Big dreams ... but only a few will see them realized

Long before they have the opportunity to play in Sunday’s Super Bowl, would-be players vie for the attention of our nation’s top college football coaches ahead of National Signing Day. Wednesday’s roller coaster event was important for coaches and players alike, while all fans could do was hold their breath and dream that the next Tom Brady was among those invited to play for their favorite team.

Cameras across the nation focused on high school stars who often revealed their choice of college by donning a piece of clothing matching the colors of their new school.

Sportswriters kept a tally of winners and losers. This newspaper, for example, headlined the count this way: “Big Ten gaining ground on SEC,” adding that “The two conferences — despite strong showings from several schools from the ACC, where national champion Clemson resides — emerged as clear winners.”

And our friends at ESPN displayed a ticker along the bottom of a massive video board on one of its buildings in Bristol, displaying the top football recruits in ESPN’s 2017 class rankings and their college choices.

This day has become almost as much a high stakes event as the National Football League draft itself, because, for the winners, that’s where it leads. It is, in fact, the minor league draft for the NFL.

But what about college? What about the three to four years in which these young men are supposed to be getting an education? Will this span be nothing more than a volunteer training camp, while they hone and show off their skills? And what about those who don’t make it to the NFL? Will the years they spend on campus have value? And, frankly, does anyone care or are they just fodder for a machine that turns out professional prospects.

Still, these young men dream, hoping that they will become the next star. After all, after playing college football for the University of Michigan, a Big Ten school, Brady was drafted by the Patriots in the sixth round of the 2000 NFL draft. In Brady’s 15 seasons as a starter, the Patriots have earned seven trips to the Super Bowl, the most for any quarterback in history, winning four titles.

On the other hand, the players union has put the length of an average NFL career at 3.2 years, and that’s if they make the opening day roster at all — all the more reason why these would-be stars need a real education.

To the Editor:

Today, Feb. 3, is a very important day in the history of medicine. It is National Women Physicians Day; this date marks the birthday of a legendary female physician, Elizabeth Blackwell, MD.

Dr. Blackwell was the first American woman to earn a medical degree. She continues to be an inspiring role model to the thousands of women who dream of becoming a physician. Dr. Blackwell attended Geneva Medical College in New York and pursued a career in obstetrics and gynecology. She also was one of the founders of the New York Infirmary for Indigent Women and Children. Today that hospital is known as New York Presbyterian / Lower Manhattan Hospital.

There is much to celebrate for female physicians. In 2010, women made up nearly one-third of the physician workforce. And according to the Association of American Medical Colleges, 47 percent of medical students and 46 percent of interns/residents are women.

Closer to home, the female physicians who comprise our medical staff, play a vital role in fulfilling our mission to the community. The Bristol Hospital Multi-Specialty Group includes numerous female internal and family medicine physicians as well as a wide range of sub-specialists.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, the Executive Leadership Group and all our employees and medical staff, thank you to all the female physicians who are dedicated to providing safe and quality health care to our patients and families.

Kurt A. Barwis
Kurt A. Barwis is the president and chief executive officer of Bristol Hospital and Health Care Group, Inc.

Did Trump’s ban influence Quebec shooter?

A stunned Quebec is in mourning. Flags are at half mast, vigils are being held, and expressions of solidarity with the Muslim community are flowing in from all quarters.

Sunday night’s outrageous, murderous attack on innocent worshippers, which has taken at least six lives, seriously injured several more people and left many children fatherless, is getting the vehement condemnation it deserves.

Ordinary Quebeckers of all faiths and none have recoiled at the violence and its heartbreaking toll.

In the wake of the attack, many questions have yet to be answered. But what is already far too clear is that innocent people were killed simply for who they were: Muslims. This massacre, all the more offensive because it targeted those who were going to achieve their dreams, is getting the right kind of attention.

Was it anything more complicated than an expression of hatred pure and simple? It’s disconcerting to think that discourse painting Muslims as people to be feared might have been one of the factors behind this attack. There has been far too much dog whistle politics in recent years, both in Quebec and by those who made niqabs an issue in the last federal election. If so, that would be a particularly bitter irony. Assault weapons are not to be found under burkas, it seems, but in the hands of those who would do innocent Muslims harm. Who has reason to fear whom?

Was the attack influenced by the current discourse south of the border? Was it merely a coincidence that it was committed the same weekend that U.S. President Donald Trump enacted entry prohibitions on citizens of seven majority-Muslim countries? The president’s defenders were quick to say this was not a “Muslim ban,” and that citizens of many other Muslim countries were not affected, but in the context of Trump’s statements on the campaign trail, it would be hard to see it otherwise.

Or were there other twisted motives? Regardless of what motives may have been at play, however, the attack on innocent worshipers was an attack on all of us. And therefore it is incumbent on us to do our part to show solidarity in the face of this horror. In due course, the accused will have to answer in court. In the meantime, the unity of our condemnation must be the only response to these repugnant actions.

It’s National Women Physicians Day

THE MONTREAL GAZETTE

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DOONESBURY by Garry Trudeau

OUR HERO TAKES A HINT. YOU KNOW, LORD ZONER, MAYBE YOU SHOULD CONSIDER MOVING IN PERMANENTLY!


NOW, DAD, THAT MIGHT BE A TID EXCESSIVE, BUT I APPRECIATE THE... UN TIDE. THAT NIGHT, HE SENT HIS FAMILY, AND DAD — BRING LOTS OF BLUEBERRIES!