

from our viewpoint...

# Helping others shows holiday spirit

Presents have been bought, wrapped and placed under Christmas trees all around town, and friends and neighbors will be getting together to celebrate and enjoy the season.

This time of year people are a bit kinder to each other and we reach out our hands and pockets to help those who may be in need.

For some that means helping with the Genesis food baskets or helping with the Churches Thrift Store Kids Christmas Shoppe while others volunteer to brave the cold and ring the bell to help the Salvation Army.

Whatever part you may play in these activities it is the community spirit that makes the season special.

The tough economy and recession the federal government says we have been in for more than a year doesn't seem that tough here. However, that may be because we have been in drought conditions for so long it is hard to see any difference.

Being more rural than the major cities to the east and west the effects of the downturn in the national economy may take longer to reach out to our area.

Recent employment statistics from the state show our part of Kansas as being well below the national average of 6.7 percent and below the state average of 4.8 percent. For November Sherman County was reporting an unemployment rate of 3.1 percent and Thomas County was reporting unemployment of 2.9 percent.

The only blip on the unemployment radar that appears out of sorts is that Wallace County was reporting unemployment in November of 7.1 percent. It does not take much of a change in Wallace to show a huge jump as the state reports the work force in that county at 884 with 822 of them employed. The 62 unemployed are the 7.1 percent.

In contrast the state reports Sherman County has a work force of 3,470 with 3,364 employed. That leaves 106 unemployed or 3.1 percent.

The state employment figures for the Hays Area (Ellis County) reported 2.8 percent unemployment in November with a work force of 17,621, and 17,119 employed, leaving 502 people unemployed.

Low unemployment figures is usually a good sign, but the numbers could hide an underlying problem. It could mean jobs aren't available, and for those jobs available it is hard for businesses to find good people to fill those.

The old year is coming to an end and we look forward to a new one with hope and a few worries that our area may not be immune to the recession.

Good things continue to happen around our town, but we have the usual round of shops and restaurants closing while others are preparing to open with the new year.

Business climates have an ebb and flow and good weather and bad storms, but with an underlying confidence of the people the community will find a way to steer a clear course.

At times it appears our town is not gaining, but a look around the area indicates our county is doing better than most.

We can look back at the year to see the positive things such as the skate park and new streets and roads. From the point of history the bumps of the year get smaller as we focus on the future.

We hope everyone has a wonderful, happy and safe holiday season.

Merry Christmas to everyone. — Tom Betz



# One, day, one heart, one ball at a time

To the Editor:

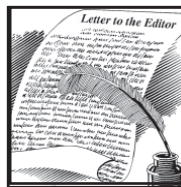
At this blessed time of giving may we all remember with gratitude all our servicemen and women so far from home who so selflessly serve to preserve our freedoms.

Through the special giving spirit we are well over half way to our goal of sending 1,000 soccer balls to the children of Afghanistan by July.

A special thanks from Air Force Capt. Andy Stewart and his family to the many people who have helped make this possible through their donations to Operation Andy's Gift including Duane and Lois Unger, Robert Moyer, Ying Huang, Robert and Irma Silkman, Max Alderman, Ron and Lucy Ackerman, Lynn and Cathy Hoelting, Ed and Becky Schulte, Duane and Peg Hanke, Mona McGinley, Darlene and Roger Lauer, Richard and Joy Hayden, Kyle Sorensen, Jennifer and Kevin Sanderson, Kim and Dave Horinek, Bill and Janet Mehling, Stan and Becky Purvis, Jim and Judy Hayden, Richard and Connie Allaman, Debbie and Tony Martin, Gary and Miriam Yonkey, Sherida and Dennis Shoff, Janice Phipps, Gary and Karen Coon, Jeff and Tricia



Capt. Stewart



## from our readers

to the editor

Bhend, Goodland Rotary Club, VFW Ladies Post 1133, The Goodland Star-News and S&T Communications.

Please check our blog for current pictures and updates at <http://operationandysgift.blogspot.com> or contact Tom or Carol Stewart at [tstewart@st-tel.net](mailto:tstewart@st-tel.net) or (785) 890-3150 if you would like to donate to this ongoing project.

We could possibly touch the lives of up to 10,000 kids.

Capt Andrew Stewart and family Afghanistan and Goodland

To the Editor:

Our Goodland City commissioners are in the throes of selecting a new city manager. They have hired a head-hunting organization and will probably pay them a big fee; they will soon hire a manager for a large salary, and he or she will know little of our city, but will be

an "expert."

We have had several managers in the past, and after a year or two, they terminate and leave town. They take their salary, perks, benefits and say, "So long, it's been good to know you!"

Few, if any, have ever even bought a house in Goodland. None have actually become a citizen of this community.

The laws of Kansas say he or she merely needs "administrative ability." I would like to suggest an alternative to the present procedure.

Why not promote from within the group that runs the city now — the present city employees. We have experts in many areas of city management presently working for the city. They all make Goodland their home, love the city and are concerned about its future.

We have an excellent pool of "administrative talent," and anyone in that group could become a very good city manager.

Wouldn't it be great to have a city manager who really knows, loves and understands the city? One who would hit the ground running, work with all the departments and truly start solving Goodland's problems?

It has worked in other cities; why not Goodland?  
Pete Whalen  
Goodland

# Obama priority is to remake America

Early personnel appointments show that President-elect Barack Obama's policy team is more interested in remaking America's social policy than changing foreign policy or improving the ethical standard in our nation's capital.

Obama's policy teams appear comfortable keeping the Bush foreign policy intact, but the President-elect is hiring people who are committed to remaking domestic policy by vastly expanding the scope of federal power.

As a case in point, Former Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle as Obama's choice for Secretary of Health and Human Services is very telling. Obama strategists wanted a legislative veteran in this job because they are planning an almost immediate push for socialized medicine. Expect early-on maneuvers supporting universal-coverage mandates for business and new healthcare entitlements for lower-income Americans.

According to the Washington Blade, D.C.'s gay newspaper: "Officials with President-elect Barack Obama's transition team this week named at least seven openly gay people to transition panels assigned to review federal departments and agencies. Three of the seven gays named to the transition panels — businessman Fred P. Hochberg, former San Francisco Supervisor Roberta Achtenberg, and labor attorney Elaine Kaplan — held high-level positions in the Clinton administration." They are all proponents of a major push for federal legislation and regulations to vastly expand the rights of gay couples.

Another priority for Obama is abortion. "The first thing I'd do as president is sign the Freedom of Choice Act," Sen. Barack Obama told the Planned Parenthood Action fund on July 17, 2007. "That's the first thing that I'd do."

This radical piece of pro-abortion legislation invalidates any "statute, ordinance, regulation, administrative order, decision, policy, practice, or other action" of any federal, state, or local government or governmental official (or any person acting under government authority) that would "deny or interfere with a woman's right to choose" abortion, or that would "discriminate against the exercise of the right... in the regulation or provision of benefits, facili-



## floyd, mary brown

commentary

ties, services, or information." The Freedom of Choice Act legislation would establish, in Sen. Barbara Boxer's words, "the absolute right to choose" prior to fetal "viability."

And ironically, Barack Obama's campaign was propelled to victory with a message about remaking America's policy toward the war in Iraq and the world. He was able to win early primary contests against Sen. Hillary Clinton specifically because of her support for the invasion of Iraq. Now as he assembles a foreign policy team he is choosing defense hawks, including Sen. Clinton, who supported the war. She is the leading candidate for Secretary of State.

The Los Angeles Times is reporting that anti-war activists are upset: "Obama ran his campaign around the idea the war was not legitimate, but it sends a very different message when you bring in people who supported the war from the beginning," said Kelly Dougherty, executive director of the 54-chapter Iraq Veterans Against the War.

In addition to Sen. Clinton, other hawks who are being promoted for key positions include Republican Sen. Richard Lugar and Bush's current Secretary of Defense Robert Gates.

His choice for White House Chief of Staff, Rahm Emanuel, is known in Congress as a defender of Israel and is unlikely to support any changes in America's policy toward the Mideast and the Jewish state.

And mind you, don't expect a higher standard of ethics from Obama acolytes.

Emanuel carries baggage because he was a member of the board of directors for the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation, the controversial "Freddie Mac." This plum position was payback for his loyal support of President Clinton. Emanuel made millions from Wall Street investment banking before he moved on to the U.S. Congress in 2002. Freddie Mac was plagued with an accounting

scandal during the Emanuel tenure. The Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight later accused the board on which he served of having "failed in its duty to follow up on matters brought to its attention."

Similarly, former Judge Eric Holder, tapped for Attorney General by Obama, was instrumental in arranging the pardon of notorious felon Marc Rich. According to The Washington Post, he has a "blot" on his record: "Mr. Holder was No. 2 at the Justice Department when President Bill Clinton pardoned fugitive financier Marc Rich, whose ex-wife was a major Clinton contributor. Although Mr. Holder oversaw the lawyers responsible for evaluating pardon requests, he did not insist that his department formally evaluate the legal merits of the claim after Mr. Rich applied directly to the White House for his pardon."

Based on early personnel choices, it looks like a President Obama will keep the Bush foreign policy, turn to Washington insiders despite their checkered pasts, and push ahead with a radical social agenda that was largely off the radar during the campaign.

Floyd and Mary Beth Brown are bestselling authors and speakers. Together they write a national weekly newspaper column. To comment on this column, e-mail [browns@caglecartoons.com](mailto:browns@caglecartoons.com).

## Letter Policy

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