

from our viewpoint...

## Deadly tornado breaks all the rules

The leaves have fallen, and we're a lot more likely to have a blizzard than a tornado, right?

That may be what people in Indiana and Kentucky thought this weekend, before a mammoth twister ripped through homes and a trailer court, killing at least 22 people.

It's too late for a tornado.

But unfortunately for those in its path, this storm hadn't read the rules. It came ripping through the night, and many victims slept through storm warnings.

The storm hit about 2 a.m., maybe the worst time of the day to get people up and into shelters. Victims at a trailer park never had a chance.

It's sobering thought, tornadoes in November, and it sounds far off, but the site is only about as far south as Scott City.

We could have tornadoes here in November. It's not that uncommon to have weather warm and wet enough to breed these terrible storms.

November is not exactly April when it comes to tornadoes, but we can't count on not having any.

A few years ago, November tornadoes near Hays hit several homes, but avoided populated areas. No one was hurt.

October storms are pretty common, even farther north. Funnels were photographed near Goodland in late October a few years back. One of the biggest tornadoes to hit Colorado came roaring right over Wolf Creek Pass a decade ago in October.

Tornadoes aren't supposed to form in the mountains, either. Elk hunters were amazed, but they were the only people in the area. Again, no one was hurt. Millions of trees died, and wood cutters are still trying to haul off the remains.

The worst tornado disaster in the nation's history swept through Missouri, Illinois and Indiana early in the season, March 18, 1925. Six hundred ninety-five people died. Major storms have struck as early as February.

The message ought to be clear: We need to be prepared for tornadoes year around. Sirens need to be tested. Weather spotters trained and alerted as needed.

Blizzard season may provide a break from tornadoes, but we can't rule them out. We should never assume tornado season is "over."

It might be no one told the tornadoes.

— Steve Haynes



Mike Keefe THE DENVER POST 2005 www.caglecartoons.com

## Women honored for 'courage in journalism'

There should have been a banner saying "Feminists Forever" above the doorway so the guys could cut and run.

But there wasn't, and all 10 or 11 of them got sucked into the hall at the National Geographic Building in Washington, along with the 100 or so women.

A lawyer and fellow journalist had secured tickets for us to International Women's Media Foundation "Courage in Journalism" awards.

First there were drinks and hors d'oeuvres in the foyer.

As one man put it, "The groceries are good and the drinks are free."

I had a glass of wine and went to check out the food, since supper had been a salad and I was hungry.

One table was taken up by six or eight kinds of sushi. I don't care what they do to it, it's raw seafood and rice, and I don't do sushi.

A second table had Mideastern dishes — flat bread, a couple of kinds of humus (that's smashed chickpeas) and some rice dish. I grabbed a piece of bread and some humus. Chickpeas are better than fish, but only a little. Still, you have to have an open mind.

Like Goldilocks, I found the third table more to my liking, with duck egg rolls, chicken puffs and pastries. I had a couple of egg rolls and a puff. The pastries were not on my diet.

Then it was time to watch the ceremonies in the theater. Five women sat on the stage with the president of the Geographic's women's media group moderating. It turned out that three of the



cynthia haynes

• open season

women were the award winners and two were interpreters.

Next time I complain that the school board, county commission, city council or a letter writer is being mean to me, remind me of this column.

Sumi Khan covers crime, fundamentalism and violence against women in Bangladesh, one of the world's most dangerous countries for journalists.

She was forced to leave the first paper she worked for because of a story she wrote about a woman raped by a prominent businessman. When he was done, he threw the woman off his balcony.

Last year, three men beat her and slashed her with a knife. The wife and mother of two was in the hospital for several weeks and still does not have full use of one hand. "You have gone too far," one said.

Today her beat — at her new newspaper — is the Bangladesh Mafia.

Anja Niedringhaus, an Associated Press photographer, started her career as a teen-ager taking pictures of the fall of the Berlin Wall in her native Germany.

She's been covering wars for 15 years, first in

the middle of Europe and more recently in the Middle East, Iraq and Afghanistan. Her photos dwell on the toll of war on the innocent, primarily women and children

This spring, she was the only woman on the 11-member Associated Press team that won the Pulitzer Prize for breaking news photography, mostly from Iraq.

She says it's too dangerous now for a blonde European woman to go out taking pictures in Iraq. She spends her days editing pictures from a hotel in the Green Zone.

Shahla Sherkat is the editorial director of Zanan (Women) in Tehran. She founded the monthly magazine in 1991, after she was fired as editorial director at the government-owned weekly magazine Zan-e-Rouz (Today's Woman).

Since then she has tried to tell the stories of women's lives in her country, defying the authorities, who are a continual threat to her freedom to report.

One issue of her magazine was seized by the government and destroyed because it contained a photo of the uncovered face and wrists of a woman.

She spent four hours arguing with a gang of fundamentalist young men bent on destroying all her equipment. She wore them out and they left.

She said through an interpreter that many of her friends tell her they buy the magazine but do not take it home because their husbands and fathers would forbid them to continue getting it.

Boy, that makes an angry call from a public official I've offended look pretty tame. Talk about courage.

## The Goodland Star-News

(USPS No. 222-460. ISSN 0893-0562)

Member: Kansas Press Association

Inland Press Association Colorado Press Association

National Newspaper Association

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Published every Tuesday and Friday except the days observed for New Year's Day and Christmas Day, at 1205 Main Ave., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

Periodicals postage paid at Goodland, Kan. 67735; entered at the Goodland, Kan., Post Office under the Act of Congress of March 8, 1878.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Goodland Star-News, 1205 Main Ave., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

TELEPHONE: (785) 899-2338. Editorial e-mail: star-news@nwkansas.com. Advertising questions can be sent to: goodlandads@nwkansas.com

The Goodland Star-News assumes no liability for mistakes or omissions in advertising or failure to publish beyond the actual cost of the ad.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: In Sherman County and adjacent counties: three months, \$24; six months, \$42; 12 months, \$76. Out of area, weekly mailing of two issues: three months, \$34; six months, \$49; 12 months, \$84. Mailed individually each day: 12 months, \$119. (All tax included.)

Incorporating:

The Goodland Daily News

1932-2003

The Sherman County Herald

Founded by Thomas McCants

1935-1989

THE SHERMAN COUNTY STAR

Founded by Eric and Roxie Yonkey

1994-2001

Nor'West Newspapers

Haynes Publishing Company

## Libby on the label

"When it says Libby Libby Libby on the label label label, it means testimony given is mostly fable fable fable."

The team in charge of Scooter Libby's defense has already tipped its hand as to the vice presidential chief of staff's legal strategy in the Valerie Plame case. Apparently he's going to stick with the "I'm a busy guy" defense. We've all seen it before. They trot out a stack of papers as big as a phone book, and call his phone logs "Defense Exhibit A."

"We're talking about a busy person here, people. How could this man possibly be expected to remember at what precise time he betrayed one of our secret agents as revenge on her husband for criticizing our government's motivations for going to war? This is the chief of staff of the most powerful man in the free world. Payback is his job description. Exact vengeance on perceived enemies is a 24-hour-a-day job. For him, the skirting of the boundaries of treason is like you and me going to the copy machine. You want the truth America? Let me tell you something, YOU CAN'T HANDLE THE TRUTH."

In the interest of avoiding this boring, tiresome and clichéd charade while at the same time fulfilling my duties as a consultant to Court TV, I've provided a couple other possible defense strategies the vice president's team might want to check out:

- Too preoccupied with the grave responsibility of preserving the safety of our great nation from evildoers to recall exact sequence of events over 26 months ago.
- Perjury! Since when is perjury a crime? What are you guys, liberals?



will durst

• raging moderate

- Playing Scrabble in the Presidential Suite of the Mayflower Hotel with Dick Cheney, Bill Frist, Karl Rove and Tom DeLay at the time. What time? Any time you want.

- Indictment is simply the desperate death rattle of a partisan prosecutor determined to advance the empty agenda of a hollow opposition party by exploiting extreme legal technicalities.

- Come on. His accusers are jailed journalists. Who you going to believe? The people committed to protecting us from terrorists or a bunch of Geraldo wanna-bes?

- He was on Twinkies at the time.

- Fixing broken crutches of crippled children at an orphans' hospital at the time of reputed phone calls. And why weren't you?

- Russian Embassy microwave interference distorted his space-time continuum.

- You can't send a guy named Scooter to prison.

- Couldn't have made calls in question as he was consulting with evangelist Pat Robertson in a one-on-one seminar about how to better spread the message of our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ across the globe.

- If the glove doesn't fit, you must acquit.

- Inner ear infection caught while rescuing drowning puppies in the Euphrates River had

him all discombobulated. But he's much better now.

- Recently diagnosed with an 18-and-a-half minute gap in his memory.

- In the middle of obsessing over the cancellation of "Buffy the Vampire Killer," subsequently went on a two-week ecstasy bender and can't recall anything from that time period except a Portuguese seamstress named Eva and a three-legged goat.

- Unable to process precise memories due to lead poisoning contracted while growing up as a poor black child in Queens.

- Before single-handedly stymieing a hitherto-unpublicized terrorist attack in the cookbook section of a Borders bookstore in the Crystal City Mall, he took a direct hit from a radioactive al Qaida bicycle pump hose, causing him to suffer from debilitating headaches and occasional blackouts.

Political Comic Will Durst did some of that. E-mail Will at willdurst@sbcglobal.net.

## 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@nwkansas.com>.

## garfield

