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Posted on Thu, Feb. 16, 2006

LETTERS

Armstrong inspires

One could congratulate American Century's advertising genius for the in-your-face banner with Lance Armstrong (2/10, A-1, "For cancer survivors, alliance is not just business"). And one could decry the "Big Lance is watching you" Orwellian poster as a tasteless billboard that intrudes into the serenity of the cityscape of the Plaza.

Both may be appropriate.

But for those of us who are cancer patients and cancer survivors, having an icon of our patron, St. Lance, is an inspiration to keep on pedaling.

Thomas O. Baker

Kansas City

Stem-cell research

The Star (2/10, Sports) carried the sad news that the Chiefs' Super Bowl star Otis Taylor has Parkinson's. The paper also had the good news that Lance Armstrong is ready to lend a hand in support of the Missouri stem-cell initiative. Stem-cell research may some day provide a cure for Taylor and others like him.

Unfortunately, Patty Skain for Missouri Right to Life made the lame statement that so far stem-cell research hasn't cured any cancer (or other disease, I suppose), implying that therefore stem-cell research isn't justified. This is either a deliberately disingenuous argument or one that displays ignorance of how scientific research progresses.

On the scale of a 24-hour day, stem-cell research has been under way for only a few minutes. I believe that once a few hours have passed we will see many benefits. But if we followed Ms. Skain's position to its logical conclusion, I guess we could argue that if CPR doesn't revive someone after one breath we should stop trying.

I favor continuing to try, and so does Lance Armstrong. So did Otis Taylor. That's what made them both champions.



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Dean, College of Biosciences

Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences

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In reading Laura McKnight's As I See It (2/9) regarding "getting it right" with Missouri higher education, I was struck with Gov. Matt Blunt's suggestion to connect the region's higher education strategy to the important research being undertaken by the Stowers Institute of Medical Research. This was called Blunt's Lewis & Clark Initiative.

Jim and Virginia Stowers have always been held in high esteem in our home, until recently. They have chosen to ignore reputable scientists' accounts of the unethical and thus far unsuccessful use of embryonic stem cells. Even if ever there were some success with embryonic stem cells, it would mean destroying life to save others and thus would be unacceptable.

Our first concern should be that all life be respected in "life science" efforts.

Therese Ismert

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Important news

Friday's paper (2/10) featured the 2002 terrorist plot on L.A. prominently on the front page. It is certainly suspect that the Bush administration is releasing this story four years later to justify its "eavesdropping."

In the same edition, the revelation that Scooter Libby was directed to leak information from an intelligence report by his superiors only garnered a small space on page A-6. Paul Pillar (senior intelligence officer for the CIA) only earned page A-11 with his indictment of the White House handling (ignoring) of warnings that Iraq could cascade into violence if we invaded to overthrow Saddam Hussein.

Once again, the administration has succeeded in taking our eye off the ball and *The Star* has been complicit by assigning importance in the placement of these stories.

Cheryl Hughes

Prairie Village

Obstacles, challenges

In reference to Lewis Diuguid's column (2/10, Opinion) concerning his bike accident as a metaphor for minorities' struggles, I think Mr. Diuguid must have landed on his head.

All people face challenges each and every day. People of color are not unique in this respect. Most of us face the challenges and overcome them without complaining or using excuses.

I am sure the people in line behind Mr. Diuguid that day at the license bureau faced the challenge of waiting for him to waste their time because he had not produced the proper



paperwork. Maybe if he had concentrated on gathering the appropriate papers to renew his license instead of trying to dream up wild ideas for his next column on racism, the poor folks in line behind him wouldn't have had to face that challenge.

Rick Bennett

Kansas City

I found Lewis W. Diuguid's recent article, which focused on his bike as a metaphor, to be very descriptive in explaining how a person of color faces obstacles and deals with them.

As a Mexican-American, I, too, can relate well with what Mr. Diuguid writes about. Racism issues are regular "obstacles" for us minorities, and difficult to explain to those who have never experienced this. It is by helping each other out, as Mr. Diuguid writes ("...people of all colors who know where such problems exist must warn others to steer around them...") that we will be better off as a society.

I hope Mr. Diuguid will continue to enlighten our multicultural community with his writing talents for many years to come. Arriba, Diuguid!

Jose Luis Marquez

Topeka

Dog attacks

Most dog attacks are from stray dogs, but some are not. Some dogs are in their own yards, not bothering anyone. When does the blame ever go to the person, be it child or adult, who trespasses in someone's yard?

Children especially need to be taught not to go into someone's yard uninvited. This does not give the dog's owner a choice, or even a chance, to be responsible. If signs are posted to stay out of a yard and someone disregards that warning, that person should be held accountable, not the dog owner or the dog.

Please teach your children proper respect for others and their property. If it isn't their yard, they don't need to be in it, even if it's a short cut. Don't tease dogs, and don't blame the dog if you do tease it and it bites you. And if you see a sign that says "Keep Out" or "Beware of Dog," it's there for a reason.

Kelly Taylor

Kearney

My 12-pound dog, Lily, would not have survived a recent attack, and the attacking dog would not be off the streets of Old Leawood, were it not for three responsive people.

A black Labrador approached me while I walked my mini dachshund. Before I could stoop to pick Lily up, the lab lunged at her throat. I kicked the lab's side, screaming. Nothing deterred her from the mauling. Nearby construction workers looked on.

Finally, I kicked the lab squarely in the face and she dropped my dog. A Scott's Lawn Service landscaper came to our rescue, chasing the lab away as it came back for another

attack. He drove us home.

After taking Lily to my vet, I went back to find the lab and was helped by Kim, a woman in that neighborhood. She caught the dog long enough to read the tags and call its owner. Leawood Animal Control officer Liz Bartels came within minutes of my call and caught the lab again within 30 minutes.

Miraculously, Lily survived. She has three layers of stitches in her throat and weeks ahead of wound management and pain.

I extend gratitude to those who helped us.

Emme Griffith

Leawood

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