

from our viewpoint...

Post Office blames Congress for trouble

We were in Kanorado on Saturday for their Octoberfest, and enjoyed seeing the people line the Main Street for the annual parade. It is a somewhat unique parade that makes a pass from the north end of the street to the south end and then returns up the street so a person gets to see both sides of each parade entry.

The Burlington Sixth Grade band made another appearance and put on a great performance for their small numbers. The band paraded down the street and when the parade came back were the final group so they could use the street for their special songs and accompanied dance moves.

While checking out the craft show, cake walk, kids games and other vendors we walked past the Kanorado Post Office. This small post office in a corner building on Main is one of the 3,700 on the chopping block.

“Our situation is extremely serious,” postmaster general, Patrick R. Donahoe, said in September. “If Congress doesn’t act, we will default.”

Donahoe has been pushing a series of cost-cutting measures to erase the agency’s deficit, which will reach \$9.2 billion this fiscal year.

The measures include eliminating Saturday mail delivery, closing up to 3,700 postal locations and laying off 120,000 workers.

The post office’s problems stem from a hard reality, being squeezed on both revenue and costs. Cuts in service and the Internet have reduced the income and the recent recession has increased transportation costs.

Donahoe blames Congress for the financial problems and has used the dire cuts as a way to hold the system hostage as he tries to get the public to help him get Congress to take action to give his agency some relief.

The biggest stumbling block is the Congressional requirement the Post Office pay the retirement costs up front. This requirement that has put the agency in a tremendous financial bind and forced Donahoe to try to raise awareness.

Fredric V. Rolando, president of the National Association of Letter Carriers, warned of disaster if partisanship keeps Congress from acting.

He said the Post Office is not broke, and without the required retirement payment the agency made \$700 million last year.

Small towns like Kanorado may lose their post office as it exists today, but the agency has a possible way to keep a “village” post office by combining it with either another business in town or even a government office to reduce the overhead costs.

That might work for Kanorado, but might be more difficult to save the Edson post office that is on the closing list.

If Congress doesn’t act to give the Postal Service some relief from the retirement payments, the dire cuts may be forced on the public or the Post Office may announce some unpaid “holidays” similar to those being taken by the Kansas courts to handle a cut by the Kansas legislature.

Kanorado is one example, and the community spirit shown on Saturday will probably mean the people find a way to keep their post office. The threats of other drastic cuts should make people put pressure on Congress to act, but the deep partisan divide may leave us watching a great Constitutional institution slide into oblivion.

We need the U.S. Postal Service, and it is past time for Congress to remember this institution is written into the U.S. Constitution. If we truly want to heed the words of the founders we need to return the Post Office to being a government department. — *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@nwkansas.com

Steve Haynes, President
Tom Betz, Editor
Pat Schiefen, Society Editor
Advertising Department
Jessica Corbin and Jeff Dreiling
Sheila Smith, Circulation 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).

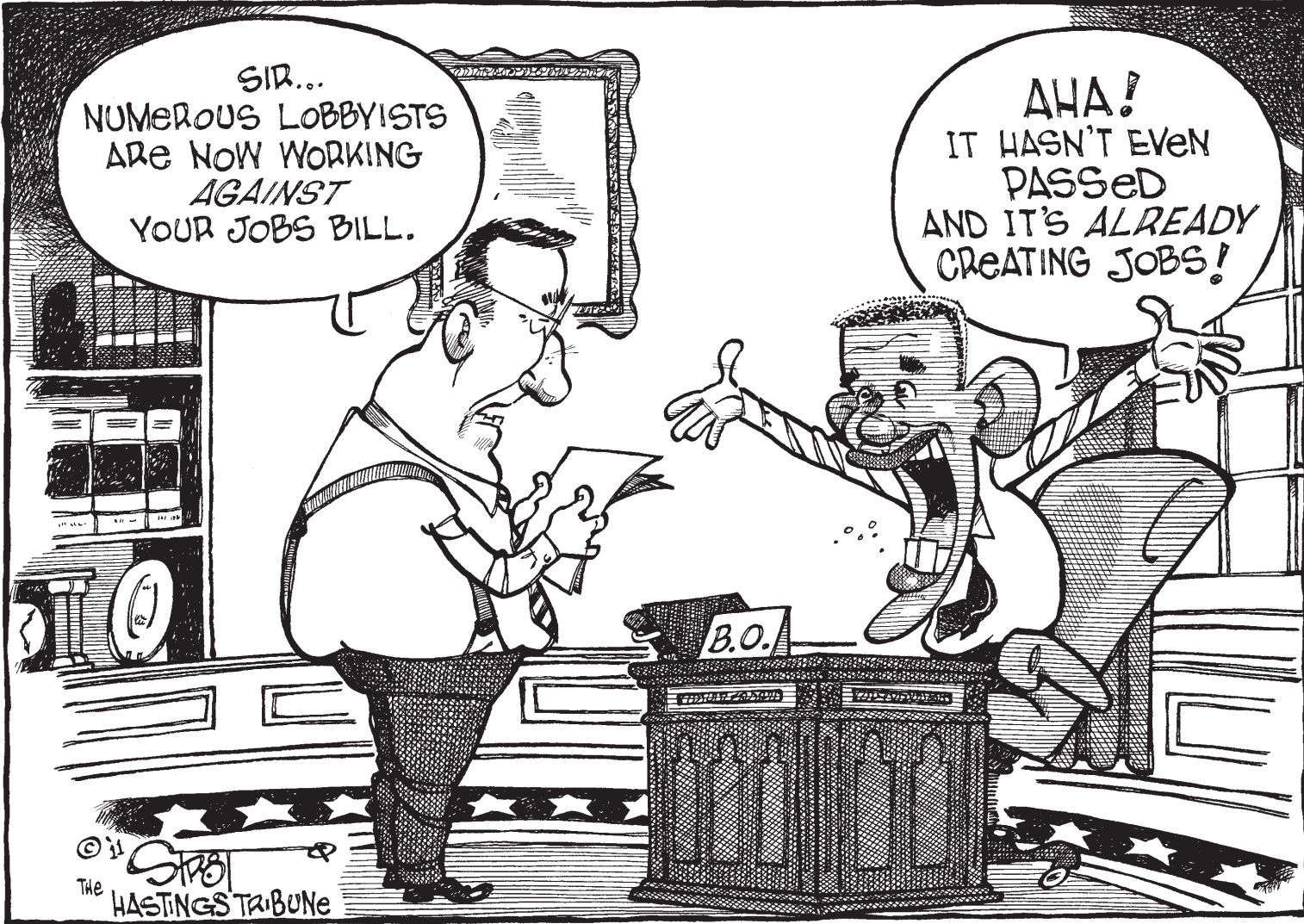
Incorporating:

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



Spring flowers gone, fall ones in full bloom

I heard someone say that fall is the time that flowers give way to fruits and vegetables.

Looking around me, I don’t see that.

True, my spring flowers – irises, tulips, daffodils and lilacs – are gone, and my summer lilies are about bloomed out, but I still see lots of flowers around.

The mums I bought several years ago to decorate the front porch and later planted next to the sidewalk are starting to bloom, and the neighbors’ morning glories are a riot of blue and purple every morning.

But the biggest, most impressive flower around is the sunflower. The fields of cultivated ones are mostly gone, but the wild ones are in their full glory.

I remember being amazed and comforted by the sunflowers when I moved to southern Colorado. I had never lived anywhere but Kansas and, while I had visited Colorado on a few summer vacations, it was mostly uncharted territory.

It was hard to quit a good job, sell our home in



**cynthia
haynes**

• open season

Kansas City and move to this new state, where mountains reared out of the prairie and they raised potatoes instead of corn and milo.

But all along the roads, there they were – sunflowers, the welcoming symbol of my home state. They made me feel a whole lot better about this whole move-to-someplace-else-and-run-a-weekly-newspaper thing.

I don’t have any sunflowers in my yard this year, but a couple of years ago, the birds planted some at each end of my garden.

It was kind of cool, and I don’t know why I didn’t pull them as weeds when they were tiny. For whatever reason, we left them to grow. And they grew, and grew and grew into giants that

towered over me. Each was topped by a single enormous flower.

Then there is the flower box out in front of my office. While the sweet potato vine has mostly taken over, the petunias as still hanging in there, blooming their fool heads off. And beside the planter are the two half barrels we put to hold the remnants of the last owner’s rose moss. She’s gone now, but her flowers still bloom every year, and every time I see them, I remember a wonderful woman.

Yep, my vegetables are doing well. The tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, cabbage, carrots and squash are spreading out all over the garden. My fall lettuce is making salads and I think I’ll get some fall peas before the first frost.

But the flowers are definitely not gone, and even after the frost, when the tomatoes vines turn black and the squash is dead, the mums out front will be providing a welcome splash of color to my front lawn.

Personal responsibility

File this under the category of: “The lamest excuse to come along in my lifetime.” What I’m talking about is the continuing attempt by some in the media and entertainment business to saddle America’s farm and ranch families with the growing epidemic of obesity. Seems they would like us to believe farmers and ranchers are producing food that is too affordable and too available.

Stop right there. Many Americans can remember a time when their families or neighbors had trouble keeping food on the table. The concept of food that was too cheap was as foreign as paying two bucks for a bottle of pop – that’s twice the size it used be and packs twice the calories.

But the times they are a changing and just like our politicians on both sides of the aisle, folks like to play the blame game. You know, look elsewhere, never in the mirror.

Rather than thank farmers for producing abundant, affordable food so that most of us will never experience the pangs of true hunger, making farmers the scapegoat for obesity appears to be too popular a trend. Some also say federal programs that help stabilize the farm economy encourage farmers to overproduce. Blaming agriculture only diverts attention away from the factors that do contribute to obesity.

This is a slap in the face to the thousands of



**Insight
this week**

• john schlageck

families that depend on agriculture for their livelihoods and to the millions of Americans whose high standards of living are built on our varied and efficient food, fuel and fiber industry.

Without our nation’s farmers and the federal programs that help them through economic and weather disasters, Americans might have to depend on other countries for food just like we already do for oil. That could be a threat not only to our food security, but our national security as well.

Evidence of a global obesity trend indicates that the problem involves more than access to and an abundance of snack foods, deserts and soft drinks. People are reportedly getting heavier even in developing nations where citizens do not have all of the foods and snacks found on our supermarket shelves. That tends to point toward rising incomes and less physical labor around the world as the cause, not just U.S. food industry practices.

Since when do farmers grow junk food? When did farmers begin to force consumers to eat a specific diet, healthy or otherwise?

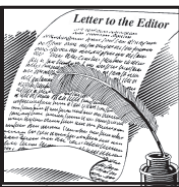
Thanks for the help at the car show

To the Editor:

First I must apologize for not getting to this sooner, been busy trying to fix my hotrod. I want to thank the Brick Top Cruisers for putting on a very good show.

Even though I experienced trouble with my car.

I especially want to thank LeRoy Thomas for



**from our
readers**

• to the editor

his help. LeRoy took time away from setting up

at the Elks Lodge to come over to my motel and try to help diagnose my problem, he got hold of Rick Jorgensen at the NAPA store to open up and sell me some parts in order to help me out. when that didn’t work LeRoy let me put my car in his garage until we could get back Monday to pick it up. Thanks all.

I would also like to thank the Maverick Motel for being such great hosts. They took very good care of us, and the food at Shiraz was fabulous.

Dale and Tami Bowman
Thornton Colo.

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>