

from our viewpoint...

# January is over, July around corner

The month of January is behind us, and now is the time to be organizing the July 4 celebration.

When the Goodland Area Chamber of Commerce decided to drop all festivals and events they left a void. The Flatlander Committee was organized to keep that festival going, and they had a good event the first time through.

However, the July 4 Freedom Fest has not been so fortunate and no organizations have stepped forward to take it on. Although July is five months away, the planning for July 4 has to begin now. Decisions about what kind of program, and where to get the money will have to be made before the end of March.

No doubt the new event will not be as big as the one last year, and there are a lot of ways it could be done for less cost.

Finding the organization willing to handle the event is the first step, but one problem is going to be finding the money to cover the cost of the fireworks.

There would not be a problem if the money contributed last year by the city and county had been put in a separate account rather than being swallowed in the chamber's red ink.

The report last week from the Goodland Chamber of Commerce was a positive change with the group getting out of the red and trying to rebuild their membership.

Wednesday the Sherman County Economic Development Council spent time talking about goals, and decided their top priority for this year is to hire a director.

During the discussion of goals a question was asked about the importance of the festivals the chamber used to do.

Council members said they felt the festivals were important to bring people to the city, and as a way to highlight the city to people who potentially want to move here or who may have a business to start, relocate or expand.

The Flatlander Committee was a success, and maybe a similar committee should be established to do the July 4 celebration. There are organizations in the community who could form the foundation for such a committee with the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion and the Kansas National Guard being the ones that come to mind.

The Goodland Lions, Kiwanis and Rotary could lend their support to such an effort, and there are other groups who could be enlisted to help develop a plan for celebrating the nation's birthday.

Getting the ball rolling is the first step. Yes, there is going to be the question of where does the money come from, but that is a question for the new committee to consider. Raising money for the fireworks can be done in many ways, and each should be explored.

Time is fleeting, and it will be March before we know it, and if we are going to have a July 4 celebration the time is now to begin.

The Goodland Star-News would be willing to be part of the effort, and we think the Economic Development Council would help.

Having a good community celebration will take interest from the citizens, and we feel it is important that such an event is held here on July 4. — Tom Betz



caglecartoons.com

Mike Keefe THE DENVER POST 01/19/06

## My predictions for 2006

It is the beginning of the new year, and typically the time for ink-stained wretches to trot out the tried-but-true "ye olde predictions piece."

The wretches who don't resort to trotting out the trite-but-true "ye olde resolutions" piece, that is.

Being the average traditionalist wretch with great respect for heritage that I am, (and especially lacking any other fertile ideas whatsoever), I am proud to honor this revered journalistic practice. Hence, I have your predictions for the new year right here. Resolutions will show up the next time I get stuck for other fresh and bright ideas. In other words, soon.

Happy 2006 everybody.

### In the year 2006

- I predict George W. Bush will continue to cut programs to the poor and the old so that rich people can have more money. I also predict that through a series of tragic financial reversals, the 43rd president will die both poor and old. Because that's the way God would want it.
- I predict Tom DeLay will lose his Houston Congressional race to Conservative Democrat Nick Lampson who lost his seat in '04 due to DeLay's redistricting scheme, because that's also the way God would want it.
- I predict this administration will break more laws, then conduct investigations into who told



### will durst

- raging moderate

the press about the broke laws instead of investigating crimes being broken. Like blaming Toto for the Wizard of Oz's incompetence.

- I predict Paris Hilton will hold a press conference to which no one will come and she will wither away like autumn leaves crushed by the tires of an 18 wheeler blown away in a brisk breeze.
- I predict Dick Cheney's face will freeze like that.
- I predict technology will become so user-friendly that geeks will go back to being nerds.
- I predict air travel will become less user friendly to the point that certain discount seats require pedaling.
- I predict the San Francisco Giants will win the World Series, but in lieu of going to Disneyland afterwards, Barry Bonds, the MVP, will instead be whisked straight away to a retirement village for a series of recuperative salt baths.
- I predict Bill Gates will develop a donor

recipient software program that makes himself obsolete.

- I predict that Iraq will have so many elections this year, that voter turnout will drop to levels normally seen in North Dakota during force-five blizzards.
- I predict Tom Cruise will lose another debate on "The Today Show," this time to Katie Couric's assistant makeup artist.
- I predict that during a stump speech in upstate New York, gubernatorial candidate Donald Trump's hair will be wind-whipped into the shape of a sail, whisking him airborne into a mall parking lot in suburban Vermont.
- I predict that lobbyist Jack Abramoff's squealing will bring down so many members of Congress that the 2007 House freshman class will be known as the Abramoff Babies.
- I predict Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger will move so far to the left in his attempt to mend fences with California voters that Fidel Castro will denounce him as a socialist tool.
- I predict that Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld will engage in a bout of such verbal gobbledygook he will confuse himself and finally be forced to give a straight answer.

Political comic Will Durst wants to buy Donald Rumsfeld's verbal gymnastics workout plan. E-mail Will at willdurst@sbcglobal.net..

## Expect nothing new in State of the Union

Is it too late to cancel the president's State of the Union address?

Tonight President Bush will go before Congress to give his annual version of how peachy everything is going at home and abroad.

We'll get some fresh metaphors from his speech writers. We'll hear some new promises the president knows he'll never be able to keep and a bold agenda for the coming year that he knows Congress will never come close to giving him.

We'll probably get a "surprise" announcement about troop cuts in Iraq in a carefully crafted, selectively spun speech that, by custom, is deliberately leaked a few hours beforehand. Otherwise, Bush probably will sound a lot like he did last year.

You don't remember last year's historic address? You can no longer recite its ringing lines?



### bill steigerwald

- newsmakers

It was the one where the president said "the state of our union is confident and strong" and begged the scoundrels and compulsive spenders of the House and Senate to help him "build a better world for our children and grandchildren."

It was the one where he begged Congress to help him restrain spending, pass tort reform, fix the tax code, reform immigration policy, let families control their own health care ... and, oh yeah, begin the privatizing of Social Security.

The annual message to Congress by the president, which is constitutionally required, has been delivered either in person or in writing 215 times since George Washington spoke the first one in 1790.

It'd take a David McCullough to determine whether the early messages were any less partisan or politically calculated than our contemporary televised ones with their 67 built-in applause lines. But thanks to the Internet, any citizen historian can go to a site like factmonster.com/t/hist/state-of-the-union and read every address ever delivered.

In almost any year you look, you can find high American ideals and fine rhetoric. George Washington set the tone when he urged Congress to help him with "the arduous task of in-

sureing to our fellow citizens the blessings which they have a right to expect from a free, efficient, and equal government." Rutherford B. Hayes gets pretty dull in his 1880 rant in favor of federal civil service reform. But wouldn't it be sweet if we could hear President Bush say, "Our relations with all foreign countries have been those of undisturbed peace, and have presented no occasion for concern as to their continued maintenance"?

And Cal Coolidge's addresses, the first on radio, are full of timeless limited-government prayers that wouldn't be heard again until Ronald Reagan's rousing — but never summated — counter-revolutionary call to roll back Big Government in 1982.

It'd be nice if the president surprises us with something truly radical tonight. It'd be great if he declares the war on drugs over or says he'll seek repeal of the 16th Amendment.

But it'll never happen. Like most recent State of the Unions, it'll probably be 99 percent hot political air and instantly forgettable, not to mention a waste of prime network TV time.

It's painfully clear that in our 24/7/52 News and Information Age, the State of the Union address has outlived its original civic usefulness. It's just another regularly scheduled presidential pseudo-event — a partisan infomercial. It's time for our presidents to resume sending their annual messages to Congress by letter. Or better yet, e-mail.

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(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@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

### 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

