

from our viewpoint...

Fair, reunion events show spirit, pride

Wow, it's been a wonderfully busy and great two weeks that showed the depth of our community spirit and pride.

The Northwest Kansas District Free Fair lived up to its usual standards, and with some additions, the homeowned carnival was a hit. The fair may only be a week for most people, but for the 4-H kids and parents, it is months of preparation and a full two weeks of work and shows.

That busy time was followed last weekend by the Sherman County Alumni Reunion, held every five years since 1961. The city was alive with people who graduated from high school in Edson, Ruleton, Kanorado and Goodland remembering old times and getting a chance to meet old classmates and friends.

Working for the newspaper, we get a chance to see and record the events of fairs and reunions, and to sit back and reflect on what they say about our community.

We have been in Goodland about nine years, which is long enough to have watched the homeowned carnival start up and flourish, and to have been here for two alumni reunions.

With half of the Max Jones Fieldhouse filled with alumni and friends on Saturday, it was easy to see the strength that enthusiasm and base give the association and the community. In places with larger high schools, the alumni often are not as well organized as in Sherman County. They may put on an annual reunion and honor some classes from the past, but Sherman County has stepped beyond that level to raise money for scholarships and to make donations to the schools to help with equipment needs.

The spirit that makes the homeowned carnival and the alumni association work is one of the things that helps make Sherman County a great place to live.

Some alumni said it was too bad that Main Avenue was torn up, but still good to see the progress the city is making.

There are a lot of things in the city and county that are moving ahead. There are good things that have been in place for over 40 years. They all help keep the focus on what we can do rather than what is in our way.

Hats off to the people who worked so many hours getting the carnival rides ready and to those who run the rides and the games each night of the fair. Kudos to the 4-H kids and their families, to the volunteers and leaders, the people who organize the fair and all its events.

Congratulations to the alumni association for such a wonderful gathering of former graduates, and the behind-the-scenes efforts to make it a great success.

— Tom Betz

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The truck was stolen

“Yep, we’ve had that truck for a couple of years, except for the time it was stolen,” he said.

Stolen? It’s a small town. We’d have known if this prominent citizen had had his truck stolen.

He could see the question in our eyes, so he grinned and explained.

It seemed a helper was taking a delivery to the nursing home and borrowed the boss’ white truck. The delivery made, the helper came back out and got into white vehicle sitting at the curb — with the keys in the ignition — and drove back downtown and parked near the store.

When the boss went outside to go home, his truck was missing. He asked the helper, who said it had been parked in its regular place. He called the police.

It didn’t take long for the officers to find his white truck, still parked in front of the nursing home.

The woman whose white car had been taken was still inside. She’d never realized her ve-



cynthia
haynes

• open season

hicle had been inadvertently “borrowed.”

We all laughed about the mix-up but I had a guilty memory of getting into a white car more than once only to realize it wasn’t my white car. Somehow, I figure, if it’s white, a car and parked near where I should have parked, it’s mine. Sometimes it is. Sometimes I jump out and hope nobody saw me.

I remember a similar thing happened with my parents back in Concordia when I was a teenager.

We had two copper-colored Buicks. They weren’t identical but they were only a year apart and they were pretty similar.

President Mike? Yes, he can win

If Mike Bloomberg runs for president as an independent, he can win. Yes, not just hurt Hillary Clinton or the Republicans, but actually win the White House.

Obviously, he has his bank account in his favor. Like Ross Perot in 1992 and 1996, he wouldn’t have to convince skeptical donors that a third-party candidate could succeed for the first time in American history. He can cut short the conversation by just writing a check.

But he can succeed where Perot failed, because he knows how to handle himself in the public spotlight.

Bloomberg’s years as mayor have fully equipped him to handle the national press corps. He’s been on stage 24/7 for his entire term in office and through two campaigns. That education makes it unlikely that he will implode with paranoia or be rattled by the antics of the party national committees, as Perot was.

The mayor has played in the biggest of leagues in front of the toughest of press and media — not to mention the most wary of electorates — and has come out in great shape. It is no mean feat to survive as a Republican mayor in a liberal, Democratic city. And Rudy was no easy act to follow.

By contrast, service as a senator or governor — particularly of a small state — doesn’t prepare a candidate for the national stage.

In the Senate, the media is largely absent except on those very rare occasions when great legislation hangs in the balance. A senator can attract attention when and where he chooses by making a statement or holding a media event,



dick
morris

• commentary

but unwanted, unsolicited attention — of the sort that drives presidential candidates crazy — is rare.

A governor usually doesn’t face the intense media focus that a mayor or a presidential candidate must handle. His life is much more quiescent and, if he chooses, he can be nearly invisible except when the legislature is in session.

Also unlike Perot (whose impact was to make it impossible for the first President Bush to be re-elected), Bloomberg would draw equally from each of the two main parties.

The mayor’s strong anti-terror credentials and practical experience at keeping New York safe from attack would be vastly reassuring to “security mom” voters. He has kept New York safe and even improved on Guiliani’s extraordinarily low crime statistics.

He has shown himself able to resist pressures for spending and taxes while keeping his budget balanced — and he’s a strong advocate of charter schools and educational standards. All good Republican positions.

Democrats, meanwhile, would find his pro-choice, pro-gun control, pro-gay rights, pro-affirmative action positions attractive. His pro-city focus could attract large Democratic sup-

port, and he’d probably bring into his column the bluest of blue states — New York.

Not that Bloomberg is the only one who can win as an independent in 2008. If Hillary gets the Democratic nomination and some right-winger like Virginia Sen. George Allen defeats John McCain or Rudy Giuliani for the GOP nod, the way will be wide open for a strong independent candidate.

Either McCain or Giuliani could run and win as an independent. Either one could raise the money. Giuliani, released from the deadly confines of a Republican primary, would find his liberal social views on abortion, guns, and gays to be an asset, not a fatal flaw. McCain’s legendary independence on issues like tobacco regulation, tough corporate governance, campaign-finance reform, global warming, torture of terror suspects and immigration would no longer be seen as straying from GOP orthodoxy once he left the Republican primaries, but would become the basis for a very attractive campaign platform.

The fact is that any of these three men could win as an independent. Both parties seem hell-bent on nominating extremely vulnerable candidates who cater to their ideological peculiarities more than to the broad middle of the American electorate. As a result, the time is ripe for victory by a third-party candidate than it has ever been in our nation’s history.

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