

from our viewpoint...

## Best improvements not always biggest

Constructing the new entrance to the city along the west side of Cherry Ave. will improve the appearance of the area and boost the city image.

The city has received some great publicity with the various photos and program highlighting the Van Gogh painting, and most recently is the photo on the cover of the Feist Northwest Kansas telephone directory that was recently delivered.

Getting the area around the painting and the flood control project to the west completed will make the area more pleasing to the eyes of people who travel along the highways.

Finding the money or reshaping the project to fit the available budget are the best options, and there is every indication that the basic project can be accomplished this year.

People have been questioning the wisdom of spending the money on another “park” when there are more important things that need attention.

This past year the city staff worked hard to improve the appearance and add more function to Gulick Park by pouring a sidewalk all the way around the park and the courthouse. The completed project was met with compliments to the city and an increase in the use of the park. More improvements for this park are planned this year with the addition of new playground equipment.

The pride the city staff showed in handling this project and the civic pride from the people who appreciated the effort gave a new sense of community pride in the appearance of that part of the community.

When completed in the fall we believe a similar sense of pride will follow the Pioneer Park project.

Citizens who contribute to the project will know they had a part in making it a success. Saluting the pioneers who stopped in Goodland more than 100 years ago is fitting, and when the trees and benches are in place it will be a beautiful place to reflect on that legacy.

In the grand scheme of things Pioneer Park is a minor event, but for the image of the city it is a major step forward. — *Tom Betz*

## where to write

**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

**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

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Member: Kansas Press Association  
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e-mail: [star-news@nwkansas.com](mailto:star-news@nwkansas.com)

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[nwkansas.com](http://nwkansas.com)

*N.T. Betz*, Director of Internet Services

([ntbetz@nwkansas.com](mailto:ntbetz@nwkansas.com))

*Evan Barnum*, Systems Admin.([support@nwkansas.com](mailto:support@nwkansas.com))

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Roxie Yonkey  
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## I look for unusual ways to express ideas

I don’t know about you, but I am always reading, listening and looking for unusual ways of expressing ideas.

Here are some I like:

“Life is too short to try to please the eternally displeased” — No Place Like Home by Barbara Samuel. (Amen!!)

“Borrowing freely from Anatole France: ‘Chance was the word God used when he wished to remain anonymous’” — from Thale’s Folly by Dorothy Gilman.

“Just because something isn’t true doesn’t mean you can’t believe in it” — from Second Hand Lions movie.

Spoken by Dumdledore in Harry Potter: Chamber of Secrets movie, based on book by J.K. Rowling — “It’s not our abilities that show what we truly are; it is our choices.”

I’ve lost the source of this one, but I include it anyway. People can “lose their facsimiles” (instead of their faculties). I think that was a statement from a bystander at a crime scene when interviewed by a news team.



**lorna  
gt**

● commentary

“If there was one thing I truly detested, it was sullen teenagers standing around collecting attitude like metallic filings” — Isle of Palms by Dorothea Benton Frank. (Isn’t that one great?)

“From a weatherman: “That line of showers should pass through our area barely unnoticed.” What does that mean?

“Remember, humans are the only animals that know we live at the same time we actually live. What a gift that is” — from Steps to the Altar, by Earlene Fowler

“No one can find peace and hold a grudge. Unforgiveness devours joy” — from Halos, by Kristen Heitzmann.

“A worker was vacuuming the corridor, but

her lights were still on” — from 3rd Degree, by James Patterson and Andrew Gross. (But what does it really say?)

“Yes, we’ll go back to normal. But normal will be different. This is the new normal” - from “The Guys” movie.

This is an e-mail I received in August 2004: “In his beautiful book, I Shall Not Want, Robert Ketchum tells of a Sunday School teacher who asked her group of children if anyone could quote the entire 23rd Psalm. A golden-haired, four-and-a-half-year-old girl was among those who raised their hands. A bit skeptical, the teacher asked if she could really quote the entire psalm.

“The little girl came to the front of the room, faced the class, made a perky little bow, and said, “The Lord is my shepherd, that’s all I want.” She bowed again and went and sat down.

“That may well be the greatest interpretation of the 23rd Psalm ever heard.”

## Marriage amendment headed for passage

As the legislative session completes its third week, the Defense of Marriage Amendment demanded much of the attention at the Capitol.

The House of Representatives passed its first two bills of the session. Acquisition of rural water district by another district (HB 2018), and School districts; enrollment, increases relating to military-connected personnel (HB 2059), passed by votes of 122 to 0 and 120 to 2 respectively.

### Defense of Marriage Amendment

Senate Concurrent Resolution 1601, commonly known as the Defense of Marriage Amendment, was heard by the Federal and State Affairs Committee during the week. The amendment states marriage”...shall be constituted by one man and one woman only. All other marriages are declared to be contrary to the public policy of this state and are considered void.” The committee heard over 12 hours of testimony related to the issue and moved it out of committee January 27. The amendment is expected to see the House floor on Tuesday, February 1.

### Taxation Comparison

The 2005 session promises discussions of education finance, healthcare and other issues that are funded with taxpayer dollars. When faced with these discussions or questions pertaining to taxes, it can be helpful to compare Kansas with surrounding states.

Rep. Dan Johnson (R-Hays) has provided an interesting set of numbers in a matrix form that compare several relevant tax rates and spending numbers. These numbers show that Kansas, when compared with surrounding states, is at or near the top in maximum personal income tax rate, state sales tax rate, gasoline tax per gallon, state tax collections per capita and per pupil public school spending.

Kansas is not a low tax state. It is considered by many tax watchdog groups to exact a relatively high financial toll on its citizens. Kansas leads Colorado, Missouri, Nebraska and



**jim  
morrison**

● capitol review

Oklahoma in state tax per capita, gasoline tax per gallon and per pupil public school spending. The referenced matrix provided by Rep. Johnson is below:

**Max Personal Income Tax Rate:** Kansas 6.45 percent; Colorado 4.63 percent; Missouri 6.0 percent; Nebraska 6.68 percent\*; and Oklahoma 6.65 percent.

**State Sales Tax Rate:** Kansas 5.3 percent\*; Colorado 2.9 percent; Missouri 4.225 percent\*\*\*; Nebraska 5.5 percent; and Oklahoma 4.5 percent\*\*.

**Gasoline Tax/Gallon:** Kansas \$0.24; Colorado \$0.22; Missouri \$0.17; Nebraska \$0.246\*\*\*; and Oklahoma \$0.16.

**St. Tax Per Capita 2002:** Kansas \$1,775; Colorado \$1,549; Missouri \$1,535; Nebraska \$1,735; and Oklahoma \$1,738.

**Public School Spending Per Pupil 2002#:** Kansas \$8,262; Colorado \$7,453; Missouri \$7,395; Nebraska \$7,336; and Oklahoma \$6,681.

\*2003 Nebraska state personal income tax rate; \*\*No exemption for groceries; \*\*\*State grocery rate: 1.0 percent; \*\*\*\*Nebraska adjusts rate for inflation every six months, all gasoline data from Tax Foundation; and #Statistical Abstract of US: 2003, p. 169, chart 255 State Tax Collection Per Capita, Tax Foundation Special Report, March, 2004.

### Committee Reports

Most committees are still in the educational briefing/pre-hearing stage; however, several are planning to hear specific bills in the next week.

Financial Institutions — The Committee will hear a bill that will place new caps on the interest rates lenders are allowed to charge in the state.

Higher Education — The committee will hear a bill that allows the spouse and children of a soldier killed on active duty to receive free tuition at state university.

Taxation — The committee will hear the used car sales tax repealer, Senate Bill 23, on February 1.

Education — The Select Education Finance Committee is meeting this week to discuss weighting aspects of the finance formula. The Education Committee plans to begin drafting legislation setting up a new school finance formula in the near future.

Health and Human Services — Scheduled for introduction is legislation regarding scope of practice for Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners and others in the Nursing Board oversight. Other related legislation may also be introduced during the week of Feb. 1st.

This may be worth your time to listen to and watch by visiting the committee website broadcasting LIVE Monday through Thursday 1:30-3:00 Central Time. The Internet address is: [http://www.kslegislature.org/committee-minutes/05-06/house/hhealth/h\\_hhs.shtml](http://www.kslegislature.org/committee-minutes/05-06/house/hhealth/h_hhs.shtml). Tentative hearings are scheduled for Feb. 9th and 10th.

### Letter Policy

The Goodland Star-News encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be typewritten, and must include a telephone number and a signature. Unsigned letters will not be published. Form letters will be rejected, as will letters deemed to be of no public interest or considered offensive. We reserve the right to edit letters for length and good taste. We encourage letters, with address and phone numbers, by e-mail to: [star-news@nw-kansas.com](mailto:star-news@nw-kansas.com).

### garfield

