

from our viewpoint...

# City finds a way to support Chamber

When the subject of paying for the Fourth of July fireworks came up at last Monday’s City Commission meeting, it appeared there was a slim chance that any increase in the city’s contribution would pass.

Hats off to Commissioner Dean Blume, who suggested a compromise where the city would match the money the Goodland Area Chamber of Commerce is able to raise to pay for the fireworks.

Commissioner John Garcia had been trying to get an increase approved, but his motion to raise the city amount by \$1,000 met with silence, dying for lack of a second.

Commissioner Dave Daniels, who had said he liked Blume’s idea, made a motion to have the city match the money the Chamber can raise up to \$2,500.

It passed with Daniels, Blume and Garcia in favor.

There was no surprise that Mayor Rick Billinger and Commissioner Jim Mull voted no, as they both had said they were not in favor of increasing the budgeted \$500.

The compromise will allow the Chamber to move forward with its fund raising, and ensure that there will be fireworks in July.

Daniels said he believes the Chamber can raise the full \$2,500, which will mean the city will increase its support by \$2,000 to match what Sherman County commissioners have pledged.

The suggestion for a city match was a demonstration of the art of leadership through compromise, one of the basic political processes on which our country was founded over 200 years ago.

It is now up to the Chamber to raise the money and show public support for this annual event.

The commission made it clear this is a one-time matching proposal, and it will be important for the Chamber to find ways to raise the money for next year’s Freedom Fest and establish a fund to bank the money in advance.

Spending tax money for fireworks to disappear into the sky does seem a bit of a stretch, and when two-thirds of the cost is borne by the taxpayers, it appears quite lopsided, but the increase won’t break the city.

“This is not going to bust our budget,” Garcia noted.

However, this is a countywide program that should be mostly self-funding.

Chamber leaders tried to make it that way with fund-raising events during the Freedom Fest, but rains last summer busted their budget.

Celebrating the nation’s birthday on July 4 should be supported by everyone, and it is not wrong for a part of the money to come from taxes.

However, citizens, businesses and civic organizations should be contributing more than half to cost.

People in Sherman County are touched by everyone who needs money, but if enough of those give at least \$15 to the festival, it should be enough to keep the Chamber shooting off fireworks for years to come. — *Tom Betz*

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

Steve Haynes, President

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

N.T. Betz, Director of Internet Services  
([ntbetz@nwkanssas.com](mailto:ntbetz@nwkanssas.com))

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

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# Feminists? Crusaders for equal rights!

A couple of weeks ago while working on a column about gay marriage, I uncovered a disturbing bit of information about women’s rights.

It turns out that women are not specifically guaranteed equal protection under the law. (I know; I was shocked, too).

I remember learning in school that the Constitution of the United States guaranteed equal rights for everyone regardless of race, religion and sex. I distinctly recall thinking about how wonderful that document is and how everyone has a chance in this country because of freedoms for everyone.

My world of equality came crashing down when, to prove a point about equality for all (gay marriage column, remember), I researched the passages.

To my dismay, one of the fairest and wisest document in the world guarantees equal rights regardless of color, creed and religion, but doesn’t mention anything about sex.


Don’t get me wrong; those are important and I wouldn’t want to take them away, but why was I left out?

I know that my freedom is implied and countless court cases uphold my equal status, but I’m upset that it isn’t specifically stated.

Who in this day and age actually believes that women aren’t deserving of equal protection?

I am not totally naive and I understand that women are not treated equally and wouldn’t be regardless of the Constitution.

An example of innate sexism was clear to me when I was watching the season finale last year



**kathryn burke**

• commentary

of one of my only reality television vices, NBC’s “The Apprentice.”

Donald Trump, arguably one of the most powerful men in the country, was trying to choose between a young man and a young woman as his next apprentice.

He kept asking for advice on who to hire from audience members and I gritted my teeth as again and again, middle-aged white men stood up and told Trump to hire the man.

OK, so everything wasn’t the same, and maybe the guy was a better fit for the job, but it seemed so wrong. It was as if powerful men were just clearing spaces to make more men powerful and ignoring women altogether.

Does wearing a skirt really open me up to this kind of clear discrimination?

Harvard University President Lawrence H. Summers gave a speech in January suggesting that biological differences between men and women make women steer clear of top jobs in math and science professions. Summers later said he was trying to be provocative and he called for more research to investigate the theory.

I guess if we use “scientific theories” to discriminate, it’s OK. Summers’ ridiculous idea that states women can’t measure up in some

# Public shouldn’t be fooled by Bush plan


To the Editor:

As President George W. Bush has been traveling around the country to promote his plan to privatize Social Security, he has told America there is an imminent crisis in funding for Social Security.

The American public should not be fooled. Privatization is a benefit cut in disguise and weakens the program, making its financial problems worse — not better.

Privatization is the crisis; it would balloon an already huge deficit and increases the debt future generations will have to pay by trillions of dollars.

We shouldn’t lose sight of the fact that Social Security is more than just a retirement pro-



**from our readers**

• to the editor

gram. It is a comprehensive life and disability insurance program as well. When someone retires or becomes disabled, or in the event of a death, families receive desperately needed monthly benefits.

Privatization ignores the need for disability and survivor benefits, and replaces lifetime guaranteed benefits with a private account containing a finite amount of money. For women,

# 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](http://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](mailto:brownback.senate.gov/CMEmail.me)

**U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran**, 2443 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715; Fax (202) 225-5124 e-mail address — [jerry.moran@mail.house.gov](mailto: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](mailto:jmorrison@house.state.ks.us)

**State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer**, State Capitol Building, Rm. 128-S, 300 SW 10th, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785)-296-7399; e-mail address — [ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us](mailto:ostmeyer@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