

from our viewpoint...

Emergency services better, not perfect

Emergency service in rural America gets better all the time. New computers and global positioning equipment can track calls and pinpoint an accident site. Ambulances are better equipped and crews better trained than ever. Hospitals are more prepared for emergency cases as air ambulances rush victims to city trauma centers. The national 911 system integrates response and saves lives. There's one little detail that's often overlooked, though, a flaw that could be easily fixed. The dispatch system still relies largely on local county dispatch offices. Dispatchers in hundreds of locations across the country take 911 calls and route them quickly and efficiently. Most have not really adjusted to the era of cell phones, however. Most still answer the phone with something like, "911 emergency." That's fine if the caller is right there in town. It's not so great when you're out on the highway and have no idea who you are talking to. At thousands of points across the nation, a cell-phone call might be routed to as many as a dozen different towers. On any given day, a call from the same hill might go to one county dispatcher one time and another county the next. Callers can't tell what dispatcher they will get, and most aren't thinking clearly enough to ask. One night this spring, a group from Texas wrecked a car a few miles south of the Nebraska line on U.S. 83. An Oberlin man pulled up and asked if everyone was all right. "Have you called for help?" he asked. "Yes." He called the county emergency center just in case. Sure enough, the dispatcher had no idea there was a wreck north of town. He called a deputy and sent an ambulance. While it seemed to take forever, the deputy, rumpled hair, wrinkled pants and all, arrived, followed closely by the ambulance, manned by volunteers also roused from bed. Five minutes later, a sheriff's deputy and a fleet of fire trucks from Nebraska roared up to the scene in a blaze of red and blue. The original call had gone to a Nebraska dispatcher. He had sent his troops, not knowing the wreck was well into Kansas. Not finding anything in their state, they kept going — to their everlasting credit. The whole thing might have been avoided had the dispatcher been trained to identify his location to callers. When you call 911 from a mobile phone, you should ask the dispatcher where he or she is located. Dispatchers are trained to probe and find out where an accident or fire is, of course, but it doesn't always work. Someday, the new satellite technology may make all this past tense, but it could never hurt for dispatchers to identify their location. It could only help. And it might save a few lives. — Steve Haynes

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
Sports Editor
Anne Selfridge, Advertising Sales
Sheila Smith, Office Manager

Nor'west Press
Jim Bowker, General Manager
Richard Westfahl, Judy McKnight, Betty Morris,
Heather Merklin, Jerry Kirkpatrick, James Jackson,
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

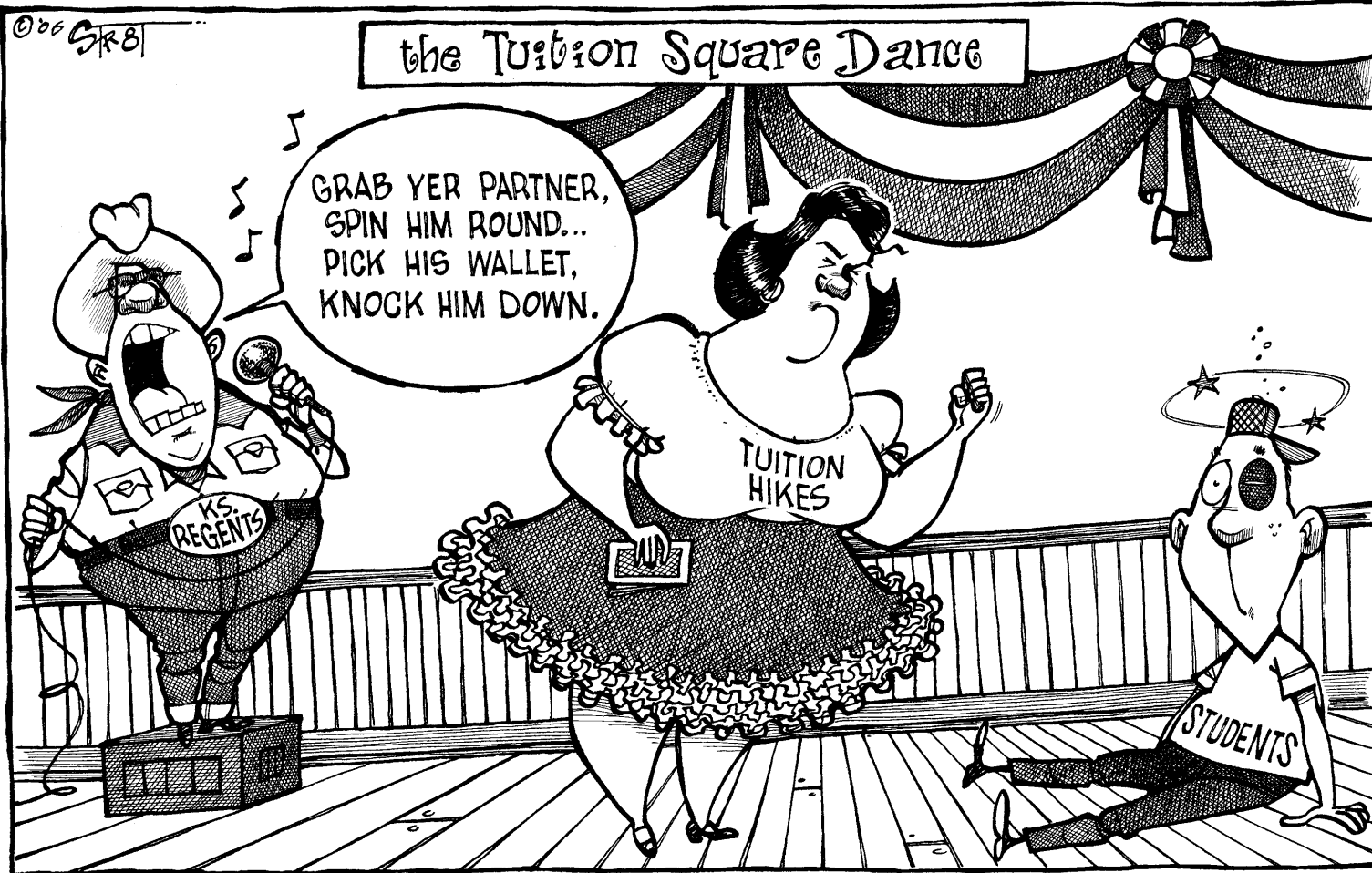
The Goodland Star-News assumes no liability for mistakes or omissions in advertising or failure to publish beyond the actual cost of the ad. SUBSCRIPTIONS: In Sherman County and adjacent counties: three months, \$24; six months, \$42; 12 months, \$76. Out of area, weekly mailing of two issues: three 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



A time for rage



michael reagan

The Biblical book of Ecclesiastes tells us there's a time for everything, including a "time to love and a time to hate...a time for war and a time for peace." There is also a time for rage, and in this time of war that time is now. The bodies of two courageous U.S. soldiers, Pfc. Kristian Menchaca and Pfc. Thomas Tucker, were found June 26, and, according to CNN reports, "mutilated and booby-trapped." They had been so horribly mutilated with their eyes gouged out and their remains so desecrated a visual identification was impossible - DNA testing was needed in order to confirm their identities. CNN also reported that not only were the bodies booby-trapped, but homemade bombs also lined the road leading to the victims, an apparent effort to complicate recovery efforts and kill recovery teams. That story makes my blood boil — and it should make yours reach boiling point too. More than anything else in the recent events in Iraq, this horrific outrage demonstrates with awful clarity the kind of depraved monsters we are facing in the war on terrorism. It also shows why they must be eliminated from the face of the earth. They are a species with which civilized mankind cannot co-exist. During the Civil War when Gen. T.J. (Stonewall) Jackson was asked how to deal with the enemy, he had a simple answer: "Kill 'em; kill 'em all." The hideous torture and killing of Kristian Menchaca and Thomas Tucker should tell us that it's time to adopt Jackson's strategy as our own. Their deaths are proof that we face an

enemy that will never cut and run, but will lurk in the shadows and strike out against us at every opportunity until they have been wiped off the face of the earth. Nothing else can guarantee the safety of the American people. Incredibly in some quarters, instead of provoking rage — and a firm and renewed determination to prevail in the war against Islamofascist terrorism no matter how long it takes - this unspeakable outrage has been seized upon as an opportunity to make political capital out of a disaster of mammoth proportions. The antiwar left in the Democrat party and the Bush haters in much of the mainstream media have been shameless in their reaction to the deaths of these two brave men. How many relatives, for example, did NBC News have to canvass before they found a kin of Pfc. Menchaca who would take the occasion of his relative's murder to express his anti-administration views? NBC's Today Show found Ken MacKenzie, Menchaca's uncle, who obligingly told NBC, "Because the U.S. government did not have a plan in place, my nephew has paid for it with his life." He added that the government should have offered a \$100 million reward and offered to exchange mujahideen detainees for the soldiers' lives. It

seized enough money from Saddam Hussein to afford it, he said. He had nothing to say about the brutes who murdered his nephew, and expressed no anger at them. The Democrats all but jumped for joy over the sleazy opportunity they saw to exploit the soldiers' deaths for their political purposes. Listen to Illinois Democrat Sen. Dick Durbin's comment that the discovery of the two mutilated soldiers' bodies is a "grim reminder of the price we're paying for a failed policy in Iraq." Like McKenzie, he didn't bother to direct his anger at the fiends who committed the atrocity. Nor did he or any of his anti-war Democrat colleagues bother to note that the so-called "failed policy" in Iraq has produced 5 million Iraqi children inoculated since the U.S. went into Iraq, or how many schools and hospitals have been built, the 32,000 teachers trained, that 20 million Iraqis now have clean water — all the positive things they or the media studiously ignore. Now instead of the rage they should feel, these white-flag-waving Democrats are demanding that the U.S. set some sort of timetable for withdrawal, ignoring the fact that such an act would be a signal to the al-Qaeda butchers to be patient and hang in there and wait for the U.S. to cut and run. Have they no shame? Mike Reagan, the eldest son of the late President Ronald Reagan, is heard on talk radio stations nationally. Email Comments to mereagan@hotmail.com.

Postal Service connects people, community

To the Editor: This letter is in response to your recent editorial, "Sharp increase in postage could deepen postal woes," in the May 31 issue of *The Oberlin Herald*. There is no better time than this year, the 300th anniversary of the birth of Benjamin Franklin, to remind your readers of the U.S. Postal Service's rich tradition of connecting people to their community newspapers. Franklin was not only the nation's first postmaster general, but also a newspaper publisher. In fact, during the early days of the Post Office Department, newspaper publishers often served as postmasters, which helped them to gather and distribute news. If Mr. Franklin were alive today, he might be scratching his head over the assertions made recently on your editorial page as he would understand the challenges faced by any postmaster general and the costs associated with getting the mail delivered every day. Nobody likes to pay more for postage, and we don't like to announce proposed rate increases. But just like any other business, when the cost of doing business goes up we have to raise prices to cover those costs. As one of the nation's largest transportation and delivery organizations, the Postal Service is extremely sensitive to rising energy costs. We have also experienced significant growth in health benefit payments. That is why proposed rate adjustments for 2007 include a rate increase to



from our readers

to the editor

mail local newspapers to subscribers. Despite what you may have heard, this increase is not designed to drive away community newspapers. Instead, it is required by law to cover associated costs. For the past 20 years, rate increases for local newspapers (technically termed "In-County Periodicals") generally have not only been smaller than those of the other periodicals subclasses, but also lower than the overall rate increase for all domestic mail. In-county rates are much lower than any other postage rate. For instance, they are much lower than even a similar nonprofit newspaper mailed from the local office and delivered to the same address. In January of this year, there was even a 2.3 percent rate reduction for In-County publications, when virtually all other mail got a more than five percent rate increase. There are some suggestions, we believe emanating from Washington, that next year's proposed increase for mailing newspapers could run as high as 30 percent. Let's look at this with real numbers. The fact is the increase would only amount to a couple of pennies. The new price for most community newspaper

mailings would be 9 cents to 11 cents, depending on weight and where it is entered into the mail stream. Sound like a good deal? It is, especially when you consider community newspapers often receive same-day service. Think about it, local newspapers often get Express Mail service (currently \$14.40 for a Flat Rate Envelope) for about a dime! The very low rates that In-County publications pay have always been a bargain and will continue to be a bargain. We will always strive to keep these rates as low as possible because community newspapers serve a vital function in American society. That was true in Benjamin Franklin's day and is true today. Azeezaly S. Jaffer, vice president Public Affairs and Communications U.S. Postal Service Washington

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

