

from our viewpoint...

Tough economy should stop ‘raises’

The nation remains in the grip of a three-year recession. Unemployment hovers near 10 percent, growth is stagnant, recovery slow. Economists talk about a possible “double dip.”

In business, many have lost their jobs. Those lucky enough to have one probably haven’t had a raise in three years. Many would like to have those jobs.

Times are hard, yes, but across Kansas, perhaps across the country, public employees are demanding – and getting – raises. Many times, city councils and county commissions are raising taxes to get the money.

In the middle of the worse economy, many say, since the Great Depression, who has money to pay higher taxes? Well, everyone, if you listen to the public employees demanding raises, budget increases, guaranteed jobs.

How did these people become so entitled? And where do they think the money to pay them more will come from? The unemployed?

Public employees have it pretty good. They may not make as much as factory workers or others with good unions, but then a lot of those jobs have gone overseas. Public jobs, for the most part, can’t be exported.

Public employees, by and large, have better insurance and get more holidays than anyone else. We wonder how many of our readers in private business get a full 12 days off each year – other than bank employees, whose workplaces must be closed by federal regulation on holidays.

How many of you out there have full Blue Cross coverage? Have a state-funded retirement plan that allows you to retire early and take another job, while collecting a full pension?

(Forget for now the fact many state pension funds, which cover city, county and school workers also, are badly underfunded and in danger of collapse. It’ll just take another tax increase to fix that.)

Public employees have more job security, under civil service rules, than most in private business, especially at the small businesses that pay much of the tax load.

Public employees have it pretty good – but they’re not satisfied with that, apparently. They want more. Whether anyone else can afford to pay is not their concern.

In Kansas, for instance, when schools faced layoffs, teachers and others banded together to force the state to raise taxes. Can’t blame them. But who can afford to pay a 19 percent increase in the sales tax?

In a situation like this, an economic crisis of major proportion, that any government body would consider money for raises may seem absurd. Still, most are. Most will approve raises and push them through, raising taxes to pay the bill.

Voters ought to call for an accounting. We’re not saying public salaries should be cut, but raises ought to be out of the question right now. Tax increases, especially the property tax, should not even be considered.

But until voters get mad, this will keep happening.

Voters seldom go to budget hearings where these things are discussed. They don’t get mad until the tax bills come out at the end of the year, and by then, the decisions have been made.

If you’re happy with all that, fine. If not, maybe it’s time to find out if your city council, your county, your school district plans to raise spending, employee compensation or taxes this year.

If enough people ask, things might change. But it has to start with voters and taxpayers. – *Steve Haynes*

The Goodland Star-News

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

Member: Kansas Press Association
Inland Press Association Colorado Press Association
National Newspaper Association
e-mail: star.news@nwkansas.com

Steve Haynes, President
Tom Betz, Editor
Pat Schiefen, Society Editor



Jessica Corbin, Josh Harenberg, Anne Selfridge
Advertising Department

Sheila Smith, Office Manager

Nor’west Press

Richard Westfahl, General Manager
Jim Bowker, Betty Morris, James Jackson,
Lana Westfahl, Kris McCool, Stacy Brashear, Tracy Traxel,
Gary Meyer, Judy McKnight



nwkansas.com

N.T. Betz, Director of Internet Services
(nt.betz@nwkansas.com)

Evan Barnum, Systems Admin.(support@nwkansas.com)

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

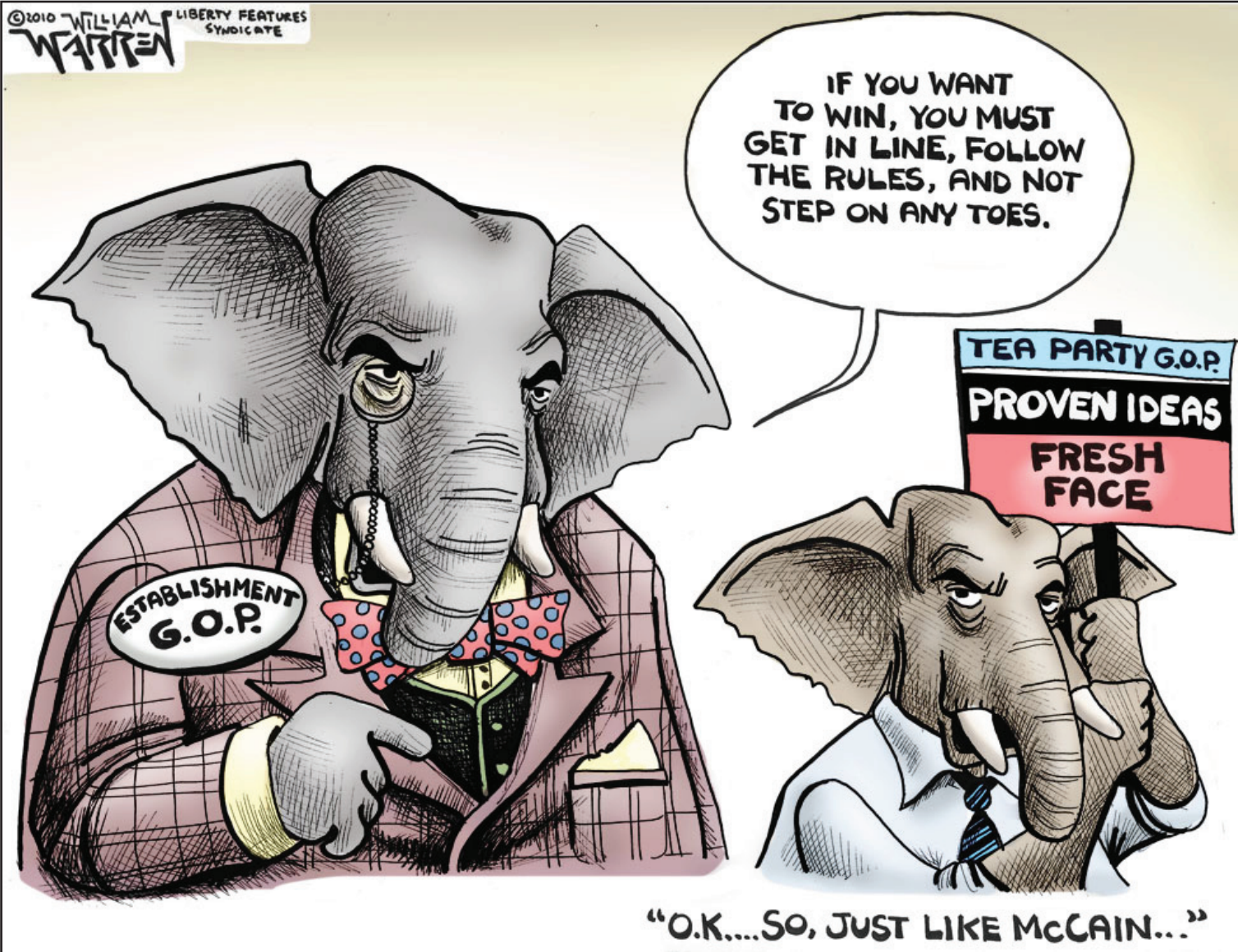
Founded by Thomas McCants
1935-1989

THE SHERMAN COUNTY STAR

Founded by Eric and
Roxie Yonkey
1994-2001

Nor’West Newspapers

Haynes Publishing Company



Where did the summer go? I want it back

I want summer back.

I know my rights! Summer is supposed to last a whole lot longer than this.

I demand it get its sunny little rear end back here.

Not that I don’t appreciate fall, mind you. Why, some of my favorite seasons are autumns. But you just can’t trust fall.

Fall starts out all cool, crisp, sleep with the window open and before you know it, the furnace is on and you’re up to your hubcaps in snow.

Disgusting!

Fall provides us with all these beautiful, colorful leaves. Then it kills them all off, and we end up with a brown, rustling carpet all over the lawn and a bunch of bare branches.

Disgusting!

Pumpkins and fresh apple cider appear in the fall. Then it freezes, and you end up with a garden full of dead tomato and squash vines. By the time you get around to removing the nasty things, they’re a slimy mess.

Disgusting!



cynthia haynes

• open season

There’s bonfires and football and wiener roasts.

Nice, but I prefer sunshine, baseball and picnics.

Let’s face it. Fall only has one purpose. It’s a bait-and-switch game to lead you into winter.

Winter is heating bills, snow to shovel, short and dreary days, wet feet, cold fingers and chapped faces.

Summer is gardens, flowers, sunshine, children playing outside, swimming, vacations and long and lazy days.

OK, so it’s also air conditioning, sunburn and bugs.

I can live with that.

As I look back over the last three months, I realize I didn’t get to go fishing, never went

swimming, rarely used our hammock and never ran through the sprinkler.

I did plant, weed, water and harvest our garden.

Steve and I did take the dog for walks at midnight, enjoy many lunchtime picnics and ate our dinner on the porch. All things I’d like to continue doing for three or four more months.

I’ve always liked summer best. Even when I had three children at home, I always hated to see school start each August. Summer vacation always seemed too short for all the things we wanted to do – go camping, visit the lake, take long walks in the woods and enjoy cooking outside.

So, please, if anyone out there has any influence with Mother Nature, could you ask her to be an old dear and not be in such a hurry to send summer on its way and bring on fall.

After all, you just can’t trust fall. It’s a sneaky season.

Helping people find their money, property

To the editor:

It is a special honor for me to serve as your State Treasurer and one of my favorite parts of this job is the opportunity to reunite Kansans with their unclaimed property.

As your State Treasurer I am responsible for property and financial assets that belong to Kansans but remain unclaimed for one reason or another. I am committed to returning as much of this property to its rightful owners as possible.

Unclaimed property can come in many forms. It can be inactive savings and checking accounts, un-cashed checks, stock shares, mutual funds, bonds, dividend checks, insurance proceeds, mineral royalties, utility deposits and in some cases safe deposit box contents.

Did you remember to pick up that last payroll



from other pens

• commentary

check from your previous employer? Have you ever had a check not survive a trip through the washing machine but not sure who to contact to get a new one? Companies are required to send those funds to our unclaimed property division.

Recently my staff made a special focus on locating property owners in Sherman County. In fact we were able to mail 124 claim packets as the first step to reconnect these Kansans with their money.

Rockies player reaches milestone

It was a touching moment.

A crowd of more than 37,000 fans at Denver’s Coors Field stood and applauded, made noise and waved for two to three minutes Friday as veteran first baseman Todd Helton stood at third.

Helton had to wave his cap twice before the fans would sit down.

The announcer had just told them the Helton’s first-inning double was No. 525 in his long career, putting him in a tie for 35th all-time among major league players. That brought him even with some guy named Ted Williams, who used to play in Boston.

After the game, Helton was typically humble, though reporters said he was grinning from ear to ear.

“Ted Williams? Come on. That’s crazy. I don’t comprehend it. It’s hard to believe, but it’s true.”

At 38, Helton is no longer the everyday player who led the Rockies to so many memorable triumphs. He has platooned all year with 39-year-old Jason Giambi at first base and spent weeks on the disabled list with back problems.

Though Helton already has put up Hall-of-Fame numbers over the years, he may have another good season or two in him. He certainly wants to help push the Rocks to yet another September playoff run this year.

But for an aging superstar, and 37,265 of his friends, Friday night was pretty special.

And Sunday, when Giambi came off the



steve haynes

• along the sappa

bench to win the game with a two-run “walkoff” homer, wasn’t bad either. The team had come from behind to tie the game, leaving a 2-2 score in the bottom of the ninth.

Giambi, as he has all year, was Manger Jim Tracey’s choice to pinch hit “in the clutch.”

It was his 39th birthday. Later, he seemed to think that it had been a good one.

As for the Rockies, it seems as though they can always find a way to win in September. The rest of the season, they get behind, forget it.

To understand this one, you have to know that in baseball, a game is “a save situation” when a team is leading by three or fewer runs in the ninth inning. The team usually calls on its “closer,” a relief pitcher who specializes in ending games, to pitch the ninth then.

It’s not just that the pitcher, if successful, records a “save” in the record books, but closers are not to be wasted on big leads.

And out front, at 20th and Blake Street, there is a street preacher who tries to talk to the crowd after most every game. An associate holds up a big hand-lettered sign that says “Jesus Saves.”

The guy talks and talks as the crowd sweeps

by, headed home or perhaps intent on the dozens of bars and sin-holes down the street in the area they call LoDo. You have to admire his dedication.

Anyway, we were sweeping by, headed for our favorite bar, when the guy behind me asked his buddy, “What does that mean, Jesus Saves? That wasn’t a save situation.” (The Rocks had won 13-4.)

I suppose Jesus plays a different game, had souls to save that night, not a baseball game. The “save” would have gone to Rockies closer Huston Street – if there had been one. I think.

Letter Policy

The Goodland Star-News encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be typewritten, and must include a telephone number and a signature. Unsigned letters will not be published. Form letters will be rejected, as will letters deemed to be of no public interest or considered offensive. We reserve the right to edit letters for length and good taste. We encourage letters, with address and phone numbers, by e-mail to: star.news@nw-kansas.com.