

from our viewpoint...

Taxpayers get extra weeks to pay

Sherman County’s delinquent property tax list is running over two weeks late this year.

The list shows all the real property for which the taxes from last year have not been paid. It usually begins running the middle of August, and the tax sale is held the first Tuesday of September.

The problem this year was the county computer system, according to Treasurer Iris Scheopner. She told commissioners she could not get help from the clerk’s office to get the delinquent property tax list ready to be published in *The Goodland Star-News*.

There has been some controversy between the two offices, and County Clerk Janet Rumpel told Scheopner that she did not have time to help with this list.

This list, published by state law, gives those who have not paid their taxes another chance before the county treasurer puts them onto the public auction when they have not been paid in a three-year period.

State law sets up the process, and says that the delinquent taxpayers are to get a reminder letter in July. Those not paid by the end of the month are put on the list to be published in August. The list is supposed to be at the newspaper by Aug. 1, so it can be set up to run later in the month. The list is published for three weeks, and the last publication must be a week before the tax sale.

Scheopner told the commissioners she was working on the list in her office, but could not get it to save to a disk to take to the newspaper. Her complaint was that Crystal Wright of the clerk’s office, considered to be the courthouse computer person, would not help her with the problem.

By Aug. 16, the delinquent tax list had not arrived at the newspaper, nor had there been any word from the treasurer to say they were having trouble.

When we called to ask about the list, Scheopner said she was having trouble, but would get it to the office later that day. The disk did not show up until Monday, Aug. 21. Scheopner tried to deliver the list by disk on Friday, Aug. 18, but it did not work and an attempt to send by e-mail failed. The delay means the tax sale this year will be on Friday, Sept. 15.

“Each department has their own time frame, and if you are asking for help from another department, you need to give them the time,” Commissioner Kevin Rasure said. “I think this is an Infinetec job to help you get this done. Crystal is here for technical help on the main computer, but she has other duties.”

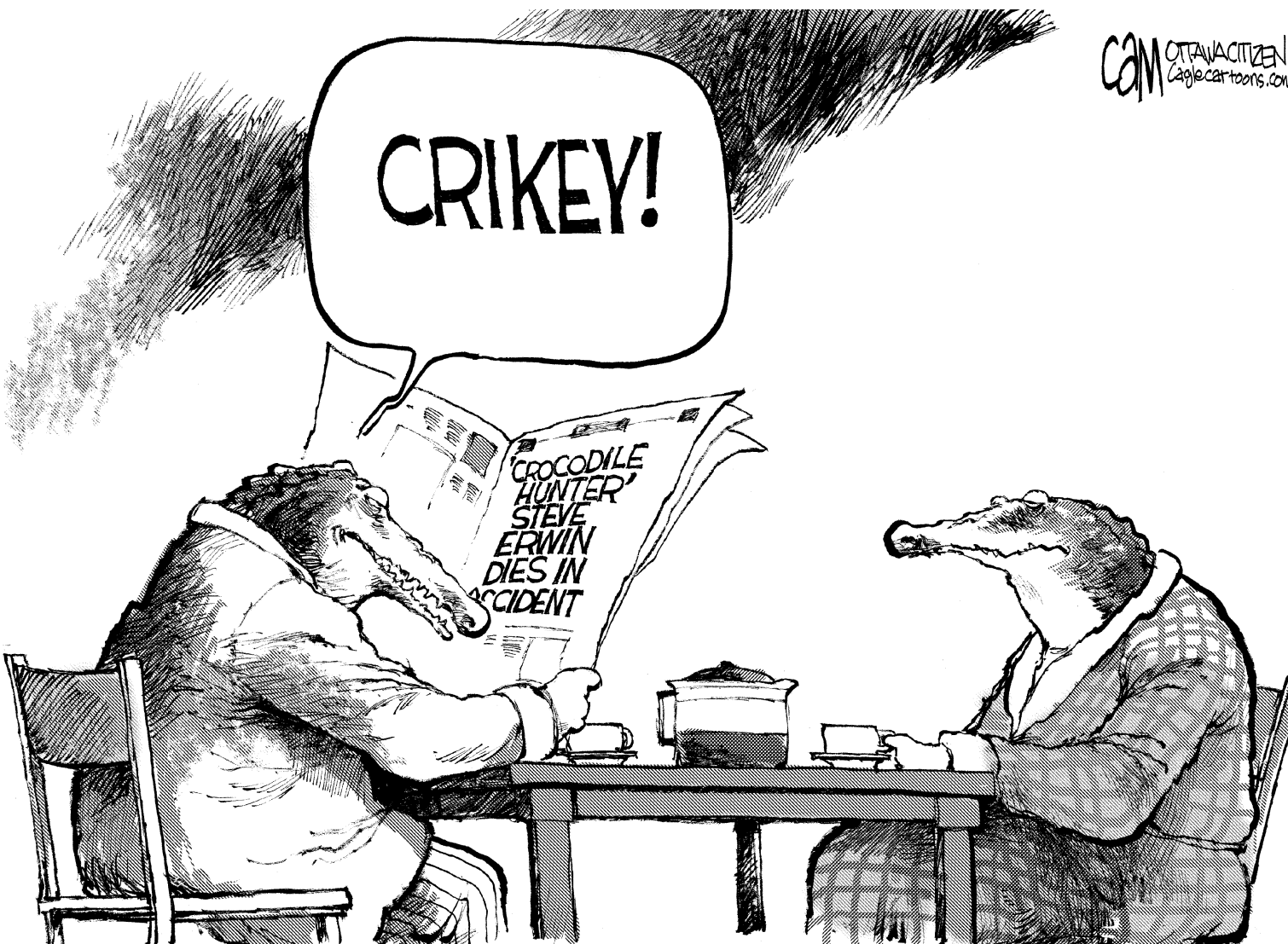
“I thought she was here to help us,” Scheopner said.

“She is there to handle the backups,” Commissioner Mitch Tiede said. “We just sort of backed out of having her do the computer stuff.”

The commissioners have told Wright she is to do backups and save files on the computer system, but that Infinetec, the software vendor, and Tracy Purvis from S&T Telephone are to handle the technical support for the county computer system.

The delinquent tax list advertising cost is paid by the either the taxpayer or the person who buys the property. The treasurer adds a portion to each property listed. Publication of the delinquent tax list encourages people to pay before their name is published, promotes the tax sale and brings more money into the county.

The world will not end because the list did not get published on time, and we’re sure that Scheopner learned a lot from the experience this year. — *Tom Betz*



Lieberman’s loss: Joe will rise again

Reports of Joe Lieberman’s political death are (as Mark Twain once said of rumors of his own demise) “premature and grossly exaggerated.”

Lieberman has lost a battle, but he can still win the war running as an independent.

While Ned Lamont will clearly have a bounce after yesterday’s primary victory, the Rasmussen Poll of July 20 showed Lieberman and Lamont tied at 40 percent each in the general election (with scandal-plagued GOP nominee Alan Schlesinger at 13 percent).

Those who would consign Lieberman to the dustbin of history need to realize that the Democratic primary in Connecticut is an affair that could be conducted in a good-sized phone booth. About 140,000 people voted for Lamont, but the state saw 1,575,000 votes cast in the general election of 2004. Assume a lower turnout in 2006 (an off year), say 1 million votes, that still leaves 860,000 who could vote for Lieberman.

The Connecticut incumbent can, of course, count on the roughly 130,000 who backed him, aside from a few party regulars who might find it necessary to fall into line and endorse the nominee.



dick morris
● commentary

Then, with the Republican plagued by reports of huge gambling debts, Lieberman will strongly attract independent and GOP voters, plus moderate Democrats who weren’t energized enough by the Lamont challenge to vote in the primaries.

In the general election, Lieberman can paint Lamont (a former client of mine) as the rich, light-weight dilettante he is (heir to the fortune of J.P. Morgan’s partner) and can focus on the broad range of his legislative agenda. After all, Lieberman has taken the lead on issues ranging from campaign-finance reform to tobacco regulation to corporate-governance reform to tough action against terrorism to the battle against global warming. He’ll look better and better, while Lamont will look like a one-issue challenger who is out of his league.

Freed of the confines of the Democratic pri-

mary, Lieberman can now appeal to independents, Republicans and mainstream Democrats who were not sufficiently motivated to participate in the primary, and he can win.

In the meantime, Lieberman’s primary defeat sends a message to all presidential contenders, particularly Sen. Hillary Clinton, that they have to move to the left on the war or be buried by the party’s increasingly radical and leftist base. Al Gore is emerging as the one for her to worry about in 2008. Anti-war from the start, riding the global warming issue and a proven popular-vote winner, Gore will be increasingly attractive to the same left-wing voters who nominated Lamont in Connecticut. Hillary’s convoluted flip-flops on the war won’t play well in the primaries.

Dick Morris was an adviser to Bill Clinton for 20 years. E-mail for Dick Morris is dmredding@aol.com.

Eileen McGann, an attorney and consultant, is a chief executive officer of VOTE.com and Legislativevote.com. She works with Morris on campaigns and around the world, specializing in using the Internet to win elections.

Justice was not served in Colby case

To the Editor:

The last phrase of the Pledge of Allegiance is “and justice for all.” It is getting very difficult to have faith in that phrase with the corporate scandals and lack of punishment handed out and a recent Thomas County court decision.

In the Friday, Sept. 1, issue of *The Goodland Star-News*, you published a story about a woman from Colby who received a \$177 traffic citation for the October 1 deaths of motorcyclists Roberta Casey and Roger Blau. They are part of the “all,” but justice was not served.

I am sure that Dawnelle Umberger is a good person and that no positive purpose would be



from our readers
● to the editor

served by her being in jail for a long time, but a ticket for failure to yield does not seem to be justice for a careless moment that claimed two lives.

The article does not even say if her driving privileges were suspended. Our state will jail you, revoke your license and give a permanent record if you get a drunk-driving citation. That

same issue showed a \$210 fine issued for a dog at large.

Would the court’s decision be the same if a biker ran over a pedestrian?

Thomas County Attorney Andrea Wyrick and Judge Richard Ress should resign immediately and face censure for this flagrant miscarriage of justice.

Citizens of Kansas, this decision makes us look terrible. We should be ashamed that it was allowed to happen in our state.

Motorcyclists should and probably will boycott Kansas. We deserve it.

James Waugh
Goodland

Scarlet service threat

It’s my duty as a patriotic American to send up this warning flare to the Republican Congress. Their very lives are in peril. THIS IS NOT A TEST!

Unknowingly they have stumbled into a dangerous situation that threatens them to a degree they are blissfully unaware. The fact that none of them will heed my advice saddens me a little, but not as much as it makes me giggle.

Let me explain. They just barely missed pushing through a bogus minimum-wage bill that also would finally accomplish their thick-headed goal of eliminating the estate tax, ensuring that Paris Hilton gets every damn penny she deserves. Well, perhaps that’s imprecise phrasing.

Anyway, that’s not the scariest part. As part of the bill, the majority passed on straight party lines an amendment to the bill mandating a DROP in the minimum wage for workers who live in the seven states with a higher minimum wage for tipped employees, meaning in California, pay for bartenders, waitresses, bellmen and valets could have fallen from \$6.75 an hour to \$2.65. In other words, the minimum wage hike would have cut the yearly pay of tipped employees by about \$9,600.

Besides being more cynical than dyeing oval-shaped rocks and passing them off as Easter eggs to contestants in the Special Olympics, this situation would put thousands of Americans at risk. Especially members of our distinguished Congress.

Now it goes without saying that these privileged lords and ladies have the same working relationship with the service industry that a giant cephalopod has with the gear ratio of a



will durst
● raging moderate

Toyota Camry, but my question is: are they out of their mother-freaking minds? Do they harbor a secret death wish? What exactly is their long-term plan, to never eat in a restaurant or drink in a bar or park their car again?

Back in Milwaukee, at a classy joint known as Century Hall, I was Will the Cosmic Waiter for a year and a half, and remain eminently knowledgeable of how very, very, very long that journey between the kitchen and the table actually is. Many a twixt between cup and lip doesn’t even begin to cover the circuitous trip that appetizers may be subject to. Quick and dirty detours are always available. What lies at the bottom of the murky depths of your soup? You don’t want to know.

I’m not just talking about ptomaine and salmonella and E. coli and Hepatitis C — I’m talking about foreign objects such as grated pencil shavings and excess saliva in the béarnaise sauce. How many of our distinguished representatives are prepared to wear diapers full time to guard against the surreptitious drop of Visine in their Vodka Cran? And good luck getting the bathroom attendant to hand you more paper. You might want to ask the senator in the next stall for change for a five.

A Republican leader said the bill may be scuttled for now, but plans are to revisit it as

soon as possible. Someone, please, for the sake of humanity, warn these simpletons that a minimum wage bill is supposed to raise the wages of our neediest. And they do not want to put themselves in jeopardy by even considering such a regressive measure.

I am only thinking of their welfare at this point. To root out every possible sabotage would be like picking out a pubic hair in a sprout sandwich. Does a dead fish under the passenger seat of your Town Car have no meaning here?

Comic, writer, actor, radio talk show host and, former busboy Will Durst carries a bottle of Visine just on the off chance he will meet senator-doctor-Indian chief Bill Frist.

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>.

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