

OPINION

District has key moves to make

Now that the Valley Center school district’s bond issue projects are either finished or well under-way, there are a few decisions that need to be made.

First, the new elementary school under construction near Seneca and Fifth Street and the supplemental learning center being built on the high school campus need names.

The district could go the expected route and call the elementary school East Elementary. West Elementary is on the west side of town, but it was named for the road it is on. Sheridan Avenue used to be called West Street.

The new school will be the first new elementary to open since Wheatland in 1992. Although the land surrounding Valley Center has increasingly more houses on it than wheat these days, that name was an easy pick for a school in Kansas.

Abilene, the oldest elementary, is named for the street it’s on.

The new elementary will be on Tanner Trail. That could be the name.

The district has said it plans to establish a committee and seek community input before naming the new school. That could happen over the next couple of months.

Another decision to be made before the end of the year is whether to continue to allow families to choose which elementary school to send their students. The school board looked at a variety of options this summer and seem warm to a hybrid, choice-boundary approach. Families who live east of Meridian would choose between Abilene and the new elementary. Families west of Meridian would choose between West and Wheatland.

While there will be exceptions, that system makes sense to us.

Still another decision facing the school board is what the district does with the remaining funds from the \$58.9 million bond issue. The district estimated there will be about \$9.8 million left when the projects are complete. That can change, depending on construction costs or other surprises.

The board appears to be leaning toward another hybrid answer — use some of the money for additional facility projects and use some toward paying off the debt.

Again, that’s a reasonable solution.

— The Ark Valley News

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The Ark Valley News

(USPS 655-380 PERIODICALS)
Published weekly by Strunk Publishing LLC at P.O. Box 120, Valley Center, Kan. 67147. Publisher: Chris Strunk. Periodical postage paid at Valley Center, KS 67147. Postmaster send address changes to: The Ark Valley News, P.O. Box 120, Valley Center, Kan. 67147. Subscriptions are \$40 annually in-county and \$50 annually out of Sedgwick County in Kansas. Out-of-state subscriptions are \$60 annually. The Ark Valley News merged with the Valley Center Index Sept. 10, 1975. Telephone: 316-755-0821. Fax: 316-755-0644. E-mail: legals@arkvalleynews.com. Official city newspaper for the cities of Bel Aire, Kechi, Park City and Valley Center. The office is located at 210 W. Main, Valley Center, Kan.



Local news in your mailbox

Welcome to The Ark Valley News.

You may be reading The News for the first time this week. As part of our annual effort to deliver the Back to School guide to each home in the Valley Center school district, each residence is receiving this week’s issue of The News as well.

I hope you enjoy what you read. And I encourage you to consider making The News part of your weekly routine. It’s easy to sign up. In fact, you’ll find inside this week a subscription offer for two months free if you sign up for a year. It’s only \$40 for a year.

Let me tell you about some of the things we do here every week.

For starters, you may notice that The News contains nothing but local news and information. That’s all we do. We believe the local newspaper is the best source of news about

Out of the office

By Chris Strunk



our communities. We strive to give readers information and stories they can’t find anywhere else — not on the Internet and not in any other publication.

You’ll notice we devote a lot of space to local governments and their actions. We report on growth and how that affects each of us. We keep an eye on our community’s decision-makers and make sure they’re acting with the public’s best interest in mind.

We report the good news and the bad news.

The philosophy at The Ark Valley News is simple: We want this newspaper to reflect the communities it

serves. We know the communities in which we live aren’t always bad. But we realize they’re not always good. That’s why we can’t turn a blind eye to the not-so-good things happening around us, especially where public safety and public trust are concerned.

You’ll also notice that schools are a major priority in our coverage decisions. The News regularly highlights the accomplishments of local students — in the classroom and on the athletic fields. You’ll find in the coming weeks profiles of fall sports teams, followed by coverage of middle school and high school athletics. It’s a major emphasis for us.

You’ll also find coverage of the academic and musical endeavors of our students.

The Ark Valley News also gives its readers a way to interact with the news of the week. We encourage resi-

dents to write letters to the editor or send unsigned comments to news@arkvalleynews.com. We want to hear what you think.

Along with our weekly printed newspaper, readers can also find us on Facebook, X and our website, www.arkvalleynews.com, for breaking news and sports coverage.

Finally, I encourage readers to share with us the good stories, the not-so-good stories, the off-beat stories and the relatively ho-hum stories. We can’t get enough story tips and ideas. Call me or send me an email.

I hope you enjoy reading the local newspaper. If you have any suggestions, please let us know.

Chris Strunk is publisher of The Ark Valley News. Reach him at 755-0821 or news@arkvalleynews.com, or find him on Facebook.

Love and logic: Good sense wins

A friend called me recently from Minnesota and asked if I would accompany him from Wichita to Oklahoma. Sure, I said, and when are you leaving? His answer was, “Yesterday.” This from a guy who maps out breakfast weeks in advance.

At his age, he shouldn’t be traveling, but he is. At my age, I shouldn’t be surprised, but I was. Still, when a friend calls, we go without thinking it through. And you know me. I don’t spend enough time thinking.

Within just a few minutes, the conversation displayed more red flags than a riot at a European soccer game. He was taking his girlfriend to Oklahoma so she could confront her husband. But wait. Girlfriend? She’s 57. My friend is 92. He’s widowed, but she’s still married.

She wants to ask her husband if he wants to reconcile. She doesn’t want him to reconcile, but she does want to ask. But there’s a problem with that. He has a girlfriend, and he does want to keep her. The girlfriend, that is, not the wife, who is confined to a wheelchair. But wait. It’s the girlfriend in Oklahoma that’s in the wheelchair, not the wife who is traveling

A likely story

By Roger Ryberg



from Minnesota.

Bonnie and Clyde — the names have been changed to protect the guilty— will be here at any moment, and I’m still trying to sort out the characters. The woman in the wheelchair is no longer in it because it was stolen, but still insists on being relocated at my friend’s expense, even though they’ve never met.

Her 59-year-old boyfriend, who is married to my buddy’s girlfriend, has a criminal record and so does his wife. It’s a decade old, but it’s the same charge for both individuals, which suggests some form of domestic violence. I could overlook that, but for the fact that I’ve never met these people.

My friend and I have never met the Okies either, but he’s confident they will cooperate with his expectations. (Whatever they are.) Somehow, I kinda doubt it. Somehow, this cast of unlikely characters will almost certainly find a way to disrupt Sunday dinner for

Kay County sheriff’s deputies.

My friend thinks the Okies will want to return with him to Minnesota. He also thinks they are wannabe Christians. Even their address at a local No Tell Motel doesn’t diminish his faith in their future. After all, he said repeatedly, people can change.

I couldn’t agree more but still wouldn’t approach these perfect strangers without a defensive, uh, tool in my CC holster. Even at the coffee shop, we talk about it all the time. Pray for rain but stock an umbrella. Trust in God but lock your car. Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition.

Even in the face of lunatic logic and half-baked ideas that defy current wisdom, I’m reminded that common sense is, in fact, a learned trait. I’m also reminded in my own neighborhood that romance in our 90s is not a foreign concept. Who am I to disparage or impugn the opportunity for love, salvation or the coffee shop chair closest to the bierocks?

So in the interest of full disclosure, I convinced Bonnie and Clyde to turn around and go home before crossing the Oklahoma state

line. They were delighted just to have another 10 hours all to themselves, and arrived back in Minnesota tired but unhurt, unfazed, unruffled and unshot. I don’t know about y’all, but that sounds like a win-win for everyone involved, and those of us lucky enough to not be.

Roger Ryberg is a Valley Center resident. After 40 years of interstate trucking, he’s too old for a paper route, too young to retire and too tired to have an affair. You can reach him at rogerclark437@gmail.com.

What’s on your mind?

Not Goddard

What is it going to take to get the residents of Valley Center to realize the truth is not being told by the city council or board of education concerning tax rates and mill levy rates when floating their pie in the sky luxuries? Valley Center does not have the commerce and the population increases are just numbers that yet do no exist. Valley Center is not Goddard, Haysville, Park City or Andover.

Leave us alone

The city needs to stay out of our backyards. We deserve a bit of privacy without someone snooping through our fences and over our gates.

Views from News readers

What’s on your mind?

Write a letter and drop it off at 210 W. Main, Valley Center, or email comments to news@arkvalleynews.com