

from our viewpoint...

Gas price makes traveling expensive

Pulling into a gas station today seems more expensive than going to a five-star restaurant. The difference is you have more of a choice about the restaurant.

There are two theories about why gas has cracked the \$3 per gallon mark. One is that it is truly a case of demand outstripping supply combined with higher imported oil prices. The second is that “Big Oil” companies are taking advantage of the perceived shortage to gouge the America driving public.

Over 30 years ago, there was a gasoline shortage that had people lined up at service stations to get \$10 worth of gas, as the stations had to ration it to meet the high demand. Newspapers and radio stations kept track of where the open stations were, and how much gas could be purchased. People complained that the oil companies created the shortage to raise the price above 49 cents a gallon.

The shortage lasted for several months, and there was a cry for a Congressional investigation to show the oil companies had arranged the crisis. Hearings were held. There were a lot of accusations, but no real proof. When the dust settled, the gas prices had settled around 70 cents a gallon.

The price of gas has increased over 400 percent since then, and again there are accusations being tossed out that the price is being raised to increase oil company profits.

Last week, one expert was saying \$3 was not as high as he expected the price to go this summer. He said it might reach the \$4 level. That really seemed outlandish, and no doubt gas prices that high will create a new wave of accusations.

The driving public is frustrated by the apparent lack of choice in the matter, and there are reports of people shouting insults or throwing things at the gas station attendants when they are changing the price signs.

If the price reaches \$4 a gallon, the name calling will increase, and may even get somebody hurt. That is not a good response to a situation that is not the gas station people’s doing, but it is the sign of the frustration of those who have to scrape up the money to pay for the privilege of driving.

High gas prices are not going to go away, but there are alternatives being developed. The changes won’t happen overnight and there will be more gnashing of teeth and wringing of hands as the prices remain high.

Americans will adapt to the \$3 a gallon price, as we have to the \$1 and \$2 gas prices of the past 20 years.

The ripple effect of high gas prices will affect our lives and businesses over the next year or more as each segment of the economy stretches to cover the added expense and find ways to pass it on to their customers.

Finding better-mileage vehicles will help and expanding the alternative fuel options will help. However, these are long-term solutions.

Americans and drivers around the world should remember that as we pump oil out of the ground, it cannot be replaced, and the countries that have the oil know at some point it will run out. They have gotten used to having control of the market and are trying to increase their income by stretching the supply and raising the cost.

Conservation is not something Americans tend to embrace willingly, but seem to have it forced on them by circumstances. Hopefully the fallout of the current wave of high gas prices will result in better options, rather than more frustration at the pump.
— Tom Betz

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@nwkanssas.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



nwkanssas.com

N.T. Betz, Director of Internet Services

(ntbetz@nwkanssas.com)

Evan Barnum, Systems Admin.(support@nwkanssas.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@nwkanssas.com. Advertising questions can be sent to: goodlandads@nwkanssas.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



Darin and Kati Curts (back row left) had a farewell party with several of their students at their apartment in Yueyang City, Hunan, China. The couple made western food for their students to sample. The tuna fish sandwiches and spaghetti were the unanimous favorites.

Hard to believe it’s already been a year

Darin and Kati (Amos) Curts are WorldTeach volunteers in the People’s Republic of China. The group, affiliated with Harvard University, places volunteer English teachers with the Hunan Department of Education and Foreign Affairs. Darin and Kati are teaching at Yueyang Ba Zhong (Yueyang No. 8 Middle School) for a year.

July, 2006

Nimen Hao!

A year ago, we were anxious with questions. How will we keep in touch with family? Will we be able to adjust? Are we qualified to teach?

Now, as we finish our year in the People’s Republic of China, we are again filled with questions. What will we miss the most? Will we keep in contact with the many friends we’ve made? Will it be easy to adjust back to the life we had before?

June was our last full month here, and we packed it in with a little of everything. As the mercury rose, so did the restlessness of our classrooms. We administered the final exams and handed out grades. We showed movies and talked to the students about their futures and goals. We will surely miss the 75 young faces crowded into a small classroom and the excited voices screaming greetings in unison.

We took one final trip to see the giant pandas in Chengdu, the Grand Buddha in Leshan, and the Longmen Caves and Shaolin Temple in Luoyang, the birthplace of Kung Fu. On every plane, train, and bus we rode, we couldn’t help but feel blessed to be able to have such

wonderful opportunities and memories as we’ve had. At the same time, we knew that we may not ever have the chance to come back. We will miss the free time that a 16-hour week allows and the many weeks of holiday vacation that a volunteer teaching position offers.

We also had many lunches and dinners to say goodbye to each of the close Chinese friends that we have made in only a year. Whether they are teachers or suit designers, and no matter their level of English, they are all special and the memories we’ve made with them will remain for a long time. We’ll miss the impromptu games of charades and the deep discussions about culture and history.

Our final lunch was eaten at the small shop across the street where we enjoyed, for the last time, our eggs and tomato dish and cauliflower dish. Chinese food was far different here than it was before in the States and we’re well aware that we will never be able to make the spicy, oil soaked food the same way as our favorite cook-friend.

Our organization, WorldTeach, held a two-day conference at the end of the month to offer suggestions on adapting back to the culture of “home” and also gave us the chance to say goodbye to the other volunteers who have now come to be nearly family. We exchanged e-mails, plans for next year and lots of hugs.

As we took one last look around our apartment and started thinking about what to pack and what to mail, we remember how worried we would be that we wouldn’t bring enough.

Now we realize that there’s a lot of stuff we never used because it’s available here. It helps to remind us that China is not the third-world country it used to be, and the quickness at which it is growing and developing.

Throughout all the sadness and reflection, we can’t help but worry about the adjustment that will be necessary when we arrive back in the U.S. How much has our neighborhood, our city, our country changed in the short year we’ve been away. It isn’t moving as quickly as China, but it certainly doesn’t stay the same.

How will we be welcomed? How far out of the loop will we be? How amazing will chicken fried steak and apple pie taste?

The answers to our excitement and anxiety will come sooner than we think, and we can only hope that we’ll be able to handle it with the same attitude we had coming here.

Until next month,

Darin and Kati Curts

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@nw-kansas.com>.

letters from china being supported by

garfield

