

from our viewpoint...

## People step forward to save fireworks

It is great to be an American, and live in a country where people step up when they see their help is needed.

The ultimate expression of being an American is celebrating the birth of our nation on Independence Day, July 4, which is three weeks away.

Until three weeks ago, there were no plans for a Fourth of July celebration in Goodland. However, a group of people did not want to see the tradition of the Freedom Fest and fireworks show disappear.

Today, with the help of the city, county, businesses and civic organizations, the celebration will be assured for this year, and possibly in the future. Over 70 percent (\$5,000) of the \$7,000 needed to pay for the fireworks show has been raised.

What happened last year, when a Freedom Fest concert went down in a sea of red ink, was unfortunate. It was hard, at first, to get people excited about picking up the pieces and getting things organized this year.

Organizers had assured everyone they would not be back to ask for more money. Instead of making money, though, the concert was a loser. That plan failed. It does not mean the community as a whole did not want to support the fireworks, but the existing plan wasn't going to work and the Chamber of Commerce board made it clear it was not going to be out front this year.

One of the most important parts of the new plan is that all the money donated to the fireworks will go to pay for the show, and cannot be sucked out to pay for anything else. Having the Sherman County Community Foundation as a collection point makes it easier to track the donations, and there is a side benefit that the donations should be tax deductible.

Kay Younger, project coordinator at the Sherman County Economic Development office, has placed jars around town that are picking up donations from the public. This is one way people can directly show their support for this family event. This money will go into the foundation, and if there is more than enough to pay for this year's show, it will be seed money for next year.

Sherman County Community Services, which operates the home-owned carnival, may take Freedom Fest on as an annual project. That would assure the organization of the show next year and for years to come. As Brad Schields, president of the organization, said, it is a natural for a group with the broad representation the carnival board has. Plus, the Fourth of July evening gives the group a chance to work the rides to be sure they are ready for the Northwest Kansas District Free Fair at the end of the month.

With all the fantastic help being offered, people can be sure a fantastic fireworks show produced by Goodland native Joe Diaz will again be the largest between Hays and Denver, and July 4 will be a night of family entertainment, watermelon and carnival fun. — *Tom Betz*

## where to write

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## Governor reshaping political landscape

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius seems intent on re-making the political landscape of Kansas.

The governor returns again and again to the liberal side of the Republican party for recruits.

First, she named John Moore, a respected Wichita Republican and Cessna Aircraft executive, as her lieutenant governor.

She had Mike Hayden, the Atwood native and former Republican governor, continue as secretary of wildlife and parks. She held over Secretary Janet Schalansky at Social and Rehabilitation Services.

More lately, Sebelius and her Democratic party minions persuaded Paul Morrison, a Johnson County Republican and veteran district attorney, to switch parties and run against the conservative Phill Kline for attorney general.

Now she has named Mark Parkinson of Johnson County as her new running mate. Parkinson is a former Republican legislator and a former state Republican party chairman under Gov. Bill Graves.

What the governor aims at is nothing less than a realignment of Kansas politics, a return to the two party system. She might be doing us all a favor.

For decades now, Kansas has been dominated by an odd political system, more or less a three-party setup with the Democrats only occasionally a player.

The Legislature has been controlled by nominal Republicans for years. Most governors have been Republican. Only when the GOP could not produce decent candidates has



**steve  
haynes**

● along the sappa

the Democrat had a chance.

And then, only exceptional Democrats — the Dockings, father and son; the maverick Joan Finney; the able and appealing Ms. Sebelius — have made the grade.

Because you had to be a Republican to play the game, many young politicians joined the GOP who in other states would have been Democrats. Mark Parkinson and Mike Hayden might just fall into that crowd, but they are legions.

The result was to reinforce the political paradigm: If everyone, liberal or conservative, became a Republican, then there was no future for the Democrats. There were so few of them in Topeka that no one paid any attention, save political reporters seeking to balance a story with a quote or two.

The liberal Republicans — euphemistically referred to as “moderates” in most news stories — have fought with conservatives in the way Republicans and Democrats fight in other states. Both groups allied with the minority Democrats when it suited their purposes. Each has had some success controlling the Legislature, but the liberals have produced more governors.

All that may be about to change.

## Bush wants to be Mister Majestic

Well, the good news is the president has finally come up with an immigration policy. The bad news is nobody can figure out what it is yet, but hey, give the man his props; he gave it a shot.

Sensing what could be called a somewhat dissatisfied electorate in the same way a 13-acre glacier might be referred to as an ice cube, he delivered his long-awaited speech on immigration and uncharacteristically revealed an actual plan.

A magnanimous five-part plan but not one that included amnesty. This was an amnesty-free plan. A plan that had something to do with increasing border guards and utilizing the National Guard in an unnamed amorphous manner, and there was a provision about going home. Not President Bush, unfortunately, but there was nothing, I repeat, nothing, in there about amnesty, even the thing he called “earned citizenship.” A concept that is totally different than amnesty. Somehow. No matter what those confused Republicans are saying.

This is a big deal because his conservative base does not like the idea of letting illegal aliens stay without suffering some sort of penalty. A fine is fine, but there is a large portion of the right that wants to see raised welts. Some sort of Biblical retribution. There's an example God's righteous justice for you. “Why do you think they call them illegal aliens?” Unhhhh, because “poor people seduced to cross a desert



**will  
durst**

● raging moderate

border by large corporations whose goal is to underpay an entire industry” takes too long to say?

Although doubts remain concerning the plan's workability, most members of Congress are interested in only one very important answer to this internationally vexing question: how does this affect their re-election campaign? The way you can tell Bush's idea is not that bad is both sides of the aisle are pissed off at him, which if you remember, Clinton used to do all the time. Especially both sides of Hilary.

That's what struck me: how grey it was. No good guys. No bad guys. Strange territory for George, whose world is normally cut and dried like a third-grade Sunday School Primer. “With us or against us.” “Good versus evil.” “Sesame egg twist versus focaccia bread.” But as most of us who graduated past third grade figured out, life ain't like that.

Then the President, dressed as Charles Bronson on a dusty trip to the border, called America “a lawful society, and a welcoming society,” but alas not an amnesty granting so-

ciety. In a stroke of existential irony, he listed speaking English as one of the qualifications for “earned citizenship,” his un-amnesty-like proposal and pretty much endorsed the moderate bill being debated in the Senate right now as opposed to the extreme House bill which calls for illegals to be ear tagged and used in rodeos as replacements for roping calves. A proposal the President disagrees with mostly because that sort of steady employment could be seen as a form of amnesty. Which he's against.

Writer, comic, actor, radio talk show host, manual transmission driver, Will Durst is very much in favor of amnesty. For pretty much everything. Email comments to [durst@willdurst.com](mailto:durst@willdurst.com)

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### garfield

