

from our viewpoint...

Clean up money bad news indeed

The fact that the City of Goodland got \$37,000 in federal “homeland security” money for cleaning up after the November blizzard is bad news for American taxpayers. Bad news indeed.

It’s just a symbol, though, of how bloated, inefficient, wasteful and corrupt our federal government has become.

Pay Goodland for blizzard costs!

This was a two-day storm, a minor event. In years past, the city would have cleaned up the limbs and power lines and gone on about its business. It’s not that big a deal.

But it was declared a federal disaster, and under present rules, cities and counties could apply for federal aid.

Federal Emergency Management Agency officials, anxious apparently to be seen as men of action, swarmed out of Topeka and told local officials how to apply for some federal dough.

FEMA, which couldn’t find New Orleans after Katrina, has plenty of time to help disaster-ridden western Kansas.

We imply no criticism of city or county officials for asking for — or spending — federal money here. If the feds are going to give it away, we might as well get ours.

But that’s part of the problem. The more money the feds give to more people, the harder it is to cut the budget.

Federal money is addictive. The more you get, the longer you get it, the more you depend on it.

Until you can’t exist without it.

Ask the school board. Ask any farmer.

There are strings, of course.

Take their money and the feds get to tell you what to do.

Farmers, schools, cities, counties, the state, you name it. Federal money goes everywhere. Federal rules affect everything.

These programs always sound like “a good idea.”

All of them build a following, addicts who depend on the help.

Now, just try and cut the budget. Zero out a program. Even reduce a line item.

“But you can’t do that,” someone will holler. “We need that money. We depend on it.”

Meantime, the government can’t do what we really need it to do.

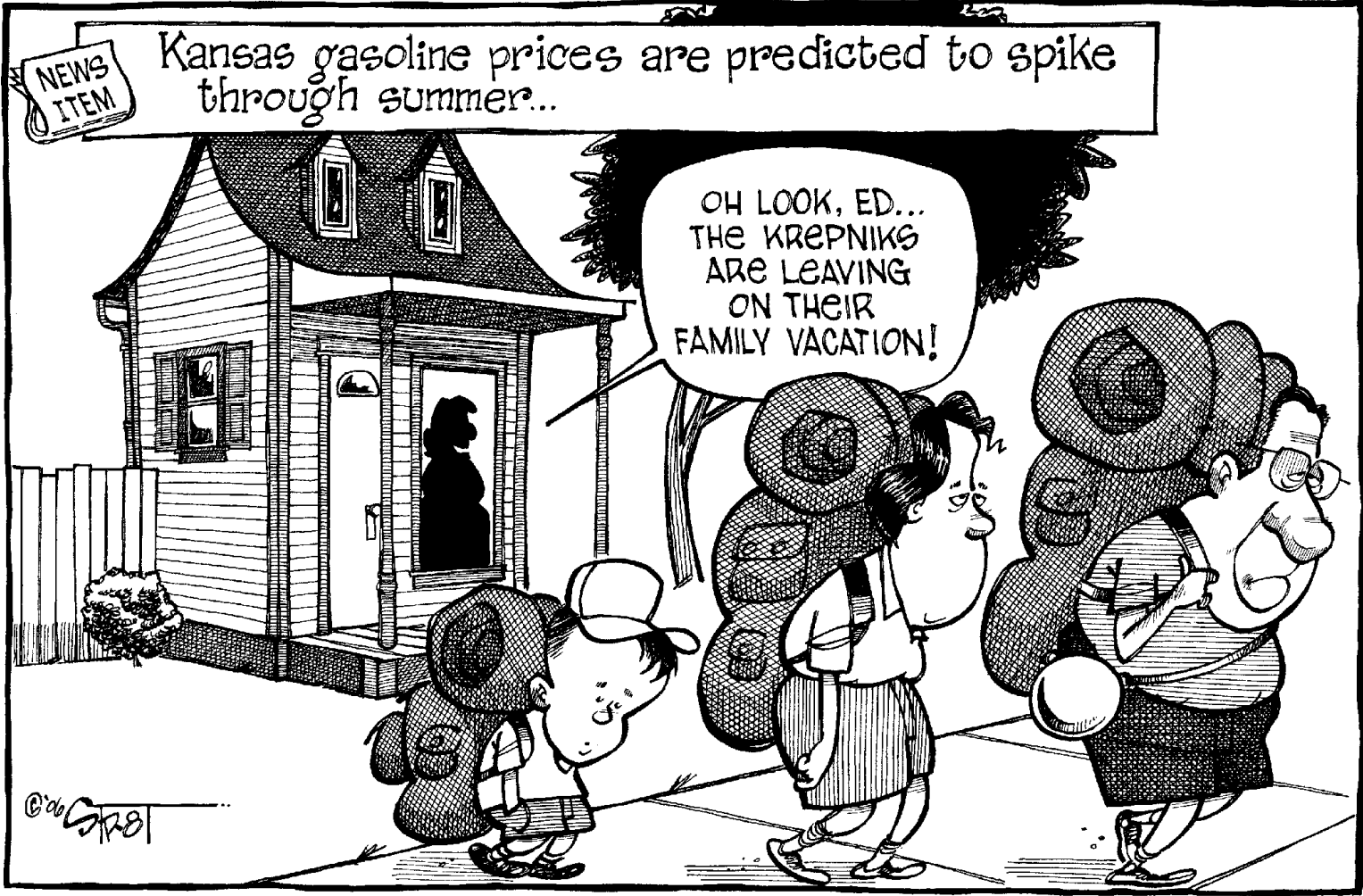
Our military is depleted after three years of war. The piddling help that came after Katrina was too little, too late. Only the Army came through, at least at first.

We can’t solve the crisis of Social Security and we can’t agree on balancing the budget.

Because of the corrupting influence of federal money, Congress can’t even agree on President Bush’s plan to cut the deficit in half by the time he leaves office.

Enjoy your federal help, Goodland. But remember it’s dirty money, money the government can’t afford to give and we really can’t afford to spend.

Not without feeding our national addiction. — *Steve Haynes*



Stirring being in a room with Bush

It’s really mind boggling to be in the same room as the president and to listen to your friends ask him questions.

George W. Bush, the 43rd president of the United States, talked to reporters and publishers, all members of the National Newspaper Association, on Friday.

This wasn’t a big, fancy press conference with CBS, Fox or NBC, though it did get national attention.

These people were from dozens of small dailies and weeklies in New Jersey, Texas, Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado and Louisiana, among other places.

Bush said he knows that it’s the grass-roots press of the country that provides the information people need.

“I may not like what you print, but what you print is necessary for a free and vibrant democracy,” he told us.

He talked about the economy, Social Security, alternate energy, passionately defended the No Child Left Behind law, touched on the war in Iraq and jumped on critics of a deal allowing foreign allies to run a few of our ports.

He said that we are through the recession and the economy is doing fine, with low unemployment and business expansion. The tax cut he pushed several years ago should be made permanent, he said. An increase will not cut the federal deficit, he said, because Congress will just spend the money.

“Washington will raise your taxes and find new



cynthia haynes
● open season

ways to spend your money,” Bush said. “Every program sounds worthwhile. Every spending request is necessary.”

Social Security needs fixing, he said, and that will take agreement by both parties.

As for alternate energy sources — they are vital, he said. Other forms of fuel are needed besides gasoline and diesel. Ethanol can help.

“We’re addicted to oil, and that’s a problem,” Bush said. “We want people to drive cars using fuel grown in America.”

Bush says test scores are proving that the No Child Left Behind law is working.

“We’re at war,” he said. “I vowed on Sept. 11 that I would use all assets at my disposal to protect you.

“We’re taking al-Qaida apart, but it takes time and we can’t allow them safe haven.

“The world is better off without Saddam Hussein in power.”

The enemy doesn’t have the weaponry or an ideology that is appealing, Bush said, but it has one powerful weapon — the capacity and willingness to kill innocents.

“If we don’t lose our nerve (in Iraq),” he said, “I’m sure we’ll be successful.”

The United Arab Emirates are one of the our best allies in the Mideast, Bush said. The backlash when a company owned by that country bought the firm running several of our larger ports smacks of isolationist and protectionism, he said.

Bush said he is worried about the message this sends to our friends.

“We can’t win the war on terror by ourselves,” he said. “They’re a committed ally. They’ve helped us numerous times.”

Answering a question from a Colorado editor about a Denver teacher who was put on probation for comparing the president to Adolf Hitler, Bush said that he felt everyone should have the right to criticize government officials.

“I think people should be allowed to criticize me all they want,” he said, “and they do.

“The right of people to express themselves is a sacred part of our society. It separates us from the Taliban.”

(The teacher was reinstated that same day.)

Bush said, getting worked up about the issue, said he knows that not everyone agrees with him.

“You can’t let the public opinion polls and focus groups allow you to determine how you make a decision,” he said. “You’ve got to stand on what you believe. I know some of my decisions are unpopular, but that comes with the territory.”

Relaxed, engaged, charming and funny, the president talked way past his time. No one seemed to mind.

And agree with him or not, Bush got an enthusiastic ovation from those present.

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Member: Kansas Press Association
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e-mail: star-news@nwkansas.com

Steve Haynes, President
Tom Betz, Editor
Erica Harlan, Copy Editor
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nwkansas.com
N.T. Betz, Director of Internet Services
(ntbetz@nwkansas.com)
Evan Barnum, Systems Admin.(support@nwkansas.com)



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Glad Kansas now has conceal carry law

To the Editor:

I am happy that the Kansas Senate and House finally stood up to the governor. Their override of her veto for the concealed firearms carry law for citizens of Kansas was a great victory for democracy!

After all, the legislators speak for their constituents. It is evident that the majority of citizens wanted this law passed. It was deplorable for Gov. Kathleen Sebelius and past governors of Kansas to place their own personal values on decision-making when it comes to their veto power. This time, the two-thirds majority was present, defeating the governor’s personal bias.

With only three states left that do not allow concealed carry, it should be evident that this right has not been abused nationwide. Statistics show that over the years, there have been few incidents of permit-bearing citizens misusing their authority to carry a concealed firearm. Thousands of law-abiding people all over the United States carry firearms every day to



from our readers
● to the editor

protect their personal safety.

I have been in law enforcement and corrections for 30 years. The law enforcement community and some legislators believe that there will be incidents involving violence with weapons now that citizens will be carrying legally. I do not believe this. Remember, the people carrying these weapons must meet legal requirements. And do not forget, they are law abiding citizens, or they won’t be granted a permit. So, let’s all take a breath and relax and not conjure up concerns that have not occurred and probably will not.

Florida was one of the first states to allow concealed carry. Their findings over the years did not substantiate any significant incidents or problems with concealed carry. Store owners and clerks are fighting back with robbers and chasing them from their stores. This is actually occurring nationwide; people are fed up. In the larger cities, police are so busy, they cannot respond to many of the “hot” calls as quickly as they need to. So, what’s a citizen to do?

I always remember the National Rifle Association’s old slogan: “If guns are outlawed, then only outlaws will have guns.” I say this: Criminals, be wary. After July 1, 2006, if you decide to commit a violent act, think twice. The one you pick just might be the person who will pull their legally carried firearm and dispense immediate and justified action against you.

Barry Shultz
Lansing

Letter Policy

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where to write

U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774; web address — roberts.senate.gov

U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521; web e-mail address — brownback.senate.gov/CMEmail.me

U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran, 2443 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715; Fax (202) 225-5124 e-mail address — jerry.moran@mail.house.gov

State Rep. Jim Morrison, State Capitol Building Rm. 124-N, Topeka, KS 66612. (785) 296-7676; e-mail address — jmorrison@ink.org

State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, State Capitol Building, Rm. 128-S, 300 SW 10th, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-7399; e-mail address — ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us

Kansas Attorney General Phil Kline, 301 S.W. 10th, Lower Level, Topeka, KS 66612-1597 (785) 296-3751 Fax (785) 291-3699 TTY: (785) 291-3767

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