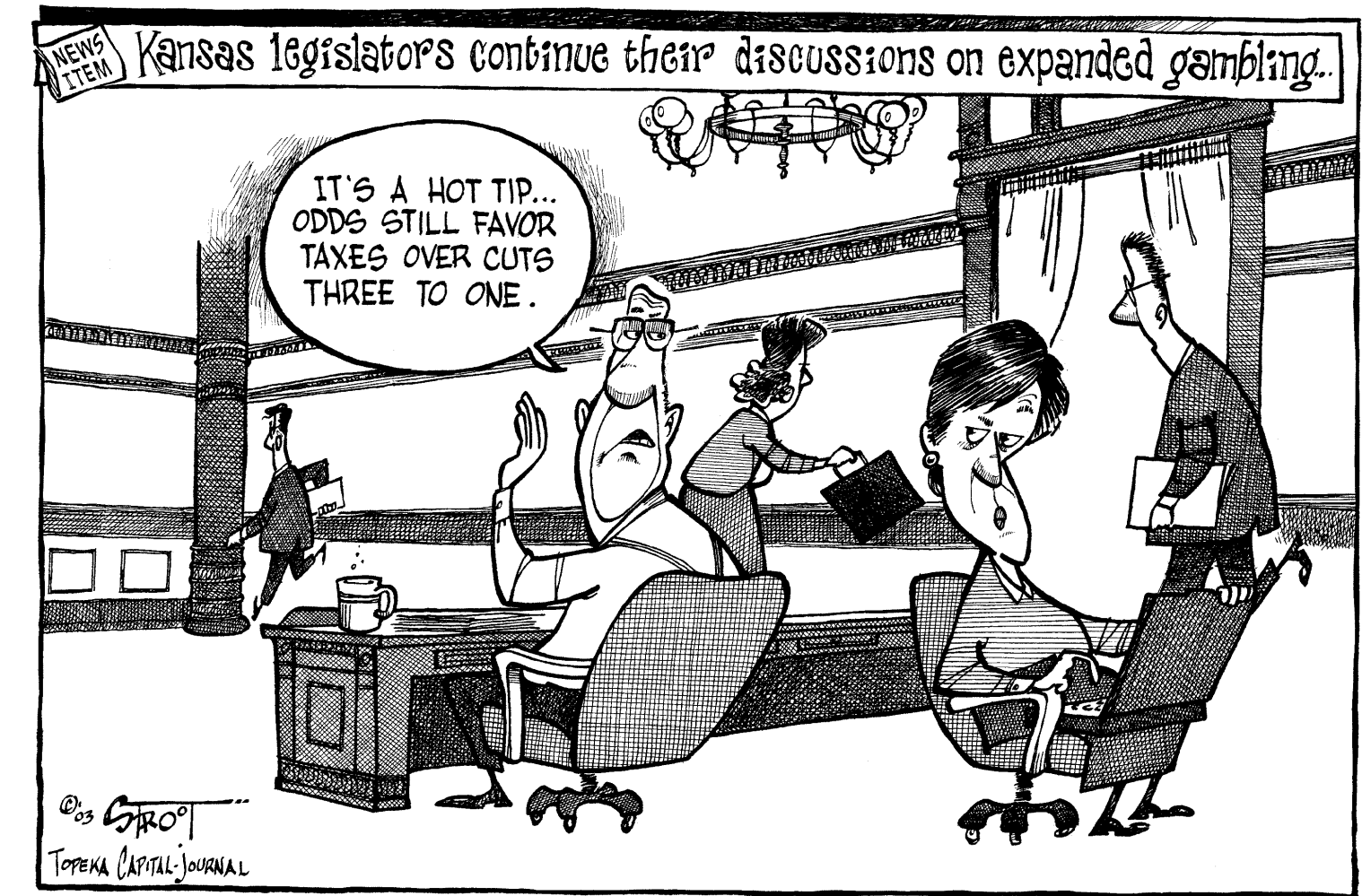


commentary

from our viewpoint...

What are the odds on war in Iraq?

Will it be war?
The odds are no better the even today that war can be avoided.
The president and his team are running a high-stakes gamble here, backed by hundreds of thousands of American and British troops.
Saddam Hussein is bending, slowly, to their will. But no one, not even the United Nations, believes everything he says. Only his actions will tell.
What Mr. Bush and his friends want is to declaw Iraq, to put its weapons of mass destruction (there's a nasty little euphemism) on ice and send Saddam packing.
The thing about running a bluff, though, is that if your opponent does not fold, you have to show your cards. That's why we have 200,000 troops in the Mideast today and 60,000 more on the way.
Mr. Bush has to be able to back up his threats. And he is.
Does he want war?
Hardly. It's messing up his economy, stalling the recovery and inviting more terrorist attacks.
If he had wanted war, remember how quickly they attacked Afghanistan — with no talk at all.
The administration has not given up on the rest of its war on terrorism. The capture of al-Qaida's No. 3 man shows that the U.S. is quite capable of pursuing Osama bin Laden while threatening Saddam. But there are more dangers in the world.
North Korea is rattling its saber, restarting its nuclear plant and generally making Asia unsafe. It wants respect, though, and not war.
Iran is reported to have an "advanced" nuclear program, which considering the fundamentalist nation's close ties to some terrorists groups, is more than frightening.
Of course, Pakistan and India have the bomb, but they seem to have eyes open for each other. It's a friendly little subcontinent down there.
All things considered, you'd think Saddam would do the wise thing and give in to Mr. Bush and Secretary of State Colin Powell.
Experience teaches us that many people do not live in the real world, however, and to expect Saddam to do the logical thing may not be all that logical.
He is, after all, a thoroughly cruel dictator used to having his way. A man who has used nerve gas on his own citizens is not likely to balk at losing a few thousand troops to an American-led invasion.
And the lack of support for President Bush from France and Germany plays into his hands. It has to make him feel stronger.
War?
Who knows, but at this point, don't bet against it. Time is running out. — *Steve Haynes*



A lesson from the 23rd Psalm

I don't know about you, but I love a good joke.
Here's one I received via e-mail:
A five year old boy was about to start school. His Mom loved him very much, and being a worrier, she was concerned about his walking to school when he started Kindergarten. She walked him to school the couple of days, but soon he told his mother that he did not want her walking him to school everyday.
He wanted to be like the "big boys." He protested loudly, so she had an idea of how to handle it.
She asked a neighbor, Mrs. Goodnest, if she would surreptitiously follow the boy to school, at a distance behind him that he would not likely notice, but close enough to keep a watch on him. Mrs. Goodnest said that since she was



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up early with her toddler anyway, it would be a good way for them to get some exercise as well. So she agreed.
The next school day, Mrs. Goodnest and her little girl, Marcy, set out following behind Timmy as he walked to school with another neighbor boy he knew. She did this for the whole week.
As the boys walked and chatted, kicking stones and twigs, the little friend of Timmy noticed that this same lady was following them

as she seemed to do every day all week. Finally, he said to Timmy, "Have you noticed that lady following us all week? Do you know her?"
Timmy nonchalantly replied, "Yea, I know who she is."
The little friend said, "Well, who is she?"
"That's just Shirley Goodnest," Timmy said.
"Shirley Goodnest? Who is she, and why is she following us?"
"Well," Timmy explained, "every night my Mom makes me say the 23rd Psalm with my prayers 'cuz she worries about me so much. And in it, the prayer psalm says, "Shirley Goodnest and Marcy shall follow me all the days of my life," so I guess I'll just have to get used to it."
God loves you too. You might as well get used to it!

Today's girls are at a crossroads

To the Editor:
This generation of girls is at a crossroads. Ahead of them is a multitude of paths to choose from.
As Girl Scouts across the country celebrate Girl Scout Week this week, we are issuing a national call to action for parents, caregivers, and other adults to encourage girls to embrace opportunities to build skills in math, science and technology.
By nurturing their early interests and showcasing female role models in these areas, we can assist girls in taking on the technological opportunities and challenges of the 21st century.
It all starts with a healthy dose of self-esteem. Studies by the Girl Scout Research Institute and other organizations demonstrate that risky behavior such as smoking, drinking, unsafe sexual behavior, eating disorders, suicidal tendencies and self-mutilating behavior are often associated with low self-esteem.
Girl Scouting promotes all girls' perception of themselves as important, competent and talented. When girls are comfortable in their own skins, they'll be empowered to resist peer and societal pressure, allowing them to follow their true interests in life.
Secondly, girls need a safe place to discuss real-life issues important to them. Girl Scouts is providing that space in nearly a quarter of a million Girl Scout groups or troops in the United States today, including the 125 in the 16 counties of northwest Kansas.

How can the parents and other adults in our communities help? By fostering girls' natural interests, whatever they may be. By serving as a role model to girls and volunteering with a group/troop or sharing your interests/skills in a council sponsored program. Whether you have an hour or a day, we can match your availability with the needs of girls.
Your daughter and those of your family and friends deserve the opportunity to pursue their interests, have a safe environment to share their hopes and build the skills needed for future jobs in any field. It's her future; be there.
Linda Mills
Executive Director
Girl Scouts of Sunflower Council
Hays



**from our
readers**
• to the editor

Editor's Note: The following letter came to Harvey Swager, principal at Goodland High School:
Harvey:
I just wanted to drop you a quick note to add my name to the many that have shared with you compliments and congratulations on the regional wrestling tournament.
As is always the case, some might not agree with the decision of the Kansas State High School Activities Association staff as to which school teams to assign to a regional. HOWEVER, one thing that I have had universal agreement on is the quality of effort you and your staff put forward in making the tournament a great event for all who either attended or participated in it.
I know that it took us a while to get a regional out to Goodland and hope that we will be able to use Goodland High as a host site again in the not to distant future. As you know, northwest and northcentral Kansas have a wonderful wrestling history, and virtually all schools in that area enjoy hosting wrestling and do a wonderful job of just that.
Again THANKS for putting on a great event for the schools and fans attending.
Rick Bowden
assistant executive director
Kansas State High School Activities Association
Topeka

To the Editor:
On the issue of the time zone change, there are pros and cons both ways. Although they may have the legal right to make this decision, I would hope the county commissioners would want to bring this to a vote at a future election, as this is an important matter effecting all of us. Please give us the opportunity to be heard.
Peggy Bahe
Goodland

To the Editor:
I recently completed my seventh annual "Big First" Listening Tour of the 1st Congressional District. Starting Dec. 31 in Quinter and ending Feb. 19 in Ulysses, I have held town hall meetings in each of the 69 counties. I thank everyone who came to the Sherman County town hall meeting at the Western State Bank in Goodland.
The tour allows me to meet with Kansans and get your ideas to take back to Washington. This year, I chose to do my tour of earlier to get input and suggestions from Kansans as the Congressional session gets underway. That will enable us to work towards your goals during the year.
If you have further questions or concerns, or were unable to attend the meeting in your county, please contact one of my offices:
Hays District Office: 1200 Main St., Suite 402, Box 249, Hays, Kan. 67601-0249. Phone: (785) 628-6401. Fax: (785) 628-3791
You can email me at: jerry.moran@mail.house.gov or visit my web page at www.house.gov/moranks01/.
It is an honor to serve you. Please let me know how I can be of service.
Jerry Moran
Hays, Washington

Letter Policy

The Goodland Star-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. We encourage letters, with full address and phone numbers, by e-mail to: <star-news@nwkansas.com>.

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