

from our viewpoint...

Positive thinking key to town success

The power of positive thinking has been proven time and time again, and getting people to think positive about Goodland is the idea behind the new campaign being added to the bottom of *The Goodland Star-News*' front page.

For years, the front page has been mostly out of bounds for advertising, even for the best of purposes. News space is tight enough as it is, and purists think giving up even a percentage of the front page is a no-no.

When the "Have you said anything good about Goodland today?" idea came up, we argued about whether to put it inside the paper or on the front page. We decided it belonged on Page 1.

We think it's important to be proud of our town. If you agree, and want to be part of this effort, call Jordie or Jessica at 899-2338.

The impetus for the campaign was a speech by Goodland lawyer Ron Vignery at a recent Shine On Sherman County update. His said people who live in Goodland should be the first to say something good about our town, and not be afraid to stop someone who is making an untruthful or harmful comment.

"We should not let it be acceptable to let people just complain," Vignery said. "We should not accept a negative statement without asking them why they are complaining."

"This is a good community and we have good people. We need to challenge anyone who says that another town is better than where we live."

The perception people coming here have of Goodland is fashioned mostly by the citizens they meet, so the people who are out front at the motels, hotels, gas stations and restaurants are on the front lines.

Complaining is easy, and comes out quickly when we talk amongst ourselves, but we need to remember the people around us and the kind of damage that can cause.

That reminds us of an World War I and II slogan that "Loose lips, sink ships."

Today's economy and recent announcements about businesses here have a lot of citizens thinking dark days have arrived, but positive things are happening in downtown Goodland.

Lots of people have great ideas about opening a business, and today banks try to work with people to see if they have a business plan to make that dream a reality.

Sherman County is part of a five-county Western Business Consulting Service that provides free up front help developing business plans and putting people together to help both existing businesses and those wanting to start their own.

Sherman County Economic Development works with the Small Business Development Center out of Hays, which has similar programs, and offers training in finance and business management to help get businesses off on the right foot.

Driving down Main Avenue, people sometimes only see the empty buildings, but today driving from Eighth to 17th, there is a lot of activity, with some businesses ready to open their doors this week, including Applejack's Restaurant, 1016 Main, and the Vault Creamery, 921 Main.

Other changes are coming to several other buildings on Main include a new professional office as St. Francis chiropractor Dr. Brett Polling opens a branch here.

People in Goodland and Sherman County can look around and see the rough things happening and complain, or look for that always present silver lining and let everyone know that Goodland is doing OK — not perfect, but OK. — Tom Betz



I've been toadnaping for my garden

OK. OK. I admit it. I took it. That toad in your yard, it was me. I took it. I've been toading my garden since early June, and I'm up to five now.

Steve and I go for a walk almost every evening, and when one of us spots a toad hopping his merry way down the street, across the grass or over a sidewalk, I toadnap him.

And, of course, Steve is an accessory to the crime. He helps me corral them.

Those little hoppers are hard to catch. They jump, change direction and make us look like fools running around in the dark on somebody's lawn trying to trap them without injuring them.

Once captured, they always seem kind of surprised that nothing is trying to take a bite out of them. They're ready to be really bad tasting, but nothing seems to want to eat them. So, in frustration, I think, they sometimes pee on you.

This is why I try to keep my eyes on the trees and shrubs, rather than the sidewalks and lawns, for the first half of our walks. Who wants to spend most of an hour carrying a squirming, peeing toad? Not me. Not Steve, for sure.

When I arrive home, I put the toads in my



**cynthia
haynes**

• open season

garden. They don't stay there but that's where I keep "seeding" them.

So far, one has taken over the area by the garbage can, one is hopping around the auxiliary garden on the south-side of the house, one is living in the sunflowers and Steve's native grass (weeds, if you ask me) beside the garage, one is in the iris bed and one is in an undisclosed location. In other words, I have no idea where it went.

Steve is really very indulgent about my love for creepy crawlies. He's lived through turtles, salamanders, garter snakes, lizards and toads besides the usual dogs, cats, rabbit and spiders. (What! You never kept spiders? What a strange family you had.)

I'm not sure where I got my proclivity for unusual pets, but I passed it on to my children. My son kept lizards when he was in high school and my youngest daughter had a pet

spider. She once spent her lunch hour, while in graduate school, rescuing frogs from the college fountain. When the tadpoles turned into frogs, it seems, they had no way to get out of the fountain and would drown without a little help from a friendly student.

Personally, I've been known to grab a garter snake while touring a high-end tourist resort's prospective golf course and carrying it around the rest of the day with the developer throwing me odd glances and my husband pretending it was the most normal thing in the world.

When we came to Kansas to look at the papers, I yelled for our hosts to stop the car then got out to rescue a box turtle, which was venturing into the path of an oncoming truck. Again my husband smiled and the newspaper owners, who had raised four kids, sold us the company.

But, I don't want to be greedy. You can have your toad back. All you have to do is check under the zucchini in the auxiliary garden on the south side of my house — oh and help yourself to some squash, too, please.

(Hey Steve, you don't have to go looking for those unlocked car now. I think I've taken care of the problem.)

Talking veepstakes

This seems like a good time to talk about the race for the vice presidency. Not because of the overwhelming excitement involved in what is essentially a backstage safari. And not because of the dazzling personalities being rigorously vetted. Because nothing else is going on. Right now, the Veepstakes is the only game in town.

The presidential campaign has entered what can only be described as its dormant hibernation phase. The whole damn thing has stalled like John Goodman over the dessert table at a 4-star casino's Sunday Brunch on the Mississippi Coast. Think of an endlessly looping PBS pledge drive.

The candidates have abandoned the playing field and are sucking down Gatorade while the trainers search for additional wads of cash to stuff into the hollow portions of their uniforms. And the score at halftime finds Barack Obama leading John McCain by about 15 points. Which should excite Democrats. I mean the last time they had this kind of a lead, at this point in the race, was way, way back, four years ago when John Kerry enjoyed a similar lead over George Bush. Oh.

Meanwhile, welcome to silly season. To demonstrate their unity, former sworn mortal enemies, Senators Obama (Crips) and Clinton (Bloods) met up in a New Hampshire town named Unity where, back in January, both received 107 votes. Get it? They're not at each other's throats anymore. They're in Unity. You can't make up stuff like this. And no, I have no idea if Truth or Consequences, New Mexico or Maggie's Nipples, Wyoming were considered as alternates in case the civic fathers of Unity proved truculent.

We should relish these two months of campaign downtime before the conventions



**will
durst**

• raging moderate

begin, and where, just like now, absolutely nothing will happen. The only difference is then, that nothing will be reported upon at such a great length, that grown men are developing rashes on the insides of their thighs just thinking about it.

Who will be number two? Nobody knows. And we might not for a while. This time around the VP picks are undergoing prodigious scrutiny due to the peculiar vulnerability of each of the nominees. John McCain is old and could nod off at any time, and Barack Obama is black and will have to campaign in America, a country more comfortable with guns than library cards. No word as to whether that whole library card thing is scheduled for any future Supreme Court docket.

Both secondary races are wide open and the speculation is so thick you can hide small clusters of cherry tomatoes in the smoke coming out of Chris Matthews' ears.

You got your public short-list and you got your private shorter-list and then you got your slip of paper with Hillary Clinton and Mitt Romney's names on it, who only get the nod if every other politician in America coincidentally trips and falls into an active lava tube.

Some people say that the vice president doesn't affect the general election. Maybe not, but the choice of the vice president does have an impact. Do the names Eagleton, Ferraro, and Quayle have any meaning here? How 'bout Admiral Stockdale, Ross Perot's running mate in '92? "Who am I? Why am I here?" A question never adequately answered. For him or for us. Or for our current presumptive nominees.

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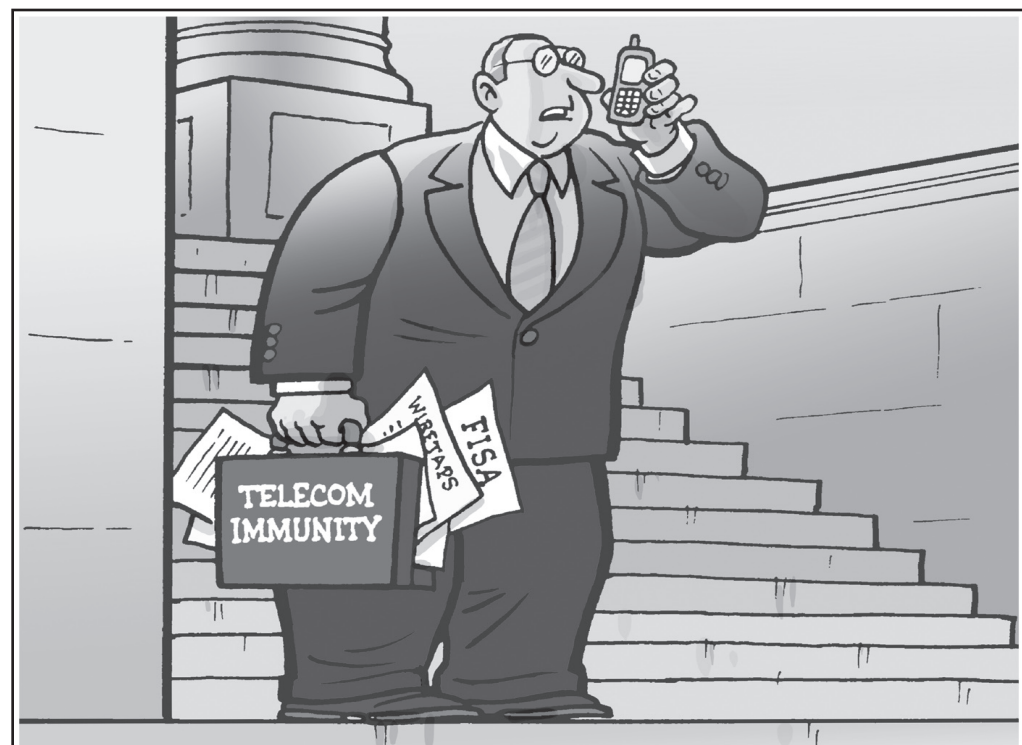
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