

# commentary

from our viewpoint...

## Cops find advantages in talking to the public

There's been a growing realization on the part of law enforcement officials that there are a lot of advantages to communicating with the public.

Cops are traditionally closed-mouthed. Dealing as they do with crooks, cheats and liars, they question everyone and trust few. You really can't blame them.

Police agencies usually do share information with one another. When there's a robbery or a gas skip, the local police call counties up and down the highway. An alert goes out on the radio net. The bad guys usually are caught.

When a car is stolen or a felon goes on the lam, entries are made in the police computer system. When the stolen goods or missing bad guy turn up anywhere in the country, they're caught.

It's not always been that way. Communications improve every year. And police agencies learn what works.

We can remember a sheriff's department, in a county far, far away, that didn't like to ask for help, even when there was a jailbreak. Especially when there was a jailbreak.

Instead of putting out an alert, the sheriff would send all his deputies out to look for the guy. By the time the highway patrol and area agencies were notified, the guy would be six states away. They'd catch him, but he kept busting out. And the sheriff, he never did learn.

That kind of secrecy would be rare today. In the 21st century, law enforcement agencies are taking the public into their confidence more and more.

Nowhere is that fact more visible than in the "Amber Alert" system, named after a Texas girl who was kidnapped and murdered. Experts say time is critical — the longer the bad guy has a kidnap victim, the less likely he or she is to be found alive.

Amber Alert gives authorities a way to quickly initiate a statewide search when a child is missing. It works. In California, two teen-age girls were saved earlier this year when a citizen spotted them and their kidnapper. He was minutes away from a secluded spot where, police and the girls believe, he intended to rape and kill them both.

Kansas has Amber Alert now, and it's a good idea. The public deserves to be better informed about crime and criminals, and it has a lot to offer in terms of helping cops catch crooks.

In Oberlin last month, an escaped juvenile was quickly caught after dispatch aired his description on the city's cable system. That proved the value of the cable alert, though cable reached only a minority of most county's homes and no one in rural areas. Broadcast on the local radio station should be part of the police arsenal, something which "Amber" includes.

Back when that sheriff was too embarrassed to ask for help hunting the escaped convict, there were two serious flaws in his thinking. First, he wasn't getting any help from other agencies or the public. He needed it badly. Second, the public was at risk, now knowing that a desperate felon had broken out. People deserve to know about things like that.

But today, law enforcement agencies are finding that the public can help, not hinder, an investigation or a dragnet. It's about time. — Steve Haynes

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

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The Associated Press

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National Newspaper Association  
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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@nwkans.com](mailto:daily@nwkans.com). Advertising questions can be sent to: [gdnadv@nwkans.com](mailto:gdnadv@nwkans.com)

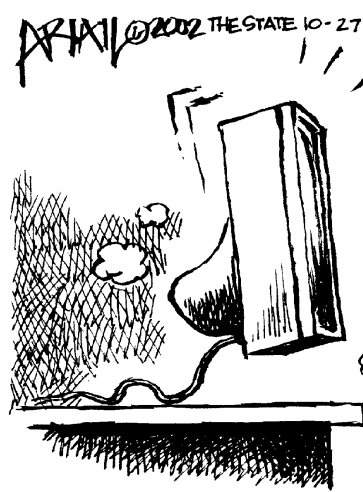
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SNIPER CAUGHT!!



## The world according to stew

One of the things that distinguishes is that it cooks gently for a long time. A side benefit to stews is that they make your home smell wonderful. Stews can be very economical because tougher, less costly cuts of meat can be used. The stew pot is varied according to the country that is doing the cooking. This culinary tour of stew recipes and information is from the book "real stew" by Clifford A. Wright

### Piedmontese Turkey Stew

This recipe is from the northern part of Lombardy.

1 1/2 pounds turkey breast, boned, skinned and cut into 2 inch cubes

1/4 cup (1/2 stick) unsalted butter, cut into 4 pieces

3/4 pound ripe tomatoes, cut in half, seeds squeezed out and grated against the largest holes of a grater down to the peel

1 medium size onion, chopped

4 fresh sage leaves, chopped

2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley leaves

2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil leaves

salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

1 cup dry, full-bodied red wine

2 tablespoons flour

Put the turkey, butter, tomatoes, onion, sage, parsley, basil, salt and pepper in a casserole or stew pot. Turn the heat to medium and cook until the liquid begins to bubble, 6 to 7 minutes. Add wine and stir. Add flour and stir again. Reduce heat to low and cook until turkey is white and firm. Stir occasionally and be sure to keep from boiling only bubbling gently. Cook 35 to 40 minutes. Serve immediately with polenta or mashed potatoes. Serves 4.



pat schiefen

• postscript

### Barbara Shulgasser-Parker's Chicken Stew with Prunes

3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil  
1 1/2 large onion, sliced 1/4 inch thick  
One 3 1/2 pound chicken, quartered, skinned, rinsed and patted dry with paper towels  
salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste  
3 cups chicken broth  
2 teaspoons mild Indian curry  
1 teaspoon ground sage  
1 teaspoon chopped fresh rosemary leaves  
3 tablespoons honey  
1/2 pound large pitted prunes  
juice of 1 lemon or 1/4 cup white wine

In a large skillet, heat the oil over medium high heat. Cook onions until translucent, stirring, 6 to 7 minutes. Push the onions to one side of the skillet, season the chicken pieces with salt and pepper, brown chicken on both sides doing the side with the most meat first. Once the chicken has been turned, move onions on top of chicken to keep them from burning about 8 minutes. Season with more pepper.

Add enough chicken broth for there to be about 1 inch of liquid in the skillet. Turn the chicken and onions together and bring to a gentle simmer over medium heat. Dust the curry over the chicken and with a wooden spoon scrape the browned bits off the sides and bottom of the skillet into the simmer-

ing broth. Sprinkle with sage and rosemary. As mixture returns to a light simmer, drizzle in honey and stir. Add prunes, placing them between the chicken pieces in the sauce. Check the seasoning. Add more broth as needed to keep the liquid level at about 1 inch. Simmer, covered for 30 minutes. Then uncover and cook, turning the chicken occasionally and spooning sauce over it until meat is ready to fall off the bones, about 1 hour.

Stir in lemon juice to achieve a sweet and sour flavor and serve. Makes 4 to 5 servings.

### Briami

Briami is the name of a variety of family style vegetable stews found in Greek home cooking.

1 1/2 pounds mixed new Yukon Gold, Peruvian Purple and red potatoes, halved

3 large carrots, thickly sliced

1 kohlrabi, without leaves, peeled and sliced

3 beets, trimmed, peeled and quartered

1 large red onion, sliced and separated into rings

1 large white onion, sliced and separated into rings

4 large garlic cloves, finely chopped

3 tablespoons chopped fresh dill

1 tablespoon dried oregano

1 1/2 cups extra virgin olive oil

salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

2 pounds ripe tomatoes, peeled, seeded and sliced

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Toss all ingredients, except salt, pepper and tomatoes, together with 1 cup of oil. Season with salt and pepper and arrange in earthenware casserole. Cover the top with tomatoes and pour remaining 1/2 cup oil on top. Bake until potatoes and beets are tender and the tops of the vegetables are dark in places, about 1 1/2 hours. Serve immediately. Makes 6 to 8 servings.

## Sebelius, Graves do curious dance in budget crisis

Gov.-elect Kathleen Sebelius insisted that Gov. Bill Graves is still in charge, but power clearly has shifted at the Statehouse.

The aides bustling busily about, talking about appointments and policy, work for Sebelius. When Graves and Sebelius met for the first time last week, she kept him waiting for a few minutes in the hallway outside his office.

Yet she has a reason for not wanting to assume power too quickly — the projected \$255 million budget deficit on June 30.

She'd rather have Graves handle that mess so that she doesn't have to consider quickly breaking promises she made during her gubernatorial campaign.

"I don't think it's appropriate that I second-guess him," she said. "He is the governor. We have a lieutenant governor. We have Cabinet secretaries in place who have already made one round of cuts in their agencies and I think are preparing some other recommendations."

For his part, Graves seemed prepared to cede power to his newly elected successor.

"My staff's done a lot of preliminary work," he said. "I hope that the ground work is laid for a very quick and expedient transition process."

Sebelius won the governor's race on the same day economists, legislative researchers, Department of Revenue officials and members of Graves' budget staff issued a new fiscal forecast that projected a \$255 million deficit on June 30, with a current budget of \$4.4 billion.

The current budget already included \$41 million in cuts imposed by Graves and \$252 million in new taxes approved by legislators in May.

Those same state forecasters said the gap between revenues and spending commitments set by state and federal law could reach \$1 billion by the end of the state's next fiscal year.

Graves said just before the election that he would be willing to impose more cuts in the current budget if the governor-elect wished.

Later, after he and Sebelius met for the first time, Graves said he still hoped they could draft a joint plan for dealing with the budget.

However, in her first news conference as governor-elect, Sebelius made it clear that she has different ideas.

"My focus is on the '04 budget," she said. "He is the sitting governor. This is his budget and his Cabinet officers."

She and her aides also told reporters to be patient,



john hanna

• ap news analysis

noting they were asking whether she had any specific ideas for dealing with the projected deficit in the current budget year.

But Sebelius had been running for governor for at least a year; she had a campaign team in place in the spring. The general financial trends have been obvious for months, even if the numbers haven't.

Furthermore, none of the budget numbers that argue against her being able to keep her campaign promises are any secret, all being in the public record. Much of the data are available over the Internet.

The budget was the most important issue facing the gubernatorial candidates; they discussed it constantly. Sebelius has spent 16 years in state government, first as a legislator, then as head of a department.

In short, she and her team didn't start from scratch after winning the election.

The looming deficit for the current fiscal year appears to require spending cuts. It's unlikely that legislators could convene in January and approve tax increases quickly enough to generate much new money before June 30.

To avoid that deficit the state would have to cut its current budget by 5.8 percent — taking a full year's worth of reductions out of the remaining months of the fiscal year.

During her campaign, Sebelius promised not to cut aid to public schools or higher education, roughly 68 percent of the budget.

She didn't specify whether those promises applied to this year's budget and the fiscal 2004 budget, or only to the 2004 budget. On Friday, spokeswoman Nicole Corcoran-Basso said the promise would apply to both years.

If Sebelius attempted to keep those promises while working with Graves to impose cuts in the current fiscal year, the task of avoiding the deficit becomes far more difficult — finding \$255 million from \$4.4 billion worth of spending.

That doesn't factor in her promise to conduct a top-to-bottom review of state government to find efficiencies. But such a review seems unlikely to find such large savings so quickly.

Would there be other ways out? Legislators have proven adept in recent years in gimmickry. And Senate President Dave Kerr, R-Hutchinson, recently suggested that legislators could resort to some accounting tricks to make the budget work.

For example, he noted, legislators borrowed \$94.5 million in highway funds to make the fiscal 2002 budget work, promising to pay the money back on the last day of fiscal 2003.

Simply not paying back the loan would make the deficit that much smaller. However, it also would rob highway projects of money — and perhaps force Sebelius to break another promise to keep the state's 10-year \$13.5 billion transportation program intact.

Everywhere Sebelius turns to deal with the projected deficit in the current budget, the necessity of breaking a campaign promise looms.

It's no wonder that she wants Graves to do the dirty work before he leaves office.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Correspondent John Hanna has covered state government and politics for the Associated Press since 1987.

### berry's world

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