

from our viewpoint...

## Cone zone access hurting retailers

Downtown Goodland, let's face it, has been losing ground as a retail center for some time.

There's nothing new or unusual in that statement. It's something that's been happening in many American cities, large and small.

Big retail moves out to the "suburbs" or on a smaller scale, the edge of town. Stores that are left behind often close, as had happened here. They are replaced by small retail shops, offices, churches, other uses do not require prime space.

Some people won't like to see any of this in print, but unless we recognize a problem, we can't do much about it.

And one problem with doing business in downtown Goodland is that pretty much every year, some agency makes it darned near impossible to get there.

This summer, access is blocked from the south by the 17th Street project and from the north by the closing of Caldwell Avenue for reconstruction.

Sure, there are detours. You can get into town from the south, but you can't get out, not to go east, anyway.

We know you have to tear up streets to fix them, but the constant closing off of downtown Goodland can't be good for businesses — those that remain, anyway.

And downtown has been blocked off time and time again: When Cherry Ave. was rebuilt, for 17th Street, for Caldwell, when K-27 was reworked at U.S. 24, when they city rebuilt brick intersections over two summers, when the state and city worked on K-27, when the county rebuilt North Caldwell.

Just when you think the work is done and traffic will start flowing, they city or the county or the state comes up with yet another project.

The cumulative affect, over several summers, starts to add up.

We are not suggesting an end to road improvements. One thing Goodland has that many towns this size lack is a government not afraid to spend money and improve the infrastructure.

It's just that in the end, if there are no stores left for people to shop in and all the business has gone somewhere else, what's the point?

What we are suggesting is that as projects come up, the city, county and state make every effort to keep traffic moving through the limits, even if it costs a little more.

The hidden cost of lost business never appears in a road budget, but it's real.

Someone will say that having to go a couple of miles out of your way shouldn't deter shoppers, but people are funny about things like that. A little inconvenience can change shopping patterns for years.

Maybe it's too late to change how these things are done. Maybe the horse is already gone. But we could work together and try to provide better access through all the coming projects.

It just might pay off. — Steve Haynes

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## Darting squirter

Four-Star General David Petraeus spoke of George Bush's vaunted troop surge as having unintended consequences, i.e. the squirts. And no, I'm not kidding. By putting pressure on targeted segments of the bad guys we have caused them to, and I quote, "squirt out of Baghdad."

That's right. We squeeze. They squirt. Those darn squirter. Clever little squirter, they. Wonder if they dart as well. Darting squirter; that would be something to see. Definitely worth a two-drink minimum.

Retired Army Captain Phillip Carter rather likened the surge to a water balloon. We push on one side, and the insurgents squish over to the other. Apparently, Iraq is a brimming bladder beset by the enlarged prostate of occupation. There may be no future in our Baghdadian misadventure, but there is an excess of liquid metaphors. For instance: some people see our involvement as a glass half full of democratic promise, some see it as half empty of morals and others see it as a heathen receptacle equally saturated with the toxic wastes of imperialism and the soul-severing venom of greed.

Doesn't matter what you call whatever it is we find ourselves stuck in: a quagmire, crapstorm or bloodbath. Come hell or high water, Bush is not about to abandon ship since democracy is too important to let some silly



### will durst

● raging moderate

civil war rain on any corporate earnings parade.

Besides, the president has ice water in his veins, and wields the IV of free enterprise. He's got his hand on the nozzle that leaks pipeline profits. And you can't throw the revenue baby out with the insurgent bath water.

Our efforts to push back the tide of Islamic fanaticism are as successful as spitting into the wind-borne drizzle blowing off the Gulf of Oman. All we're doing is adding gelatin to the Kool-Aid and getting sprayed by the hose of dogmatism. The downpour of liberty can't feed the freedom-irrigating rivulets of independence when the showers of democracy are doomed to be foiled by the ancient dams of religious fanaticism. And when it rains, it pours. Look at Arkansas.

We all know if a drowning man wants to learn to swim, someone is going to have to get wet. You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it vote to share its oil revenue with the Kurds. And let's speak of the forgotten liq-

uid... that black viscous stuff bubbling out of the ground in too great an abundance to ignore.

Blood may be thicker than water, but oil is thicker than both. And whoever didn't see that coming doesn't have both oars in the lake, if you fathom my meaning.

We ignore the torrent of ill will spewing from the spigot of anarchy that our invasion turned on at our peril. Same with the boiling emanations of international outrage bubbling over the edge of the stew of chaos we've stirred up. Not to mention the geysers of fury caused by the steaming vapors of collapse. What I'm saying is... people are pissed. And no matter how soon Bush's scheme is deep-sixed, we will be cleaning up the debris of this tsunami of sorrow tossed off the Tallahatchie Bridge over troubled waters and washed up on the shore of regret, spoiling the broth of two-dollar-a-gallon gasoline for a long time.

Then again, that's just me. Being a wet blanket.

Comic, writer, actor, former radio talk show host and Amsterdam breakfast chef Will Durst thinks we're just treading water.

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## Don't trust Washington



### michael reagan

● making sense

When my father Ronald Reagan said one of his mottos was "trust but verify," he was talking about dealing with the Soviet Union. If he was talking about present-day Washington I think he'd simply say, "Don't trust — ever."

He'd have good reason. Some of the people running things today would steal the pennies off a dead man's eyes, and then claim they needed it to make everybody's life better.

Look at the current furor over the (fortunately) now-dead Comprehensive Immigration Reform bill, sold so deceptively it would shock the worst snake-oil salesman.

Last year's attempt to enact a similar bill failed, so the powers-that-be decided to make another try of imposing this ill-begotten piece of legislation on the nation. Under the leadership of the feckless Sen. Harry Reid, the supporters got together and tossed out all the Senate's time-honored procedures by crafting the bill not in committee but in secret, behind closed doors, and then sought to ram their 800-page bill down the throats of their fellow senators before any of them had a chance to study it.

Standing on the floor of the Senate, Sen. Jim Bunning, R-Ky., said: "Here we go again. Three weeks ago a significant majority of the Senate rejected this flawed immigration bill and the flawed process that led to it. But now it is back. It just won't go away."

"One of the key reasons the bill failed the first time around was the flawed process, or the lack of process, that led to the bill. In the Senate, an idea normally takes months if not years to become a bill and pass. But instead of letting the bill develop through a deliberative process, a few Senators wrote the bill in secret. They held no committee hearings. There was no committee report. In fact, Senators did not even see the actual bill until several days into the debate."

Bunning, a storied member of the Baseball Hall of Fame, threw a strike across the plate when he noted that "the Majority Leader is taking an unprecedented step to shut off the rights of Senators to debate and amend a bill. That is not the Senate."

The bill died, but not because the powers-that-be wanted it to, but because the vast majority of Americans wanted it dead. They had the good sense not to trust the powerful forces

imposing a rule that will make it impossible for talk radio to survive. Should their so-called "fairness doctrine" be revived, radio station owners would be so restricted they would not be able to program conservative talk radio and keep their licenses.

Every time a conservative talk show host said something the liberals didn't like, the station owners would be forced to find a liberal and put him on the air to reply.

The liberals want to follow the lead of their fellow Marxist, Venezuela's Hugo Chavez, who simply takes over any opposition TV stations and turns them into his propaganda outlets

Bear in mind that these are the same people who never stop talking about how much they love free speech, as long as those who practice it agree with them.

They lie about their devotion to free speech, but they want us to trust them when they try to stifle all opposition.

Mike Reagan, the eldest son of the late President Ronald Reagan, is heard on talk radio stations nationally. E-mail comments to [Reagan@caglecartoons.com](mailto:Reagan@caglecartoons.com).

