

from our viewpoint...

Dig volunteers give city high marks

Volunteers at the archeology dig near Kanorado are giving Sherman County high marks for being friendly. During the first week, more than 50 people from Colorado, Missouri, Idaho, Nebraska and Kansas have been working the dig and spending evenings in town. Volunteers have nothing but compliments about Goodland people being helpful. The visitors complimented the High Plains Museum and Ennis-Handy House, which many toured last week.

Some volunteers are camped down at Smoky Gardens while others are camped in the high school gym. Others are scattered throughout the city's motels and camping areas. One couple said they had been going to breakfast at the Buffalo Inn for several days before the "farmer crowd" began asking them what was being found at the dig sites. The giant Van Gogh painting has produced its share of comments, and a lot of questions about why it is in Goodland. Most of the volunteers were surprised to hear about the amount of sunflowers grown in northwest Kansas.

Daily as the bus drives up Cherry Ave., the volunteers have been watching the work being done on Pioneer Park and the hike-and-bike trail along the east side of the street. There is a lot of speculation about how it is supposed to look when completed.

"Where is the best place to eat," is a common question, and those who have tried the restaurants give their ratings. What is the best, of course, depends on what type of food you are looking for. All of the restaurants have been given high marks for their food, though. A couple where volunteers said the service was good, but slower than they expected.

Shopping is somewhat limited for the volunteers, as they board the bus at 8 a.m. and most do not return until about 5:30 p.m. Those digging half a day have had a chance to check out the shops, and most are pleased with what they have found.

As part of the Kansas Anthropological Association's public relations effort, the volunteers are using \$2 bills when they buy anything. During past field training programs, the group reports, merchants of could see the influence in their stores by the number of \$2 bills being circulated.

Linda Knott at Knott's Just Books said she had several customers from the group buy things in her store.

Artifacts being found at the three sites near Kanorado are being taken to Denver for examination. Based on the items found the first week, a new exhibit should be established at the High Plains Museum to present the information and evidence of man's habitation of this area over 12,000 years ago.

Volunteers will be digging at the sites the rest of this week. More historic artifacts and mammoth bones may be found to establish this as the oldest human site in the country, adding prominence to Sherman County. — Tom Betz

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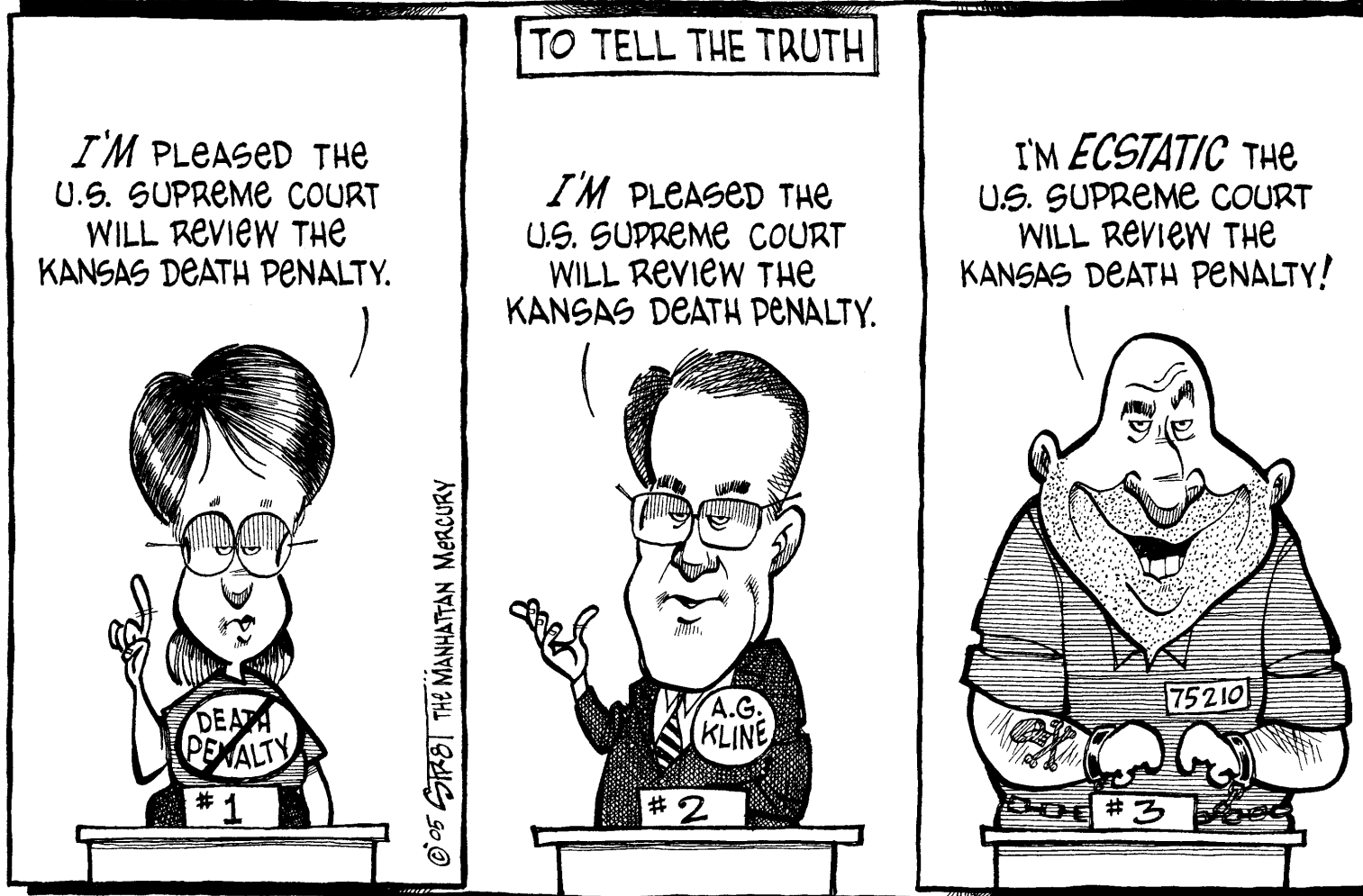
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THE SHERMAN COUNTY
STAR

Founded by Eric and
Roxie Yonkey
1994-2001

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There are areas where population is growing

Out where we're faced with ever-declining population and decreasing school enrollment, it's hard to believe that others have the opposite problem.

Visiting friends in north Georgia, though, we found that rural areas are not all the same.

On the High Plains, we've been bleeding farmers and high school graduates for a century. Our towns are shrinking, our schools are fading away and our countryside is all but devoid of habitation these days.

There are places like that in Georgia, especially in the poor counties to the south.

Not just agriculture, but the textile industry, have deserted the rural South. And there are some pretty dusty spots along the road.

Around the cities, even the smaller ones, though, there is growth. And around Atlanta, now pushing 4 million, there is growth for miles in every direction.

Our friends are the fourth generation to run the newspaper in Jefferson, seat of Jackson County. Fifteen miles north of Athens, site of the University of Georgia, and 90-some miles northeast of Atlanta, they are smack in the middle of exurban growth.



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Not the suburbs, mind you. Those are closer in, and today they offer many of the same problems of crime, race relations and crowding as the city itself.

The exurban territory spreads out through the woods and fields for miles around a city, offering "homes in the \$140,000s to \$180,000s" and room for kids to grow.

Populated mostly by young, Christian, conservative families, the exurbs define red-state growth. They're repopulated by big, new churches and Christian schools. Subdivisions spring up where corn or cotton or hay or horses grew a year or two before.

You can find these places in Miami County, Kansas, and Weld County, Colorado, but the hills

around Atlanta are rife with them.

In some ways, our friends don't mind. It's good for business. The town is bustling, and they've started one new paper to cover growing areas.

But there's the traffic. Mike can hardly back out of his office some days, even though the state built a bypass for U.S. 129.

And there are subdivision hearings and new roads and new sewers and the like to be built. Taxes are going up, and with higher values on land, farmers can't afford to hang on.

The growth brings in new people with no loyalty to the town or county, a place where once citizenship was defined by generations, not months.

The county school district just opened a new high school, and the state has plans for more four-lane roads. The growth brings new businesses and makes others prosper.

But it also brings change.

Me, I think we could stand a little growth out here.

But I'm glad we're not all that close to Denver.

Senator's support helps asbestos victims

To the Editor:

A group called the Senate Accountability Project has been running ads in Kansas, criticizing Sen. Sam Brownback for his recent vote in support of asbestos trust fund legislation.

Kansans might wonder what standing this shadowy group has to come in to tell Kansans what they ought to think.

Here are the facts: the asbestos litigation system is hopelessly clogged, with an estimated 300,000 claims now pending. Victims are forced to wait years before getting their day in court, and when they do, half of their awards go to their lawyers and court fees. The current system is particularly unfair to veterans exposed to asbestos during their service, who have nowhere to turn for compensation.

Is there any surprise that one of the major parties standing in the way of reform—the trial lawyers—is the group profiting the most from the current system? That's why trial lawyer groups, like the Senate Accountability Project, are coming into Kansas to tell us what's "best" for us and for victims of asbestos-related illnesses.

But they're wrong. Lawmakers are finally closing in on a solution that works for veterans and other victims. The Fairness in Asbestos Injury Resolution Act, recently approved



from our
readers

- to the editor

in the Senate Judiciary Committee, provides veterans and other victims suffering from asbestos-related illnesses with fair and certain compensation.

Under the proposed law, veterans will no

longer have to hire lawyers, or chase down the companies that supplied the government with asbestos in order to be compensated. What's more, veterans would still be able to collect veterans benefits for their asbestos-related injuries.

As an Kansas veteran, I'd like to thank Sen. Brownback for supporting the bill. I urge both Kansas senators to support the bill when it comes to the Senate floor.

Roger Sellers, past state commander
Kansas Veterans of Foreign Wars
Shawnee

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