

from our viewpoint...

Let’s visit about recalling vehicles

Vehicle recalls are nothing new. But the way they are being played up now you’d think they were. A lot of the confusion probably rests with the fact we make more cars now than we ever have – worldwide.

This writer has had cars recalled for nearly as many years as he’s owned them. Sometimes it was simple things, things you’d wonder why they’d recall a vehicle for. But apparently it needed attention so the car would go to the hospital to treat whatever the illness.

There was one time I had four recalls in 14 months on a brand new just off-the-floor purchase. After the fourth recall I asked the dealership if they wouldn’t mind calling the manufacturer to see when they planned to have my car all put together.

Then there was another time when I was testing driving a new car with the dealer riding along and the fan belt busted. There were only 62 miles on the vehicle. Now how uncool was that and how embarrassing for that dealer.

However, there is a question I’ve wondered about. Do all manufacturers check their product before putting it out on the roadways? It almost seems like it may be a hit-and-miss kind of situation with some of them.

Toyota isn’t the exception. American brands have also taken their place in the recall hot seat. But Toyota’s recall was of such massive proportions that it captured headlines around the world.

The sad part of this is that angry owners of recalls take it out on their local dealer. And it isn’t their fault, they just happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

I can’t ever recall any of my dad’s cars being recalled. Of course that was back in the 1940s and early 1950s and what he was comfortably able to buy were what they called back then “used cars.” There were times I think he was driving something that should have been recalled. But that word wasn’t part of the conversation then.

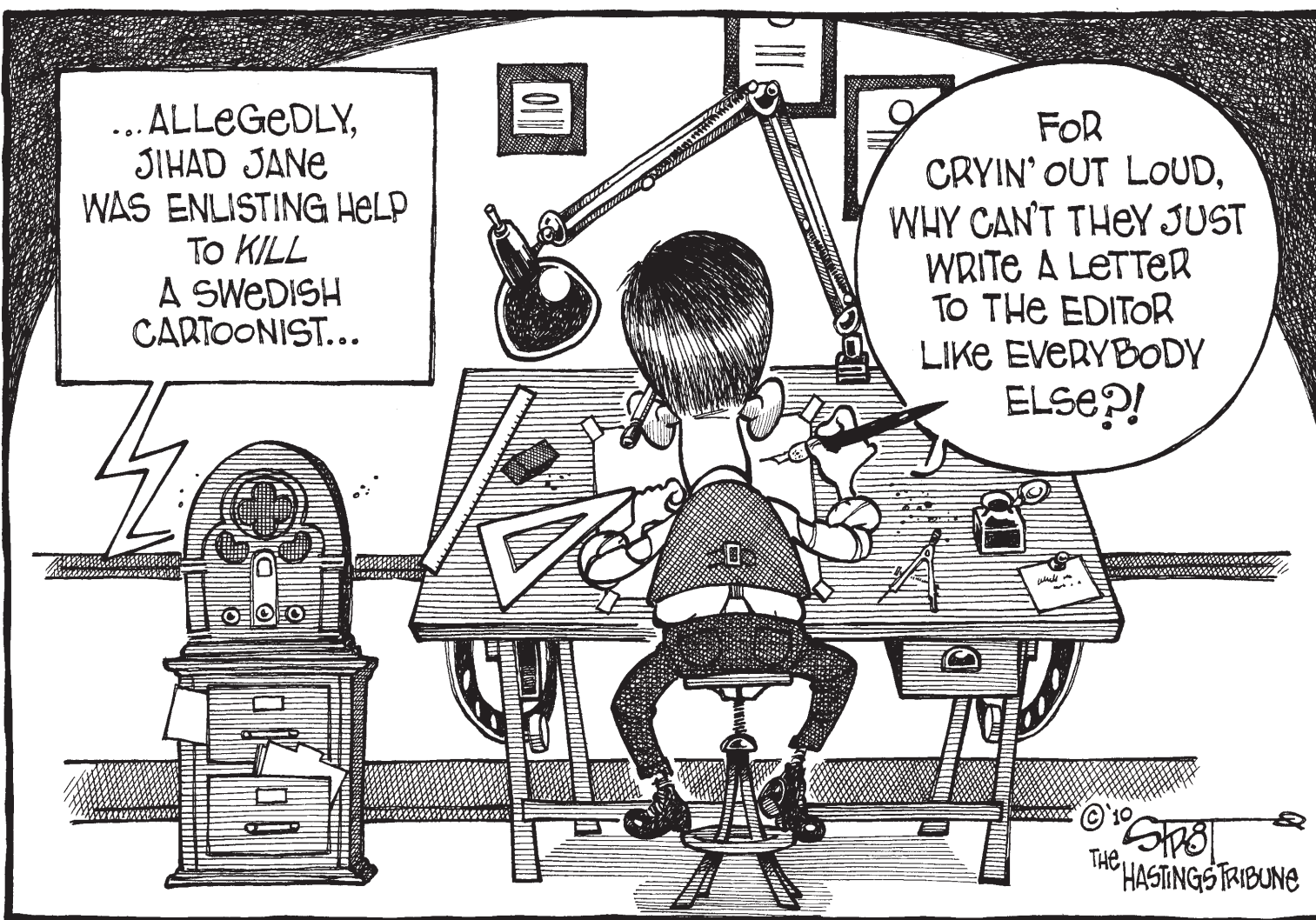
Maybe today’s problem is the amount of vehicles being turned out in just a short period of time. All of today’s cars are beautiful looking machines and it’s hard to see how those looks can be so deceptive, as recalls suggest. Do buyers now approach dealerships with a bit of apprehension? They can’t be blamed if they do, but again you can’t blame the dealership if something goes wrong.

It’s unfortunate that some recalls have resulted in injuries and death. No one wants that. But airplanes crash, trains derail, buses roll over. Why? Maybe because inspections on the floor overlooked something minor but important to the operation. Call it human error.

But there is another way of looking at this: Of the billions of vehicles — maybe trillions by now — that have been put into operation since Henry Ford’s first car took to the dirt (roads), the number of recalls don’t amount to all that much, which does speak well for the way those machines are put together.

This writer climbs into the cab of his red Ford Ranger several times a week with confidence that it’ll get me to where I’m going and it hasn’t let me down in the six years of ownership.

So, the next time you see those two big words appear on your television screen — BREAKING NEWS — and the story unfolding deals with a specific vehicle recall, take appropriate action if it impacts you, and be thankful that whatever the problem the manufacturer isn’t hiding it, Your safety is the manufacturer’s #1 priority. -TD



Students saluted; health care poll begins

THUMBS UP to: “Grant Junior High’s Scholars Bowl Teams on their great showing at League at Hoxie on March 8, with the 8th grade team of Brianna and Berkley White, Brianna Garrett, Jared Lake and Zach Miller, placing first out of seven teams; and the 7th grade team of Raquel Tom-sic, Tyler Neufeld, Hiram Hendrich, Makayla Kennedy and Keegan Bowling, placing third. And thanks to Mrs. Bergquist for all the guidance and support given the team!” -(e-mail); “the gang that out-steered the steer. All’s well in Goodland!” -(from a chuckling telephone caller); “the Goodland Rotary Club, on its book project.” -(e-mail); “to GHS, for the recognition given the students who performed exceptionally well on the state test scores!” -(telephone). *(It’s easy to give a thumbs up; simply e-mail me at tad1@st-tel.net, call 890-2475, or drop it off at the Star-News office. Thanks; no charge.)*

-td-
HEALTH CARE POLL
By the time this reaches your home, the Capitol Hill vote on President Obama’s Health Care Reform Bill might have been taken, but then maybe not. That’s not the point of this item, however. What I would like to find out is how **YOU** feel about the health care reform bill. Why don’t you e-mail me at tad1@st-tel.net with a simple YES (in favor) or NO (opposed). Your name will not be used as I delete e-mail messages that respond to requests as



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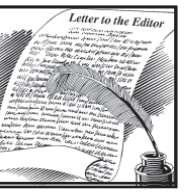
soon as they are received.
We hear about polls that show the majority of Americans are against this particular bill and we also hear about polls that support it. I guess these are not straight Yes and No polls, but are so designed that a respondent would need to answer a series of questions. I’ve always thought those “series of questions” in some polling — not all — leads respondents to the conclusion sought by the pollster.
But what is important to me if how YOU feel, simply with a Yes or No vote. I know the health care reform battle has generated quite a bit of talk around town and around the county. Now, with this little poll we will be able to see if Obamacare has legs to stand on or not.
If you don’t have a computer, hey, call me at home at 890-2475 and give me a simple Yes or No and don’t tell me who you are.
If you don’t have a phone, you can still be involved by putting a Yes or No on a sheet of paper and shove it through our drop box next to the front door.
When I was publishing *The Norton Telegram* we did a couple of polls on different issues and the response was always very good. I hope we can have a similar response to the health care

reform bill.
Results will appear in this column.
Please don’t let me down.
Thanks...in advance!
-td-
AREALSTUMPER!
I was reading the other day about a third grade teacher who asked her little students what they would ask God if he were to knock on the door, come in and sit at her desk. The questions were many, but the real stopper came from the mouth of a little boy who simply said, “You know you’re not supposed to be in here.”
More proof that those little ears hear every-thing?
How would you have responded to the child’s comment?
-td-

BLUSHING RED?
Well, the ladies’ man is going back on the golf course after taking a few months break to deal with whatever he’s addicted to. He’s hired a former presidential press secretary to help him iron out the wrinkles. Wrinkles? Those were tidal waves! If he happens to win the Masters, they’ll need to change the color of the Green Jacket awarded the victor, to blushing red. Gosh, I forgot his name!
-td-
Have a good evening! And maybe we could adopt something like ‘Church Madness’ to help fill out the weekend!

Gov. urges Kansans to ‘Thank a farmer’

Governor Mark Parkinson is urging Kansans to remember where their food comes from and “thank a farmer” during Kansas Agriculture Week, which runs through this week.
“Agriculture has always been the backdrop to life in Kansas,” he said. “It’s a tradition that predates our statehood, and it continues to contribute to our economic well-being,
“Whether it’s a Thomas County wheat farmer, a Flint Hills rancher or a truck farmer from Johnson County growing heirloom tomatoes, Kansas farmers and ranchers help fill our food, fiber and fuel needs. During Agriculture Week, especially, we need to remember to thank them for the work they do.”
Parkinson recently signed a proclamation



from
other pens

• commentary

to declare March 14 to 20, Kansas Agriculture Week and Thursday, Kansas Agriculture Day. The proclamation said Kansas has a leading role in wheat, grain sorghum and beef production, as well as its second place ranking in cropland, and third place rank in land in farms and sunflower production.
The proclamation said the impact for the state is the \$13.9 billion market value of all ag-

ricultural products sold in 2008, which placed Kansas seventh in the nation. The same year, the state ranked sixth in farm product exports, valued at \$5.9 billion.
“Agriculture is our bedrock,” said Josh Savty, secretary of the Kansas Department of Agriculture. “The economy may wax and wane, but demand for food never ends. During these challenging economic times, it’s good to know one in five Kansans has a job tied in some way to agriculture and food production.”
Savty said the agriculture community is taking its “thank a farmer” message to the streets during Kansas Agriculture Week.
“If you EAT today, THANK a FARMER.”

Defending our freedom of speech, press

The power words have.
One simple little want ad has stirred more complaints than we’ve had in years.
“God, what is your problem? Are you asleep, deaf, on vacation or dead? Are you incapable, indifferent or just plain cruel?”
Someone paid to put that in the Colby paper and the *Country Advocate* for two weeks. I’m not sure who; I haven’t asked, and although I presume the person who took the ad wrote down his or her address and phone number, I don’t want to know.
As a Christian, I suppose, I’d like to offer whatever friendship and solace I could. One pastor wrote a column outlining a possible response. Someone else paid to put a “reply from God” in the want ads last week.
As an editor, I’ve fielded calls from angry readers who wondered why we would print such at thing.
“I don’t like it,” was a common thread. “I don’t think you should print it.”
In America, that’s a scary sort of demand. I’m glad these people aren’t in charge.
In America, we have free speech and freedom to worship because we live under the First Amendment, the first and greatest of the 10 amendments known as the Bill of Rights.
The first is not only the bedrock of our freedom, it’s a marvel of spare and ingenious



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writing, only 44 words and barely a half dozen lines of text:
“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”
There you have the things that make us free, freedom to worship as we please, to speak our minds, to publish as we want, to assemble and to petition our republican government. No other nation has quite the full package.
And many Americans would throw it out the window tomorrow.
“Is it legal to run that?” one caller asked.
“I think it’s blasphemy,” another shouted.
“You shouldn’t run it.”
But if the only newspaper in town won’t print unpopular writings, even an anguished attack on the Lord, then what good is freedom of speech?

No, it’s not illegal to rail against the Lord, your God. Many have done it before; read your Bible.
Yes, it might be blasphemy, but don’t you think the writer had some reason to arrive at a place where he or she felt that way?
You callers claim you’re Christian, but where is your charity? How would Jesus answer this person?
How did the Lord answer Job? Or his Son, on the cross at the hour of his death:
“Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” which is, being interpreted, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” (Mark 16:34, 21st Century King James Version)
I wouldn’t pretend to have all the answers for this person — I have enough trouble keeping my own life in line — but I do back his right to his lament.
I’d hate to see America come to the point where someone couldn’t print something unpopular, especially about religion. These freedoms are at the very core of what this country stands for.
The Founders left us neither a Christian nation nor a state religion. They made it possible for us to believe and to speak as we wish. No greater gift could have been given.

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, Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving 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. Advertising questions can be sent to: 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

Nor’West Newspapers
Haynes Publishing Company