

from our viewpoint...

# Immigrants come to build better life

We've been trying to get a handle on why people get so worked up over the current wave of immigration.

It's just people coming here to work, and to build a better life, like we always have.

No one moves here to go on welfare or subvert the American way of life.

Immigrants want to work. The want to make money. Most want to be Americans, and history shows, in a generation or two, they will be.

Most of them speak another language, Spanish or Vietnamese or Thai. So did every immigrant group after the first.

But the children of all those Poles and Swedes and Bohemians and Germans learned to speak English. So will the children of today's immigrants.

And despite what is says on the base of the Statute of Liberty, today it is no different than a century ago.

There've always been those who abused and maligned the latest immigrants, whether they were Italian or Irish or Greek or Mexican. While we say we welcome the tired, the poor and the hungry, just as often, we've called them names and told them to stay away.

By the middle of the last century, we'd put quotas on immigration and tried to limit the number who came here.

But our economy is so good, we can't find workers at home. Haven't been able to in years. And quotas or not, they come.

Across the border, through the fence, following trails through the desert or hiding in trucks and railroad cars: Many risk their lives. Some pay the ultimate price.

They must think it's worth it to be here.

We must, too, because we hire them.

Without immigrants, roads wouldn't get built in this country. Construction would stop. Packing plants would close. Fast food would be slow.

Americans don't want these jobs. We think they're beneath us. Maybe they are.

Immigrants will take them. They want to work.

But it's natural for humans to look askance at someone from another tribe. We fear that we don't know or understand. We dislike anyone who is different.

There is hope.

The longer an immigrant group is here, the more it assimilates. Children lose their accents and the grandchildren are as American as the next guy.

It'll happen.

Meantime, we need to just stop worrying and get on with life. Immigrants aren't the threat. Prejudice and ignorance are.

Common sense will prevail.

We think. — *Steve Haynes*

## Letter Policy

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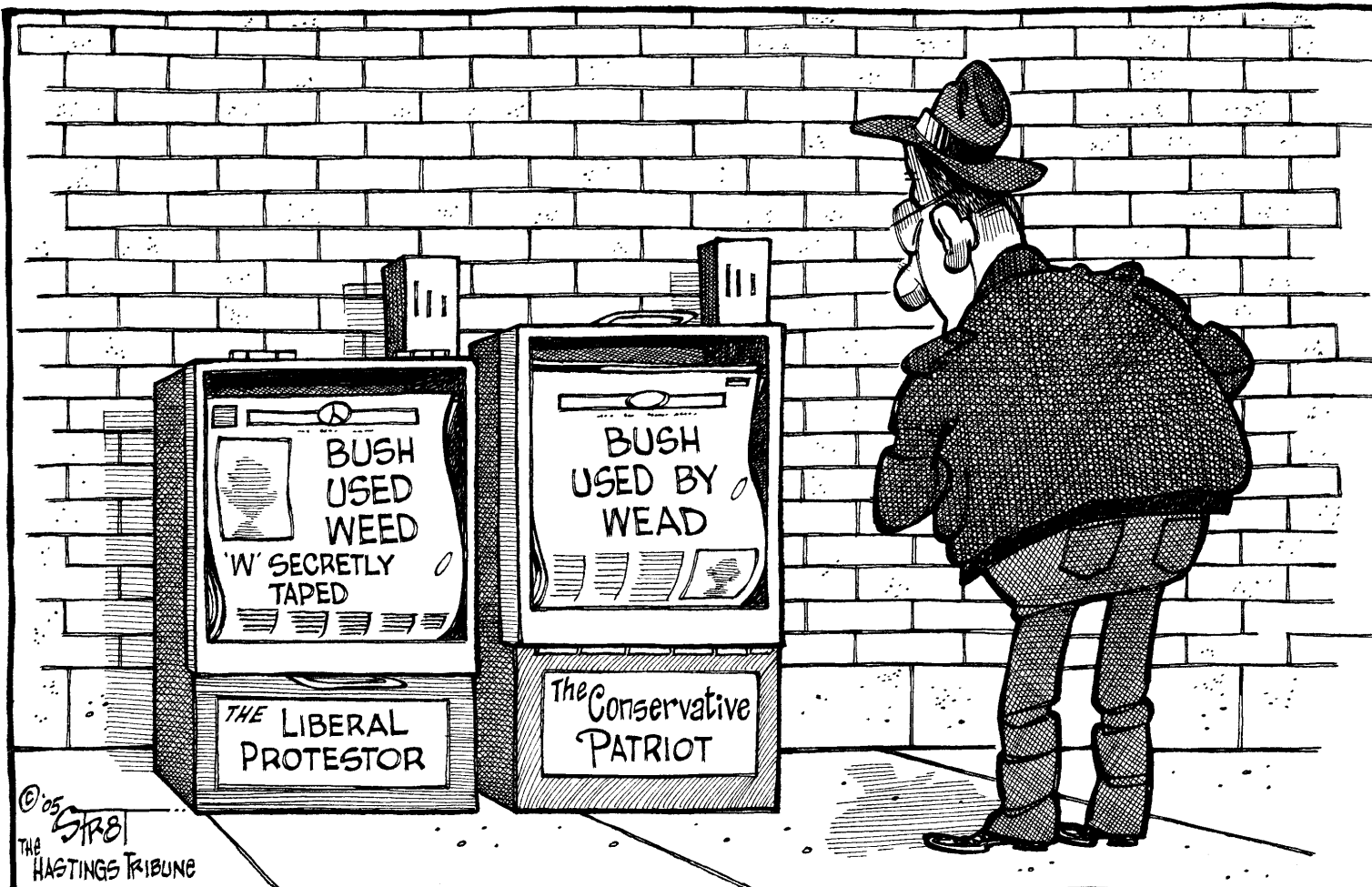
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## Holiday combines compassion, daring

I don't know about you, but according to my calendar, Valentine's Day has passed.

With all my work, it was really just another day. I even had a meeting that night.

But to many people it is a holiday filled with thoughts of love and romance. A friend did send me a card and another friend included a box of candy, all of which I sincerely appreciated.

That's really more than I did. As I get older it is harder and harder to keep up with all the relatives and all the holidays.

Valentine's Day. A day to honor your loved ones.

Did you know it began many years ago — probably during the Roman Empire? There are various claims about its origin, but it seems to have been linked to a problem Rome was having.

Men didn't want to go to war and leave their families. So the emperor cancelled all marriages and engagements.

However, that didn't solve the problem. A few priests, like Valentine (later to be named a saint) secretly performed marriages and helped



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• commentary

struggling Christian martyrs. For his compassion, Valentine was arrested and sentenced to death by clubbing. His martyrdom occurred on February 14th, which also was the holiday to honor Juno, the Queen of the Roman gods and goddesses. Juno was known as the goddess of women and marriage.

So our holiday honoring love is a combination of compassion, daring and paganism. It isn't a Christian holiday, but our society celebrates it with gestures of love.

So I'll end with a quote about love:

"Love deeply. Do not hesitate to love and to love deeply. You might be afraid of the pain that deep love can cause. When those you love deeply reject you, leave you or die, your heart will be broken. But that should not hold you

back from loving deeply. The pain that comes from deep love makes your love ever more fruitful. It is like a plow that breaks the ground to allow the seed to take root and grow into a strong plant. Every time you experience the pain of rejection, absence or death, you are faced with a choice. You can become bitter and decide not to love again, or you can stand straight in your pain and let the soil on which you stand become richer and more able to give life to new seeds.

"The more you have loved and have allowed yourself to suffer because of your love, the more you will be able to let your heart grow wider and deeper. When your love is truly giving and receiving, those whom you love will not leave your heart, even when they depart from you. Those you have loved deeply become a part of you...." (Henri J. M. Nouwen, The Inner Voice of Love).

Don't be afraid to love. And don't be afraid to express your love. God is love. And love is what makes all of life worthwhile.

## Sheriff explains vehicle replacement, decals

To the Editor:

Regarding Mark Jenkins' letter in the Feb. 25 *Goodland Star-News*, I would like to take this opportunity to address a couple of issues I feel need clarification.

The budget of the Sherman County Sheriff's Office is a matter of public record, and I would encourage any and all county citizens to review these records regularly.

It is my hope anyone with any concerns, complaints or questions in general will feel free to come to my office, or stop me on the street, to discuss whatever is weighing on their minds. I am always willing to listen to a new perspective, or differing opinion, and clarify my own line of thinking on a particular issue to those with questions.

With regard to Jenkins' concerns over my office purchasing two new vehicles, I would like to offer the following, as I hope it might clarify my position and reasoning for making such purchases:

My deputies routinely respond to crimes in progress. These run the gamut from shootings, matters of domestic violence to something as simple as yard ornaments being vandalized. My patrol vehicles are driven at high speeds, at times on bad roads, and under sometimes extreme conditions.

This type of wear is hard on any vehicle. A typical shift for one of my deputies might include 200 miles of patrol on county roads. A relatively low odometer reading on a given vehicle might be deceiving, as it probably does not adequately reflect the life of that vehicle.

As our office is limited in size and resources, even my off-duty deputies may be called on to respond in an emergency from their homes. We need vehicles on which we can depend to get us to that major accident, or the scene of that violent crime. We are trained first responders, and we often arrive before to emergency medical services. I would hate something as academic as a budget concern result in our not



**from our  
readers**

• to the editor

being able to respond to a medical crisis quickly. Reliable transportation can mean the difference between life and death.

My office has purchased two new patrol vehicles. Using one, the pickup, as an example, by trading our current pickup in, I received \$23,399, and am only using \$11,660 of tax money towards the new truck which will replace it. If I wait another year to trade in the current truck, its mileage will certainly exceed 100,000, and the trade value will drop. I believe trading this year will maximize the trade in money we receive, and therefore save tax dollars.

With regard to decals recently applied to one of our patrol cars, the \$300 required came not from tax money, but rather from the jail's commissary fund. That money is accrued when inmates buy optional items at their own ex-

pense, such as AM/FM radios, snack food items, and phone cards.

I believe the sight of patrol cars sitting together, with officers from the same or different agencies conversing, is a welcomed sight in Sherman County. As a lifelong resident of this community, I can remember a time when interagency relations were so poor that such a sight was unheard of. To me, patrol cars sitting and officers talking is a sign they are working together, comparing notes on various issues, such as the latest known or suspected criminal activity. Often, this information is sensitive, and cannot be aired over the radio, as many criminals have scanners. Criminals do not respect jurisdictional boundaries, and far fewer would be apprehended if the agencies working in this county did not share information.

In closing, I would like to reiterate my invitation to anyone and everyone who has a question, comment, or concern they would like to voice to please feel free to come in and share those thoughts with me. I am your elected official, and am therefore accountable to you.

Sheriff Kevin L. Butts  
Goodland

## where to write

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