

from our viewpoint...

## Slicing modern day Gordian Knot

Alexander the Great faced a test thousands of years ago where he was challenged to untie the Gordian Knot. In an early example of thinking outside the box it was reported Alexander used his sword and sliced the knot in half. It may not have been the answer the person who created the puzzle was expecting, but in Alexander's mind it made perfect sense.

Today we face any number of issues appearing to be as complicated as the Gordian knot was many centuries ago, and like the wise men of old who kept trying to untie the knot without success we need to find the out of the box answer.

Goodland has an issue with noise from trucks, and a problem where the city zoning ordinance drawn up many years ago says truck parking is prohibited in residential districts.

The wording seems pretty clear, but over the years this simple sentence has been ignored and we know at least 30 semi trucks are being parked in residential areas in the city.

Recently a noise complaint about one truck caused the city administration—who were not here when the zoning regulations were written—to react and finding the section about trucks being prohibited in residential districts ordered the owner to relocate his truck away from his home.

The other side of the knot is the city building inspector had been told truck parking was allowed in residential districts as long as the truck was not on the street.

In the case of the particular truck complaint the citizen who called the city commissioners was not calling about a zoning complaint he was complaining about the noise the truck was apparently making that Sunday morning.

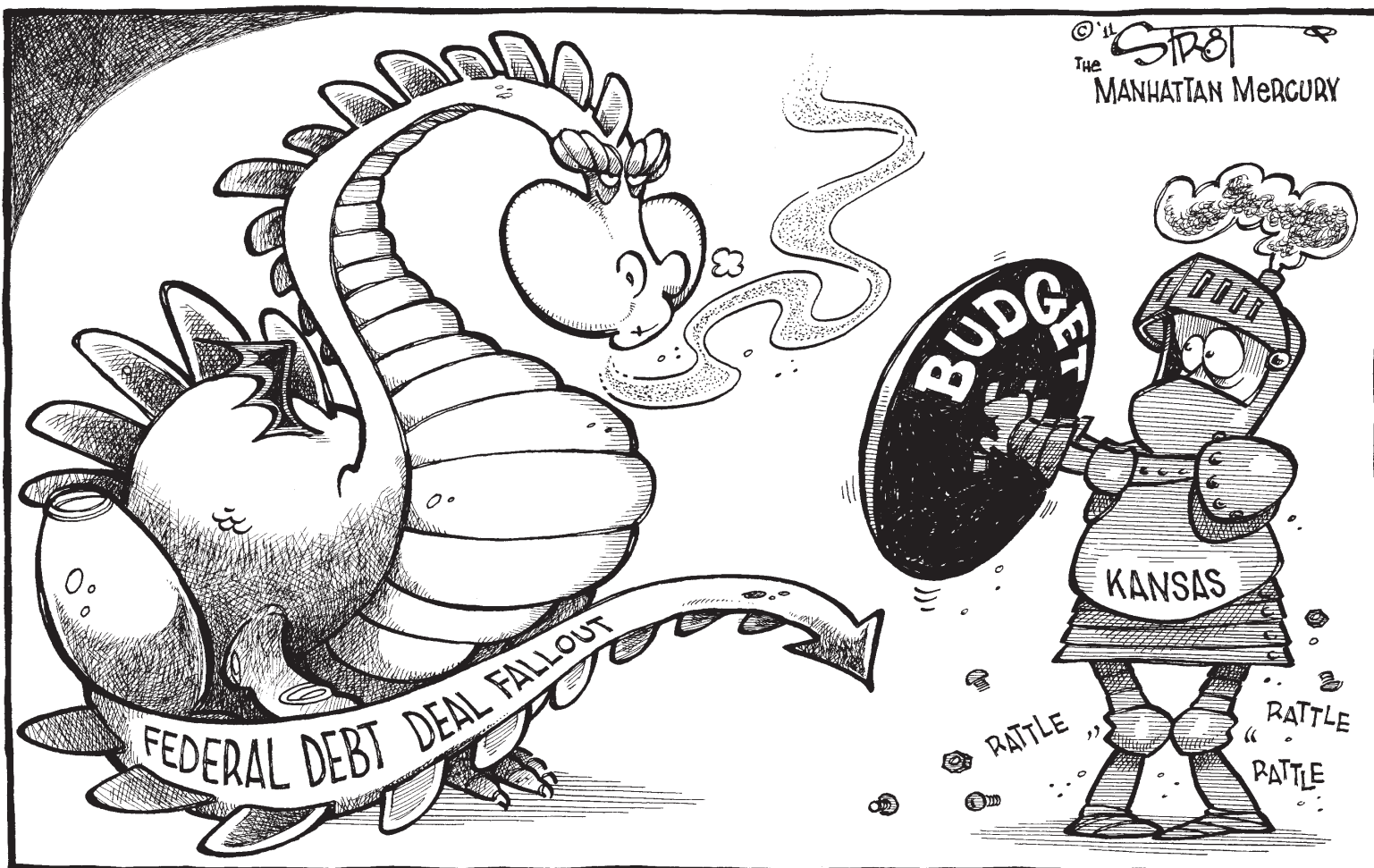
In recent years the city commission tried to address the truck issue by passing an ordinance requiring them to be parked off the street, and recreational vehicles and trailers were required to get a free permit to allow them to be parked on the street for a few days at a time. This was to allow people who had friends or relatives who visited in their recreation vehicle or a fifth-wheel trailer to be able to park on the street for a set number of days.

At the time this ordinance for handling the trucks was adopted the city manager and building inspector at the time did not mention anything about the section in the zoning prohibiting truck parking in residential districts.

The city zoning regulations were adopted through a public process including a citizens review and suggestions were made about what should be covered. The existing zoning regulations were updated more than a dozen years ago, and the section about trucks was adopted along with the rest of the zoning regulations.

Zoning regulations are designed to give a city or county a blueprint for development with the idea of keeping residential, industrial and commercial areas separated, but allow citizens some freedom to use their property in the manner they want as long as it does not interfere with their neighbors.

Cutting this Gordian knot is not going to be an easy as slicing it in half as Alexander did. We feel the city needs to consider addressing the changing nature of residential use with the number of families who depend on semi trucks for a living—remembering this started as a noise complaint. —Tom Betz

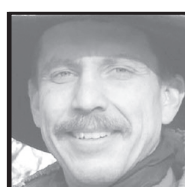


## Sherman County list of shame

The Friday, Aug. 12 issue of *The Goodland Star-News* published the list of persons and entities that are delinquent in paying their property tax. And what a list it is!

The total delinquent taxes due to our little Sherman County are almost \$380,000! I suppose some folks make it on this "List of Shame" accidentally by missing to pay their tax bill or maybe the confusion of caring for an estate or sickness is the cause. But upon closer inspection I see the names of many who show up every year and still others who owe thousands of dollars. These are no oversight but represent a conscious decision to renege on their taxes and let those of us we do pay carry their share.

By far, the most egregious tax deadbeat is the Goodland Energy Center with a total delinquent tax bill of \$178,002.91! This entity sucked up well over \$10 million of local working capital, got every tax break possible and is now still sucking the life juices out of our community by refusing to pay their taxes. It was sold to the citizenry as an economic boon for our community but as near as I can tell it's made for one job—the security guard who watches over the partially constructed



guest  
columnist

• ken klemm

monuments to their failure.

Another disturbing trend buried in the listing are the many businesses listed that have been brought to our community or received our Economic Development program dollars, been given utility breaks or have benefitted from many of the other government programs available to those who are bold enough to ask for other folks' money.

I found the following on the "List of Shame": Bowladium Inc. — \$2,212.40 — closed?; Jeff Soper of "Main Street Junk Emporium" — \$2,581.61 — closed?; Naughton Blair — of the "Terminally Vacant Steak House Diner" — \$13,460.45; Michael Brannick of Taco John's — \$9,026.13; Wendy and Rusty Fritz of the new "Basement" beer joint — \$433.91; Mike McGlone of the vacant exit #19 gas station and a Main Street property owner — \$3,635.11; Larry Minner — successful insurance broker

and owner of the old Centennial Building on Main Street — \$1,349.50 and the list goes on. All of these, and probably a few more I've missed, have been given public money; that's money from those who do pay their taxes, to help their businesses.

Why do we spend our tax money on businesses that fail to pay their taxes and in reality mostly fail altogether?!

One last disturbing piece of information I've gleaned is we have several who desire to serve as our public servants on the list. These List of Shame persons include one past senatorial candidate who owes \$5,247.80, one past city commissioner candidate who owes \$3,864.62, one past school board candidate and previously listed tax recipient who owes \$9,026.13 and finally one current Kansas Representative who seems to owe jointly on a small house the amount of \$274.07.

Perhaps these folks have simply overlooked their central duty as a citizen and will clear it up soon. We can only hope.

Ken Klemm is a local buffalo rancher concerned with restoring Constitutional principles of liberty. He can be reached at (785) 899-5804 or by e-mail ken@thebuffaloguys.com

## Language is always changing

Language changes, sometimes for the better, sometimes for the worse, but always, it changes.

Time was when the head of a company was called president. He might be outranked—and perhaps reported to and could be fired by, the chairman of the board—but day to day, the president was the boss.

This applied not just to corporations and big institutions, but many little firms as well. To be sure, some small business people were satisfied enough to be called "owner," while other groups had their own unique titles. Cooperatives were headed by general managers, hospitals by administrators, trade associations and charities by executive directors and so on.

But your bank had a president and so did General Motors.

Then, sometime around the 1980s, mushy language began to invade the field. Someone decided that it wasn't enough to be president and declared he was chief executive officer, and the term caught on, and pretty soon, every firm had one.

To make matters worse, at some, the chairman was the chief executive, and at others



steve  
haynes

• along the sappa

the president. Pretty soon the vice president of finance was the chief financial officer, and from there, things took off.

Good or bad? It's hard to say. The terms are descriptive enough, if perhaps a little stuffy. But it wasn't enough to just change the terms. Someone noted how long a title "chief executive officer" was and began using the initials. Now the president was known by an acronym, and the terms CEO or CFO were bantered about with abandon.

Then people began just using the initials when they talked about executives. The president wasn't the president of the company, not even the chief executive; he was the CEO. Columnists started referring to the evils of "corporate CEOs." In effect, the initials lost track of the words. They became the word.

Even the leaders of smaller outfits started

referring to themselves as CEOs. It became a status thing; if you didn't have initials, you adopted some. And no one wanted to be just a president, an executive director, a general manager or a comptroller.

Some CEOs had only a few minions. Like a banana-republic dictator wash in gold braid or a small-town sheriff weighed down with the four stars of a full general, they affected the fancy title with glee.

Apologies to my CEO friends, but I'm not sure this has added to the clarity of the language. Of course a CEO with four followers is no more overblown than a president with three. The initials just seem more of an artifice.

It'd be interesting to stop a dozen people on the street and see how many of them could say what the acronym means. Not a majority, I'd guess.

I've been happy to not be a chief anything. I could be chief news officer, I suppose. But I'm editor and publisher, and if I need a corporate title, it's president. Someone has to take that job; it's the law.

I'll leave the initials to others.

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e-mail: star.news@nwkansas.com

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Gary Meyer, Judy McKnight



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

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

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## Garden produce never ready for fair time

The county fair comes too early every year. I'm never ready for it.

Each year, I think, "Why not enter something in the open classes at the fair?"

"I'm a pretty good gardener, so why not show some of those tomatoes, green beans, corn, green peppers, cucumbers or cabbages that I grow every year?"

Well, there's one good reason. It's never ready.

When fair time rolls around each year, the peas, radishes, lettuce and spinach are all gone. The corn, carrots and cabbages are nowhere near ready to pick, and the squash, tomatoes, green peppers and cucumbers are just coming on.

If an entry was one yellow squash or one cucumber, I'd have a chance. But no, they want a selection. That I don't have.

I'd probably have enough tomatoes, except Steve keeps eating my entries.

In another month, mind you, I'll be leaving vegetables on strangers' doorsteps. But not yet. Not now. Not this week.

Speaking of weeds, I'm waging war against the grasshoppers again.

Now, mind you, I believe in organic gardening. I'm willing to share some produce with



cynthia  
haynes

• open season

nature—not tomato horn worms—but the bugs can eat a few leaves and I won't complain too much.

But those darned grasshoppers are treating my green beans like dessert. They don't ever eat a whole bean. They just take a bite out of each pod. That's sort of like the couple who go to dinner. He orders dessert and she just takes a bite.

I'd prefer the grasshoppers eat all of one bean instead of taking a bite out of every one in the patch, though.

Right now, I'm fighting bugs with bugs. I've done everything I can to encourage the spiders to take over my garden. The webs over my cabbage plants are incredibly beautiful. I hope to have some really nice cabbages this fall. Or I might have some really pretty cabbages full of itsy bitsy spiders.

Oh well, we'll see how this one turns out.

And, while on the subject of spiders, I saved

one's life the other day.

I was on pharmacy duty in Norton when the tech let out a little yelp and pointed out a large wolf spider hiding under a counter. The inside of a pharmacy is no place for a spider of any kind, and their life span tends to be very short once the girls discover them.

So, I got a plastic container and shoed the spider into it. I then coaxed a manager to let me out the back door. I crossed the parking lot and tenderly let the spider go in the grass. The manager's look told me that she thought I had lost my mind. The tech was relieved and the spider was just glad to be out of there.

Steve did a little traffic control the other night as well. As I was driving up to the garage, he noted that Toadaly, our pet toad, was out in the middle of the driveway.

Steve got out of the car and herded the annoyed toad, who was finding great pickings out there under the lights, back to his usual spot by the bushes.

Come to think of it, Toadaly is beginning to remind me of Jabbita the Hut.

Ah, well. It's summertime, and nature is taking over. Don't ya love it?