

from our viewpoint...

Shuttle Atlantis mission end of era

On a summer evening more than 50 years ago we camped out in our backyard and waited for the passing of the Echo I communications satellite. The little aluminum ball circled the globe every 90 minutes.

Echo I came to mind when Space Shuttle Atlantis launched on Friday and docked with the International Space Station on Sunday in the final mission of a space program covering 26 years.

The National Aeronautic and Space Administration was created under President Dwight Eisenhower as America's answer to the Russian launch of Sputnik in 1957, and the space race was on. President John F. Kennedy challenged Americans to achieve greatness in space vowing to send men to the moon.

When Atlantis returns to earth in about a week the American manned space program will come to an end for those who have grown up watching the baby steps of the Mercury program with Alan Shepard and John Glenn to the Gemini and Apollo programs and gave us our first landing on the moon at the Sea of Tranquility on July 20, 1969, and many lessons about traveling in space.

Over the years of the shuttle program we have watched many launches, including the Challenger disaster in 1986, and the loss of Columbia over Texas in 2003. The shuttle program had 135 successful launches in the 26 years.

The program has not been cheap, with an estimated cost of \$1.2 billion per flight. Whether that will be shown to be money well spent will depend on the continued commercial development of reusable launch vehicles as the next chapter in the space story.

Discovery and Endeavour (built after the Challenger disaster) will join Atlantis as museum exhibits to the American manned space efforts, and NASA will turn its attention to other areas.

Atlantis will be displayed at the Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex in Florida; Endeavour, at the California Science Center in Los Angeles; Discovery, at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center in Virginia; and the test shuttle, Enterprise, at the Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum in New York.

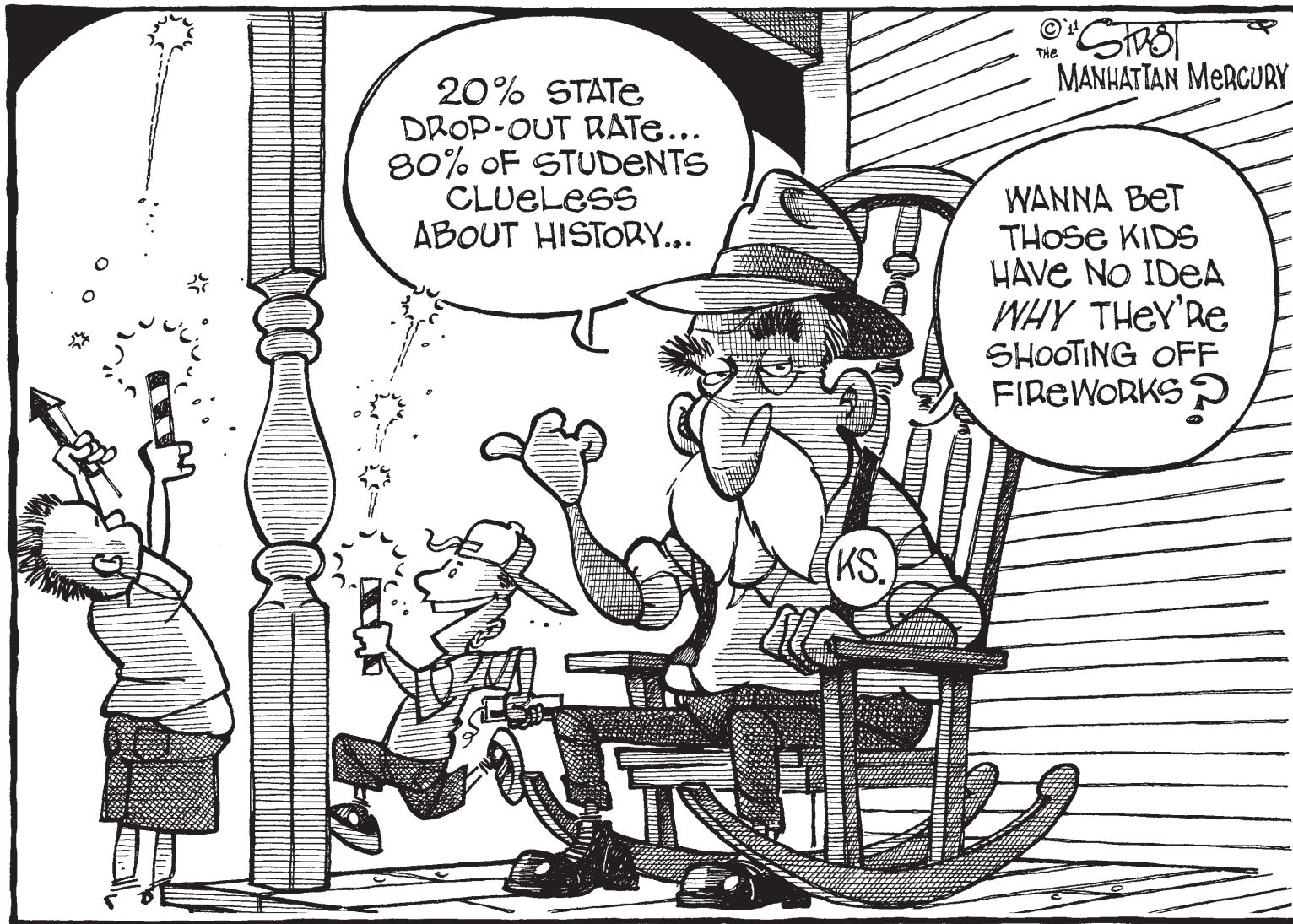
Over the years of the development of the space programs the University of Colorado has become one of the leading developers of special space experiments, and had 19 graduates become astronauts.

Students at CU have worked closely with NASA over the years with research and ongoing efforts to study the ozone layer and had several projects to help improve the Hubble telescope.

As commercial development continues Colorado – as a state – and the University will be out front, and even though NASA may not have a need of astronauts CU will provide people to fly the new vehicles.

Whether the man eventually does land again on the moon and establish a base is for the next generation to watch unfold.

After more than 50 years we continue to remember those early steps, and know we have grown up through the era of early space exploration. We send kudos to all those people who contributed to the NASA space programs, and pause in memory of the 17 astronauts who lost their lives in service to their country. – Tom Betz



Addictions drive men to madness

Addiction is a terrible thing. It drives men to madness. Makes them do things they would not normally think of doing. Causes disruption of homes, families and work.

The problem is, most addicts don't believe they have a problem. The common theme is that they can stop any time.

Steve is addicted to baseball.

It's an insidious addiction which causes him to cheer for a team so hapless at times that listening to the games can be a painful experience.

When we lived in Kansas City, he was a Royals fan.

Back in those days, the team was awful. They started to get better, and I was dragged to a couple of playoff games in the late '70s, where we froze our tails off and watched future Hall of Famer George Brett boot several easy grounders.

We moved, and the Royals got better but then we were living in a town without radio. Literally, we couldn't get a radio signal due to the mountains.

Steve had his sister tape a couple of games and



cynthia haynes

• open season

send them to us. We listened to those two games about 50 times.

Then the Rockies came to Denver, and we moved to a town with radio. We got a set and started listening to the games. We even got to go to a few.

After moving to Kansas, Steve would meet our oldest daughter, who by then lived in Wyoming, in Denver for games.

Over the years, we've collected about six portable radios for listening to games. We have the outside radio, the upstairs radio, the kitchen radio, the radio to take to the lake and the one to take on evening walks around town.

We are signed up for satellite radio in case we are out of range of the Denver and Goodland stations, and can get the games on the Internet if we miss one and need to get a replay.

We have a large-screen television to watch the good plays on Sports Center late at night. We seldom watch the games because the Rockies aren't usually good enough to be the game of the day – that honor usually goes to the Yankees, Red Socks or Braves.

When there's a game on, the radio or computer is on at home, in the office, in the car, on the deck, in the back yard or under the stars as we walk the dog.

In the winter, he goes into a depression and starts to calculate the number of days before the pitchers and catchers report for spring training – always sometime in February.

It's always a long, bleak, baseballless winter for him.

Now, Steve will tell you he can stop any time. He doesn't really listen to all the games. He's not really hooked on the national pastime.

Don't believe him. He's hooked, line and sinker.

But, then I shouldn't complain. It's a reasonably cheap addiction, and it could be worse. He could be addicted to football. There never seems to be an off season for football.

Farmers are not truckers

Just in case you've been busy cutting wheat, spraying weeds, hauling feed or water to your hungry cattle or selling some of your livestock at the sale barn and you haven't had a spare moment to hear the news – the Federal Motor Carriers Safety Administration (FMCSA) recently released a 30-day request for public comment on a series of transportation issues directly related to production agriculture.

What the government is concerned about is the movement of commodities grown and raised on the farm/ranch. You know wheat, corn, beans, cattle and other livestock.

The first fly in the ointment I have already mentioned. Farmers and ranchers already have their hands full with planting fall crops, wheat harvest and caring for their livestock. Thirty days is not enough time for ag producers to review and contemplate the likely impacts on their operations and respond.

Farmers and ranchers are willing and able to weigh in on this important discussion, says Steve Baccus, Kansas Farm Bureau president who farms in Ottawa County.

"We're eager to help Washington-based regulators understand a farm truck is not an over-the-road motor carrier," Baccus says.

Sen. Pat Roberts (Kansas) is pushing for a 90-day period to allow farm and ranch families the opportunity to fully understand the potential impacts of the issues involved and to provide thoughtful and constructive comments to the agency.

Here's the real kicker. If adopted, regulatory guidance recently published by the feds will mean farmers/stockmen moving a single cow



Insight this week

• john schlageck

to the local sale barn in a 16-foot trailer will fall under the same regulatory regime as Yellow Freight or J. B. Hunt.

There's a big difference between a farmer hauling his own grain down the road a few miles to his country elevator and a trucking company transporting appliances across several states. For-profit truckers have the capital and manpower to handle these chores, farmers don't.

"Farmers farm for a living and truckers transport products" Baccus says. "Farmers produce crops and livestock and haul them to market so people in this country and around the world have food."

Our government believes there's lack of a uniform definition of "implements of husbandry." They further note that many states exempt tractors, combines and other farm equipment from vehicle safety regulations.

At this time the agency believes implements of husbandry and off-road agricultural equipment don't meet the definition of a commercial motor vehicle, but officials are asking if they should.

Secondly, federal officials question whether a producer hauling commodities to market, part of which is his and part his landlord's, should be considered "for hire."

"In Kansas, we believe if the farmer trans-

porting the commodity also raised the commodity, it shouldn't matter," Baccus says. "However, if the government puts farmers in the category of 'for hire' carriers, they would be regulated like commercial truckers."

Even more alarming is the issue of interstate versus intrastate commerce. In terms of grain and livestock movement, agriculture has long operated under the belief that hauling a farmer/rancher's own commodities within 150 miles of the farm/ranch was exempt from regulation.

Long ago Congress distinguished agricultural transportation from commercial because it is typically seasonal in nature and occurs over relatively short distances.

This country became a global power because of its infrastructure and its ability to transport crops, livestock, automobiles and other goods fast and efficiently. Exporting U.S. crops to other parts of the world will do us no good if this nation can't get the grain off the farm, out of the field and ultimately onto the barges and other shipping containers for transport around the world.

Kansas agriculture, and agriculture across this nation, has its work cut out for it on this transportation issue. Farmers will rapidly lose their competitive edge if they are subjected to overzealous regulation.

John Schlageck of the Kansas Farm Bureau has been writing about farming and ranching in Kansas for more than 25 years. He is the managing editor of "Kansas Living," a quarterly magazine dedicated to agriculture and rural life in Kansas.

where to write

U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774; E-mail address – <http://roberts.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?p=EmailPat>

U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran, Russell Senate Office Building, Courtyard 4, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521; Fax (202) 228-6966. E-mail address – <http://moran.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/e-mail-jerry>

U.S. Rep. Tim Huelskamp, 1st Congressional District, 126 Cannon House Office Building, Washington D.C., 20575-1601. (202-225-2715) E-mail address – [https://huel-](https://huel)

skamp.house.gov/contact-me/email-me

State Rep. Rick Billinger, Docking State Office Building Rm 724, Topeka, KS 66612. Phone (785) 296-7659, cell (785) 899-4770, home (785) 899-5824. E-mail rick.billinger@house.ks.gov.

State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, State Capitol Building, Rm. 225-E, 300 SW 10th, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785-296-7399; e-mail ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us

Kansas Attorney General, 301 S.W. 10th, Lower Level, Topeka, KS 66612-1597 (785) 296-3751 Fax (785) 291-3699 TTY: (785) 291-3767

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

Pat Schiefen, Society Editor

Advertising Department

Jessica Corbin, Anne Selfridge,

Jeff Dreiling and Jordan Snow

Sheila Smith, Office Manager



Nor'west Press

Richard Westfahl, General Manager

Jim Bowker, James Jackson,

Lana Westfahl, Kris McCool, Stacy Brashear, Tracy Traxel,

Gary Meyer, Judy McKnight



nwkansas.com

N.T. Betz, Director of Internet Services

(nt.betz@nwkansas.com)

Evan Barnum, Systems Admin.(support@nwkansas.com)

Published every Tuesday and Friday except the days observed for New Year's Day, Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving 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@nwkansas.com. Advertising questions can be sent to: goodlandads@nwkansas.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, \$29; six months, \$46; 12 months, \$81. Out of area, weekly mailing of two issues: three months, \$39; six months, \$54; 12 months, \$89 (All tax included). Mailed individually each day: (call for a price).

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

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 and letters deemed to be of no public interest or considered offensive will be rejected. 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.