

Race track overnight success

If you see George Anderson this week, shake his hand, pat him on the back, and then give him a high five.

Hastings' super-promoter hit another home run this week with his Showdown at Showboat tractor and truck pull. Competitors from across the state showed up, and about 1,100 spectators came to watch.

On a Tuesday. In a wheat field. Anderson had all sorts of challenges before him when he decided to bring this event to Hastings. There was no track, much less a grandstand. It wasn't a weekend event. And he had a limited amount of time to plan, find sponsors and get the word out.

But in typical George Anderson style, he pulled it off, and with great success.

By Tuesday morning, the field was plowed, a dirt track was formed, a parking lot was roped off and temporary bleachers were up. There were banners, food, beer, T-shirts, portable toilets — even free earplugs.

The emcees were entertaining and the tractors were loud.

And if that's not enough, Anderson himself could be seen in an orange safety vest atop a large piece of machinery, working the track between tractor pull runs. Later, he mingled with the crowd and handed out bug spray.

It's amazing to us how this event came together. But we take it as a sign of things to come at Motorsport Park Hastings.

Anderson has a lot of plans for the humble track at Showboat Road and U.S. Highway 6. He has promised a drag track, a Sports Car Club of America rally track and an SCCA road race track.

In fact, the next event at the track, the SCCA RallyCross National Challenge, is only a month away — and no hint of a track yet. But with Anderson behind this national race, we're sure it will be an even bigger hit than this week's tractor pull.

The fact that Anderson can convince tractor pull and racing associations to commit to holding events in Hastings shows that he has an incredible amount of pull in the racing world, as well as an incredible number of connections.

We don't imagine that just anyone could get these groups to take a chance on Hastings when there have been no prior events here and not even a track to speak of.

But those in racing circles obviously have a lot of faith in Anderson, and the people of Hastings should, too.

So if you do run into Anderson, congratulate him, then tell him to go take a nap. He's got a lot more work ahead of him.

Fixing the U.N.

The Providence Journal

Let us hope that the world leaders gathering at the United Nations will go beyond posturing and photo ops to seriously plan for long-delayed U.N. reforms.

Among them:

- ◆ Making the U.N. Security Council more representative, by including Japan — the world's second-biggest economy — and Brazil and India. Both of the latter are increasingly important economic players, and Brazil's membership would finally add a Latin American component to the council. The council must better represent international political and economic realities.

- ◆ Eliminating or reforming that home for hypocrisy, the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, which often serves as the voice of tyrannies represented on it.

- ◆ Taking new action to reduce the threat of genocide, a peril still very much with us in Sudan, central Africa and other places. In this, rhetoric has always exceeded commitment.

- ◆ Increasing rich countries' development aid to poor ones, but with toughened safeguards against the money's being stolen or otherwise misused by corrupt national or local officials.

- ◆ Giving the position of U.N. secretary-general more administrative authority, while making him or her more accountable. The Iraq oil-for-food scandal has shown the urgent need for such restructuring. The U.N. administration has all too frequently been badly run, and had little oversight — encouraging corruption.

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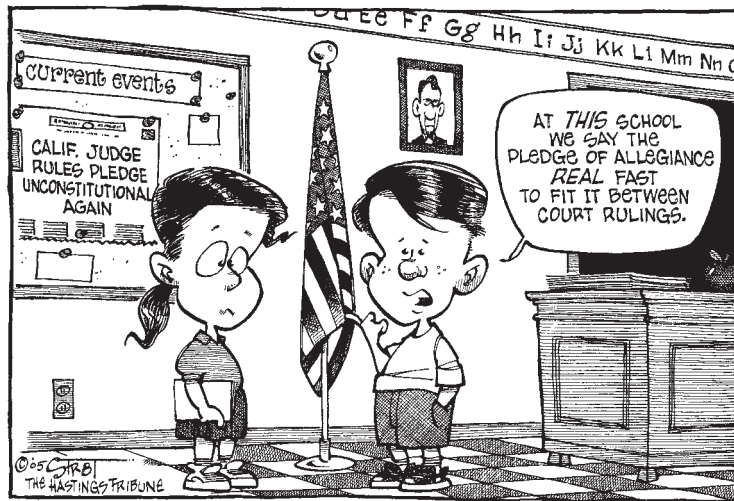
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Katrina and football, just wondering aloud

Since my brain is wandering as I come up with a theme, let's just go with a few things I can't help but wonder: As I write this, Hurricane Ophelia is working its way up the coast in the general area of the Carolinas.

With Hurricane Katrina still the top news of the year, we can only hope that this one causes just a fraction of the damage. But through it all, I wonder if I missed a storm or two. I thought these storms are named in alphabetical order. Was Katrina so big that they just decided to jump a few letters? I worry that Hurricanes Larry, Moe and Napoleon are out there churning away somewhere. Maybe they were just little storms and stayed way out to sea. I know I could probably find answers to these questions with a few clicks on the Internet, but I don't want this column to be confused with one that requires research and accuracy — hey, I'm just wondering out loud here.

As long as I'm wondering, let's see if I can come up with a couple more. I wonder why some people hang up their golf clubs once Labor Day comes around. For my money, fall golfing is some of the best. My son and I got in a couple of rounds within the last week, and the conditions couldn't have been better, Wednesday evening especially. No wind, no bugs, no need for layers of sun screen, no sweat pouring down your back. Maybe it's just the fact that we hardly played at all this summer that made the first rounds of fall



Russ Batenhorst

more enjoyable. Now that I think of it, though, I wonder if I'm nuts to share this information. One of the other nice things was that the course wasn't very crowded at all. So on second thought, fall golf is awful, you better continue to stay away.

I wonder if a college football team has ever gone a full season with the defense scoring more than the offense. Could be happening right now with you-know-who. Hey, if nothing else, it gives us a reason to keep tuning into the Huskers.

I wonder what time the Iowa State game will start. People are trying to make plans, you know.

I wonder which way gas prices will go tomorrow.

FRANK FANS

It's fun to see sometimes how loyal people from around here can be. I just happened to be in — well, let's just call it a public gathering place — last Friday night when the Ohio University Bobcats pulled off their football surprise with a win over Pitt. Unless you're completely allergic to the sports section or truly just don't care, you no doubt know that Ohio is coached by Frank Solich, the former Nebraska Cornhuskers coach. When one of his players picked off a pass and ran in for the

winning touchdown in overtime, you would have thought the Huskers had just won the Orange Bowl. Cheers erupted and glasses were raised as everyone felt good for "good old Frank." "Nice to see him get his first win after being out of coaching for a year" seemed to be the prevalent feeling.

I couldn't help but wonder how many of those same people were in the "get rid of the bum" camp a couple of years ago. Actually, I'm guessing not too many. Without tipping off who was there, let's just say some are in a professional position to be able to sympathize with a man of his position. But no matter if they wanted to see him go two years ago or not, everyone was behind him last Friday. We get that way for people that are from here and have moved on. Lots of Hastings people still pull for NFL coach Bill Parcells wherever he may happen to be coaching just because he started his career with one season as an assistant coach at Hastings College.

I wonder if people will feel that way 10 years from now as they watch Bill Callahan coaching somewhere else — unless, of course, he is here for the long haul, hoisted high as the winningest coach in college history, or anything like that.

I wonder what the odds are of that.

Russ Batenhorst of Hastings is a columnist for the Hastings Tribune. Reach him by e-mail at russmary@aoltel.net

When did moms and dads stop being right?

How is it possible that we've gotten to a point in our culture in which parenting experts tell us moms and dads that we have to "earn" our authority — even when it comes to an infant? (Just try asking the police officer who pulls you over if he's "earned his authority" to do so that day.)

That helping our child grow up with strong self-esteem is the most important task of parenthood?

The most important task? What about learning to esteem others?

We're instructed by the experts to criticize only the behavior of the child, never the child himself, as if bad behavior showed up in the morning cereal box, not in the heart. And remember, disguise your "no's" as much as possible. One expert gives us "seven ways to avoid saying no to your child."

I would suggest that, instead, more parents should choose to use "no" as a complete sentence.

And for heaven's sake, the experts tell us — don't spank your children. After all, we're reminded by one expert that Adolf Hitler was spanked as a child.

Huh? What's going on here is a culture that has abandoned the once-unquestioned notion that parents really do know better than their children, and that children desperately need parents who have that confidence, and authority, if they are to thrive. We see the result. Too many joyless, snarly, angry children



Betsy Hart

and teens — and parents who are tyrannized by them — making everyone miserable.

It's not a surprise, by the way that we see kids in control of their parents. Kids have been attempting power grabs since the beginning of time. What's changed is the impotence of the parents in the face of the power grabs: I like to call it "imparentance."

This seems to come from the prevailing notion from the experts that, all evidence to the contrary, children are born into the world full of inherent wisdom, goodness and virtue (and so needing only a little gentle parental cheerleading). You don't have to see "Lord of the Flies" to know they are not. Here's the proof: Have you ever heard anyone say, "That little guy must be exhausted — he's being so sweet and kind and generous"? No, when our defenses are down, our true natures are more likely to come out — and they are not pretty.

We're crazy about our kids, and we should be. But when we idolize them and idealize them, we don't do them any favors. When we believe that with the "right technique" we can have these almost perfect little people, we don't give our kids the freedom to be kids, to fail, to learn and to grow. We don't give them the experience of their full humanity.

The cultural implications for this are huge. Here's what one high-school teacher wrote to me about what she's seeing in her class-

room as a result of idolized kids: "...we have pumped our young people full of self-importance in the hope that this would transfer to their acceptance of the importance of others; yet, we have created nothing more than a generation of selfish and rude people who truly believe that they are the sun around which all else revolves."

The sad fact is that by not recognizing a child's true character, that our children are wonderful, flawed little human beings — just like us — we don't get to their hearts and help them to deal with the flawed tendency of those hearts. Instead, we idolize our kids and admire them to excess. We protect them from every adversity ("Don't you dare cut my kid from the team!"). We give 2-year-olds choices at every opportunity — all the better to build their all-important self-esteem. We deliver "no's" dripping in sugar, we "separate the behavior from the child" and we always tell them how wonderful they are, even when they are not being wonderful at all at the moment.

I'm not saying for a minute that I don't blow it and fall into a lot of these traps myself with my own four little ones. I am saying that too many of us parents today make such practices the rule of our home, and so we deny our children their humanity because we refuse to see them — and help them, and encourage them — as they really are.

Betsy Hart is a columnist for the Scripps Howard News Service.

Voice of the People

POLITICAL HARDBALL

Contrary to popular belief, the great American pastime is not baseball, but political hardball.

And while Texan George the Younger is surely a major league player, he is and always will be an error-prone Bush leaguer.

As Will Rogers, the hard-hitting All-American pitcher from Oklahoma was fond of saying, "The trouble with two-party politics is two-party politicians."

And that, sports fans, is a grand

slam for the home team.

Don Kramer
Hastings

STAND UP, BE COUNTED

To the citizens, taxpayers, business leaders and employers, we truly do need to stand up and be counted.

It has been far too long since our community supported a school bond issue for the benefit of all. The Hastings Middle School was built in 1926 — that represents outdated and undersized facilities.

We can no longer expect our teachers to teach and our children to learn in antiquated and undersized facilities. Hastings is truly making an effort to grow our business and residential sections, but we have for far too long neglected our most important asset, which is our public school system. If we want to continue to grow, we need new and improved school facilities.

As an employer, one of the first questions asked by prospective employees considering our community is about our public school sys-

tem. While we can extol the virtues of our teachers and students, the prospects have only to drive around and see the age of our facilities.

In order to continue to grow, we must do what Grand Island and other communities just recently did and that is to support and pass a school bond issue to bring our facilities into the 21st century, so our students and our community can continue to grow.

Paul H. Powers
Hastings