

from our viewpoint...

Sadness hits city after teenage death

A pall descended over the county Sunday as word spread of the accident Saturday night that claimed the life of a Goodland student and injured four others.

Heartfelt prayers go out the families of the young people whose lives have been suddenly altered.

For the parents of the boy who died, there is nothing we can say that will really ease their pain, but we feel their sadness. It is always devastating when a young person is taken in such a manner, and a bright light has been extinguished forever.

The classmates of these kids will have to deal with the tragedy, and their struggle will be like a ripple effect through the schools, homes and churches of our city.

Our thoughts and prayers will go out to the young driver and his family, who must deal with the consequences of his actions, the death of a friend and injury to other friends.

When a young person gets his or her first driver's license or first car, they are on Cloud 9, certain they can handle any situation. Such optimism is good for those looking ahead to a full life of excitement and experiences.

Parents, as their kid has the driver's license or the keys to a car, know the dread of the late-night phone call to say their son or daughter has been involved in an accident.

This has been a tough year on the highways and roads, with the death of two men in separate dust storms five months ago. One was a well known banker from this city and the other was the area's state senator.

Four months ago, another tragedy took the lives of three women, and plunged the city into sadness. Two of those women worked at the schools and touched the lives of many in our community.

It seems a bit different when the deaths are kids themselves, but any traffic death is tragic and affects the community in ways we can only imagine.

As tears well up in the eyes and stain the cheeks, there should be the resolve to take these incidents and turn them around as examples to teach the terrible consequences that can happen when we're driving, no matter the age. There is no way to say if the life would have been saved had the kids been wearing seat belts, but it probably would have kept the three from being ejected from the car.

Nearly every person has taken a risk on the road at one time in their life.


The lucky ones survive and grow up mindful that there are consequences for their actions. Most do not take such chances again.

The unlucky ones just don't get a second chance. —
Tom Betz

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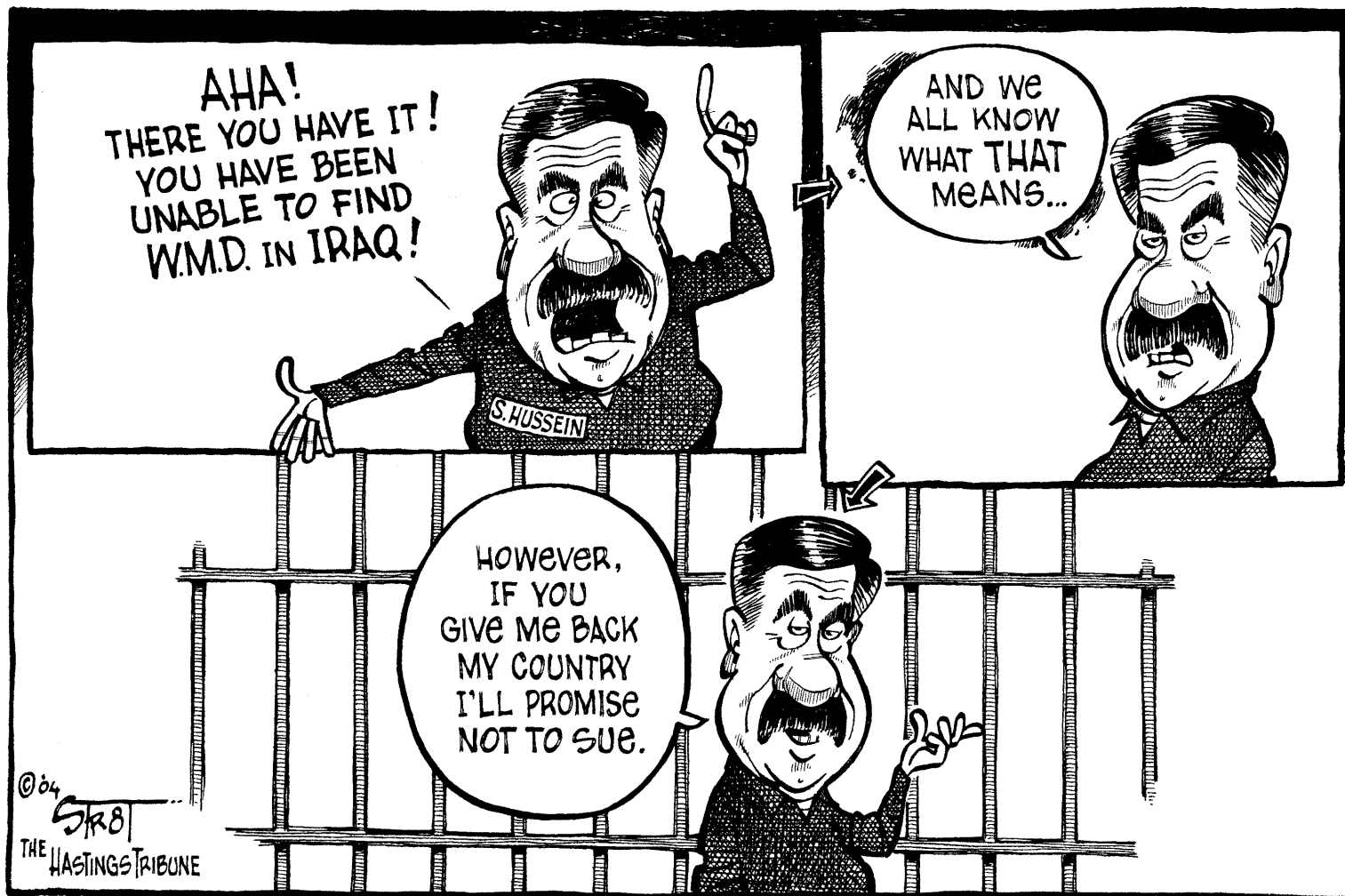
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 **nwkansas.com**
N.T. Betz, Director of Internet Services
(ntbetz@nwkansas.com)
Evan Barnum, Systems Admin.(support@nwkansas.com)

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Driving into the fall in New Mexico

We skirted down off the mesa, rolling down the long, swooping approach to the Rio Grande Gorge bridge.

Blink, and you could miss the gorge, for the bridge isn't very long. But it is maybe the third or fourth deepest and most rugged canyon in the nation, though less well known than the Grand Canyon (the biggest) or the Royal Gorge of the Arkansas (best known in Colorado).

The Rio Grande had to cut through thousands of feet of volcanic debris to get out of the San Luis Valley of Colorado and into New Mexico. I have to say, it did a magnificent job.

Across the bridge, and we're almost to Taos, an ancient New Mexican settlement where today Pueblo Indians, Penitente descendants of the Spaniards and rich Americans co-exist.

There's a Wal-Mart now, a McDonalds and a Sonic, but downtown Taos looks a lot like the dusty Spanish village the eastern artists "discovered" after the turn of the last century.

There's no place to park, though, and the streets are lined with expensive imported autos and even more expensive shops. But the food is good, the view from the second-story verandah of the restaurant is spectacular and the fall sky crystal clear.

Up in Colorado, the aspen trees have shed their fall colors, but from Taos to Española, down the long canyon of the Rio Grande, the



steve haynes

- along the sappa

cottonwoods are in full color.

They could set up a toll booth, and you'd pay for this ride. We stop to buy a ristra of fresh chilies, soft, red and fragrant.

From Española south, the road is lined with new houses and Indian casinos. Each pueblo tribe has a piece of the action, and those without a place along the main highway apparently bought land in town.

Nice hotels, nice stores, all kinds of businesses surround the gambling palaces. Not much compared to Las Vegas, perhaps, but pretty nice for dusty New Mexico. To keep up with the traffic, the state is turning the road to Santa Fe into a freeway, but today it's just a mess.

We plan to walk around to window shop the next day — we don't have any money to spend, and prices are high anyway — but the weather has other plans.

The town is buzzing because John Kerry spent the night here before the final debate. On the plaza, a CNN correspondent is doing a

standup on the grass. We debate about whether we should try to make him smile, or walk behind him and wave to the kids.

A fellow from New York watches, fascinated. He says you'd have to go to every state to understand this election. In Santa Fe, he said, all his friends talk about is the environment. In New York, though, the issue is terrorism.

It's a big country, and we all have our own agenda, I guess. Today in Santa Fe, yuppies who saw Sen. Kerry riding his bike among the rich folks up Canyon Road are abuzz. George W. Bush is in blue collar Hobbs. New Mexico is a swing state.

As we head back from breakfast, it's starting to rain. So much for the walking tour.

We have coffee with a friend, drive up to get our lunch mate, drive downtown in the rain for blue corn enchiladas in red sauce.

By the time we are done, it's a full-blown snowstorm, big flakes floating down from the mountain sky.

"It's not supposed to rain here in October," our friend says.

Or snow. I start to wonder about the road over the high mesa, but it's dry by the time we get there.

It's cold when we get back to the San Luis Valley in Colorado. Fall already slipping off into winter.

Chamber beautification begins cleanup

To the Editor:

The Goodland Chamber of Commerce Beautification Committee recently initiated a fall and spring cleanup program of the entranceways to the city.

Saturday, Oct. 9, 22 volunteers helped in the Goodland entranceway cleanup. These volunteers are members of the Goodland Kiwanis, Lions and Rotary clubs.

The Goodland High School Family Career Community Leaders of America students picked up trash on Business U.S. 24 on Wednesday, Oct. 6, in an effort to improve the appearance of our community.

Special thanks go to these individuals for this work and dedication during their free time. Showing pride in our community is really appreciated.

Ken Clouse, chairman
Chamber Beautification Committee



from our readers

- to the editor

To the Editor:

The Kansas pet industry is extremely disappointed with the 2004 legislative process.

Lack of money has cut the efficiency of the respected Kansas Pet Animal Act inspection program. Inspections ensure good animal husbandry practices within the industry

Seventy eight percent of the licensed pet animal breeders responding to a survey in 2003 requested a 50 percent increase in their license fees to help fund the program.

At the insistence of the Kansas Federation of Animal Owners, (a small anti-inspection

group of breeders), the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee refused to bring the bill up for testimony, despite pleas from taxpaying citizens, and from the majority of the animal breeders that this affects.

Be careful who you vote for this November. Remind legislators, democracy means a government in which the people hold the ruling power. Let the majority rule.

Give the program the money it needs to conduct inspections as the law requires, giving the public confidence in Kansas-raised pets and the ability to eradicate the unlicensed abuser more quickly.

Sharon Munk
Licensed, educated Kansas pet animal breeder
Menlo

Letter Policy

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U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774; web address — roberts-senate.gov

U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521; web e-mail address — brownback.senate.gov/CMEmail.me

U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran, 1519 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 225-2715; e-mail address — jerry.moran@mail.house.gov

State Rep. Jim Morrison, State Capitol Building Rm. 174-W, Topeka, KS 66612. (785) 296-7676; e-mail address — jmorrison@house.state.ks.us

State Sen. Ruth Clark, State Capitol Building Rm. 449-N, Topeka, KS 66612. (785) 296-7399; e-mail address — clark@senate.state.ks.us

Kansas Attorney General Phil Kline, 301 S.W. 10th, Lower Level, Topeka, KS 66612-1597 (785) 296-3751 Fax (785) 291-3699 TTY: (785) 291-3767

garfield

