

from our viewpoint...

VanGogh project gets new emphasis

With snow falling and swirling around most of Saturday there was a question about whether people would brave the cold to gather at the High Plains Museum for the dinner event with Canadian artist Cameron Cross.

We were pleased to see the people parking around the museum and coming through the snow to show their support and hear about the future for the giant replica of the Vincent Van Gogh "Three Sunflowers in a Vase" painting.

The giant painting has been in place for more than 10 years, and earlier in the year a close inspection had people worried it was getting in dire need of repair.

Over the past several months communications between various people in Goodland with artist Cameron Cross asked his opinion about the painting and what might need to be done. Cross said he wanted to get a chance to get a close up look at the painting. He worked out a way to travel to Goodland this past week.

He was able to work with Jeff First, high school art teacher, about talking to his art classes about his life's art work, and work with several students to develop an image for a small easel project to be erected in one of the city parks when completed.

Cross said he was pleased with the actual condition of the sunflower painting. He said he had been keeping track of various photos of the VanGogh painting showing up on various web sites and places such as Facebook.

He said the painting is getting noticed, and he agrees it is time to clean the painting and work on some minor things that need to be fixed. He said the painting is in good shape for the 10 years it has been in place, and he was pleased with the park and viewing development efforts around the painting.

The good news Cross said after getting a close look on Friday afternoon with the help of the city utility crew and a bucket truck was he did not feel there was much real damage. He said he will be able to fix it when he comes back in June.

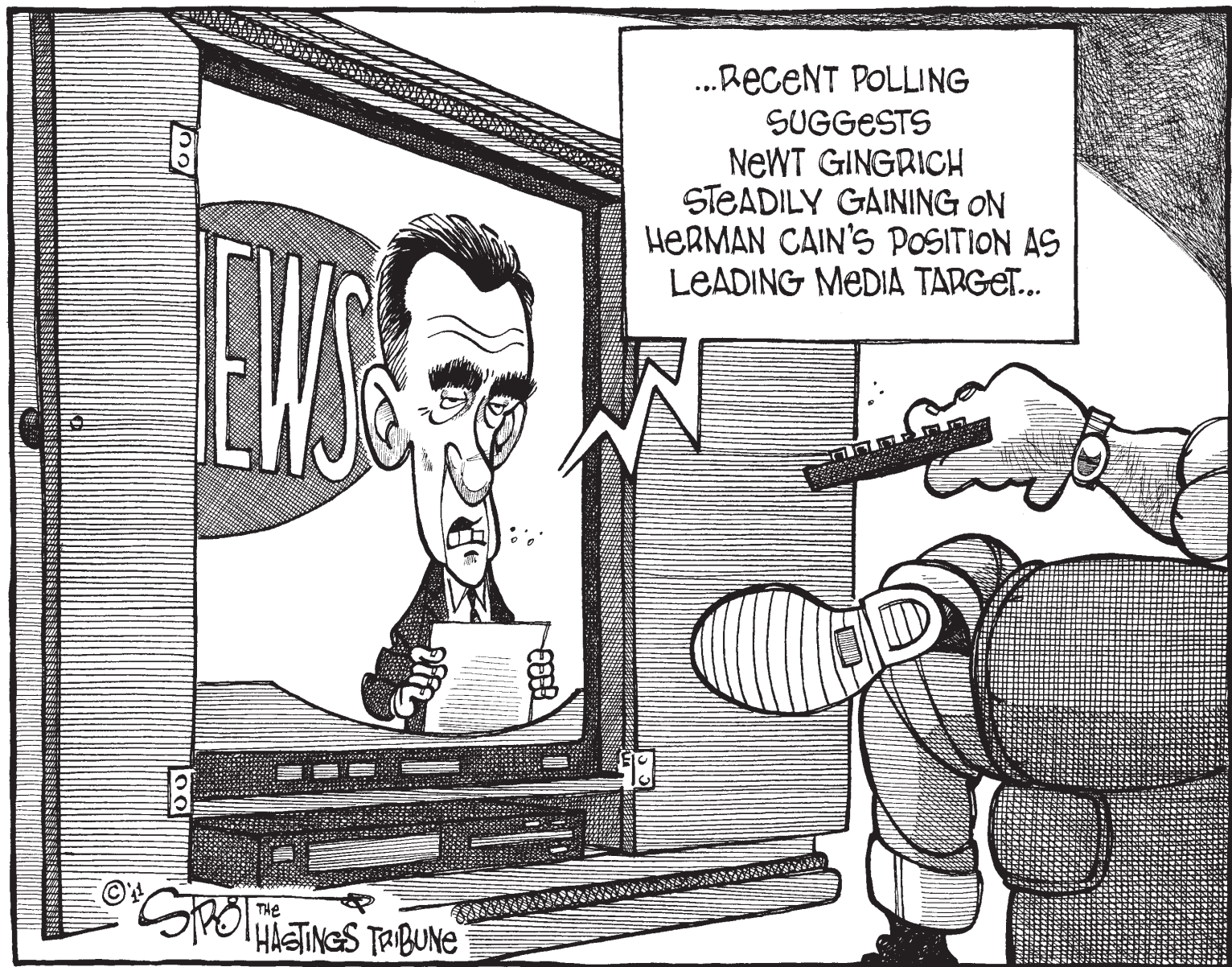
The community has been working to help improve the area around the painting. The Goodland Rotary club members have been working on the area around the painting for several years including asking the city to install the light in front of the painting, the bricks around the base and the sidewalk up to the viewing and parking area. Rotary added the benches and keeps a log of the visitors and comments.

Cross said he is pleased with the plans for the electronic kiosk and sees it as a good extension of getting people to come into town once they have stopped to view the painting.

Brooke Lockhart, Goodland Girl Scout and high school junior, spoke about her plans for the electronic kiosk and hopes to develop a historic tour of the town to be on the kiosk touch screen and be available for download. Lockhart's project is for her Girl Scout Gold Award - similar to an Eagle Scout.

The community embracing the painting is a good sign. The painting gives Goodland a unique landmark. For years the painting sat sort of undeveloped. The Goodland Rotary club - especially Larry Keirms, Wayne Aten, the help of Dick Leiss - and many others gathered thousands of bricks, donated by the city, and laid out the picnic area under the painting and the walkways to the parking lot.

When the city agreed to take over the park area more development plans were brought forward and we hope these continue with a welcome re-launch coming in June and the kiosk in the summer. - Tom Betz



Got to see son's apartment, take him food

I finally got to Lawrence last week to see son Lacy's new apartment and take him his food.

I've just never gotten the hang of cooking for two, so when I make soup, spaghetti, chili, stuffed peppers or twice-baked potatoes, I always end up with a potful left over.

The leftovers get individually packaged with item and date on the top. Then they're frozen.

Steve and I eat a lot of leftovers. It's so much easier to cook up one batch of chili and work our way through it then to try to make a batch every time we want some. And with so many leftovers, we can share.

Back when we were living in Kansas City, we would take food to my mother-in-law. In those days, Barbara was a widow who wasn't interested in doing much fancy cooking for herself.

I would make sure that there was a couple of extra portions of almost everything I made and we'd take it to her in Emporia. Of course, compared to Lacy, she was a dainty eater. For her, we needed a lot of really small containers.



cynthia haynes

• open season

The girls received my leftover stocks when they were single and living closer to home. Now, however, I only have one child who lives within reasonable driving distance for frozen food. The girls both moved to Augusta, Ga., and got married. Now they get to make their own leftovers.

My son is the youngest and the only one living alone, so he gets the biggest share of the food.

It had been some time since we had been to Lawrence. The last trip had to be aborted at Salina when the cat we were taking with us went into diabetic shock and ended up in the emergency room. As soon as she got out, we took ourselves, the cat and all of the frozen food and headed back to Oberlin. That was a couple

of months ago.

Since then, I've had time to make lots of things and the freezer was getting really full.

We packed up two coolers full and headed east. Son had so many plastic tubs, his freezer wouldn't hold all of them and he had to put a couple in the 'fridge for eating over that week.

Now, I'm making plans to feed the rest of my boys.

Soon we will head off to Georgia to visit the girls, and I'll set about feeding Nik and Brad, my sons-in-law.

Brad has already requested fried chicken and zucchini bread. Nik is looking forward to spaghetti and lasagna. My daughters are both looking forward to trying out some new, fun recipes with me. We'll work to put some extra leftovers in their freezers before we head back home.

I love feeding my boys.

Yes, Steve, you can have some, too. After all, you're my favorite boy.

Deregulation of small business: Identity theft

By Jim Houser

Running an auto repair shop, I know it's important to have clear rules of the road for how and when to repair and maintain vehicles, and clear, justifiable emissions standards. These standards and rules help keep drivers safe, keep vehicles running clean to protect our environment and public health, and provide businesses like mine with the necessary guidance on how to best serve our customers and protect the quality of life in our local communities.

Unfortunately, leaders in the U.S. House of Representatives have declared an all-out war on rules and standards, advancing proposal after proposal that would roll back things like environmental protections, new rules of the road for the financial sector, and other basic safeguards.

The latest examples? Two proposals in the House of Representatives that would undermine agencies' ability to establish and enforce basic standards and safeguards: the Regulatory Accountability Act of 2011 (H.R. 3010) and the cleverly acronymed REINS Act ("Regulations From the Executive in Need of Scrutiny Act of 2011," H.R. 10).

Both of these proposals are being promoted under the pretext of helping small businesses. This is despite the fact in survey after survey and interview after interview, real small business owners are saying what we need is more customers - more demand - not deregulation.

These attacks on basic standards are either



from other pens

• commentary

misguided or disingenuous. They completely miss - or ignore - the basic fact standards and regulations play an important role in creating jobs and supporting innovation in the U.S. economy.

Just look at my industry, auto repair. In our sector, smart and focused automobile emission standards protect the air we breathe, provide needed employment for the nation's repair technicians who keep our vehicles running clean, and promote innovations that help U.S. companies be on the cutting edge of new automotive technologies.

In the 1990s, when the vehicle manufacturers (OEMs) declared the diagnostic codes and emissions service bulletins (TSBs) they provided their dealerships to diagnose and repair emission failures were proprietary information they did not have to share, the Environmental Protection Agency disagreed.

The EPA came to the aid of clean air and the independent auto repair community, asserting environmental protection rights trump intellectual property rights. The EPA required the OEMs to release (and eventually standardize) their codes and TSBs, leveling the playing field for the thousands of small, independent busi-

nesses across America who keep the country's vehicle fleet running cleanly and smoothly.

If the EPA is "REINed" in, will all the auto repair shops across this country suddenly be relegated to oil changes and tire rotations? Is that how this U.S. House of Representatives plans to help America's small businesses create jobs?

We need demand, not deregulation. But to say all the rhetoric about regulations is just a waste of time would be putting it charitably.

It's true, the misguided focus is wasting precious time at a point when small businesses need real action from Congress - to create jobs, to get people back to work earning a paycheck they can spend in their local economies, to deal with the mortgage crisis so those paychecks aren't getting sent straight to Wall Street banks.

But bills like the Regulatory Accountability Act and the REINS Act aren't just a waste of time. In fact, they're the latest move to shift risk and shift costs from narrow corporate interests (like big polluters and big banks) to small businesses.

When politicians push this anti-regulatory agenda in the name of "helping small business," we need to call it what it is: small business identity theft. It's stealing the good name of small business to drive an agenda to benefit narrow special interests at our expense.

Oh, and about that cute REINS acronym... I think a more apt name would be the REIGNS Act, because what these bills would really do is give big corporations free reign to cut corners, use and abuse their market power, and leave the 99 percent - small businesses and our customers included - to pay the price for their misdeeds. Can someone remind me how that's supposed to be good for us?

Jim Houser owns Hawthorne Auto Clinic in Portland, Ore. He serves on the executive committee of the Main Street Alliance, a network of 10,000 small business owners across the country.

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