according to the dermatologists.

Fortunately, melanoma can be cured if it’s caught early enough. Dermatologists advise everyone to examine their skin regularly.

If you find a blemish larger than a pencil eraser, multi-colored, asymmetrical or irregular at the edges, you may have melanoma and should see your dermatologist.

While we should protect ourselves from potential skin cancer, we should be every bit as aware of this danger for our children. Overexposure to sunlight during childhood will affect children for the rest of their lives.

Studies show that damage from the sun to a child’s skin can actually increase the odds that he or she will develop skin cancer as an adult.

The dermatologists estimate that 80 percent

of a person’s total lifetime sun exposure occurs in the first 18 years.

Protect your children. Cover them up. Teach them to wear long-sleeved cotton shirts that breathe. Make sure they wear head protection at all times. Make wearing sunscreen part of the ritual for gearing up for the sun.

While skin cancer can kill you, it’s much more likely to disfigure you. Each year, thousands of Americans lose chunks of their skin to this disease, the dermatology group says. Some people lose their nose; others may lose their ears, while others may get off with only the loss of an eyebrow.

Examine your skin regularly, at least once a week. Look for warning signs.

If you find anything bleeding, crusting or something not healing, see your dermatologist immediately.

Remember, you can enjoy the sun and spend time outside, and don’t forget these common-sense suggestions: have fun, and like everything else in life – enjoy the sun in moderation.

John Schlageck of the Kansas Farm Bureau is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. He grew up on a diversified farm near Seguin, and his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

