

commentary

from our viewpoint...

Newspaper merger, time for reflection

With the merger this week of *The Sherman County Star* into *The Goodland Daily News*, we will be closing one chapter and opening another.

If you love newspapers, then one's passing is never a happy occasion. A newspaper is like a child, a lover, a mate, all rolled up in a 10-inch paper tube.

Newspapers have a personality, a life of their own. Anyone who claims to own one is a fool. It's the newspaper that owns its editor. The readers own the newspaper, buying in on the installment plan, four bits at a time.

So it was with *The Star*, the dream and creation of a couple who love newspapers. But while it was something of an artistic success, *The Star* never made any money. That's not unusual in a business which seldom supports more than one operation in any town for long.

It wasn't that they did not work hard or struggle valiantly, but they chose a very difficult task. In America today, if there are two newspapers in a town, the only certainty is that it won't last long.

Now that the two papers are merging, we realize we have a double obligation to Goodland and Sherman County. We have always been committed to the idea that a newspaper has to become the very best it can to serve its readers if it intends to succeed. We promised you that when we bought *The Daily News* from the out-of-state chain which had owned it.

That means an increased commitment to quality in news coverage, advertising design and coverage, circulation and customer service in all aspects of the paper.

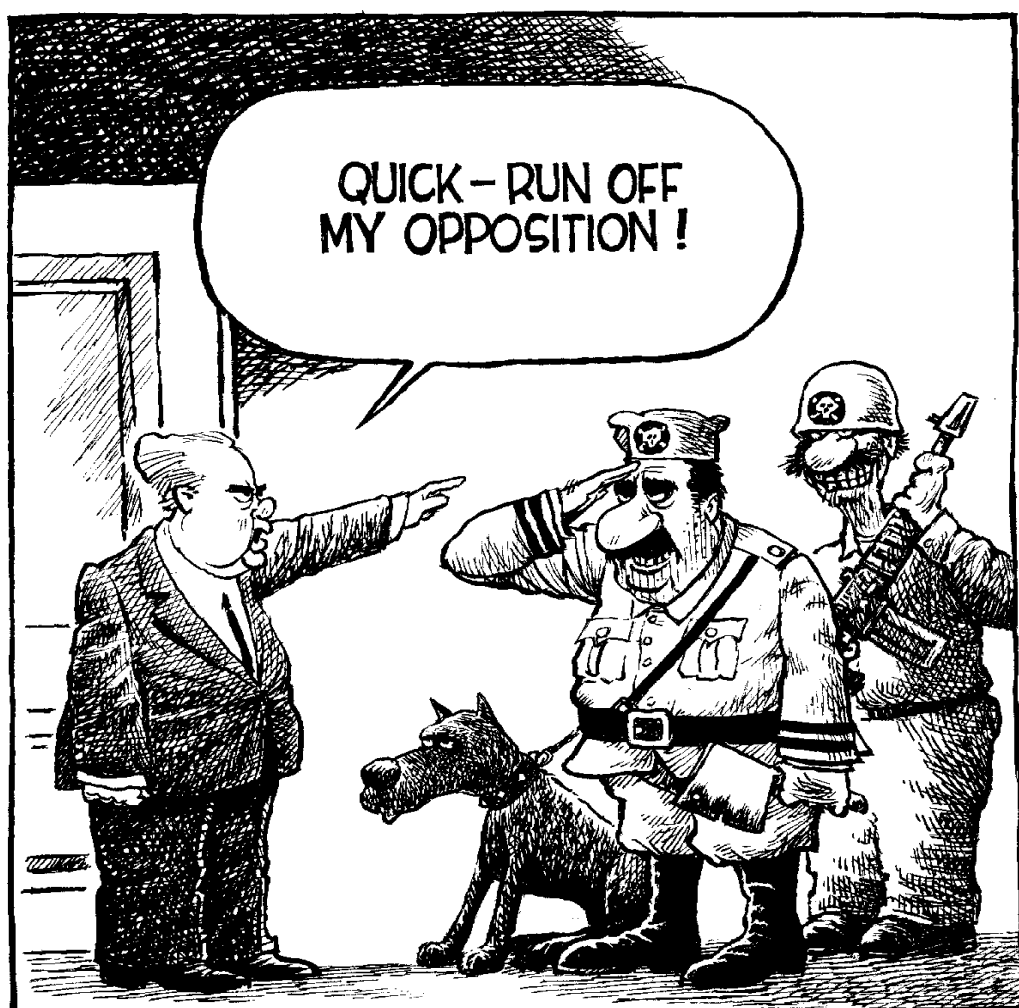
We want *The Goodland Daily News* to be the best in its class in Kansas and the region. We want to establish one strong voice for this community, giving people the news they need and want, giving advertisers the line of communication they need with the people of this county.

The Daily intends to cover Sherman County life in increasing detail and with increasing devotion. We realize we have readers to the north and south, east and west, but there are other newspapers which cover those areas. Only *The Goodland Daily News* serves our town, our county.

And we hope to do it well.

But we can only judge our success by how we please you, the reader. If you are a former *Star* reader, then we want to welcome you to our fold. We want to keep you here, all of you.

Feel free to call and let us know how we are doing. Tell us what you want to see in the paper. Criticize our work, point out our mistakes. We may not always agree, but we will listen. You, after all, are the boss. — *Steve Haynes*



Big cities miss out on local recognition

There wasn't a community newspaper like *The Goodland Daily News* when I was growing up in southeast Denver.

Sure, there were small newspapers that covered one area or subject, but there's no way they could cover everything. Denver is such a big city that most schools' sports and organizations' activities went unnoticed, along with many serious crimes and accidents.

My high school had a newspaper, but with an enrollment of about 2,000, many students never made it into the paper or even the yearbook. Those who read the high school newspaper many times had never met the person they were reading about.

Because Denverites already had two large newspapers to choose from and since it just wouldn't be profitable to have a bunch of small papers serving every community, many things happened in my neighborhood that never got attention. Things that would have gotten attention if I had grown up in Goodland.

When I won a spelling bee in elementary school, I didn't get my picture or name in any newspaper. When my brother Joel scored points in a high school rugby game, there was no reporter there to take pictures or write an article. And when a gang



rachel miscall

• unraveling

member stabbed my brother Alex and his friend at a party where there was underage drinking and drugs galore, there wasn't a word printed about it.

It would have been different if I had lived out my childhood in Goodland. No matter what, chances are good that each member of my family would have had their name and picture in the newspaper at least once, and if we were involved in sports or other school or community activities, many more times than that.

Because Goodland is a small town, most readers would have recognized my name and face if they saw it in the paper and would have met me before.

I think it would have been neat to have had a small newspaper like *The Daily News* in my area when I was growing up. It would have been nice to be recognized when I or one of my family members did something good.

I get the feeling people who live in Goodland enjoy having a community newspaper for that reason.

Parents have told me before that they feel it's important for their children to be recognized when they have done something good. Whether the accomplishment is in sports or academics, parents have said when children see their name and picture in the newspaper, it boosts their self-confidence and makes them feel like they are important in their community.

Perhaps a small newspaper would have brought the people in my Denver neighborhood closer together and inspired them to make improvements. Of course, like people here, everyone would have had to take the good with the bad.

It would have been neat to read about Joel's rugby game, but it wouldn't have been fun to read the gory details of Alex's encounter with the gang member — especially since my brother was drunk and high at the time.

It was bad enough when I hit that old woman's car with my Nissan in a King Sooper's parking lot, but to have to see it in the newspaper would have been embarrassing. Or that time I got caught... well, there's no point putting that in the newspaper now.

Letter Policy

The Daily News encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be typewritten if possible, and should include a telephone number and, most importantly, a signature. Unsigned letters will not be published. Form letters endorsing political candidates will be rejected, as will letters deemed to be of no public interest or considered offensive. We encourage letters by e-mail to: daily@nwkansas.com.

For want of a nail, an election was lost

As I sat in his office, he made a startling announcement. "I'm going to do something this fall I've never done before," he said.

As I looked at this successful small business owner, I couldn't help but wonder what it was he'd never done. Was he taking his wife on an ocean cruise? Was he traveling to New England to see the fall color? Or, was he taking up mountain climbing?

Finally, another visitor in his office asked, "What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to vote in the presidential election," he stated proudly. Then he went on to say that always before he had reasoned that his one vote was too little to matter. It wouldn't make any difference in the big picture. This year he felt differently. There was too big a difference in the candidates running for president to ignore. He would register, and he would vote.

Frankly, I was shocked that this successful, bright and articulate businessman was a non-voter. It made me wonder how many other business folks do not vote because they feel the same way. Maybe some of you reading this column today aren't registered to vote. If your excuse is that your vote doesn't matter, think again.

I remember something that Benjamin Franklin wrote that proves how seemingly unimportant things do make a big difference in life. Franklin's adage goes like this: "For the want of a nail the shoe was lost, For the want of a shoe the horse was lost,



don taylor

• minding your own business

For the want of a horse a rider was lost, For the want of a rider the battle was lost, For the want of a battle the kingdom was lost. And all for the want of a horse-shoe nail."

For Want of a Vote

Your vote is important. Use it wisely, use it often, but most important use it. Don't worry that another person's vote might cancel yours. If you don't vote, the other person might just swing the election.

One vote does matter. Let me share a little history with you. In 1649, one vote caused Charles I of England to be executed. In 1875, one vote changed France from a monarchy to a democracy. In 1876, one vote gave Rutherford B. Hayes the presidency of the United States. In 1923, one vote gave Adolph Hitler leadership of the Nazi Party. In 1941, one vote saved Selective Service just weeks before the attack on Pearl Harbor. In 1960, John F. Kennedy would have lost the election to Nixon if Nixon had received just one more vote per precinct in Illinois and three more votes per precinct in Missouri and New Jersey. In 1993, one vote

gave the United States the largest tax increase in the history of the World. Every vote matters.

Your business

Whether we own our own business, are retired or work for someone else, voting is taking care of our own business. You see, we are the government. Its business is our business. We must elect good people to run "our" business at all levels. If we exercise our responsibility, we protect our interests. Our votes will chart the course for the future.

Our liberties, freedom and standard of living are tied to the men and women we elect. Every election is important. We should vote in each one. We do have choices. We need to choose. Before we can make good choices, we must be informed. It's a job only you and I can do.

On November 7, 2000, do your duty, take your responsibility and help shape a nation. Vote. Our future may well rest on your vote. Don't blow it.

Don Taylor is the co-author of Up Against the Wall-Marts. You may write to him in care of Minding Your Own Business, PO Box 67, Amarillo, TX 79105. Column sponsored by Goodland Area Chamber of Commerce Business Development Committee

The Goodland Daily News

(USPS No. 222-460. ISSN 0893-0562)

Member: Kansas Press Association

The Associated Press

Inland Press Association Colorado Press Association

Steve Haynes, President

Tom Betz, Editor/Editorial Page

Rachel Miscall, Managing Editor

Janet Craft, Society Editor/Reporter

Dana Sulsberger, Reporter/Sports

Doug Jackson, Cami Rodgers, Advertising Sales

Susanne Allaman, Advertising Production

Sheila Smith, Office Manager Debra Turner, Page Production

Nor'west Press

Jim Bowker, General Manager

Ron VanLoenen

Judy McKnight

Richard Westfahl

Lana Westfahl

Betty Morris

Helen Dilts

nwkansas.com

N.T. Betz, Director of Internet Services (nbetz@nwkansas.com)
Evan Barnum, Systems Admin. (support@nwkansas.com)

Published daily except Saturday and Sunday and the day observed for New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day, at 1205 Main St., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

Periodicals postage paid at Goodland, Kan. 67735; entered at the Goodland, Kan., Post Office under the Act of Congress of March 8, 1878.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Goodland Daily News, 1205 Main St., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

TELEPHONE: (785) 899-2338. Editorial e-mail: daily@nwkansas.com. Advertising questions can be sent to: gdnadv@nwkansas.com

The Goodland Daily News assumes no liability for mistakes or omissions in advertising or failure to publish beyond the actual cost of the ad.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: In Sherman County and adjacent counties: three months, \$20; six months, \$35; 12 months, \$65. By mail in Kansas, Colorado: three months, \$25; six months, \$45; 12 months, \$85. (All tax included.) Out of area: three months, \$30; six months, \$50; 12 months, \$90.

Incorporating:

The Sherman County Herald

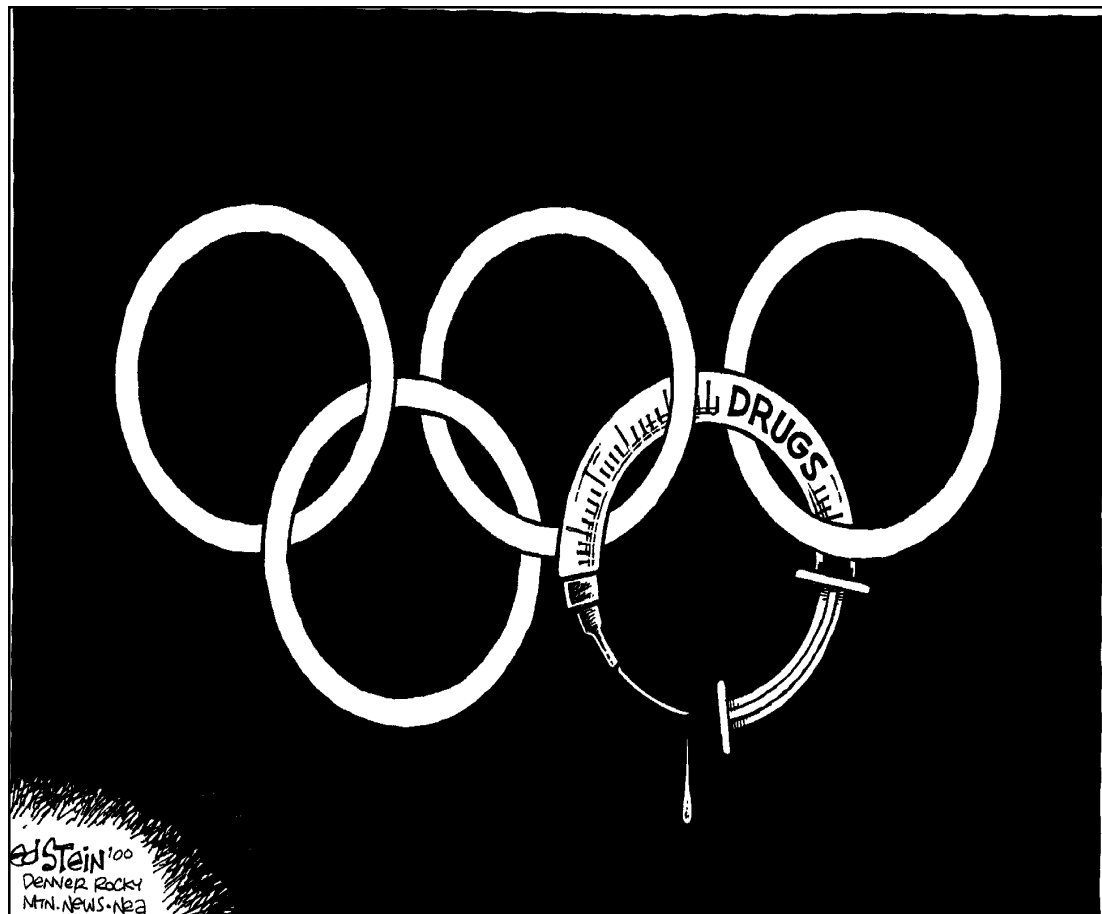
THE SHERMAN COUNTY STAR

Founded by Thomas McCants 1935-1961

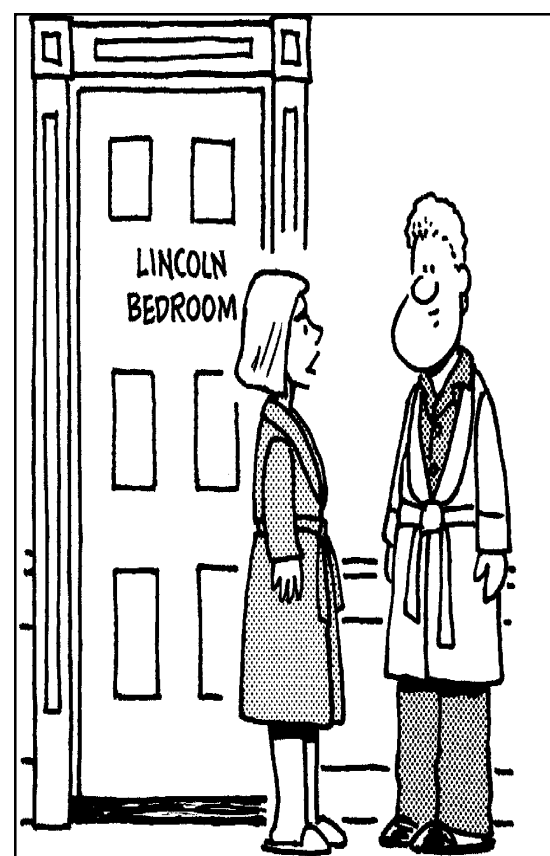
Founded by Eric and Roxie Yonkey 1994-2000

Nor'West Newspapers

Haynes Publishing Company



berry's world



Jim Berry
© 2000 by NEA, Inc.

"TIME IS RUNNING OUT. INSTEAD OF OVERNIGHT GUESTS, LET'S GO TO HOURLY GUESTS."