

commentary

from our viewpoint...

U.S. focus needs to save people from the winter

Now that we are all stuffed with turkey, and the Marines have landed at Kandahar, Americans need to turn their focus to saving the people of Afghanistan from the coming winter.

We already have done much for Afghanistan. There were celebrations in the streets of Kabul after the Taliban fled. Music, banned for seven years, wafted from shops and homes. Crowds pushed and shoved to see the first movies.

Women who felt like it shed their robes and returned to work. Television came back on the air. News was beamed to the provinces. There was talk of a new government. And thousands of men lined up to savor the simple freedom of a shave.

People were happy, and this in a country where millions have fled and thousands might have starved under the harsh and isolated Taliban regime.

Americans have shown themselves this year to be an extraordinarily generous people. We have coughed up millions for disaster relief in New York and Washington, millions more, in fact, than may be needed.

But in Afghanistan, the need is bottomless. And while the “humanitarian emergency” is said to be less frightful than at first thought, it is a country crying to be rebuilt.

Children need food. Adults need jobs. The Afghan nation needs money. At war since the time of the Soviet invasion, Afghanistan is a country reduced to rubble. In Kabul, every street corner shows bomb and rocket damage.

We can and should help. We have contributed to the destruction, and now we can help with the relief. Maybe the American Red Cross should consider sending some of its “surplus” money to the Asian nation. The Afghanis are as much victims of Al Qaeda as those in New York.

The Afghan people are not our enemies. Their reaction to the fall of the Taliban is the same as our, only more joyous.

Events have shown the Taliban to be a hard-edged minority trying to enforce its will on the Afghan people, a people who want only what all of us want: peace, a place to live, a way to make a living. And freedom.

But freedom has come to Afghanistan at a terrible price and could be short-lived unless the new government gets support from the rest of the world.

Now is our time to give, though most Afghanis live in a world far removed from ours.

As we pursue our objective — to run the terrorist murders of Osama bin Laden off the face of the earth — we can and should take time to help his other victims. Their need is as great, if not greater, than ours in New York. — *Steve Haynes*

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There are positives to living in a care home

I don't know about you, but I do a lot of visiting in nursing homes.

They can be clean, with good meals and excellent care, and yet I think no one looks forward to being in one. Many people won't go to see people there — even their own relatives, and that's sad. Yes, it can be depressing, but the people in them can also inspire the good instincts within us.

Most of the people there are lonely: for their lost health, their family get-togethers, but most of all for their home. It's a terminal case of homesickness.

Once a woman called and asked for my advice about whether or not to move into one: "Do you think I'll be happy there?"

I had to honestly answer, "No. But you aren't happy at home either. You know you can't care for yourself any longer. What are your alternatives?" When she admitted there weren't any, I tried to help her think of the positives of such a change.

Another woman I met was very unhappy. She wasn't doing well at all, adjusting to the nursing home. I talked to her several times, also trying to point out the positives.



**lorna
g. t.**

• commentary

One day she asked me to write her a prayer that she could read when things seemed overwhelming to her.

If you have a loved one in a care home, maybe this prayer will help him/her. It might even be better if you go often to pray it together:

MY NURSING HOME PRAYER

Dear loving God,

I come to you with praise and thanksgiving. I thank you for the blessings of good food, a warm place to stay, and tender hands that care for me. I have so much for which to be thankful.

O God, you know my heart. You know before I ask, and yet I still come to You as a pleading child. I want to go home. I miss being home. Jesus must have felt some of the same homesickness when He left His heavenly home to come to earth, yet he

didn't grumble. Teach me to have the mind and heart of Christ.

Give me patience, knowing that You are with me. You have been my constant companion throughout my life. How can I possibly believe You'd desert me now?

Help me to see the things I have, instead of the things I have not. Lift my spirits so that I do not concentrate on myself, but instead on Your guidance. Teach me see You in the people around me.

Forgive me when I doubt, chastise me when I complain, console me when I cry. Strengthen my health if it be Your will, but give me a gracious spirit to accept whatever comes.

I ask Your presence through these long days and longer nights while I live, and I pray that in death, You will accept me into eternal life.

Amen.

As we begin this 2001 Advent season, as we prepare for the joy of Christmas, I ask God to help us all to find contentment in whatever situation we find ourselves.

To contact Lorna about her column you may e-mail her at lornagt@nwkansas.com

Disappointed in the city's yard waste decision

To the Editor:

My wife and I were raised and grew up in Goodland. We moved away for over 20 years and began planning to move back about one and one-half years ago. We returned almost three years ago and I've reserved my comments because I felt I hadn't lived here long enough and also because I thought things could only get better.

I was wrong.

We love Goodland, the town and the people, but if we'd started planning our return within the last three years we might not have moved back here. Not because of the town or the people, but because of the city government.

About the time I think I've seen it all, the city government does something worse. It seems they do the things a select few want and not what the majority wants. When a few dozen people crowded a City Commission meeting to protest a tax increase, the commissioners didn't do what the majority wanted but what they wanted. Last I knew, Goodland was part of the U.S.A. and a democracy.

Our taxes and fees to run the city only keep going up. A city government should look for ways to lower taxes and be receptive to opposition, working together to benefit the citizens. Don't tell us our taxes won't be used or raised to fund a project, that the project will be paid by donations and will be



**from our
readers**

• to the editor

self sustaining, then a month after completion the taxpayers have to swim in debt to make up for bad city management decisions.

For three years I've heard about trying to entice businesses and people to move here. "Come to Goodland, visit our museum, Handy House, water park and the Van Gogh. Shop Downtown at some of northwest Kansas' finest stores. Visit friends and family, spend your time and money here." Just don't come in your motor home; it'll get ticketed while you visit or shop if it's parked anywhere on a street in the city! Is that common sense?

We have family that pass through, stop, visit and spend time here — in their motor home. They eat at restaurants and spend money, the things a city government should welcome! In the future, they won't stop here if there's a threat of a ticket.

On paper, the city wants to enhance Goodland's appearance. You'll get a ticket if your yard isn't kept up and mowed, which I'm in favor of. In re-

ality, this week we learned the city is removing the yellow grass dumpsters because some people are abusing them. There could be many solutions. Why not use one that benefits the citizens, instead of making things more difficult? Why are we paying more fees and getting less? To quote a friend, "I don't get it!"

To make Goodland grow and thrive, the population has to be happy and proud to live here. That takes a City Commission that listens and works for the populace. If prospective businesses and people come to scout out Goodland and they hear that the taxes are high and people are unhappy, they'll pass on by.

There are many things in Goodland that enhance our quality of life and I appreciate them all. My wife and I moved back because we have a connection to Goodland, but if we didn't, we would not have moved here. Why would others want to make Goodland their home, or why would someone stay?

By nature, people make decisions with the least obstacles. If it's easier and cheaper to live somewhere else, people will move on. The city officials need to entice and make people want to move here and stay, not do things to keep them away or to run them off.

David J. Daniels
Goodland

Beyond morality in dealing with marriage

It's not quite right to call the following a morality tale. Not only would extracting a moral at this point in the story be a dicey enterprise, it's unclear the players would know exactly what to do with one. And while this story of the very rich and somewhat famous may stand as a cautionary tale for the rest of us, its circumstances are so far removed from real life as to be almost freakish. Still, it does contain recognizable elements of the most common plots from the book of life (certainly from the Victorian novel), providing an unusual test for the bounds of modern convention.

This story, still a-hatching, could go one of two ways: Either an unmarried girl is "in trouble" and her man is a cad, or a wily female has "entrapped" an unwitting male worm who, much to her consternation, has turned away. Either way, the New York Post's headline humanitarians got the gist of the matter across this month with "Pregnant Hurley's ex-lover: Prove it." That indelicate command is reportedly the very challenge American billionaire Stephen Bing put to Elizabeth Hurley after the British model-actress announced she was expecting a child in April — fathered by her ex-boyfriend, Mr. Bing. (It's worth mentioning is that Bing owns a home in California where the law apportions as much as 28 percent of a father's gross income in child support.)

At this point in the 21st century, the unwed status of either the mother-to-be or father-to-be (ex-"partners" in the current parlance) is not at issue.



**diana
west**

• commentary

Still, despite prevailing attitudes of enlightenment on the state of matrimony, there are implications to the case that are not likely to be explained by the clinical outcome of the all-but-inevitable paternity test.

The tabloids are calling Bing's reported skepticism as a gross humiliation for the woman in question — a "sudden slap," says the New York Post, a "shattering insult," says London's News of the World, which broke the story. Such Victorian-style reactions, common enough from within a historic framework, would seem to defy all the postmodern conventions of ... well, unconventionality. While the tabs may not exactly be arbiters of behavior a la mode, they have managed to express the reflexive response that social engineering has not entirely eliminated in the rest of us. It is, after all, the barely implicit accusation of female promiscuity — not male philandering — that lies behind the headlines. Hurley, a lovely woman who has made a vocation out of being sparingly draped, may symbolize sexual liberation as well as anyone, but even at this late date, her adventures in sexual equality come

across as misadventures.

Another curious element of the story is the plushly padded insularity of the pair involved. As the grandson of a real estate magnate, Bing's life is built upon a reality-defying fortune; as a very lucrative Beautiful Person, Hurley's livelihood depends on exposure-fueled celebrity. (Reuters notes Hurley "sprang to fame" after attending a movie premiere with actor and ex-boyfriend Hugh Grant "in a scanty Versace dress.") Such people don't have to follow the same rules as regular people — or do they?

Enter Grant, Miss Hurley's former squeeze and no stranger to embarrassing publicity himself. The British leading man has now ridden onto the scene to play Galahad. According to "a friend of Liz" quoted in the London tabloid, Grant has pledged "his unconditional support" during the pregnancy. And more. "Basically," the friend added, "Hugh would marry her at the drop of a hat if she wanted."

Ah, the classic triangle. Hurley, it seems, could do worse than "unconditional support" during a pregnancy. Then again, maybe she could do better than marriage "at the drop of a hat." As for Bing, it's probably just as well that he and Hurley now communicate through lawyers. (Too bad they didn't choose that method sooner.) Just one problem: It looks as if the moral of this story will have to wait until the lady makes up her mind.

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