

from our viewpoint...

Harvest is coming, coming early, fast

Across the state, the northern half at least, wheat stands tall and headed out.

Plants are thick with stems, and the berries are starting to form.

Harvest is coming, coming fast.

Even if the cool weather continues, which is unlikely, it may be over before the 1st of July.

And it may just be one heck of a harvest.

There is a lot of wheat out there, and most of it is doing pretty well. State reports show the worst crop conditions in the southwest, where the drought may be hanging on a little longer.

Not up here, not across the northern half of the state. There is wheat, lots of it, with plenty of rain to fill out the heads.

And for the first time in more than three years, farmers around these parts may have a bountiful harvest. That, and prices are holding up pretty well, too.

And as the drought fades, talk of not planting fall crops has all but disappeared. Subsoil moisture may not be in surplus, but hardly anyone is predicting another disaster.

Last summer, heat baked emerging corn and milo. Plants died halfway to heading. Even sunflowers died in the fields. With irrigated corn, some fields depended on wells that couldn't pump fast enough to save them. Meant to supplement, not replace nature, the sprinklers failed. Other fields wilted under the summer sun when they should have been pollinating.

Hardly anyone is willing to bet on a repeat this year. Farmers are grumbling that the wet weather has been keeping them out of the fields. Seed dealers complain that they're having to replace corn with later varieties.

These are problems we just didn't have a year ago.

Anyone complaining about the rain, well, they should just smile and enjoy the day off.

It's a different year, for sure. A year when a fine wheat crop is about to roll in and a fall crop seems a lot more possible.

A year, not to relax, exactly, not just yet, but to ease off a little and be thankful that nature does provide.

Most of the time, anyway. — *Steve Haynes*

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. 449-N, Topeka, KS 66612. (785) 296-7399

Kansas Attorney General Phil Kline, 301 S.W. 10th, Lower Level, Topeka, KS 66612-1597 (785) 296-3751 Fax (785) 291-3699 TTY: (785) 291-3767

The Goodland Star-News

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

Member: Kansas Press Association
Inland Press Association Colorado Press Association
National Newspaper Association
e-mail: star-news@nwkansas.com

Steve Haynes, President
Tom Betz, Editor
Managing Editor
Pat Schiefen, Copy Editor



Reporter

Sharon Corcoran, Society Editor
Bill Wagoner, **Phyllis Hadley**, Advertising Sales
Sheila Smith, Office Manager

Nor'west Press

Jim Bowker, General Manager

Richard Westfahl **Ron VanLoenen** **Judy McKnight**
Betty Morris **Mary Jo Tapparo** **Lana Westfahl**
Teneile Lovelace

nwkansas.com

N.T. Betz, Director of Internet Services
(nbetz@nwkansas.com)

Evan Barnum, Systems Admin. (support@nwkansas.com)

Published every Tuesday and Friday except the days observed for New Year's Day and Christmas Day, at 1205 Main Ave., 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 Star-News, 1205 Main Ave., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

TELEPHONE: (785) 899-2338. Editorial e-mail: star-news@nw-kansas.com. Advertising questions can be sent to: goodlandads@nw-kansas.com

The Goodland Star-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, \$20; six months, \$38; 12 months, \$72. Out of area, weekly mailing of two issues: three months, \$30; six months, \$45; 12 months, \$80. Mailed individually each day: 12 months, \$115. (All tax included.)

Incorporating:

The Goodland Daily News

1932-2003

The Sherman County Herald

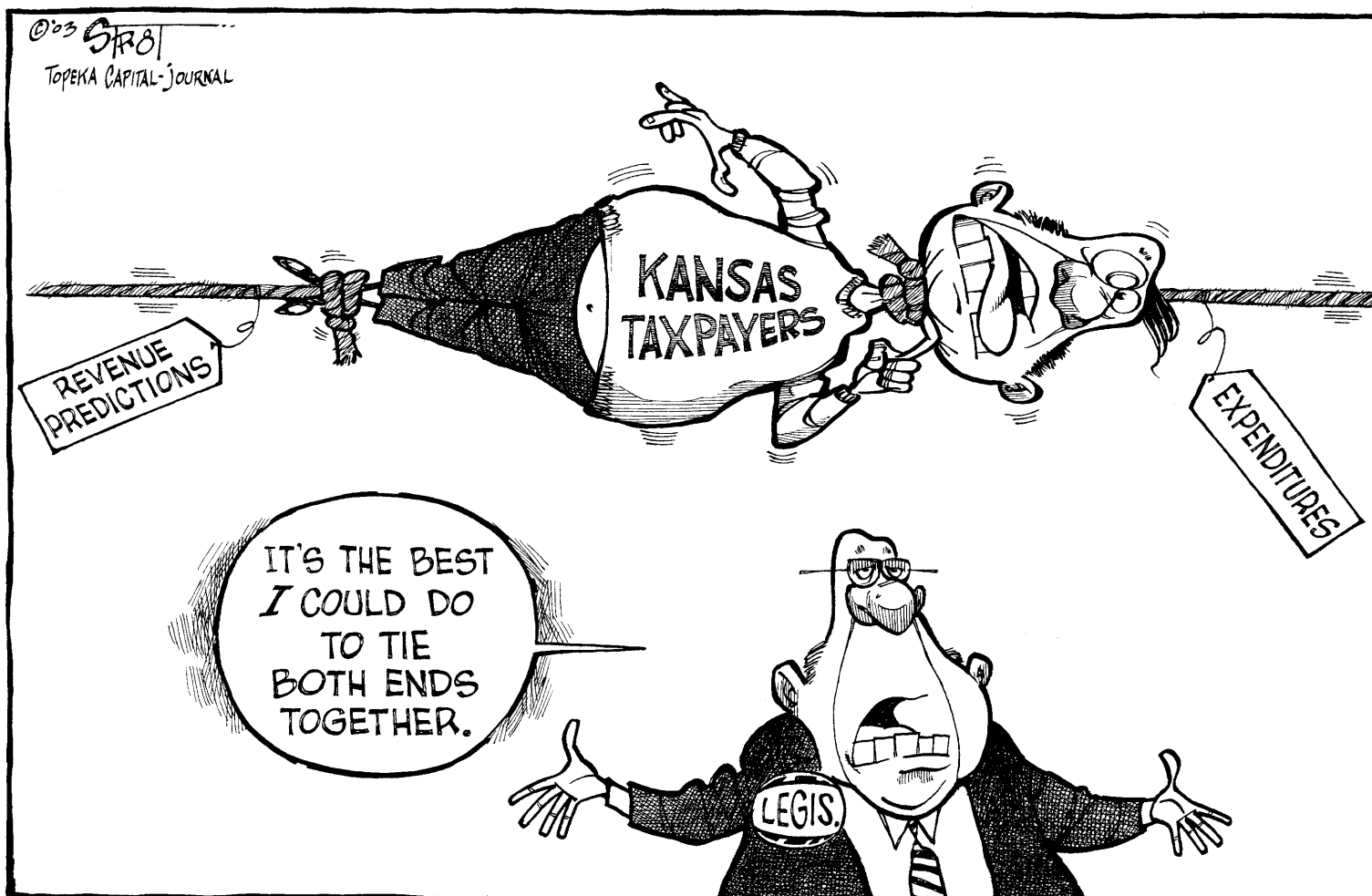
Founded by Thomas McCants
1935-1989

THE SHERMAN COUNTY STAR

Founded by Eric and Roxie Yonkey
1994-2001

Nor'West Newspapers

Haynes Publishing Company



Time to stand up for principles of Christ

I don't know about you, but I think it's time for Christians to stand up for the principles of Christ and pledge their devotion to the will of God.

Our nation is wavering over whether Christianity is necessary.

It's really no wonder. We live as though God has very little to do with our lives. No wonder there is a movement to take God out of our Pledge or Allegiance as has been done in our public school curriculum.

When are we going to realize we're either on God's side, or we're not? There is no middle ground.

Here we are ready to celebrate another Memorial Day with picnics, time off from work, etc.

I offer this message from Senator John S. McCain who represents Arizona in the U.S. Senate:

"As you may know, I spent five and one half years as a prisoner of war during the Vietnam War. In the early years of our imprisonment, the North Vietnamese Army kept us in solitary confinement or two or three to a cell. In 1971 the army moved us from these conditions of isolation into large rooms with as many as 30 to 40 men to a room. This was, as you can imagine, a wonderful change and was a direct result of the efforts of millions of Americans on behalf of a few hundred POWs 10,000 miles from home.

"One of the men who moved into my room was a young man named Mike Christian. Mike came from a small town near Selma, Alabama. He didn't wear a pair of shoes until he was 13 years old. At 17, he enlisted in the US Navy.



Lorna Gt

• commentary

He later earned a commission by going to Officer Training School. Then he became a Naval Flight Officer and was shot down and captured in 1967. Mike had a keen and deep appreciation of the opportunities this country and our military provide for people who want to work and want to succeed.

"As part of the change in treatment, the Vietnamese allowed some prisoners to receive packages from home. In some of these packages were handkerchiefs, scarves and other items of clothing. Mike got himself a bamboo needle. Over a period of a couple of months, he created an American flag and sewed on the inside of his shirt. Every afternoon, before we had a bowl of soup, we would hang Mike's shirt on the wall of the cell and say the Pledge of Allegiance. I know the Pledge of Allegiance may not seem the most important part of our day now, but I can assure you that in that stark cell it was indeed the most important and meaningful event.

"One day the Vietnamese searched our cell, as they did periodically, and discovered Mike's shirt with the flag sewn inside, and removed it. That evening they returned, opened the door of the cell, and for the benefit of all of us, beat Mike Christian severely for the next couple of hours. Then, they opened the door of the cell and threw him in.

We cleaned him up as well as we could. The cell in which we lived had a concrete slab in the middle on which we slept. Four naked light bulbs hung in each corner of the room.

As I said, we tried to clean up Mike as well as we could.

"After the excitement died down, I looked in the corner of the room, and sitting there beneath that dim light bulb with a piece of red cloth, another shirt and his bamboo needle, was my friend, Mike Christian. He was sitting there with his eyes almost shut from the beating he had received, making another American flag. He was not making the flag because it made Mike Christian feel better. He was making that flag because he knew how important it was to us to be able to pledge our allegiance to our flag and country.

"So the next time you say the Pledge of Allegiance, you must never forget the sacrifice and courage that thousands of Americans have made to build our nation and promote freedom around the world. You must remember our duty, our honor, and our country."

That's a powerful story, but I'd like to add to it. It doesn't seem a coincidence to me that this young man's name was "Christian." God relies on Christians everywhere to remind others of what's truly important. As you remember your duty, honor and country, you must also remember our country has been blessed by an all-powerful, loving God. That blessing will continue as long as you don't forget your first allegiance. You must never allow God to become secondary in your life, and you must never allow "under God" to be removed from our nation's pledge. Think about it.

Praeger assess spring storm damage

Tornadoes and storms during the week of May 4 were devastating for several Kansas communities. I recently visited three of the counties that suffered extensive damage — Crawford, Wyandotte and Douglas. My heart goes out to all of the families who lost their homes — and especially to those who lost loved ones.

The Kansas Insurance Department set up temporary offices in Wyandotte and Crawford counties to help consumers be sure their insurance needs were being met. I met with executives from the major insurance carriers to discuss our department's expectations in handling the large volume of claims.

While the Kansas Insurance Department does not have authority to prohibit companies from dropping the policies of consumers who suffer storm losses, I did remind insurance company leaders that disasters like this are the reason most Kansans carry insurance — and that our consumer assistance division would be closely monitoring their response.

We still do not know the full impact of the first round of storms, but our estimates of damage from the May 4 tornadoes are around \$70 million dollars. That only includes insured property losses.



Sandy Praeger

• insurance comm.

The estimate in northeast Kansas — including Leavenworth, Miami and Wyandotte counties — is \$50 million dollars for insured property losses. The estimate of insured property losses in southeast Kansas — including Cherokee, Crawford, Labette and Neosho counties — is about \$19 million.

Reports for estimated storm losses in April and May are still being compiled — including damage from the tornado that hit Allen, Anderson, Douglas, Linn, Osage and Woodson counties on May 8.

If you sustain storm loss, you should immediately contact your insurance agent or company. Take photographs of damaged property and get instructions from your adjuster before making repairs or replacements. Also, make sure that you do not make a settlement with your company until you are confident that the details of your loss are complete.

The Kansas Insurance Department is here to

assist Kansas consumers if they have any questions or concerns when working with their insurance companies. If you are not certain about what your policy covers, now would be a good time to call your agent to make certain you are protecting your assets.

If you have a question or concern about an insurance-related issue, please call our Consumer Assistance Hotline at 1-800-432-2484 or visit the Department's web site at "<http://www.ksinsurance.org>." Assistance is also available at our Wichita office (316-337-6010).

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 address and phone numbers, by e-mail to: star-news@nwkansas.com.

garfield

