

from our viewpoint...

Changing quorum won't help progress

After reading letters from City Commissioners Dave Daniels and John Garcia, we are more convinced that changing the commission's quorum rule is a bad idea.

Saying that allowing two city commissioners to meet outside the public meeting to discuss city business is the only way bring progress leaves the impression that the commissioners as a whole cannot work together, or trust the taxpayers with their thoughts and ideas. It's just counterproductive.

Change the quorum could widen a split in the commission and increase a sense of mistrust from one side of the table to the other.

Commissioners talking among themselves without any public input is what created the Open Meeting Laws. While the rules may seem strict, they have served Kansas cities and counties well since 1977.

The idea that the present system is keeping the city from moving forward seems strange, because it is frequently the two commissioners who want to see this changed who are silent at meetings.

Under the Open Meetings Law, "a majority of a quorum" cannot meet in private. A quorum is the minimum number of members required to do business, in Goodland's case, three of the five commissioners.

The proposed change would move that up to four, so that any two commissioners could meet in private to talk about city business. Theoretically, two commissioners could set a private agenda which would guide the commission without the knowledge of other members or the voters.

Commissioners can discuss city business individually with voters, with the city manager or the staff. It is this kind of communication, especially with citizens, that builds confidence the elected officials want to see progress.

The rules are designed to make sure the people know what their government is doing. There are exceptions built into the law to allow the commissioners to close the doors for a few sensitive matters.

If the commissioners do not feel they are getting adequate time to discuss issues, there are plenty of ways get more. They can hold additional work sessions or special meetings devoted to a specific topic.

There are many areas of the city operation that need attention, and having all five minds working together in an open meeting will develop a better plan than having any two of those minds decide a position without sharing their thoughts.

There are two commissioners strongly in favor of this changed and two who are strongly against it. That leaves the fifth member to decide which way to jump.

The quorum change is allowed under state law, and that same laws allows the citizens to file a petition and force it to a public vote.

That might be the best answer, for both sides to take the issue to the ballot in August or November and give the citizens a chance to say what is best. — *Tom Betz*

And yes, we agree with Commissioner Daniels that the public comment slot should be restored to the city agenda.

When Daniels brought up putting the visitor slot back on the agenda, we reported his statement, but that never happened.

When the motion was made to move the agenda deadline forward a day — a good idea in itself, by the way — there was no mention of adding the visitor slot. This can be fixed with a motion from any commissioner.

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e-mail: star-news@nwkansas.com

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 nwkansas.com

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

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

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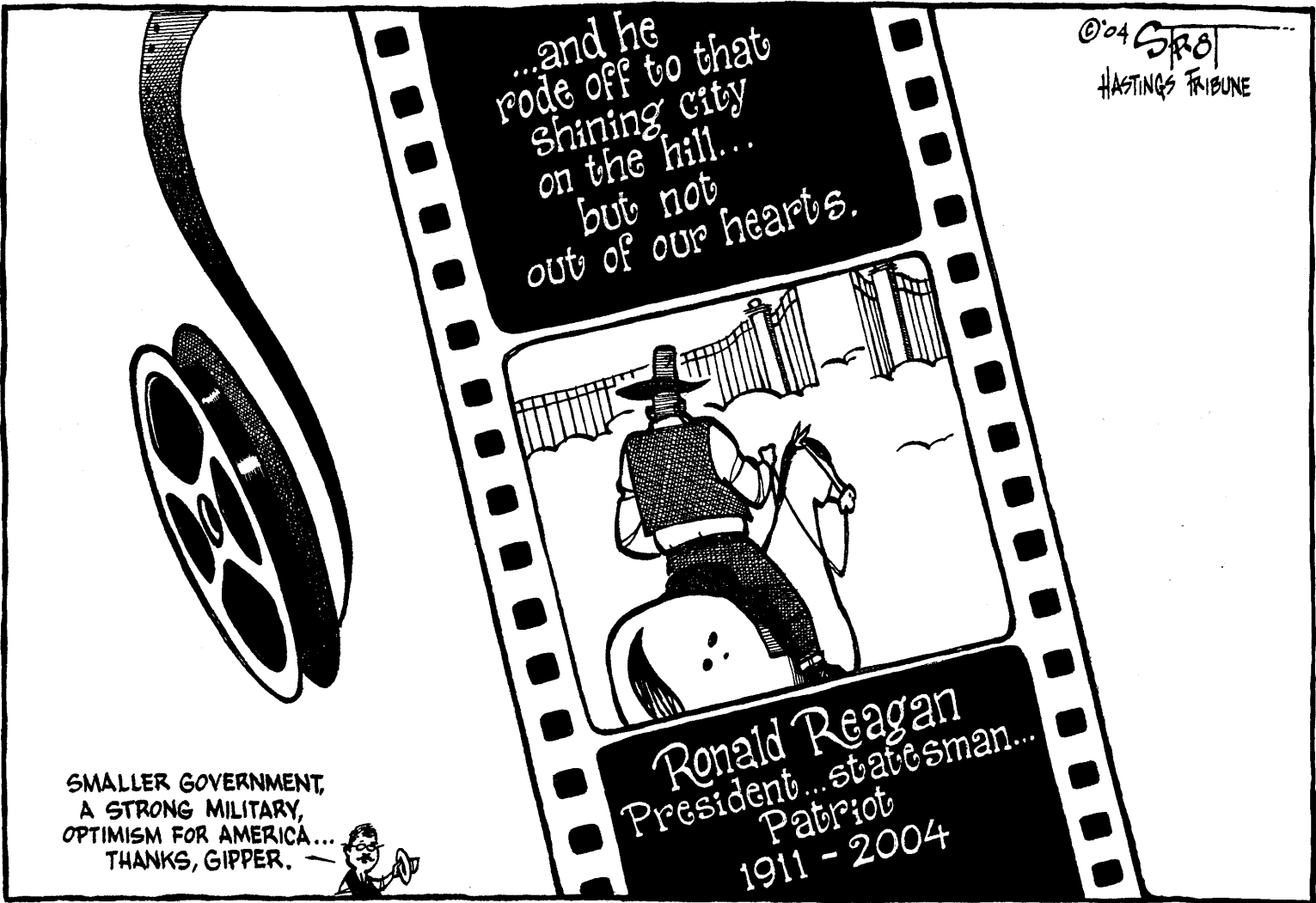
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Opening summer house always a surprise

Every year brings a fresh surprise. One year it was the kitchen floor looking like ocean waves. Then it was the sewer backing up. Another year it was a broken pipe on the hot water heater.

This year it was a broken pipe in the ceiling above the kitchen.

We love our home in Creede, high in the Colorado mountains. It's where we raised out children and where we called home while putting out our first paper, *The Mineral County Miner*.

When we moved, we rented the house for a while, then we turned the renters out and refurnished it with this and that. Now, we go back every time we have a chance.

Of course, you don't just run up to the cabin for the weekend when the cabin in 480 miles and nine hours away. You don't leave the heat on in the winter when the temperatures get to be 40 below, and that's before the wind chill is added.

So each fall, around the end of October, we close the house. We empty the hot water tank, turn off the water, unplug the dishwasher and



cynthia haynes

• open season

washing machine and the line that runs the ice maker. The electricity and phone are turned off, the shades drawn and the house sits empty and along until we return in the spring, around Memorial Day.

That's when we find the surprises. Last year, we had had the water line replaced. When we arrived, we found that the new line had frozen. The sewer had also frozen, so we were in a pickle on both ends. The city got both working, and we were in business for another summer.

Several years ago, we got a leak in the water line that feeds the ice maker in the refrigerator. When we walked in, the kitchen the linoleum was in waves from where the flooring had swollen and buckled.

We need to keep good doctors in Goodland

To the Editor:

After reading the letter to the editor in last's week's *Goodland Star-News*, I also wanted encourage area residents to let the Goodland Regional Medical Center administrators and board know that we need to find a way to keep Dr. Duncan Davis here in Goodland.

About five years ago, I was admitted to the hospital with undiagnosed internal bleeding. After Dr. Davis became involved, he determined that I had a bleeding ulcer and eventually required emergency surgery to correct the problem. I sincerely believe that without the skill and surgical talents of Dr. Davis, I wouldn't be here today to write this letter. He saved my life!

Goodland needs and deserves top-of-the-line medical care. It's time we asked ourselves why Goodland can't seem to keep good, qualified doctors here! Just in the last couple of years



from our readers

• to the editor

we have lost Drs. Bongers, Jennings and Greico. Now Dr. Davis is also considering leaving. We can't let this trend continue.

Dr. Davis and his family are an asset to our community.

If you feel the same way, please let the hospital board know.

Derry Moore
Goodland

To the Editor:
Thank you very much for the scholarship that you awarded me. I really appreciate your gen-

erosity in giving out this scholarship. This scholarship will be very helpful to me as I start my college life. Thanks again!

Trista Lalicker
Goodland

To the Editor:

I would like to thank the whole *Goodland Star-News* staff for giving me the Student of the Week scholarship.

Chris E. Smith
Goodland

Dear Nor' West Press,

Thank you for sponsoring my Student of the Week article. I appreciate it very much. It meant a lot to me that you sponsored it.

Aubrea Winter
Goodland

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