

from our viewpoint...

## City gets serious about cleaning up

Plans are coming together for the citywide cleanup the first week of October.

Citizens have received a letter from the city setting out the purpose of the project and what citizens can do to help clean up the town.

The city crews will begin going through the town on Monday, Oct. 4, to pickup items put out on the curbs, and items in front yards.

City crews have been going through the alleys in recent days to clean them up as much as possible.

The city is doing this for free, and will take anything except household hazardous waste. The city is asking people with large items that have refrigerant need to call the city to set up special pickups. The city has made arrangements to have the refrigerant removed before the items are hauled to the transfer station.

"The point of this cleanup is to help beautify the city," the letter from the city said. "If you do decide to put items out for pickup and you can help load the items into the dump truck or frontend loader, we would appreciate the help. Again the point of this is to help make Goodland a more inviting community."

The city and county have cooperated in citywide cleanups before, but this one is different in that the city crews will be going door to door looking for items to be picked up and hauled out to the transfer station.

"Put out any items you want sent to the Sherman County Transfer Station on your front yard or the front curb of your property," the letter said. "You need to sort your items into different piles. One pile needs to be all steel or metal items. Another pile needs to be construction and demolition items. Another pile needs to be furniture items."

The city will take tires, and has asked Sherman County for some help with the fees. The county has said they will do what they can to help.

Many people have been pushing to get the city to do this cleanup, and the city staff and commissioners have listened. The cleanup effort cannot be successful without the help of the citizens, and everyone is encouraged to get on board to help cleanup our city.

Not everything will be cleaned up, but this is a good beginning and everything taken to the transfer station is a step in the right direction.

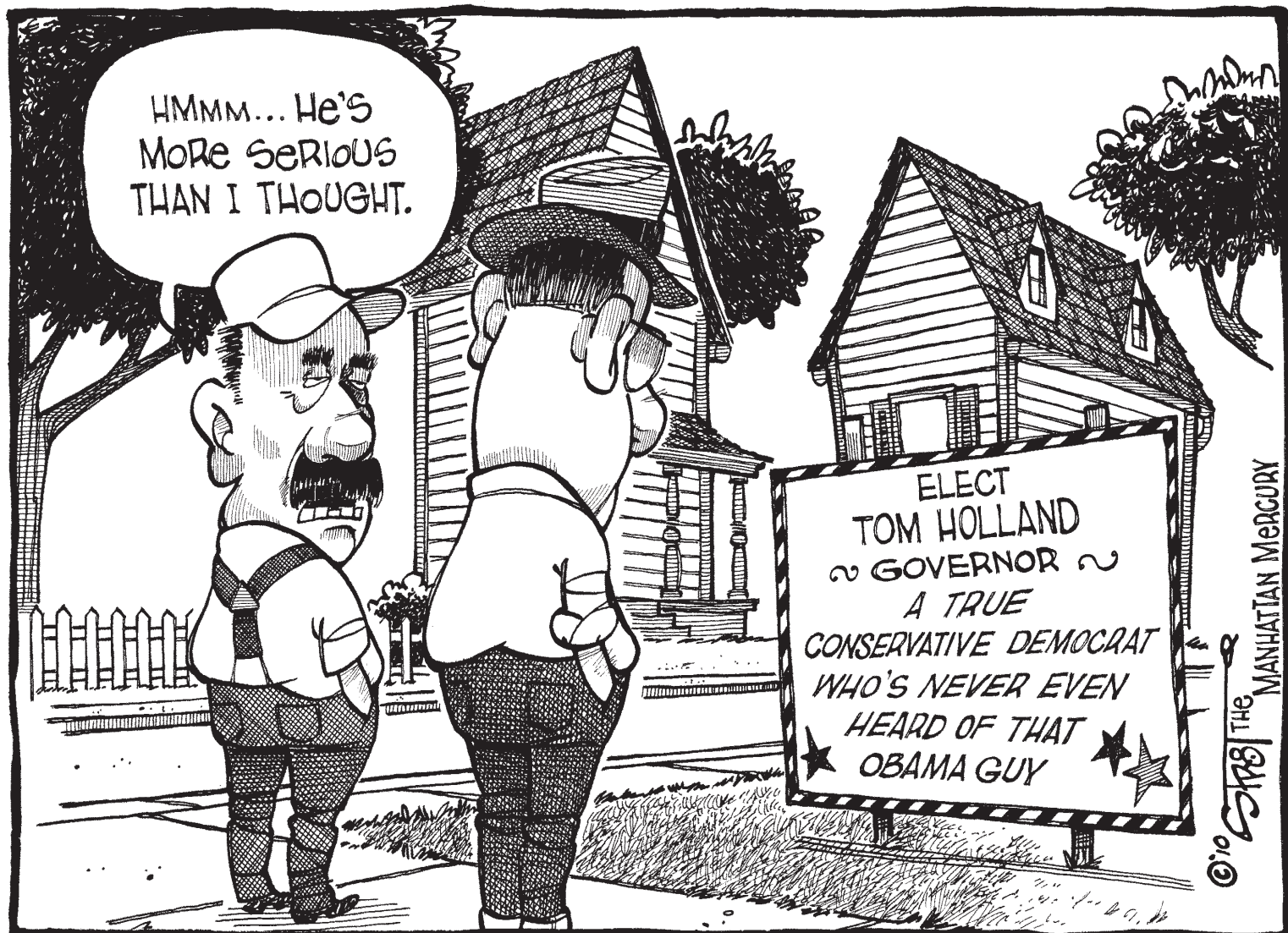
Sunday's good news was the final plug to the oil well in the Gulf of Mexico was completed with the pumping of cement into the bottom of the well. This closes the cause of the 216 million gallons of crude oil that flowed out of the well from April to August that continues to affect the Gulf coast from Texas to Florida.

When the cap created by the man in St. Francis stopped the flow of oil a lot of people took a deep breath and felt the danger was over. The damage continues, and it will be quite a long time before the story comes to an end for the people of the Gulf.

Undoubtedly the Gulf Coast will never return to what it was, but the spirit of the people will not let it fail.

We look forward to the citywide cleanup, but nothing here — thankfully — will reach the level of the cleanup in the Gulf.

Friday, Saturday and Sunday will be big days for the town with the 24th annual Flatlander Fall Festival. The event features the Brick Top Cruisers Car Club Show and the 16th Annual Northwest Kansas Motorcycle Show plus lots of games, food, car races, chili cook-off, scruffy dogs, talent show and lots of other fun things for all the family. — Tom Betz



## God's country



### Insight this week

• john schlageck

You might get plenty of arguments from people across Kansas as to the exact location of God's country. Without a doubt our state has many beautiful locations and more importantly wonderful inhabitants.

On a recent trip to far northwestern Kansas in mid August, I visited one of these jewels. My destination was the Blanka family farm and ranch located in Cheyenne County. The Blankas live less than three miles from the Nebraska border and approximately 22 miles from the Colorado line.

If you're not familiar with this part of our state the topography is flat, fertile, sandy loam farmland on the tops and bottoms of rolling hills. With plenty of rain this spring and summer the hills were lush and green with grass. Cattle grazed contentedly.

Shawna Blanka's family moved to Cheyenne County, northeast of St. Francis about 1887. In 1914 her great grandfather built the home where she and her family live today with concrete blocks and sand from the Republican River — two miles from their doorstep.

Oh, and if having a river that close isn't enough, less than a strong stone's throw from their open porch on the left side of the house is "Hell's Canyon." This view is the Blanka's favorite.

Hell's Canyon is surrounded by flat farm ground and then the land breaks off and falls nearly 300 feet to the bottom. The sides of the canyon are covered with grass and yucca plants. The steep slopes angle down in the

canyon at a 30-percent grade.

The day I visited the temperature climbed to a balmy 73 degrees by noon. A cool northwesterly rustled through the tall cottonwoods — truly a day from heaven.

"We kinda like it out here," Shawna said. "The hills, the crops, the big skies and the peacefulness. That's what we wake up to every day and come home to every night."

Don't get her wrong, the Blankas aren't merely vacationing out here on the great High Plains. But living in this land of wide-open spaces, short grass and low humidity oftentimes feels like it.

The Blankas remain busy from sunup to sundown. Shawn, Shawna and their two boys, Shakotah and Shadryon run a several thousand-acre dryland wheat, corn and irrigated corn, alfalfa and grassland operation. They also run 400 head of momma cows, finish out the majority of their calves each year, not to mention caring for more than 20 hay burners (horses) and nearly 70 goats. They farm and ranch in partnership with Shawna's parent, Tom and Donna Stevens.

The boy's names, you might ask? According to Shawna, it's a "western thing." She also wanted to continue with the "Sh"

sound. The western thing and family tradition also account for the horses.

"Grandpa got me going on a horse before I could walk," Shawna recalls. "I started competing when I was five and rodeoed through college. I just haven't been able to stop."

Shawna still uses the horses to herd cows and barrel race on the rodeo circuit. Her two boys have learned to ride.

Both love the solitude this big-sky country affords. Like their mom, they love the opportunity to ride with the wind and exercise their independence. You might say they're already firmly entrenched in a world steeped in self-sufficiency.

Shakotah and Shadryon have expressed an interest in making farming and ranching their vocation. The boys could be the fifth generation to farm and ranch in Cheyenne County.

"That'd be the best thing that could happen," he says. "There's nothing we'd like to see more than our two boys being a part of this family tradition."

And what better place to do so than the fertile wind-swept country of the great High Plains?

That's right. God's country.

John Schlageck of the Kansas Farm Bureau has been writing about farming and ranching in Kansas for more than 25 years. He is the managing editor of "Kansas Living," a quarterly magazine dedicated to agriculture and rural life in Kansas.

## Article III of the U.S. Constitution

When the Founders wrote the Constitution, they intended to signify the importance and power of each branch of government in the order that the powers are granted. The Founders saw the legislative branch as the most powerful of the three with the executive being weaker and the judicial branch being the weakest. It was the intention of the Founders for the judicial branch to serve as a final backstop against oversteps of government power.

The construction of the judicial branch is loose. Section 1 of Article 3 explicitly creates a Supreme Court, but leaves Congress with the authority to create an inferior court system. Further, the Constitution does not mandate a specific number of justices to serve on the Supreme Court. Theoretically, there could be only a single member of the Supreme Court, or many more than the current number of nine.

Section 2 of Article 3 grants the Supreme Court its powers which are limited to all cases that arise under the Constitution, the laws of the United States or between two or more states, and to cases that involve maritime or international jurisdiction.

It wasn't until 1803 that the Supreme Court had the power of judicial review, which was a product of the landmark case Marbury v. Madison. Judicial review simply means that the Supreme Court can overturn a law that they rule is in direct violation of the Constitution. This is a very powerful check against the



### from other pens

• commentary

legislative branch.

The Supreme Court can be a tool to stop bad legislation that is in direct conflict with the Constitution or it can be a weapon to enforce questionable legislation. In the 1930's, President Franklin Roosevelt attempted to increase the number of justices on the Supreme Court to ensure that none of the legislation or policies he supported were overturned. This court-packing scheme never happened in the end but the attempt to control the Supreme Court sent a chilling message to the Court about their independence.

Today, the Judicial Branch is viewed as a way to enforce or overturn laws passed by Congress. Currently, there are major court cases that could make their way through the judicial system and into the Supreme Court regarding the recently passed ObamaCare. There is a high likelihood that the Supreme Court could overturn ObamaCare on the basis that it is in direct conflict with the Constitution—which many states Attorneys General are arguing in federal court.

In Virginia, Attorney General Ken Cuc-

cinelli is leading a case against ObamaCare that argues that the law passed by Congress and signed by the President is in violation of the Constitution and a law in Virginia that bans an individual mandate on Health Care purchasing. Specifically, Attorney General Cuccinelli argues that the individual mandate requiring U.S. citizens to purchase Health Care is in direct violation of the Commerce Clause and Virginia state law. Cuccinelli said on the matter, "If the individual mandate is found to be unconstitutional, as Virginia says it is, the whole bill falls. The whole thing."

While the case brought forth by Cuccinelli is still in federal district court, it could soon hit the Supreme Court, where the judicial branch could overturn the law passed in the legislative branch—checks and balances at work.

There are many critics on both sides of the aisle that say the Supreme Court has been an activist court for one ideology or another. For instance, conservatives argue that Roe v. Wade was a liberal activist court decision in favor of abortion. And liberals argue that in the District of Columbia v. Heller decision that the Supreme Court was guilty of judicial activism in favor of conservatives that supported gun rights. In the past 18 months, Obama has already chosen two new members for the Supreme Court replacing liberal justices. Should a conservative justice leave the Court during Obama's tenure, the Article I provisions for Senate confirmation of Supreme Court justices will be headline news all over the world.

While many people pay less attention to the Supreme Court than the other two branches of the federal government, the power that lies in the Court is no small matter. The Founders vision that a Supreme Court could be the last hope to stop an overbearing legislature or executive branch is as true today as it was in 1789.

By Adam Bitely, Editor-in-Chief of NetRight-Daily.com.

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