

from our viewpoint...

The wonderful season of giving

The days grow shorter, and the winter is upon us. The cold north winds have brought us frigid cold, but the clouds are parting enough for the celebration of the wonderful birth of the Son of God.

One of the enjoyable things of the Christmas season is the giving of gifts to those we know, and in some cases to those we don't know.

Giving to those who are not enjoying the best of times is something the people of Sherman County do well, and this year the numbers were greater than ever in the past. Despite a larger number of families on the list for the Genesis holiday boxes, the people of Sherman County gave to make sure there was enough to cover the 160 families.

At the same time, Sherman County people opened their hearts and their wallets to be sure the kids of those families could have a gift this Christmas season.

We had fun Saturday afternoon giving away the grand prize and first prize of the eighth annual Christmas on Us merchants' contest. Our congratulations to the two who won the prizes. We wish them well this season.

All those who participated in the contest are winners in our book because they showed their support of our community by spending money with the businesses that participated.

There were over 20,000 tickets handed out by the participating merchants, which means that over \$200,000 circulated in our community to help keep the economy moving forward. The success of the businesses here is tied directly to the support of the people who live here.

This has been a tough year in many ways; we have seen some businesses close either because of a lack of support or that the owners felt they had to retire. There have been some new businesses open, and there is evidence that more new businesses, including a new hotel, may be on the horizon.

Efforts continue to develop the Goodland Energy Center, which will bring additional jobs and more businesses to our community. The development of an industrial park does not come overnight, but the local investors in this multifaceted program have the vision to bring three energy programs together to provide a real chance for extended economic development.

The year is almost over, but a new one is set to begin. As we saw with the people who supported the Christmas on Us program, our community remains strong, and we will take hope into the coming year.

There are cold days left in this winter, but the warmth of help will give us another chance to welcome new life. Our efforts should be focused to be sure that opportunity has the best chance of success, and our support is the foundation that can make it work.

Merry Christmas to everyone, and may you have a wonderful and safe holiday season. — *Tom Betz*

The Goodland Star-News

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

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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@nwkanssas.com. Advertising questions can be sent to: goodlandads@nwkanssas.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



Remembering those who died before 9-11

Before there was 9-11, 168 people were killed in a terrorist attack on the federal building in Oklahoma City.

At 9:02 on April 19, 1995, a rental truck carrying a bomb made from Kansas fertilizer exploded by the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, partly collapsing the nine-story building and damaging many churches, a YMCA and other buildings in the vicinity.

It took almost two weeks to pull all the bodies from the rubble and identify them. Then it took another five years before a suitable memorial was ready.

Steve and I visited Oklahoma City recently. We went to the art gallery, the Cowboy Hall of Fame and yes, we visited the memorial. Not to have gone would be like visiting Washington, and not going by the Lincoln Memorial.

After a little more than 10 years, the scars are mostly gone from downtown Oklahoma City. What was left of the old federal building was torn down. The churches have been repaired. The YMCA has been relocated to another building and its old home removed.

The young woman who gave us the tour gave us a memorized and rehearsed narrative of the blast and its aftermath. I wasn't impressed by her posturing. She has said this too many times, and she



cynthia haynes

- open season

obviously wasn't around when that bomb went off.

What did get to me was what I saw.

As we got off the bus, we were next to a chain-link fence cluttered with memorabilia. There were teddy bears, notes, photos, hair ribbons, toy trucks and even a birthday card to someone who died 10 years ago.

It's obvious, while some of these things have been there for years, relatives, friends, parents and spouses still mark special events with new items.

Inside the memorial, 168 chairs line up to nine deep on a grassy slope where the old federal building stood. Each chair bears the name of a person killed in the blast and each is set in a row representing the floor the person was on when the blast went off.

Among the chairs are 19 small ones, mostly in the second row. That's where the day-care center was. That's where 19 children died.

Each of the chairs has a glass base with the

Get serious about immigration reform

By Dick Morris

President Bush seems impaled on the false choice of appealing to the Hispanic vote or enforcing laws against illegal immigration.

Politically, legally and morally there is no conflict — and there is a great deal of synergy — among these objectives.

Bush, searching for a way to recapture the national agenda, needs to seize this issue and make it his own. A full and reasoned program will galvanize national support and unite the nation behind tough measures to enforce our laws and maximize opportunities for those who already live here legally.

Bush needs to:

- Back the fence. Walls work. Just as the Israelis, whose West Bank fence keeps terrorists out and has reduced terrorist attacks inside Israel to a fraction of their former number and intensity. Good fences make good neighbors, and the United States should act to regularize the traffic of immigrants into the country by the kind of border control that only a well-positioned fence can offer. This is no Great Wall of China seeking futilely to keep out the rest of the world. It would be a modern, high tech affair, spotting breaches and relaying the information to highly mobile border guard units to plug them up.

- Establish a legal guest-worker program. Nobody can deny the manifest need of Americans — both individuals and businesses — for the work that currently illegal immigrants provide. They would not be coming if they did not have access to jobs, and there would be no work if there were no demand.

Bush's current program for legal guest workers is a good one and should be adopted in the context of broader immigration reform. But the plan should include a track to citizenship for these workers, providing certain criteria —



dick morris

- commentary

such as English fluency, English literacy and no arrest record — to let them earn the right to become American citizens.

A guest-worker program will end the leper colony within our borders of disenfranchised, invisible illegals who have no rights and no responsibilities.

- Prosecute visa overstays. Half of the people who live here illegally entered the United States with legal visas and overstayed them. All 19 of the Sept. 11 hijackers came here under the law and then stayed on after their visas had expired (or should have been revoked because they did not attend school, having entered on student visas).

That we cannot rid our country of these illegal immigrants is hard to understand. We have their names, photos, fingerprints, addresses and phone numbers, but we do not deport them.

The main reason for their immunity is the lack of deportation judges and courts and the inadequate number of holding cells for detainees. Of the 160,000 people the United States arrested as illegal immigrants last year, 120,000 were released, without bail, back onto our streets. We need a massive expansion of judicial infrastructure to cope with the problems of illegal visa overstays.

President Clinton helped to lower the crime rate by doubling the prison space under his 1994 anti-crime bill. We need a commitment of similar magnitude.

- Regularize cash shipments home. A vital form of foreign aid for Mexico and the improv-

name of the victim on it. On three of the chairs there are two names — one for a mother and one for her unborn child.

Inside the museum, after you get past the gift shop and the elevator, you are led on a journey from a time in the early morning as people drop their children off at the day care center and head for their desks to begin another day.

You get to sit in on a tape of what looks like a rather dull hearing at the Oklahoma Water Resources Board. In the middle of the explanation of how the hearing will be conducted, there's an explosion, the lights go out and you can hear the people screaming and scrambling to get out of the doomed building.

The tape was found in the rubble.

Another room shows items taken from the debris — broken glasses, shoes torn apart, scraps of paper, damaged computers and telephones.

Above it all, television monitors show you the rescue effort as people are rushed from the burning hulk of a building into ambulances and given first aid. Other monitors show supervisors trying to find their employees and frantic parents trying to get to where they had left their children.

No Islamic terrorist here.

It's easy to forget that the people who hate us sometimes are us.

erished countries of Central America is the remittances sent each week by illegal immigrants to their families back home.

Last year, Mexican men working here sent \$11 billion to their wives and children — the second leading source of foreign-currency earnings after oil for the nation. We need to regularize this flow of cash and provide immigrants with security, bank accounts and low-cost ways to send money home.

Combating illegal immigration need not smack of racism. It is important to all American citizens — Latinos and Anglos — and is in the national interest. But it is also in our interest to allow immigrants to come and settle here legally.

Immigration is keeping America young and vital. If not for the annual flow of 3 million people — about half legal and half illegal — we would be much like the nations of Europe, losing population and watching their populations age. But we cannot afford the current chaotic flow of immigrants over a theoretical border. We need to enforce the law and make it fair.

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