

from our viewpoint...

Snow, winter makes future look bright

Looking at six more weeks of winter is not the same on the High Plains as it is in the Rockies or farther to the north and east. Moisture of any kind is what farmers here need, and the weath-ermen came through on Super Sunday with a light dusting of snow. The weather was nearly picture perfect last week for the long-awaited arrival of the new Steak house Diner. The project has been through some unfortunate delays, but the opening of the restaurant should be good news to all the construction workers who will be arriving in the next six to eight weeks.

At the same time, Sherman County’s new baler arrived at the transfer station, and should be in operation by the middle of March. The baler will extend the life of the county landfill, and there are plans to bale cardboard to further reduce the amount of waste being buried.

Goodland High School is getting into recycling with a plan to install a special container at the school and trash bins in the classrooms to gather waste paper. Kellie Rietcheck from the Student Council asked the City Commission to help with the project by buying the container. It is a good plan, and the kids should be commended for coming up with the idea.

The Goodland Energy Center has a special date with an air quality permit hearing at 7 p.m. on Wednesday at the City Administration Building. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment will be conducting the hearing to get commends for the project, support as well as any objections.

After the hearing, Energy Center investors will have to wait for about three weeks to get authorization to begin construction of the power plant. That is expected to begin in March, and construction of the adjacent ethanol and biodiesel plants should begin in April or May.

The spring will bring another type of construction activity, as highway projects get started on K-27 south of town, and on I-70 west to the state line. The K-27 project is phase two of a major modification, which will include a new highway about 100 feet east of the existing road. The recently completed bridge over the Smoky Hill River was the first phase of the project.

Downtown Goodland will have its share of construction as replacement of five brick intersections begins. Plans are to do the odd-numbered intersections — Ninth, 11th and 13th — first then to do the even intersections at 10th and 12th, so people can get to stores.

People are feeling positive here, and there is a sense the city and county could be in the early stages of a real boom.

The Goodland Chamber will hold its annual meeting Thursday evening, and there will undoubtedly be large smiles and talk about the future developments.

With our wettest months for snow coming up, a few good deep ones would give the farmers and ranchers a reason to join the ranks of smiling people. This may still be winter, but it appears to be a great time to live in Sherman County. — *Tom Betz*

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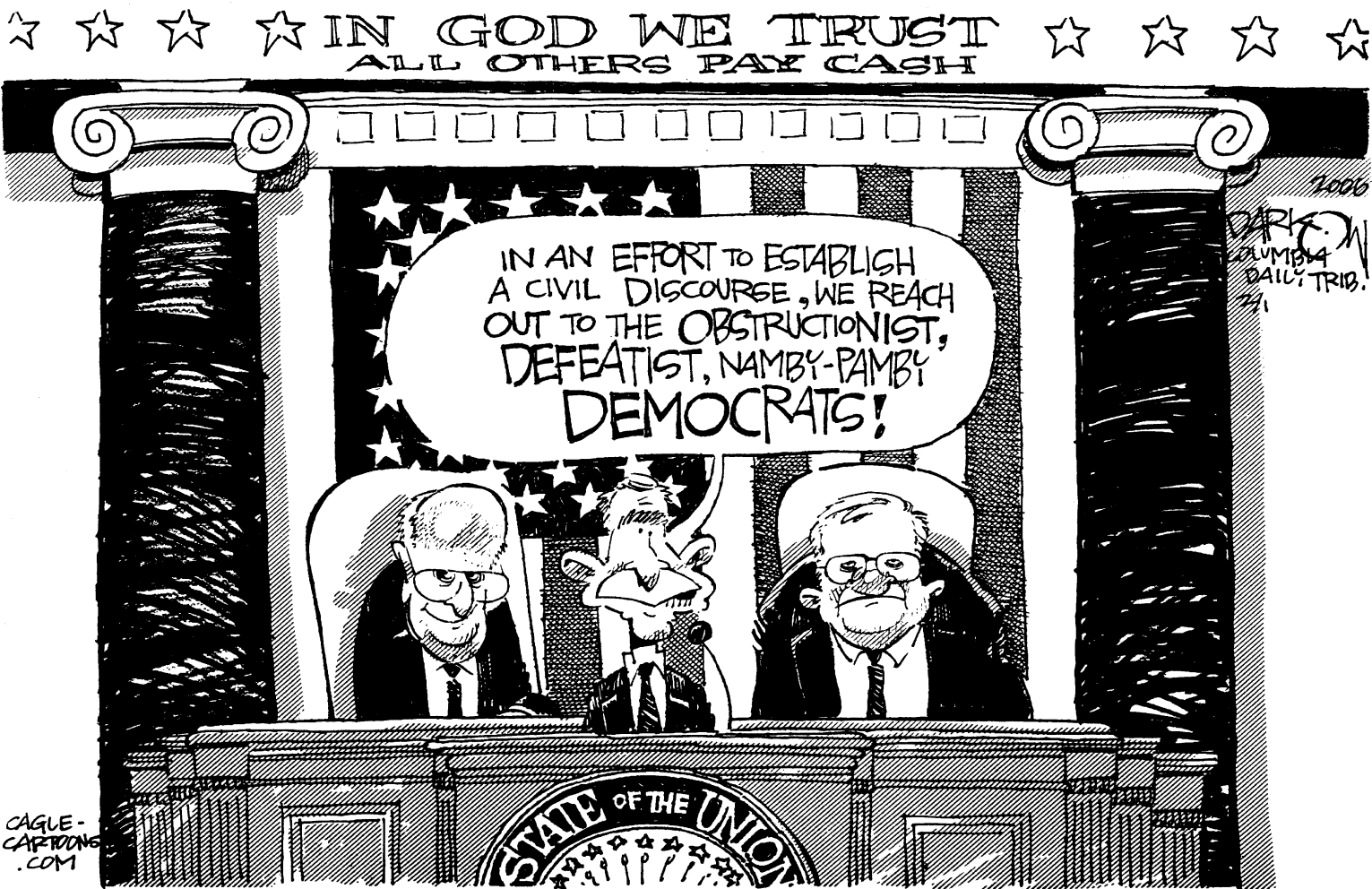
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There must be a bald cat somewhere

“Where’s the bald cat?” Barb wanted to know.

“Bald cat? We have no bald cat?” I said, somewhat mystified. “We have lots of cats. More than we know what to do with. We have our two; our daughter’s two; our son’s phantom feline, which may or may not still be here; and several neighbor cats that drop by for a visit and end up eating our cat food and sleeping on our furniture. However, none of them is bald, as far as I know.

“There must be at least one bald cat in this house,” she insisted. “The amount of cat hair I found in the upstairs alone proves it.”

Barb is more of a friend than a housekeeper. She helps me out most weeks, but she was visiting her children over Christmas and couldn’t make it. I was busy ignoring my house and enjoying the holidays, so nobody bothered to dust under the furniture for about two weeks. That can add up to a lot of cat hair during shedding season — which for cats is 51.5 weeks a year.

Having animals around is a great way to stave off empty-nest syndrome. How can you feel lonely and unneeded when there is always a dog to walk and a cat to sit on your lap?

And food, the dog is always appreciative and



cynthia haynes
● open season

the cats always demanding. You don’t want to be around our house when the cat bowl is bare — they get as obnoxious as a bunch of tired and hungry children.

Speaking of which, they fight like brothers and sisters, too.

Molly Monster is the top cat. She chases everyone else around and only old Jezebel will stand up (or more accurately hunker down) to her.

Rupert likes the high ground and enjoys sitting on top of the refrigerator, which she gets to by jumping up on the counter in front of the coffee maker and then onto the top of the fridge, where she makes a nest among the brown paper grocery bags.

The other day Molly decided that Rupert was entirely too comfortable up there. So she got on the counter and jumped up on the top of the fridge.

Soon, fur, paper bags and refrigerator magnets were flying everywhere. When the noise stopped Molly had the high ground, Rupert was under a desk at the other end of the room, the coffee maker was overturned and the floor was littered with debris.

Steve picked up the debris, tossed both cats outside and straightened up the coffee maker. It wasn’t until I tried to make coffee that I realized that the cats had broken the grounds basket. It’s held on by a stem on the bottom and the top. The bottom stem was broken although the top one was still in place and it still works.

I’ve been using the broken basket for more than a week now, waiting for the new part to arrive. I might not have ordered it at all, but I found that you can’t put the grounds in before the water. I did and I had to clean up three scoops of spilled dry coffee grounds off the counter, sink and floor. I was not happy.

In fact, I was seriously thinking of snatching one or both of the miscreants bald — but I’ve wanted to do that with the kids sometimes, too. They had some warm fannies now and then, but they never lost any hair over their misdeeds, either.

2005’s Greatest hits

The Middle East, partisan politics, big government, freedom, energy, media bias — those debatable perennials were the big issues of 2005. What follows are highlights from Q&A’s with some of the top pundits, professors, experts, gurus and politicos we interviewed this year.

The Middle East

The U.N. not being on our side had nothing to do with Iraq. It was a function of the French position on Iraq. Period. The French were opposed to our position on Iraq, start to finish. And that had everything to do with France’s economic interest and its long-standing, tight relationships with Saddam Hussein.... — *Jeanne J. Kirkpatrick, former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations*

We need to proceed with a good deal more humility and reflection when we act internationally. We don’t have all the answers. We don’t have absolute power to remake the world as we would wish it to be. — *Larry Diamond, author of “Squandered Victory: The American Occupation and the Bungled Effort to Bring Democracy to Iraq.”*

I don’t trust the post office to deliver the mail and all of a sudden you get conservatives trusting government to create a brand new society in a place that has remained unchanged for thousands of years. — *Tucker Carlson, MSNBC pundit*

I don’t think there is any doubt that we will see a weapon of mass destruction used by the bad guys. It could be tomorrow, it could be five years from now, but it’s bound to happen. — *Arnaud de Borchgrave, journalist*

Politics

Grass-roots citizen involvement is the only way to get really large-scale change in Washington. — *Newt Gingrich, author of “Winning the Future”*

I’m not pleased at the direction our party is



bill steigerwald
● newsmakers

headed on fiscal responsibility. We don’t look very conservative at all. — *Jeff Flake, Republican congressman from Arizona*

In the long run, it’s the ideas, it’s the great figures, it’s the inspirational figures who define a political party and shape in people’s mind an image of what that party is and what it stands for. — *Tony Snow, Fox News Radio*

Hillary’s life is a sham. Her life, the essential core of her life, is a sham. That marriage is a sham. — *Ed Klein, author of “The Truth About Hillary”*

The traditional black leadership that came up out of the Civil Rights Movement — every single one — are on the wrong side of history for black Americans. They want socialism. This is a capitalistic society. In order to be successful here, you better get into the capitalistic end of things. — *Star Parker, columnist*

I’m really impressed with the public. The electorate really sees through all this crap. They understand free trade. They understand low, flat-rate taxes. They understand sound money. The electorate is really cool. I’m superbly impressed by democracy — and I’m not natively that way inclined. — *Arthur Laffer, economist and father of supply side economics*

Energy

It really is an issue of national security and national competitiveness more than it is a desire by major oil companies to go into ANWR. They can produce energy in any place in the world. They are not the strong proponents of

opening ANWR. It’s people like me who want to see \$1.5 billion every month stay here in the United States instead of being sent overseas to buy oil in the future. — *Gale Norton, secretary of the interior*

High prices are in a way their own solution. The high crude oil prices are inspiring new projects to extract known reserves of petroleum that were too expensive to extract economically in the past at lower prices. — *Trilby Lundberg, gasoline guru and publisher of the Lundberg Survey*

Global worrying

There is no doubt that global warming is happening. I have no doubt there is a combination of natural warming of a kind we’ve had 18 times over the past 1.8 million years, plus some measure of human causation. But the fact of the matter is, even if we continue on as we are, nature will say to this planet, “It is time to go back to the norm,” which is glaciation, and it will happen no matter what we do. — *Harm de Blij, geographer*

Freedom

All authority ... should be challenged, should be questioned. Because government is the negation of freedom, when it does anything, it shouldn’t be presumed valid. It should be presumed invalid. — *Judge Andrew Napolitano, author of “Constitutional Chaos”*

Historians have certain presidents they like — and you can tell the presidents they like because they are always the presidents that centralize power and increase the power of the federal government. — *Thomas Woods, author of “The Politically Incorrect Guide to American History”*

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