

from our viewpoint...

Patriotic celebration facing slim times

Shooting off fireworks to celebrate the birth of the nation is a tradition, from coast to coast and from north to south, and we're sure there will be a Fourth of July celebration in Goodland this year.

It may not be quite the same as in the past few years, when the Goodland Chamber of Commerce has tried to develop the Freedom Fest, but there will be some sort of fireworks.

The Chamber has asked the city and county to increase their donation for the fireworks from \$500 to \$2,500 each. The Chamber had tried to make the event self-sustaining, selling food to cover the cost of the fireworks, but rain and storms last year left the festival with a \$3,500 loss.

The Chamber board feels it cannot let that happen again, and is trying to find a way to make sure there is money in the bank to pay for the celebration this year.

Ken Clouse, the Chamber's spokesman, told the City Commission the Chamber was asking them to give \$2,500 for this year in the belief the program can get back on its feet and be self sustaining in the future.

The Chamber hopes to have the \$7,500 in the bank by March, he said. Donations and money raised at the festival would be put back into that fund for the next year, and the city and county could reduce their support.

Sherman County commissioners stepped up and committed \$2,500 — or one third of the cost of the fireworks — and added a bit to the pot for last year to help the Chamber erase its red ink.

Over the past several years, the cost of the celebration has remained at \$7,500. Except for last year, the program has generated enough to pay the bills. There is no margin, though. Just one bad year left the Freedom Fest broke.

Years ago, the July 4 celebration was set up by the Veterans of Foreign Wars, but they tired of handling it and the Chamber stepped in. In many towns, the city or the fire departments handle the show, and in many cases, the only event is the fireworks display that night.

We feel the Chamber has done an excellent job, giving the people a real celebration with a variety of events.

The Chamber is asking the city for \$2,000 more than it spent last year, which is a drop in the bucket when compared to the city budget of more than \$1.5 million. The city and county received a windfall in sales tax collections last year, but admittedly, there is no guarantee that will continue this year.

The city is facing more serious problems than supporting fireworks, and it appeared at the last meeting that a majority of the commissioners were not interested in adding anything to the \$500 they have in the budget for this summer's show.

Nonetheless, we think the Chamber's approach is sensible. It is the best way to ensure that the celebration continues. We agree with Commissioner John Garcia that the cooperative efforts of the city, county, Chamber members and citizens are required.

With the city's support, we hope to be on hand July 4 to enjoy the music, carnival rides, food and watermelon, and watch the Goodland National Guard unit and Joe Diaz fill the sky with a spectacular Independence Day display. — *Tom Betz*

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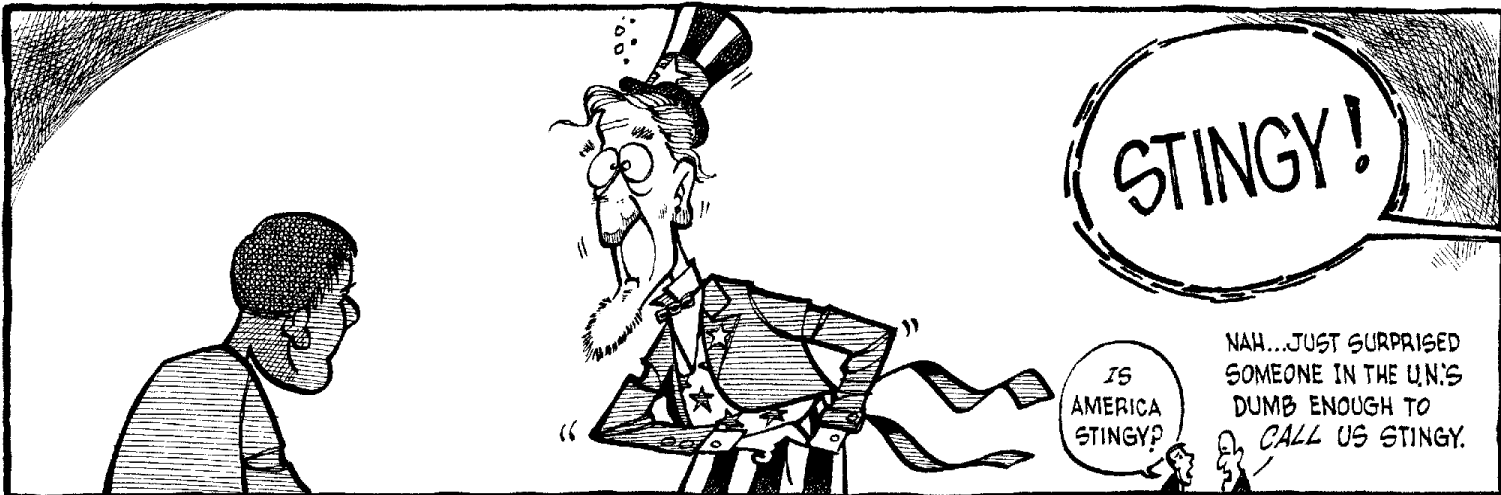
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Miss Molly hates having cats around

Miss Molly is mad.
Her house is overrun with cats.
Never mind that Molly Monster is a cat herself.
She hates cats.

Our son-in-law Nik, who rescued a gray-and-white kitten from a construction site near Topeka five years ago, claims that Molly thinks she's a dog.

He may be right. Molly loves Annie, our Brittany spaniel, and likes to go for long walks with us.

And she hates cats.

For a cat hater, the holidays at our house weren't pleasant, and things aren't getting a whole lot better.

Molly and April Alice, our blond female, share the house with an armed truce most of the time. They hiss at each other as they pass and stage about one major cat fight a week. At night, Molly sits on my lap and April Alice on Steve's.

Then youngest daughter arrived for the holidays toting Rupert and Jezebel, two of her three female cats.

Jez is a scaredy cat and immediately headed for



cynthia haynes

• open season

a hole in the basement ceiling. She came upstairs to sleep with daughter at night and spent the rest of her time hiding.

A few days later, son arrived on our doorstep with a cat carrier. Out came Frank and Jules. Frank is April Alice's son and Jules is her daughter. (No I don't know why my children gave their female cats male names — you'd have to ask Lacy and Lindsay.)

Now there were six cats in the house, and Molly was in rare form. She hissed and growled at everything that moved, including the humans. She was as grouchy as a bear with a sore tail. Everywhere she turned, there were cats, and she

hates cats.

After four days, it was time for son to pack up and head back for Lawrence. He caught Jules fairly quickly, but was having trouble with Frank. He finally found him under the couch in the living room.

Actually, he found him *in* the couch. The old lining on the bottom has a big hole and Frank was crouched up amongst the springs. It took four of us to turn the couch over and disentangle him.

Note to self — Get couch fixed before Easter.

Then it was time for youngest daughter to leave. However, she left Jez and Rupert behind. Her boyfriend is allergic to cats, and she sweet talked her gullible mother into taking two of hers for "a few months."

Now there are four cats in the house, and Molly only has to hiss and growl every half hour or so and hope the intruders go away soon.

I hate to break the news to her, but I think the boyfriend is becoming serious. Those "intruders" could be here for a long, long time.

Park roadside getting trashy



steve haynes

• along the sappa

That left half the road to pick up. I guess we'll go back. It beats complaining. (We did go back. It took four bags to finish up.)

There are a lot of slobs out there who litter. I'd

We walk the road at Sappa Park a lot. It's not quite two miles down to the lake, so we can park at the highway, walk to the shelter house and loop around to the dam, then back to the car in about an hour.

This fall, we began to notice how trashy the right of way along the park road was getting. Beer bottles, cigarette packages, fast food wrappers, junk of every description.

We were upset. We were angry.

But we decided that probably wouldn't have much impact on the idiots who were throwing this junk out.

So we decided to just do what we could.

We searched the truck, but we had only one grocery sack stuck under the seat. As we started walking, we started filling it. Here is what we found:

Beer, No. 1 on the list.
Bud Light, three bottles and a can.
Budweiser, one bottle, one can.
Boulevard unfiltered wheat, one lone bottle.
Just one high-class beer in the crowd.
Bush Light, one can.
And a Mike's Hard Lemonade bottle.

Teen-agers like Bud Light, apparently. Coors drinkers must be older or more socially responsible.

And not one hard liquor bottle in the mix, the name for the lemonade notwithstanding.

Cigarettes: Salem, Marlboro, Camels, Cambridge. Only six total packs, but smokers are a messy lot. We didn't count the butts.

Drink bottles: Mountain Dew Pitch Black (looks awful), two Mountain Dew, two Gatorade, Dr. Pepper, Sierra Mist, Bug Juice, Powerade, and one unidentified, flat bottle. A Pepsi can. A chocolate milk container.

Food wrappers from Subway, Mean Genes, generic breakfast burritos, mustard, ketchup, pickle relish and chopped onions in little packets, a stuffed biscuit wrapper, and an A&W float cup.

Sour Punch Straws, a red plastic straw, a napkin and a Skol Bandits can.

And a can of Super Penetrating Oil.

We got halfway to the dam, down to the picnic area where the road turns into the trees. Our bag was full. What a mess.



garfield

