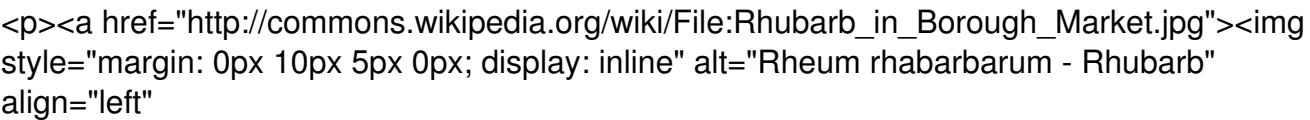


Written by Allan Besselink
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There is always a certain degree of excitement at this time of year. It's the start of a new semester of teaching, which is always an adventure regardless of how many years you have taught the course. Ten years into teaching functional anatomy and I can say it is still a fresh slate on the first day of class. It is also the start of college football season. With college football comes the thought - admittedly faint right now - that fall weather will soon be here. Call me an optimist I guess - and a sweating-profusely-in-August one at that. This episode of the Rhubarb Report takes us back in history, and looks ahead to something that hopefully won't create it.

1. August 28 marked the 50th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's "I Have A Dream" speech. This has to be considered one of the greatest speeches of all time. A mere 17:00 minutes and 1651 words that could - would - change the world. Fifty years later, his oratory is as stunning and memorable as ever. To this day, it gives me goose bumps to listen to it. But given the tremendous emotional impact of his words, I often wonder: how far have we advanced in terms of true equality in this country since then? Sadly, I think there is much work to be done on this one.

2. The NCAA never ceases to amaze me and make me shake my head in disbelief. The latest mess involves none other than Johnny Manziel. The most recent Heisman Trophy winner was given a one half game - yes, you read that correctly - suspension for Autograph-Gate. Seriously? One half game? Myck Kabongo - former UT Longhorn basketball player - was suspended for 23 games this past season for what amounted to a round trip ticket to Cleveland. Some people might consider that ticket a penalty unto its own (as a basketball player), but I digress. The NCAA needs some consistent standards for rules violations. Period. And the sooner, the better. Right now, it's a joke.

3. Finally, an issue of great concern. The United States has certainly had plenty of opportunities to learn some hard lessons when it comes to military actions over the past 4 or 5 decades. With that said, if you don't learn from history you are doomed to repeat it. Enter Syria. It rhymes with Iraq and Afghanistan among others. It would amount to the spending of billions of dollars at a time when they aren't there to be spent. Here's a novel thought: how about focusing foreign policy on diplomacy? How about defending our interests if and when they need to be defended? And if we do in fact need to be involved, let's make sure we make Congress a part of the decision-making process. Oh, and don't forget our international allies who, yes, have plenty of insight on this and other global human rights concerns. It's never too late to learn.

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