

commentary

from other pens...

Outpouring of help displays human spirit

The Topeka Capital-Journal on helping tornado victims:
The tornado that ripped through Hoisington two weeks ago left plenty of devastation. The path of destruction stretched one mile and spanned six blocks, destroying 200 buildings, damaging hundreds more and making many people homeless.

Out of that sorrow and hurt, however, has come an amazing outpouring of humanity which brings a smile. Immediately, volunteers rallied to extend a helping hand to the community and the victims. The tornado hit in the evening, but two shelters were quickly established to house nearly 300 people that night.

The Kansas Army National Guard dispatched 28 soldiers to the area to provide security and traffic control.

Then people started coming not only from across Kansas but from across the country to lend a hand...

Witnessing this generosity of individuals, organizations and even corporations can't help but warm the hearts of all of us. In an age when people sometimes seem to be drawing apart, this kind of outreaching restores our sense of community.

The benefit is felt not just by the victims, but by the volunteers as well. "We might be helping them, but they're inspiring us," one Red Cross worker said.

Amid all the destruction, it's a beautiful sight to behold.

The (Junction City) Daily Union on Brownback supporting museum:

Our U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback joined fellow Sen. Max Cleland (D-Ga.) and other sponsors in the U.S. Senate and House...to announce legislation that will create a National Museum of African American History and Culture in our nation's capital.

Throughout our nation, museums in small towns like Wakefield, counties like our own and schools of higher learning in every state, as well as private collections, show and tell about our history as a nation, as short as that may be when compared to other countries of the world.

In spite of its short life, the United States has a rich, many-faceted and complex history which single textbooks and even multi-volume studies can only briefly describe. And, sometimes, the description is faulty or incomplete...

The addition of a museum, especially one devoted to a comprehensive look at the contributions of one race of people to the emergence of the United States, today's premier world power, is an appropriate move.

It is appropriate this museum not be completely funded by tax dollars. It is a history of a group of people and, as such, needs to be funded in part by private citizens and organizations. Using our state historical society and museum as an example, a private-federal partnership in funding the work of a museum can work very well.

Great Bend Tribune on oil industry:

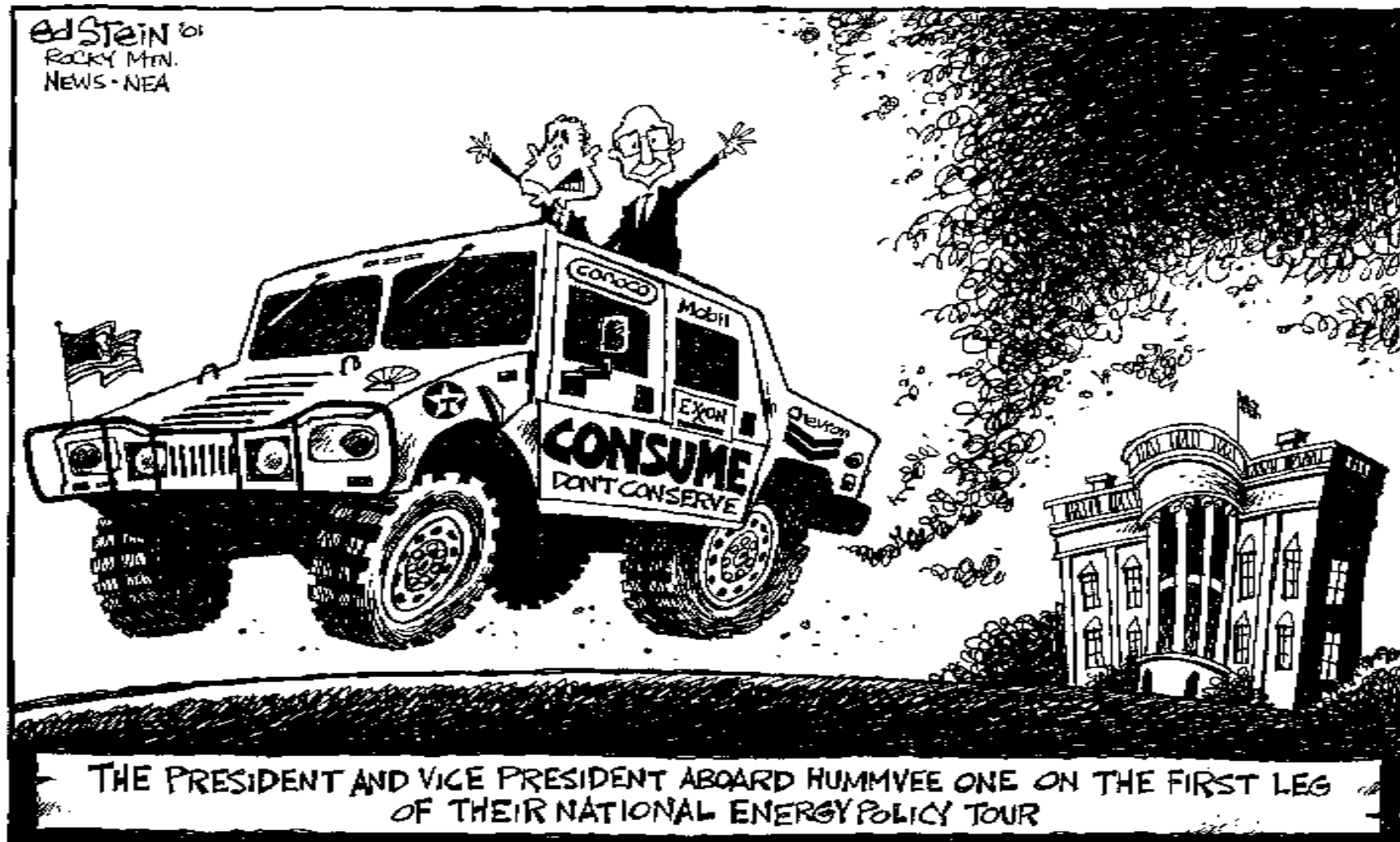
"What's in it for us?" may not be the most altruistic question for Kansans to ask, but it's one we might want to get a little more used to.

Take the gas prices. Are we paying more for gas because money is going into more expensive domestic oil production, which would be a good thing, or just because some fat cats decided to take more profits? Are we helping the Kansas oil economy or just getting gouged because vacation season is just around the corner and those same obese felines figure we won't stay home over 20 cents a gallon?

If we are truly helping the Kansas oil economy then we need to cut back somewhere else and bite the bullet. It's worth it.

We can buy less lottery tickets or make some other "sacrifices" to make up for a half a buck gallon — we don't know how high this is going.

But if we are just footing the bill for profit taking and our domestic oil producers aren't being put into a more stable position, then we ought to be hopping mad.



Respect for parents should be part of daily lives

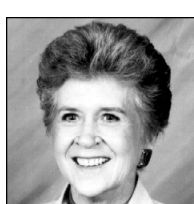
I don't know about you, but I have mixed emotions when Mother's Day comes around.

Like most holidays, we become a little overly-focused. Of course, it's wonderful to honor mothers (& fathers on Father's Day), but it shouldn't be just the actual day of emphasis. Respect of parents should be every day.

I miss my parents and resent hearing someone verbally or physically abusing the living parents they still have. How much I would give to have just one hour with mine! I would tell them how wise they were, how much I appreciate all their loving guidance.

I am grateful for the example of love and commitment they showed me. Those things were said when they were living, but every experience of my life proves more and more how right they were about so many things. And as I grow older, I know how fortunate I am to have had parents who took parenting seriously, even to the point of self-denial.

Mother's Day can get a little "sappy." Find an



Lorna G. T.

• commentary

appropriate way to tell your mother how much she means to you. You don't have to get all "mushy."

If she hasn't been the best mother, cut her some slack. Maybe she did the best she knew how. Maybe she didn't have the best example in her own childhood. Find something about her that you admire, and give her a kind word of encouragement and love. (You probably aren't the perfect child either!)

Helen Harrington has written this poem called *The Wife*: "Not always what she is painted, the wife is an individual. She has a life apart from what she puts blithely on before a mirror or friends. She is drawn more sharply than her children suppose and to more designs that a husband knows!"

Tho she may wear the sweet yielding smile that placates or can reconcile, she will have a steel intent another day, and argument, order, or blandishment cannot shake her from the course she wants to take.

The wife is a cushion. She is a prod, a thrust, a shelter; a no and a nod. She fastens firmly on family and home but has one foot loose enough to roam! Watch her—the wife! She is flesh-and-blood, real, stronger than she looks and inclined to feel that—since husbands and children are persons—she is a person, too—and has a right to be!"

Remember, mothers are people too. They are so much more than just the role of mother that they play. They make mistakes just like everyone else.

As a mother, there are many things I'd do over if I could. But my intentions were good, and they were based on the knowledge and wisdom I had at the time. I've grown wiser as life has kicked me around. Most mothers (& fathers) have. You children will too.

Music can make us smarter, reach into the dark

Dear Editor:

I am writing this letter in honor of National Music Week May 6-12. We as individuals, parents, and members need to remember the lasting value of music to enrich our lives whatever our age. The lessons learned in music class and or lessons give us a foundation to appreciate and better understand what is involved in the process of making music. Musicians are practical physicists using their craft in self satisfaction and service.

Music can make us smarter according to some experts. But music can reach us in the very darkest places humans can withdraw to. Our minds need not to be intact for music to make a difference in our lives.

We need to remember that in the money crunch eliminating the arts is a short term solution that has long term implications. Think of all the places that music is used to make our workload lighter.

Pat Schiefen
member of the Goodland Federated Music Club

Dear Editor:

I'd like to bring to your attention some of the finest people we've ever met.

My wife, Polly, and I were on our way from Dallas, Texas to Estes Park, Colo., traveling through Kansas Saturday, April 28th.

We were 12 miles east of Goodland on I-70 when a pickup passed us, slowed down, tailed us for a minutes, then waved us over. He saw smoke coming from the van. I got out and saw transmission fluid dripping rather quickly onto the road. He took me to Goodland and dropped me off at the Presto service station. The ladies there gave me three possible mechanics to try calling. It was 3 p.m., I didn't know anyone in town, and my family was sitting on the highway waiting for help to come. You can imagine how optimistic I was feeling at this time.

For some reason, I called the second number first. Alex of Alex's Radiator and Auto Repair was 25 miles east of Goodland, returning to Goodland with his tow truck. I told him what had happened and he said he'd pick up the van, and send a taxi for my family.

As I sat waiting at the gas station for Polly and the kids to come, plus the van, I was fairly discouraged. I was thinking back to all the car trouble we've had over the past year, and just couldn't believe we were facing this situation again. I told the Lord how discouraged I was and basically just asked for a miracle. The potential for us getting ripped off seemed highly likely.

In 20 minutes, Polly and the kids arrived in the taxi Alex called. Eric, the taxi driver, turned out to originally be from northern Colorado, near where Polly had grown up, and had everyone smiling by the time they came to pick me up.

Alex showed up with the van about 5 minutes later and had a cheerful conversation with two other guys that showed up. His smiling conversation with his friends didn't bolster my confidence at all. (It turned out he was telling them that as he was putting the van on the back of the tow truck, an 18-wheeler had come by, changed lanes abruptly, and due to the high cross winds we'd



from our readers

• to the editor

driven in all day, almost tipped over on the tow truck.) Since it was now 3 p.m. and the auto parts store had closed at noon, I wondered if anything was going to be done that weekend. Alex made several calls, left twice and was finally about to get the front transmission seal he needed around 4:30 p.m. He suggested we all go to the nearby Dairy Queen and that he'd come and get us when he got through. So Polly and the kids left and I began my education on the intricacies of transmission repair.

Unlike most shops, he didn't care at all if I got on a creeper and watched him take the transmission out. Alex had determined that the front seal had failed, but to replace it, he had to remove the transmission. It's a bear getting a transmission out, but he knew what he was doing. He worked on it from 4:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., with help from his father-in-law, Fred, and John.

During that time, Alex filled me in on the major entertainment of the area (dirt track racing on a 3/8th mile track - hitting 80 to 85 mph). I learned the difference between bombers and cruisers, and how Alex had rolled one car eight times in a race. He ventured that, "I was a little sore after that one." It turned out all of his friends built and raced their own cars, even the taxi driver (see what good hands Polly and the kids were in?). I also learned that if we'd had our breakdown the next Saturday, which marked the official start of racing season, everyone would have been at the track, and no one would have been around until Monday.

I also learned which cars he hated working on, that he'd grown up in Goodland on a wheat farm, and judging from the constant ringing of two phones, that he was a rather popular person in town. He could carry on a conversation or answer the phone with his nose two inches from the bottom of the van and fluid dripping down his elbow, never missing a beat. I don't think I've ever heard a more polite mechanic.

While I'm learning about transmission repair, Polly has moved from Dairy Queen to Wal-Mart, then over to Taco Bell where she met Benjamin and Evelyn Duell. It turns out that Mrs. Duell struck up a conversation with Polly, prompting my 12 year-old son, Philip, to ask Mr. Duell if he knew anything about airplanes. Given that Mr. Duell had spent some time in a C-47 and had a daughter who is a copilot for American Airlines, this led to a rather lively discussion. After some conversation, it turned out the Duells were first cousins of some of Polly's friends in Greeley, Colo. It's a small world. Mr. Duell offered to drop by the shop to see how things were going. Alex and I had just returned from Wal-Mart where we'd handled some financial matters, and found Mr. Duell waiting for us. I assured him that I'd be at Taco Bell in a few minutes and he said he'd wait with Polly until I got there.

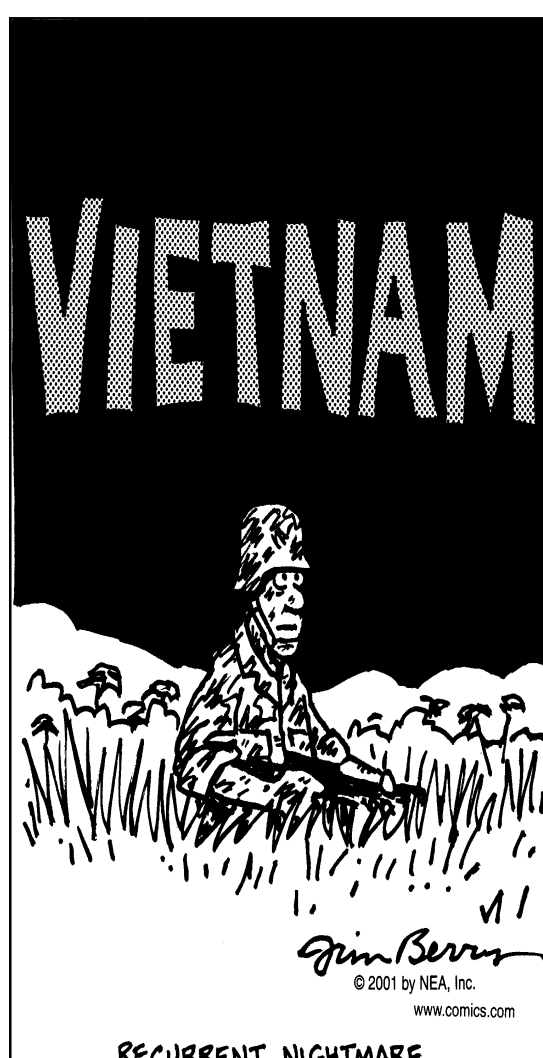
A minor adjustment needed to be made, and while that took place, I was getting my receipt from Alex when a couple of other guys dropped by. You can't rush Mr. Congeniality, and around 9:45 p.m., we'd settled up and Alex was ready for a test spin. Unbelievably, he charged us less than our mechanic back home would have charged, and it included the tow, taxi ride, and all this work on a Saturday evening. So much for getting ripped off!

We had just gotten back when the Duells showed up with Polly and the kids. Amazingly, they asked if we wanted to spend the night with them since it was so late. We had planned to continue on to Denver, where Polly's parents live, but given that it was really 11 p.m. Texas time for us, we gratefully took them up on their hospitality. We had a wonderful visit with them that night, had breakfast the next morning, and took off around 9 a.m. They are wonderful people, and were a tremendous encouragement. They even had a box of books and polished rocks for the kids, and gave us a gift to help us on our way.

I think we got our miracle. Breaking down on a trip is never fun, but if you've got to do it, do it at Goodland. We couldn't have been more impressed with the people we met and thank God for the wonderful treatment we received at their hands.

Scott and Polly Rempel
Dallas, Texas

berry's world



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