

from our viewpoint...

At-large voting issue should be priority

Sherman County citizens in public forums over the past two years have asked that they be allowed to vote a plan to have county commissioners elected at-large, rather than from districts as is the norm in Kansas.

Responding to that request, county commissioners asked Rep. Jim Morrison and Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer to handle a bill in the Legislature last year that would give Sherman County the option to change to at-large commissioners.

That bill passed the Kansas House without any trouble, but got mixed up in a Senate committee and was not approved in the last days of the session. Sen. Ostmeyer told Sherman County Commissioner Chuck Thomas the bill was not dead and could be moved out in the next session. Ostmeyer said the bill should be the first thing the committee takes up when the Legislature reconvenes in January.

The session in Topeka starts in a few weeks, but when asked at the commissioner meeting on Tuesday, Thomas said he was not sure people wanted to change the voting procedure.

Commissioner Kevin Rasure said the bill was drawn up and sent to the Legislature because people said it was a major issue they want addressed.

Getting the bill passed would not by itself change the election process. The bill changes the state law to give Sherman County voters a choice, but voters would have to make the final decision in the November election.

As Ostmeyer said there would be time between passage of the bill in Topeka and the election for citizens to debate and discuss the issue.

Voting on county commissioners at-large would allow everyone to vote on those who direct county business. As it is today, only residents of a district — one third of county voters — get to choose each commissioner.

Questions and issues about how that is done and what the effects could be are part of what the citizens should debate before the election. The decision of the voters in November would be their answer on how the commissioners are elected in Sherman County.

At this point, it shouldn't be up to just one of the current commissioners, or even two, to put the brakes on this process. People have asked to be able to decide this issue. They should be allowed to do just that.

Getting this bill passed in the upcoming session should be a priority to give the citizens a chance to make that choice.

— Tom Betz

Letter Policy

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Today's 'heroes' aren't worth worshiping

Call it a crisis of immoral leadership. It seems like the "heroes" of a big chunk of today's youth are not much worth worshiping.

That doesn't stop a lot of kids, who play gangsta rap, watch pro basketball and football, read about Paris and Brittany, watch these losers on television and try to act just like them.

We have rap "artists" shooting each other and pro athletes who want to live the same lifestyle, hang out at the same clubs. Then, everyone is surprised when a football or basketball player is shot after an altercation at some dive.

Part of the problem may be having young men with immense wealth and little education. Some come from backgrounds that just don't prepare them to be instant millionaires, but our kids still look up to them.

This is not a new problem, and it's not a problem with roots in race or cultural heritage. Hollywood has long been a hotbed of immorality, back to the earliest days. There may be plenty of entertainers who are perfectly normal, but there's always been a certain number who are not exactly good role models.



steve haynes

• along the sappa

As today's "artists" identify with modern gangsters, Frank Sinatra notoriously hung out with mob buddies and treated women poorly. Still, a lot of people worship him for his voice.

Babe Ruth and Ty Cobb were no angels, historians tell us, but the press of their time didn't trumpet their lifestyle to the nation's kids.

Today, television, magazines, tabloids and newspapers show us the stars' latest exploits day by day and week by week.

Sports stars today don't even have to pretend to go to college, with the basketball league drafting freshmen and even high school grads. There's no longer a pretense that many of these kids are going to get an education.

And why should they, some argue, when they can go straight to the big league, then

make millions with their sport talent? Because they would set an example for every kid who adores them?

I don't think most of them ever take time to think about that. Parents, agents, the press, the public just accept the idea that they'll leave school when the pros call.

Are teams responsible? Is the press? Or are we all contributing to the delinquency of our minors, every time we buy a ticket to see a drug user hit a home run and or a dropout play basketball?

Is Michael Vick a hero for his football skills, and a pioneer for his race as a prominent black quarterback? Or a disgrace for his adoption of a cruel sport as a hobby?

I personally don't think the football world misses him. He could make a comeback, if he admits his mistakes, and I'd support that. But not if, like so many athletes and entertainers, he's unrepentant.

I'm no prude. I know a lot of this is just human nature. But if we want a better world, shouldn't we be at least a little concerned about the quality of our kids' role models?

An apology for the Christian faith

To the Editor:

It is perhaps strange how events in time and space can come together and bring an issue into focus. While shopping in Wal-Mart, I met an acquaintance from out of town who prompted this apology.

We greeted and started a conversation by my asking about her health. She told me. She was known to enter a monologue with anyone who would listen.

This very nice lady revealed all of her sickness, troubles and woes over a lengthy period of time. After about six minutes, I wished I had brought my lunch. Six minutes later, my mind went dark with the thought that it would be nice if all women could be returned to silent ribs.

She ended this conversation by stating that if she had enough faith, her trials would not have occurred. Reminding her that Christians are subject to all of life's problems, and that in fact, these produced endurance, and endurance produced hope, and hope increased faith, we departed with Christmas salutations.

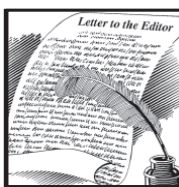
Later our conversation brought the faith issue to mind: As Christmas brings the birth of the Christ child into focus, Christians around the world have their faith uplifted to the throne of grace and renewed.

Recently the Christian faith has been challenged by individuals and by organizations on behalf of others. A group had placed an ad in a magazine stating in effect that science and reason were the only means of coping with life, implying that the Christian faith does not provide that means. Constitutional freedom gives all the right to air their views, and we need to honor that right with respect.

However, we live our daily lives on the bases of faith; it is the fact of existence and progress. Almost every decision we make is on faith that what we want will happen. Scientific experiment is done in faith that the desired result will occur, and the information we receive about the past is accepted on faith. The ad aforementioned is a faith statement because it does not prove that science and reason are the only way to cope, or the nonexistence of God.

Christian faith is like everyday faith, believing what is possible will happen. It is based on the historical person, Jesus Christ, and the eyewitness testimony of Christ's life by those who lived and traveled with Him. He revealed his Father's love for the individual, and the final reign of peace and joy on earth.

Faith is the individual experience of God's healing, renewing pardon and His presence to help us cope. Our faith is the conviction that



from our readers

• to the editor

what is unseen is the reality of a new world which will come to pass on His schedule. What He promises is true and what will be!

Earl Martell
Retired Lutheran minister
Goodland

To the Editor:

Mary Lou and I came to Goodland 12 years ago. We were impressed by the friendly people and their willingness to help each other.

We decided to stay. As the statue by the courthouse says, "They came to stay."

In August of 2006, I was diagnosed with lymphoma, stage four, a form of blood cancer. I went into remission after the second chemo treatment in November.

In June of this year, I had a relapse, and went to Rocky Mountain Cancer Institute in Denver. There I was treated with two more sessions of chemo — a little stronger.

Then we discovered that the stem cell rescue we were going to do was actually a transplant.

