

from our viewpoint...

## Encourage youth to learn, return

As graduates file across the stage this week, how many of them have been encouraged to learn and study and return to Goodland, or even to some part of rural Kansas, to help make this a better place?

Our seniors will collect thousands of dollars in scholarships from colleges, civic groups, businesses and the like. Most of that money was earned here, by people who spent their lives building a business, a farming operation, a life on the plains.

Early on, we knew we wanted the best for our children. We wanted them to have the best education possible before they went on to whatever they would do in life.

At first, a great many of them did come back. In the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, it was expected children would continue a family business or farm.

That changed with the end of World War II. The so-called Greatest Generation came home from war wanting other things — a better life in the city being first among those. Since then, fewer and fewer of our graduates have come home to run businesses, to keep farms going, to make life better for rural America.

And we raise money each year to pay them to go. We send our own children off to university with little hope they will come back, even though this is a good life.

We help raise money for other people's children to do the same. At the twilight of our lives, those who have made some money often leave a chunk of it for scholarships. It's a noble cause.

But in the end, we are financing the flight of our youth to life in the city. We're paying them to flee the life our grandfathers built.

To some extent, that's life in America today. Rural areas have been losing population. Opportunities are fewer and farther between.

But it doesn't have to be that way. The culture of small-town life changed before, and it could change again.

Why do we have to give kids scholarships so they can get a good job in the city?

Why not encourage them, with our money, to learn how to make a living and grow a business or a professional practice here, at home, where life is safe and relatively simple?

We are not talking about coercing anyone. Youths should be free to make their own decisions, and some always have — and always will — choose city life. There are things you can only do in New York or Los Angeles or Washington, after all.

But we could encourage them to value small-town life and we could give them money to study for a career in rural America.

Every civic group, every donor, every parent is free to give preference to those who will study and come back to contribute to our way of life.

We could choose to do that. *The Goodland Star-News*, in fact, does consider that when it gives scholarships. So do a few others.

But not enough. Not nearly enough.

The day should come when every scholarship raised here, or in any rural town, encourages somehow not just a good education, but a desire to contribute to a better life in Goodland, in rural Kansas, in small-town America.

No law, no rule of life, no moral imperative forces us to keep spending as we always have spent, with no thought for where these kids will end up.

If we continue as we are, we are pounding nails in the coffin of rural life. We can change that. We should change that.

We should encourage our lifestyle, cherish its values and pass them on. Not pay kids to make a life in the crowded, crime-ridden cities and sprawling suburbs.

So why don't we? — *Steve Haynes*



## Wright's tune has a familiar ring

It turns out that a number of Jeremiah Wright's incendiary and racist comments are not new, and are traceable to leaders of the Black Muslim Movement. As it turns out, Wright's radical ranting is an echo.

A glance back at history reveals an eerie connection between black separatists, the Nation of Islam (NOI) and Barack Obama's pastor. Although both NOI and Wright excel at racist and anti-American rhetoric, it now appears that they read from the same hymnal.

For starters, Wright is known for calling white Americans "blue-eyed devils." However, for all his originality, he is not the creator of that curse. Wallace Fard, the founder of the Black Muslim Movement, actually coined it.

In 1930, Fard, an Islamic black man, began stirring up the black community in Detroit about civil rights, poverty, slavery and white supremacy. Joblessness and hunger during the Great Depression swept the slums of Detroit, and Fard soon had a hate-filled following.

Another conviction shared by Pastor Wright and the Nation of Islam comes as well from Fard. Instead of "God Bless America," Wright is singing, "God --- America," in harmony with Fard, who taught that Black Muslims did not owe allegiance to America or the American flag, but rather that they should disdain and hate both.

In 1934, Fard mysteriously disappeared and one of his protégés, Elijah Poole, assumed command. Poole, as was customary with the group, took a new last name, and became



## floyd, mary brown

• commentary

Elijah Muhammad. Some in the Black Muslim movement took Islamic names, others took just "X."

One whose last name became "X" was Elijah Muhammad's right-hand man, the former Malcolm Little, who became Malcolm X. "Mr. Muhammad's powerful spiritual message opened" my eyes and "enabled me to see [white people] as a race of devils," Malcolm X said, describing the moment of his revelation. "Elijah Muhammad's statement, 'the white man is the devil,' it just clicked."

Malcolm X wrote in his autobiography, "The Muslims' 'X' symbolized the true African family name that he never could know. For me, my 'X' replaced the white slave master name of 'Little' which some blue-eyed devil named Little had imposed on my parental forebears..."

In an interview, Malcolm X explained his views, "What I want to know is how the white man, with the blood of black people dripping off his fingers, can have the audacity to be asking black people, 'do they hate him?' That takes a lot of nerve." When asked why he called it "good news" that 120 white Atlantans had died in an airplane crash, Malcolm X replied, "Sir, as I see the law of justice, it says as you

sow, so shall you reap... We Muslims believe that the white race, which is guilty of having oppressed and exploited and enslaved our people here in America, should and will be the victims of God's divine wrath."

Last month Rev. Jeremiah Wright reaffirmed that 9/11 was America's fault. "We bombed Hiroshima. We bombed Nagasaki... and we never batted an eye.... We have supported state terrorism against the Palestinians and black South Africans, and now we are indignant because the stuff that we have done overseas is now brought right back into our own front yards. America's chickens are coming home to roost."

Is the tune beginning to sound familiar? Wright was actually quoting Malcolm X, who said two weeks after President Kennedy's assassination that the president's death was a case of "chickens coming home to roost."

Less surprising than would have been previously thought, Reverend Jeremiah Wright's words echo the chorus of Black Muslim/Nation of Islam leaders Fard, Muhammad, "X" and Farrakhan. In December, Wright's church gave Louis Farrakhan a lifetime achievement award — the same Farrakhan who has repeatedly filled the airwaves with hate toward "blue-eyed devils" (whites), America and "bloodsuckers" (Jews).

*Floyd and Mary Beth Brown are bestselling authors and speakers. Together they write a weekly column distributed nationally.*

## I get a horse



## from other pens

• commentary

"The schoolteacher who writes about us says he's going to get a horse to ride to town," says Mencken.

"What for?" asks Ed Earl.

"Groceries. Brown's Hardware. Potted flowers like he puts out in spring."

"I mean why?"

"Save money on gas, I'd guess. Frugality in general."

I am the schoolteacher Mencken Cody and Ed Earl Williams are talking about. I am not there. It is a meeting of the Committee to Save the World, at the co-op in Bly, Kan. It only takes two to have a meeting.

It is coming wheat harvest. Most of us don't have time right now to save the world, so it won't be long before Mencken and Ed Earl pile into their pickups.

Gas is crawling toward \$4 a gallon. Diesel fuel is crawling uphill as well. The high-dollar wheat these men hope to sell could take a bad hit if you count the price of the fuel to bring it in.

But for the moment they are mediating over coffee about what they've heard I'm going to do.

"For an idea it sounds a quart low," says Ed Earl.

"It's a quart you don't have to add to your crankcase," says Mencken. "Besides, it's turning the clock back to better days."

## where to write

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me riding a horse to town and what kind of talk that will start.

"If he'd get a horse that could pull a wagon," says Ed Earl, "I'd ask him to pick up a few things and skip a trip to town. He could carry his potted flowers easier as well."

"It costs me \$3 here and back to drive my truck," says Mencken.

"A horse costs something," says Ed Earl. "Figure the farrier bill and the vet like tires and oil," says Mencken. "Figure feed like gas, though a round bale would feed a horse for a month. But let's say it's even. You save insurance."

"Only if you sell your truck," says Ed Earl. "Just sitting your pickup costs money every month like you were using it. A man would have to give up the use of his truck to come out ahead."

"A man loses the use of his pickup in this country and it's like losing the use of his ..."

"Don't say it out loud," says Ed Earl. "He'll put it in what he writes and that will cause all kinds of trouble for us."

They are quiet for awhile. Others of the Committee to Save the World would have been here by now if they were coming. The coffee pot is foaming black goo at the bottom. There is sunshine in the work day ahead of us.

I am heading to the Oliva farm to see if they need me to drive their grain truck. As I go by the co-op I notice Ed Earl's and Mencken's pickups. But I have promises to keep.

"How's he going to write about what we said without him being here?" asks Mencken.

"Somebody will let him know," says Ed Earl.

"I hope by the time he tells on us he's got his horse," says Mencken.

"With a wagon," says Ed Earl, standing up to drive to town.

*Robert Day is author of the novel "The Last Cattle Drive." An adjunct professor at Washington College in Chestertown, Md., he wrote this comment for the Land Institute's Prairie Writers Circle, Salina, Kan.*

## The Goodland Star-News

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

Member: Kansas Press Association  
Inland Press Association Colorado Press Association  
National Newspaper Association  
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Published every Tuesday and Friday except the days observed for New Year's Day, July 4th 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@nwkansas.com](mailto:star-news@nwkansas.com). Advertising questions can be sent to: [goodlandads@nwkansas.com](mailto:goodlandads@nwkansas.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, \$29; six months, \$46; 12 months, \$81. Out of area, weekly mailing of two issues: three months, \$39; six months, \$54; 12 months, \$89 (All tax included). Mailed individually each day: (call for a price).

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

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Haynes Publishing Company