

# commentary

from our viewpoint...

## Do complaints mean we don't like anything?

Have we had enough?  
Why don't we stop trashing Goodland and everyone join together to make it better?  
People have complained about the giant sunflower painting, the new pool, the new highways and just about anything else that's happened.  
Others want the Chamber director's hide, while still others are mad about the tax increase passed by the city commission.  
A lot of these complaints are way off base. The people who are griping just don't know what they are talking about.  
Isn't anybody happy about anything in this city?  
We should be. Goodland isn't perfect, but it's a pretty nice place. People here are good to one another and the city is well run.  
Thanks to far-sighted leadership at City Hall, Goodland has one of the finest public swim-and-play complexes in Kansas. The new water park is simply beautiful. It replaced an old pool that leaked millions of gallons of water every summer. Yes, it's more expensive to run, but the old pool had to be replaced.  
People who come here from other cities marvel at the pool and say it's a bargain. Deal with it.

And, guys, nobody ever said there was a big hole under the pool. The water system connecting it to the power plant leaked and had to be replaced. That would have cost a bundle, so the city went with a new pool.  
The big sunflower painting? Hey, nobody has to like *any* object of art. It's a personal decision. But be nice to the people who put it there. They worked hard for the city, made not a penny and the painting didn't cost taxpayers a single dime.

It you think it's ugly, that's your right. But our bet is that eventually the sunflowers will draw thousands of visitors here, prompt revitalization of south Goodland and turn out to be by far the smartest economic development move ever. And the least expensive.

Heck, one writer even complained about the proposed sports center, which (like the sunflowers) would be built entirely with private money. That's looking the gift horse in the mouth, huh?

The road work? Here, it's the business community that's complaining. Some of their concerns are legitimate. But for the next 20 years, Sherman County is going to be darned glad to have those highways. They will bring a lot of business here, and we need them.

Economic development? Hey, we have a new ag chemical facility going in. S&T Telephone is building a new office, which the city and county support, and getting ready to create more than a dozen jobs. There are new businesses on Main and the city's economy seems to be growing.

Chamber manager Ron Harding worked hard to make the sunflower painting a reality and is trying hard to recruit a grocery downtown. It's easy to criticize, but finding someone to do a better job might be tough.

Taxes? People have a right to complain when they go up. In a year like this, we think any public official who raises taxes is taking a big risk. Our advice is to listen carefully to the voters, but we'll save that one for another day.

One truly disturbing thread through all of these problems is that the people doing the complaining had a chance, for the most part, to say something before *any* of these things were set in concrete: The pool, the painting, the highway work, certainly the sports complex.

When the county decided not to pave a detour for the road work north of town, no business owner said a word. When the city decided to build the new pool, no one complained. No one stood up and said the sunflower painting was stupid *before* it went up.

And people, now is way too late to change any of those things.  
So why don't we all get over it and put our energy into something that will matter? — *Steve Haynes*

END

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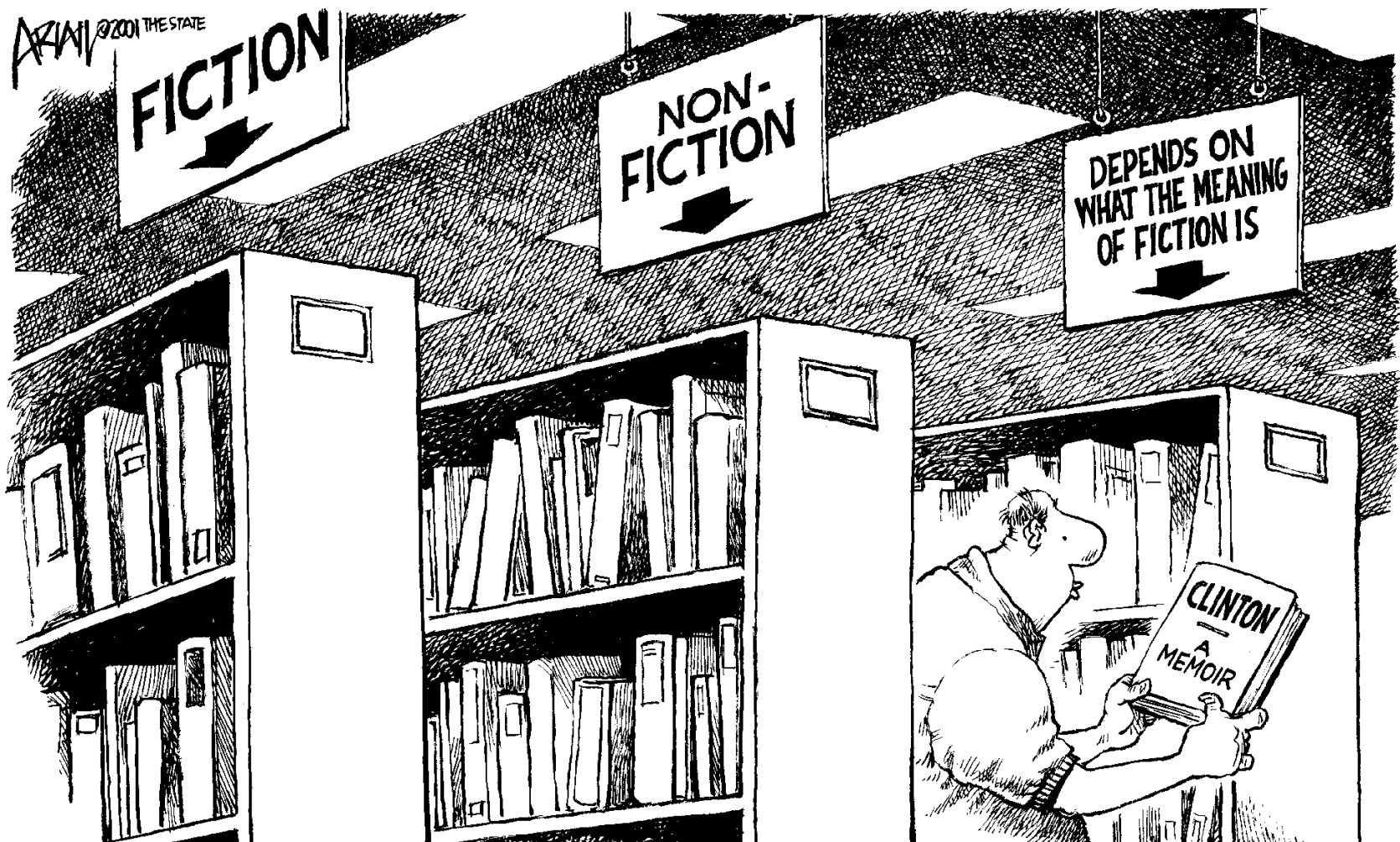
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## Does giving China Olympics signal end of ideals

Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are empty stream beds, dry holes, illusions. At least they are according to China.

With the International Olympic Committee awarding the 2008 Olympics to Beijing, the world has blessed China's view. Maybe the communists are right. Everyone knows those puny, insignificant ideas of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are outdated and will only lead to failure. Just like drug abuse. Many numerous examples of how these ideas lead to failure have occurred in Beijing at a historic place known as Tiananmen Square.

First Tiananmen Square has important symbolic significance for the Chinese Communist party. For example, the huge Gate of Heavenly Peace stands on the north end of the square and is the entrance to the fabled Forbidden City. It is also where Chairman Mao, after the Communist led revolution in 1949, declared the founding of the People's Republic of China. Those are "successes" at Tiananmen, but those have nothing to do with life, liberty, and happiness.

The recent failures of life, liberty and happiness at Tiananmen Square began in 1976. After the death of an outspoken critic of the old, powerful communist dictators, mourners went to Tiananmen Square to show their respect for the critic's life, and his ideas. They paraded around the square peacefully paying their final respects, until the communist government decided their "children" had wasted enough life, liberty, and happiness on a dead man. Once the communist leader-



**mitch  
hixson**

• the soundgarden

ship tired of the people in the square, and thank goodness they did, military units were sent in and violently forced the mourners out. The communist government decided life, liberty and happiness had run its course. Thank goodness someone in China had the "intelligence" to make the decision. Today, everyone knows life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness have run out of gas and relevance.

In December 1986, thousands of Chinese university students organized a large protest demanding greater political freedom and less government corruption. It inspired demonstrations in a dozen other cities, including Beijing. The Chinese Communist leader at the time, Deng Xiaoping, immediately took steps to smother the protests. He was acting upon his belief that "the only reason students would start a movement was that they had too much freedom, not too little." Thank goodness China had a leader at the time who recognized the limitations of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Think of the evils that would be currently ravaging the Chinese countryside if life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness hadn't been crushed by the enlightened communist Chinese government.

The most recent chunk of Chinese history, which

spans centuries, to bleed out of Tiananmen Square is the student democracy demonstrations of the spring of 1989. Between April 17 and June 4, 1989, hundreds of thousands of college students peacefully began "living" in Tiananmen Square. The students became the "stars" of CNN and other nightly news television programs. They peacefully asked for greater democracy and less government corruption. They wanted more life, more liberty and more happiness. The students held regular marches through the streets of Beijing, organized and participated in massive hunger strikes, and with their sheer numbers, they democratically and peacefully began putting pressure on the communist government to shape up.

The government, though, was smart. They imposed the "Communist Blue Light Special," also known as excessive media control teamed with aggressive military and police action. Throughout the months of the student-led Tiananmen Square demonstrations, both the students hollering for a semblance of democracy and the dictators howling to keep the students at bay, battled for control of China's mind and soul. Thank goodness the communist "adults" realized the emptiness of these American "ideas."

Do we in America believe in these ideas anymore? Are we willing to defend these ideas that veterans have fought and died for? Or are we allowing apathy, selfishness, the International Olympic Committee, and the communists in China to rewrite our American history and beliefs? You decide.

## Playing the health card



**red  
green**

• north of forty

longer, but stayed neat through the magic of grease. A comb in the back pocket and a monthly oil change, and you were in business. Women's hair got a little longer, and there were a lot of ponytails because women wanted something to bounce when they danced, and at that time, the ponytail was the only acceptable option. Then came the '60s, and everything went wild and free. Free love lost a lot of its appeal when you couldn't tell the boys from the girls. Since then, there's been a bit of everything, but the latest trend is toward bald. Even by people who have hair. Young people are shaving their heads. If hair length is a sign of personal freedom, we must be doing something wrong. For me, I'm so confused by all the hairstyles I've experienced that I'm currently going with a combination — long curly locks on the sides and the back to let you know I was a flower child and bald spots on top to indicate I am hip and happening.

**SILENCE IS GOLDEN**

Things middle-aged guys should never say:  
— Watch this.

— I'm telling you the meat is cooked.  
— Nothing can possibly go wrong.  
— I've never had a speeding ticket.  
— My back never felt better.  
— I'll have the onion rings.  
— Hand me that sledgehammer.  
— Do I look OK in these pants?

**HE SAID, SHE SAID**

The last few weeks, I've been saying things exactly at the same time that my wife has been saying them. That bothers me. I don't mind so much if it's her saying what I would say, but I'm concerned that it's me saying what she would say. I've worked really hard throughout our marriage to fake-change. I've pretended to enjoy gardening. I've gone to tea-rooms. I've even watched Oprah. But when I start talking like my wife, that sounds like real change to me. It's not good. I want to keep my own identity. I don't want to become my wife. She does a much better job at being her than I do. If it keeps up, I'll be declared redundant and then she'll downsize me.

**QUOTE OF THE DAY:** "The advantage of exercising every day is that you die healthier." — Red Green

*Red Green is the star of "The Red Green Show," a television series seen in the U.S. on PBS and in Canada on the CBC Network, and the author of "The Red Green Book" and "Red Green Talks Cars: A Love Story."*

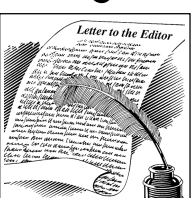
## Scouts trip saved by Goodland good Samaritans

To the Editor,

Yes, this is one of those stories that is so rare anymore — not a gripe, not a slam, not a complaint. Hopefully this first sentence has not discouraged you from reading further. This is recognition of a good deed, Good Samaritans, unsung heroes and people who care about the well being of strangers.

On Saturday, July 29, I was part of the leadership team on a bus carrying 20 members of Shawnee Boy Scout Troop 185. We were returning from a week long high adventure camping trip in Salida, Colo. The trip had already been punctuated with a bear attack in our camp, which made national headlines and a boy in our troop breaking his leg in three places while three miles up a mountain trail. So, what else could happen?

Just after crossing the Kansas state line on our return home, a loud pop followed by a long grinding noise echoed through the bus. We had blown the engine. The bus full of boys and leaders came to a stop on the shoulder of I-70, 13 miles from the Goodland exit. After examining the hole in the side



**from our  
readers**

• to the editor

of our engine, cell phones flew from the belts and pockets of our leaders. It was time to explore our options, which without some help, were few.

This is where the kindness of the people of Goodland kicked in. Two trucks which had been headed westbound pulled up behind our bus. Josh Dechant, John West and John Raby, citizens of Goodland, began what would be a seven-hour commitment on their part to make sure our troop was safe and comfortable until parents and friends could make the eight hour drive from Shawnee, and shuttle our boys and gear back home.

Josh immediately called his wife Koren and the shutting of gear began to the Presto Station in Goodland. Josh called in the reinforcements by

contacting the police dispatcher, who contacted Dennis Saint of local Boy Scout Troop 142. Dennis opened up his troop meeting place at the Goodland United Methodist Church, where after a much-welcomed Pizza Hut delivery, boys and leaders bedded down until the posse from Shawnee arrived. Our bus was towed to MCB's for safekeeping.

To Josh, Koren, John, Dennis and the good people of Goodland, we simply wish to say thank-you. We are grateful to you for your assistance and kindness. This type of unselfish action goes unnoticed these days, no matter how much we as parents try to teach it to our youth. A valuable lesson was learned, or maybe just reinforced. Hopefully fond memories were created on both sides of the equation, care giver and care receivers alike. They say heroes are everywhere, you just have to need them. On this single day in western Kansas, heroes were hard at work just outside Goodland.

Tom Smith  
Assistant Scoutmaster Troop 185  
Shawnee