

from our viewpoint...

# Moisture needed to have fun in 2004

The new year seems to be warming up, showing prospects of a fun time in northwest Kansas.

There is plenty of evidence the economy is moving forward, but there will be a real celebration if Mother Nature breaks loose with some moisture.

The arrival of more equipment for Aircraft Seal and Gasket Corp. moves the plant closer to hiring workers and beginning to make seals and gaskets. It will be a great day in February when the state officials can come and lead the opening celebration.

With the new year comes renewed hope that Pioneer Park will finally move forward, and the area around the Van Gogh sunflower replica can be landscaped to make it more photographic. This project is essential to improving the main entrance to our city.

It is fun to see the first lapel pins which will represent the city and promote the big painting, a landmark which has been receiving national attention. No matter what people think about the painting, it's here and we need to take advantage of it as another way to draw people to our town and to give them something to remember about their visit.

There are other good plans underway for this year, and it is early enough to believe they will all be successful and help our economy move forward.

Clouds on the horizon include the mad cow scare, but it seems the beef industry will be able to weather this. Cattlemen did not wait for it to happen, but took steps to protect our herds. Time will tell if these efforts were enough, but at least they are a beginning.

The continued wars against terrorism and drugs will no doubt grab our attention during the year as events arise in Iraq, Afghanistan and even in our own county. These struggles are unending. They represent things which have existed nearly since the beginning of time, and despite all efforts there are a small percentage of people who follow the path to self destruction. They not only hurt themselves, but their actions are costly to the rest of society.

Our young people serving in the military have our prayers that they return safely, and that the nation will show them the respect and support their sacrifice deserves. There are good things going on in Iraq, especially with the capture of Saddam Hussein, and there is hope the Iraqi citizens are trying to forge a new national unity and direction with our help.

It would be wonderful if the other fugitive — Ossama bin Laden — could be cornered and captured to take another leader out of the terror campaigns. There is no doubt many people are out looking for this elusive man.

Fun is a relative idea, but even though we need moisture, there are enough good things happening and coming to make us look forward to a good year. — *Tom Betz*

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## I love to read, now I listen as I drive

I love to read.

I have dozens of paperbacks ready and waiting to be read that I will probably not get to this year or next.

In my younger days, I liked science fiction. I had a friend with a collection of Edgar Rice Burroughs Mars and Venus books. Now old Edgar is renowned for his Tarzan books, but he was also into science fiction. He wrote dozens of books about the people who live on Mars and Venus and their adventures.

I was probably 9 or 10 when I was borrowing these books. The boy I was getting them from was only a year or so older than me. Our fathers had been childhood buddies and our parents went to dinner and dances together. The boy, Rick, and I weren't exactly pals, but we had a common bond, a love of reading and a taste for science fiction.

Rick was a large boy and eventually played lineman on his high school football team, but in grade school and junior high there was no football in those days, so he got a lot of teasing.

Someone teased him about liking girls and having a girlfriend because I was over at his house so much.

He replied he didn't like girls and that the person over at his house was just Cynthia. I



**cynthia haynes**

• open season

liked that answer because he was just Rick, the guy with all the great books.

After flings with romances and westerns, I went back to science fiction and read mostly that well into college. About the time I graduated and got married, I discovered fantasy. I collected a lot of "The Sword and the Sorceress" books and became a fan of Mercedes Lackey and other fantasy writers.

Then somewhere along the way, I started reading mysteries, specifically historical mysteries or mysteries set in interesting places, such as the Southwest.

Now I read tales of medieval England by Margaret Frazer, Kate Sedley and Ellis Peters, Peter Tremayne's books of ancient Ireland, Laren Haney's and Lynda Robinson's books of ancient Egypt and, of course, Tony Hilberman's Navajo novels.

But lately it has taken me forever to get through a book. I started reading "The Golden One" by Elizabeth Peters in August and just

finished it last week. By the time I was done with the book I had forgotten what the first part was all about.

My problem — commuting.

I love working in Norton. It's a nice place full of great people, as are all the other towns I've worked in, including Oberlin, Colby, Goodland and St. Francis. Still, the 35-minute drive to work and another one home again eats into my spare time. By the time I get home and fix supper and Steve gets in from his 90-minute drive from Goodland, it's usually after 10 p.m. We try to take a walk and then sort of collapse.

Since I don't get much chance to read, I've been doing two things. First, I'm spending the time I have reading newspapers. This is my way of keeping up with what's happening around here and in the world, since I don't watch television.

The second thing is a marvelous invention called books on tape. I listen to a book while driving. The libraries have been expanding their audio books over the last few years, and I'm working my way through them.

If you pass my house about 9 p.m. some night and see me sitting motionless in my car in the driveway, there's nothing wrong. I'm just trying to find out who-done-it because my drive ended before the story did.

## We need a high school baseball program

To the Editor:

The need for a baseball program at Goodland High School is apparent. Yes, we have American Legion, K-18 and the newly organized spring ball, but a general consensus of the students, business people and townspeople of Goodland shows an interest in high school baseball.

There are 64 Class 4-A high schools in Kansas, 60 of which have baseball. Goodland is one of the remaining four that does not! It is the responsibility of the Goodland School District to effectively accommodate the athletic interests and abilities of students of both sexes to the extent necessary to provide equal athletic opportunity.

Interest in a baseball team was shown in January 2002 at a school board meeting — where it was tabled and no further action was taken. It will be shown again at the next school board meeting on Monday, and all young men who are interested in playing ball and their parents are encouraged to attend.

The abilities of the players are evident. Last season, the American Legion team had their best year ever, placing second in the regional playoffs. They lost to the Colby team, which consisted of sanctioned high school and community college players.

The newly formed "Outlaws" went 11-3 last spring. Not bad for a non-sanctioned team that would play anyone who would play them. The dedication of the teams, coaches, parents and general manager was obvious, as was the exhilaration of the boys just being on the playing field. The support of the local community was apparent in the generous donations from



**from our readers**

• to the editor

businesses and individuals who contributed to the development of these outstanding baseball players.

The numbers speak for themselves. There are enough young men wanting to play ball to sustain a viable team, and the competition is available. Baseball is America's game, as well as a life lesson that instills teamwork, discipline, comradery and good sportsmanship. It is time for Goodland to stop waiting, come into the 21st century and PLAY BALL!

Peggy Alander  
Goodland

To the Editor:

I'm writing this letter to ask for support from our community.

Last spring, I managed a baseball club team called the Outlaws, a group of high school students who wanted to play baseball. They had a successful year, finishing the season 11-3. The team played by Kansas High School Athletic Association rules and represented Goodland and their school well. At Ellis, the umpires told us we had the best-disciplined and well-mannered team they had seen.

The problem is, because we are not affiliated with the high school, we cannot play in Colorado, we cannot play varsity teams (it counts

against them for games played), and we cannot play in any state tournaments (such as league, regional, or state). We would like to have baseball in our high school.

After only three years of softball, the team went to state. These young ladies had an outstanding year! Three of them were offered college scholarships. The baseball team would like the same opportunity. You don't get scholarships if you can't play at a varsity level.

You might ask, why another sport? Getting students involved promotes better attendance, better grades, and fewer discipline problems.

You might say our school is for educating, not for sports. I believe our teachers do an excellent job of teaching! But school as a whole, meaning academics, band, vocal, clubs, and sports, produces a well-rounded student, one who can cope with everyday adversities.

Did you know sports are the only activity that requires a student to maintain passing grades and good attendance?

How could we afford another sport? Did you know that sports are less than 1 percent of the entire school budget? Each student is valued at \$5,000. Let's work to keep what we have, here.

So I'm asking for the community's help. It doesn't matter that you may not have a student. What matters are that you care. Please contact a school board member and voice your support. Our baseball program needs to be a high school activity.

Liz West, manager of the Outlaws  
Goodland

## garfield

