

from our viewpoint...

Democratic process leaves one wanting

The decision on who will design county roads in the joint project has been made, and because it was made democratically, we will live with it.

Leaving the courtroom on Tuesday several things were clear. First, the decision had been made more than three weeks before it was brought up at a county commission meeting.

There was no formal process, and when it was brought up in the county meeting. there was clearly a division of opinion. The joint project ran into a territorial squabble that has been festering for years.

During city-county meetings held to plan the project, there was no discussion about what engineering firm would design the roads. It was not mentioned, we think, because officials felt getting into a fight might stop the road project before it ever got going.

Hindsight is 20-20, but from the intense emotion of the past three weeks, it might have been better to have faced this issue early. It probably would not have been as big a fight if Darin Neufeld hadn't successfully gone out and gotten the \$800,000 to help rebuild County Road 14.

There was suspicion that there was a complication looming ahead, but the focus was to get the project through the legal process in Topeka and getting Sherman County voters to approve the sales tax to pay for the roads.

Reviewing this might seem like sour grapes. There is no doubt we wish the decision had been different, but that is not the purpose here.

The road projects will be built, and the sales tax will pay for the new streets and roads over the next 10 years.

City-county relations have been damaged by this discord, though, and future projects might be in jeopardy. Getting past this will take time, and some good ideas will be shelved because the two boards are no longer working together.

People are disappointed the two came to such a break point, and they will be watching how the county road projects are done.

As we said, it was done democratically, by a majority vote of the county commission. The majority of the people attending the meeting were not supporting the same side as the majority of the county commission, however.

Citizens voted to make the road improvements possible, and that represents the ultimate power they have to change the direction of government. It does not happen overnight, and as with the city election a year ago, it takes good people willing to step up and take leadership roles.

There will be another chance for the city and county to work together some day. It will be important that the two boards and the people who are asked to approve the project feel that everyone is working together, and that the best leaders are making the right choices. — *Tom Betz*

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>.

The Goodland Star-News

(USPS No. 222-460. ISSN 0893-0562)
Member: Kansas Press Association
Inland Press Association Colorado Press Association
National Newspaper Association
e-mail: star-news@nwkansas.com

Steve Haynes, President
Tom Betz, Editor
Erica Harlan, Copy Editor
Sharon Corcoran, Society Editor
Pat Schiefen, Reporter
Greg Stover, Sports Editor
Anne Hamilton, Advertising Sales
Sheila Smith, Office Manager

Nor'west Press
Jim Bowker, General Manager
Richard Westfahl, Ron VanLoenen,
Judy McKnight, Betty Morris, Heather Merklin,
Jerry Kirkpatrick, Lana Westfahl, Barbara Lindsley

nwkansas.com

N.T. Betz, Director of Internet Services
(ntbetz@nwkansas.com)
Evan Barnum, Systems Admin.(support@nwkansas.com)

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@nw-kansas.com. Advertising questions can be sent to: goodlandads@nwkan-sas.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



"YOU HAVE A SERIOUS ADDICTION AND I'M GOING TO DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO LOWER THE PRICE OF EACH DRINK A LITTLE..."

Cutting ice in my North Atlantic

I was on the bridge of my ship that Wednesday morning as I cut through the icebergs in the North Atlantic.

The world was a beautiful white around me with a few touches of brown, green and gray. The brown was the muddy tracks in the street. The green were the tops of my daffodils breaking the crusty snow and the gray was the sidewalk Steve had scooped the day before.

I spent Monday running back and forth between a newspaper and a pharmacy as I tried to do two jobs at once. The pharmacist was stuck in Kansas City and I wasn't going anywhere that required a vehicle. In fact, I walked to work — all of five blocks — with my portable computer on my back.

Tuesday, I took off early over snowpacked roads to relieve a pharmacy which had been without help for three days. Its owner was in Mexico and the relief was snowed in two counties away. I filled a lot of prescriptions, but I didn't get any snow shoveled at my house.

cynthia
haynes

● open season

Steve, however, cleaned off our deck and the front walk from the porch to the street.

Wednesday, I took shovel in hand and went to work on the sidewalk that runs along in front of the house. It took about 40 minutes, but I got it cleared from our property line to alley.

By then, the snow that had been so light and fluffy the day before was crusting over. I really did feel like I was moving icebergs most of the time. Besides, a little daydreaming made the work go faster.

The roads were too messy to walk that night, so the next morning I got out my shovel and started to work on the sidewalk on the other side

of the alley. Now I was really starting to notice the icebergs. In some drifted spots I had to push the shovel straight down like an ax about a foot in front of me. This would break up the snow into icebergs, and I could grab them and toss them out of the way. There was still some slush underneath that needed shoveling, but my workout was getting more muscles involved.

Friday morning, I grabbed a couple of Ibuprofen before hitting the high seas. My back had started to notice the different muscles I had been working. I made it most of the way to the end of the block before I had to go in and shower and get ready for work.

Later Steve went out and finished the block. He said he found a few new muscles, too.

On Saturday, the sidewalk was clear as the snow melted quickly. It would probably have been clear is we hadn't shoveled, but it was good exercise, and how often do you get to captain your own ice cutter in the North Atlantic?

Were we in the presence of greatness?

It wasn't a message you hear every day.

"When you are with George Bush this week," the source said, "remember that you are in the presence of greatness."

That about a president who had been reviled as a liar, fool, warmonger and charlatan.

But our guest, a well-placed diplomatic source, a European with three decades of experience in America, may be in a position to judge.

"People complain that American presidents come into office with no vision for foreign affairs," he continued. "George Bush has a vision."

And, he added, cautioning that his words were on "deep background," meaning "I was never here," that vision is well on its way to being fulfilled.

Despite the talk of civil war and the demonstrations on the Iraq war's third birthday, he said, things are going well for the American side. As we pull out, the Iraqis will push foreign fighters from their land and claim peace.

The Bush strategy has not failed, he said; it's working.

Moreover, the administration's overall vision for the Mideast is about to fall into place. This vision, he said, was laid out in papers published by Bush's "neocon" stalwarts, including Vice President Dick Cheney, even before the election that brought them to power.

By toppling Saddam Hussein, the administration began the process of destabilizing the

steve
haynes

● along the sappa

Ba'athist regimes that had dominated the region. The government of Syria will fall, he predicted, brought down by the aftermath of the assassination of a former Lebanese premier.

The government of Iran is dysfunctional and near implosion, despite the nuclear threats of its terrorist president and hard-line clerics. The president speaks, and a low-level bureaucrat contradicts him. Moderate voices are starting to be heard.

The Egyptian government, too, is in danger of collapse. When all is said and done, American's friends — Jordan, Israel, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates — will be left standing and our enemies laid low. The Mideast will be a very different — and better — place when George Bush leaves office than it was when he entered.

Is he right?

The next couple of years will tell.

Later that week, President Bush launched his own offensive, defending his policies from Iraq to Iran, from Social Security to No Child Left Behind.

Mr. Bush, talking to editors from the National Newspaper Association, appeared relaxed, at ease. He was strong in his defense of his record, touting a growing economy and plugging for extension of his tax cuts to keep it that way.

In what turned out to be the opening salvo of a week-long offensive, the President arrived with top aides, including political guru Karl Rove, in tow.

He got passionate over a question about a teacher who criticized him in Colorado.

It's OK, he said, because this is America: "I think people should be allowed to criticize me all they want," he said, pausing for effect. "And they do."

"Now, what are you all laughing at over there?" he kidded. "Don't cheer them on."

"Look, I think that's the great thing about (this country) — look, there are some certain basic freedoms that we've got to protect. The freedom of people to express themselves must be protected. The freedom of people to be able to worship freely, that freedom is valuable."

That led to rather eloquent ad lib on the principles of publishers and presidents:

"You make decisions," Mr. Bush said. "You know, you have to make a lot of decisions. And you don't put your finger in the air to figure out how to make a decision. And neither should the president of the United States."

"And you have to know what you believe. Good decision-making rests on certain basic principles."

"I believe in the universality of freedom. I believe democracies lead to peace. I believe people ought to worship freely. I do believe there's an almighty God that has spread freedom, making freedom available for everybody."

"I believe in private enterprise. I believe in free enterprise. I believe in high standards in education. These are basic beliefs that I'm not going to change...."

"And I understand some of the things I've done are unpopular. But that's what comes with the territory. If you're afraid to make decisions and you are only worried about, you know, whether or not people in the classroom are going to say nice things about you, you're not leading."

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 — jmorriso@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

garfield

