

commentary

from other pens...

Menninger survives, keeps top ranking

The Topeka Capital-Journal on Menninger:

Menninger is still looking for a new partner, but the long-time Topeka institution has emerged from its downsizing and failed alliance with Baylor medical school much stronger than it has been in some years, officials say.

And the trials and tribulations of the last year have not affected the world-renowned mental health clinic's reputation. Just last month, it maintained its ranking as one of the top mental health hospitals in the country by U.S. News and World Report. ...

Its staff has dwindled to about 250, from about 1,000 two years ago, and the number of psychiatrists on staff is down to seven from 44 in 1997.

But the Menninger Foundation has more than \$80 million in assets and much of the financial pressure has eased.

Painful though it was, perhaps Menninger simply needed to go through the downsizing that it did, just as many other companies have had to do in recent years.

However, in the downsizing, Menninger had to sacrifice its educational and research programs. ...

Menninger had planned to announce its affiliation with a medical school on Aug. 1, but that has been postponed indefinitely. Menninger officials reportedly have narrowed the list to five finalists, from an original list of about 180, but they aren't saying who they are.

With things going as well as they are right now, they can afford to take their time rather than rushing into a decision.

The Manhattan Mercury on water restrictions:

Barely had it been noted last week that this drought has benefits — about half the usual number of tornadoes nationwide — than weekend rain that fell on desperately thirsty ground came with storms that caused their share of destruction. ...

That said, the moisture — several inches of rain in parts of the county — was a godsend. More rain fell in a matter of minutes Saturday (and again Sunday) than had fallen since mid-June. ...

Which brings us to the city's consideration of water restrictions. Word of the possibility came last week when the city formally encouraged residents to reduce their water use, especially pertaining to the watering — or overwatering — of lawns.

The response from homeowners ... was predictable. Many kept on watering. Maybe they figured that if the city was serious, it would have acted more forcefully. Maybe homeowners were waiting for the city to mandate restrictions.

If so, the city shouldn't keep them waiting. Not when, before the weekend rain, the city had gotten barely half of its average annual rainfall. And not when Gov. Bill Graves has asked President Bush for emergency assistance to cope with the drought in Kansas. And not when surrounding communities have taken more drastic steps. ...

And, as the response to the city's polite request last week to reduce water usage indicates, the best way to do that is through mandated restrictions.

where to write

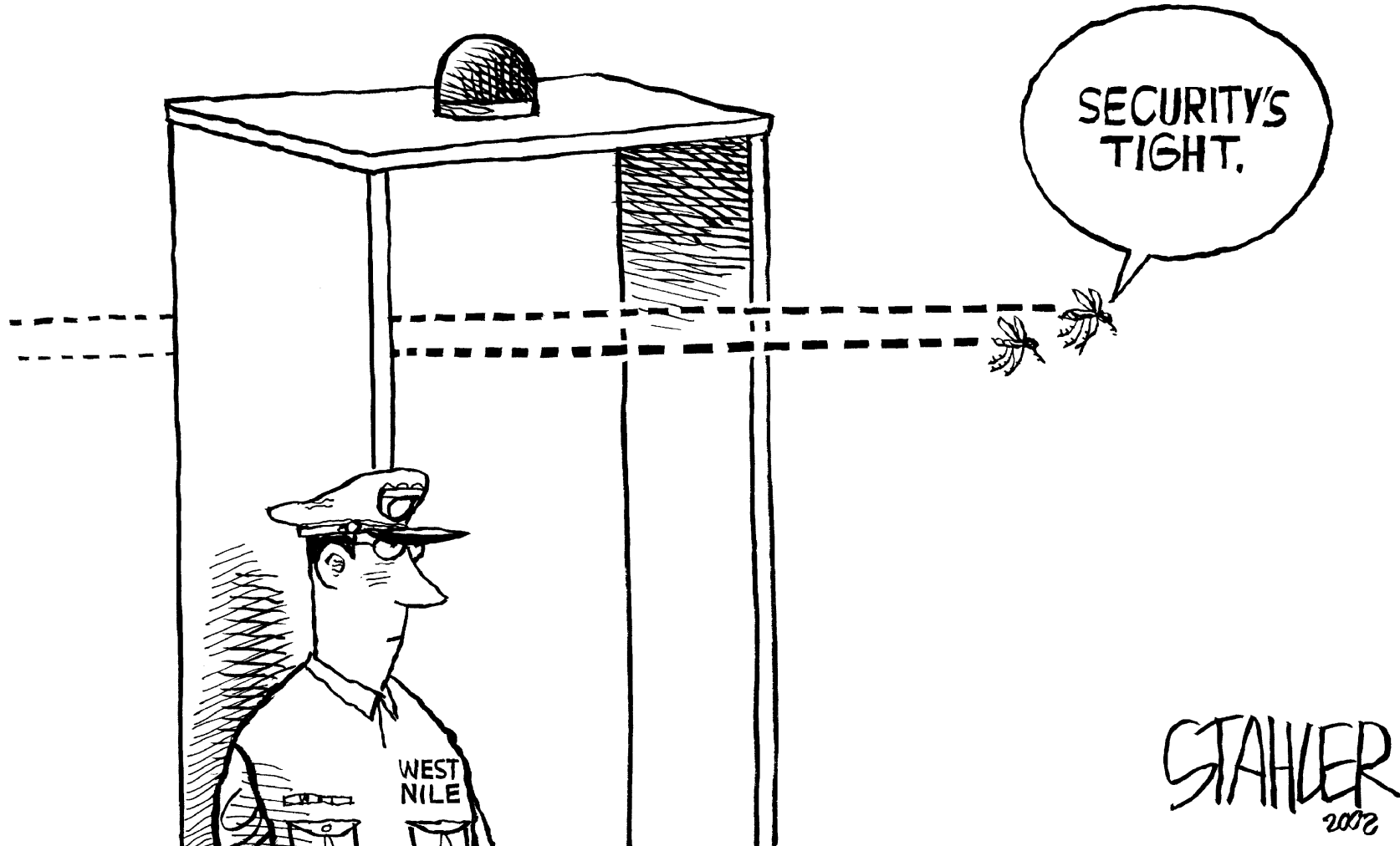
U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, 302 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774

U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521

U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran, 1217 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 225-2715

State Rep. Jim Morrison, State Capitol Building Rm. 174-W, Topeka, KS 66612. (785) 296-7676

State Sen. Stan Clark, State Capitol Building Rm. 128-S, Topeka, KS 66612. (785) 296-7399



Boardroom dregs on parade

For pure symbolic value, the arrests of Adelphia founder John Rigas and his two sons were priceless. The feds led the three men away in handcuffs, charging them with nine counts of conspiracy to commit securities, bank and wire fraud and accusing them of using Adelphia, a publicly held company, as their own "personal piggy bank."

But the reasons for the arrests two weeks ago aren't as significant as their fabulous showiness.

The press had been alerted. So television stations captured and aired the scene repeatedly, like ESPN showing the catch of the week.

I couldn't see enough. I flipped through channels looking for it. The men in tailored suits with their hands behind their backs, escorted by federal marshals on New York's Upper East Side at dawn. For me, Pa Rigas and the boys were taking the perp walk for all the grand CEOs who are, finally, getting their comeuppance.

Every day, it seems, another CEO plummets from his perch at the right hand of God. Tyco's Dennis Kozlowski gets nailed for tax evasion. ImClone's Sam Waksal is arraigned on insider-trading and securities fraud charges. WorldCom's Bernard Ebbers faces indictment in connection with his company's faulty accounting.

Joseph Nacchio was forced to resign from Qwest last month amid an SEC investigation into the company's accounting practices. This week, Thomas Middelhoff, chairman and chief executive of



joan ryan

• commentary

media conglomerate Bertelsmann, joined Jean-Marie Messier of Vivendi Universal and Robert Pittman of AOL Time Warner in a string of oysters among once untouchable media moguls.

A year ago, such a bloodbath was unthinkable. If 1980s Wall Street produced Masters of the Universe, 1990s Wall Street gave us Messiahs of the Universe.

CEOs became the supermodels of the business world, showing off their winter-tan faces on the covers of Fortune and the New York Times Magazine, writing books about their particular strain of genius and sailing to Bermuda in boats named "Himself." A late-'90s CEO would happily land in the news for buying a 64-room home in Bel Air with \$65 million in cash, as Global Crossing's Gary Winnick did. A CEO wouldn't blush while cashing in \$72 million in compensation for a single year, as Disney's Michael Eisner did, or demanding a \$10 million bonus in a year that saw 6,000 employees laid off, as WorldCom's Ebbers did.

Fueled by the notion that a single human being could make or break a multibillion-dollar organi-

zation, CEOs saw their average pay increase by 442 percent in the last decade to \$13.1 million — 571 times the average hourly worker's pay.

But as they sipped watermelon martinis in the Hamptons with Diane Sawyer and Jerry Seinfeld, their companies fell apart, struck down by a fatal combination of neglect and narcissism. "The stock bubble — in which paper wealth created auras of power and invincibility — seems to have bred an environment in which the narcissist who may lurk within many of us was able to emerge in feverish full bloom," columnist Tim Race wrote recently in the New York Times.

Now that the economy is tanking, a once tolerant public is heading with pitchforks and torches to the golden boys' gated estates. CEOs are the new personification of greed and knavery, the new punchline to late-night TV jokes.

In a column a few months ago, I predicted that workers would one day storm corporate headquarters in outrage over the obscene pay and stock options among CEOs — especially those CEOs who were pocketing millions while laying off employees. As it turned out, we didn't have to lift a finger in bringing down these brilliant, savvy, invincible leaders. They did it to themselves. May the perp parade continue.

Joan Ryan is a columnist for the San Francisco Chronicle. Send comments to her e-mail at joanryan@sfchronicle.com.

What smells so funny?

The coupon said, "Fresh New Country Scent!" and there, floating over a background of tree-covered hills, was a giant can of room deodorizer. And on the front of the can was a picture of my house: A little farmhouse surrounded by rolling hills and trees. Theirs had a white picket fence and mine has a stone fence, but other than that, they were almost identical. On the back of the coupon was a little scratch-and-sniff square. I scratched, I sniffed. It smelled for all the world like laundry soap mixed with pine needles. If they start making an under-arm deodorant for trees, this is what it will smell like. But it's not what the country smells like.

When I hear people say they wish they lived in the country because the cities have become so dirty, I wonder — do they understand that the country is where dirt comes from? The country has a dirt floor. It is filthy. It is full of mud, bugs, rotting pine needles, decomposing mushrooms, twigs, worms and slugs. It has dust bunnies the size of — oh, never mind, those are real bunnies. And those are real bunny droppings.



jim mullen

• the village idiot

Someone over at Air Freshener Central is living in a parallel universe where the country is taken out and dry cleaned twice a week. They are right about one thing, if you want a lot of bang for your fragrance buck, you can't beat the country. It's wonderfully smelly. An ever-changing mixture of odors from septic system backups, frightened skunks, mown hay, freshly spread manure, fermenting silage, stagnant water, damp leaves, compost heaps, and the town landfill. It's really not something you'd want to spray around your living room, even if it does remove that heavy cigar-smoke smell from your curtains.

There's a fresh new scent for each day in the country. I found a deer carcass by the side of the road re-

cently. The vultures had done a pretty good job but it still had a good odor on to it. My nose told me it had been there three or four days. I sniffed the room deodorizer once again to see if it had that authentic hint of death and decay, but it had been left out entirely.

Of course, the air-freshener industry doesn't really care what the country smells like. All they know is that an air freshener called "Fresh New City Scent!" would sit on the store shelf until the end of time. The mental whiff of garbage piled up on street corners, bubble gum-covered sidewalks baking in the hot sun, rolling clouds of bus exhaust, gutters full of fast food containers and unscraped dog poop is too much to overcome. The funny thing is, they would make it smell exactly like "Fresh New Country Scent!" The only thing different about it would be that instead of a picture of a farmhouse on the can they'd put a picture of giant, doorman apartment building.

Jim Mullen is the author of "It Takes A Village Idiot: A Memoir of Life After the City" (Simon and Schuster, 2001). You can contact him at Jim_Mullen@entertainmentweekly.com

County answers questions about landfill

To the Editor:

There have been many discussions concerning the county landfill and the city trash collection system over the past year.

We would like to answer some questions concerning your landfill.

As Sherman County Commissioners, we are the caretakers of a facility owned and paid for by the taxpayers of Sherman County, not only for the present, but for the future of our children and grandchildren.

Hopefully we will answer a couple of the most often asked questions.

Why didn't we put in a man made liner?

Cost — although if we want to spend that kind of money, we can put in a man made liner in future cells. The estimated costs to install a man made liner would include two liners at a cost of \$56,000 each (for a total of \$112,000, plus \$ 10,000 to \$ 12,000 for design fees. There would be an additional cost of \$200,000 to \$300,000 for a methane dispersion system that would be required to be installed if man made liners are used. The total costs to put in a man made liner could run as high as \$424,000 over and above the estimated costs to construct the new cells.

Why do we require the separation of materials? We separate the materials to keep our costs down, thus keeping your taxes down.

A. All metal taken out of the trash stream is hauled away at no cost to the county, plus, it does not take up additional space at the landfill. It also



from our readers

• to the editor

reduces the damage to the equipment at the landfill.

B. Grass is composted at a very low cost and is reusable, thus also saving space at the landfill.

C. Concrete taken out of the stream keeps our tonnage down which is required by the State to stay under the 20 ton per day limit. The concrete products can also be ground up and reused on the county roads.

D. Construction debris can be put in a very inexpensive hole as compared to the site for the disposal of household wastes at the new landfill.

E. Sherman County's landfill is classified by the State as a small and landfill which requires certain items to be kept out of the landfill.

Sherman County owns enough permitted land to operate our landfill (based on our present rate of use) to last over 150 years. The problem we have is that at the present rate, we will need to dig another cell at the landfill every 5 years at an approximate cost of \$250,000. The better we utilize our cells, the longer we can go before we have to pay for another new cell. This is one reason why we have encouraged the use of recycling by paying the yearly per capita fee of \$2, amounting to \$13,790

for 2002. The better job we do at keeping costs down, the better the chance we will have of being able to reduce the solid waste fees that are applied to the property tax bills.

Managing a landfill or a trash collection system is not easy for Sherman County or the City of Goodland, however, keep in mind we must do what is best not only for the taxpayers of today, but the taxpayers of tomorrow. We hope the City of Goodland keeps this in mind when they look at the proposals they have for contracting out their trash service.

We believe the City of Goodland is very close to making a decision that may not be in the best interest of this community and we encourage the residents to become better informed.

We would like to work together to make the trash system an efficient and user friendly system that will be a model for other communities to follow.

Board of Sherman County Commissioners
Chuck Frankenfeld
Kevin Rasure
Mitch Tiede

Letter Policy

The Goodland Daily News encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be typewritten, and must include a telephone number and a signature. Unsigned letters will not be published. Form letters will be rejected, as will letters deemed to be of no public interest or considered offensive. We reserve the right to edit letters for length and good taste.

The Goodland Daily News
(USPS No. 222-460. ISSN 0893-0562)
Member: Kansas Press Association
The Associated Press
Inland Press Association Colorado Press Association
National Newspaper Association
e-mail: daily@nwkansas.com

Steve Haynes, President
Tom Betz, Editor/Editorial Page
Rachel Miscall, Managing Editor
Pat Schiefen, Copy Editor
Doug Stephens, Sports Editor
Sharon Corcoran, Society Editor
Eric Yonkey, Bill Wagoner, Advertising Sales
Skilar Boland, Adv. Production Sheila Smith, Office Manager

Nor'west Press
Jim Bowker, General Manager
Richard Westfahl Ron VanLoenen Judy McKnight
Betty Morris Mary Jo Tapparo Lana Westfahl

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, \$25; six months, \$42; 12 months, \$79. Out of area, weekly mailing of five issues: three months, \$30; six months, \$45; 12 months, \$80. By mail daily in Kansas, Colorado: 12 months, \$115. (All tax included.)

Incorporating:
The Sherman County Herald
Founded by Thomas McCants
1935-1989

THE SHERMAN COUNTY STAR
Founded by Eric and Roxie Yonkey
1994-2001

Nor'West Newspapers
Haynes Publishing Company