

## Government should stay away from fuel prices

It's as American as anything to want the government to do something about things the government can't — or shouldn't — do anything about at all.

Farmers want government to raise prices and lift acreage limits. Anyone who uses a government program wants more money. Employees always want bigger paychecks, and don't they deserve them?

Taxpayers want lower taxes. With more service and better roads, and a nice refund, thank you.

All the usual.

But here are some things the government should stay away from:

- Fuel prices. The market regulates fuel prices quite nicely, thank you. When there's scarcity, prices go up and people drive less. When the emergency's over, prices go back down. Everyone has enough gas. There are no lines, no hoarding. People calling for an investigation of post-hurricane prices have forgotten what happens when the government gets involved.

Prices go up anyway, supply goes down and lines form at gas stations. Just a myth? Hardly. It happened when President Nixon tried to control gasoline prices during the "first" energy crisis of the 1970s.

- Oil company profits.

Investors put their money in oil companies hoping to make some money. If we want the companies to find more oil, they need money to pay for the search.

Profits are not bad.

They go to find and refine more oil or to pay investors, which today is all of us. Most oil stock is owned by our pension plans.

Oil company profits are not a bad thing. They're good for the economy and good for us.

Any investigation will be mostly window dressing. We hope.

- A "better" FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency).

It's not going to happen. This agency is a disaster waiting to happen. When it has nothing to do, it does not much. When it's needed, it's not ready.

Want action? Put the Army in charge. It worked in New Orleans.

It's always worked.

A Kansan, Gen. Fred Funston, was in charge of the Army garrison in San Francisco in 1905. One historian describes him as "a swaggering bully," but when the earthquake and fire leveled the city, Fred Funston took charge.

With no communication and no orders from Washington, he and the mayor organized relief, rescue and fire breaks, averting further loss of life. Relief trains began arriving from the south the next day and from the east shortly thereafter.

The Army may be inefficient and bureaucratic in time of peace, but when you need action ... they know what to do.

- More federal spending in place of tax cuts.

Are you kidding? With a war going on and billions in hurricane damage?

It's time to limit spending and hold the line on taxes. The economic recovery is far too delicate to be hit with a tax hike.

No, President Bush. No more tax cuts.

But no increase, either. — *Steve Haynes*

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## Mother Nature spoils trip home

Thanksgiving in Texas was great. Lots of food. Lots of laughs. Lots of shopping.

We took a special outing to a little town for the opening of the Christmas season. Vendors lined the streets and quaint, little stores were open for holiday shoppers. Jim spotted a food stand selling funnel cakes and announced to the grandkids he was buying one.

As they ripped off powdered sugar-covered pieces, 6-year old Taylor lifted her hands heavenward and said, "Thank the Lord you're here today, PaPa."

It was hard to say good-bye, but we left early enough Sunday morning to have plenty of time for a relaxing evening at home before beginning our work-week on Monday.

Our trip home was supposed to be uneventful. But, Mother Nature had other plans. We hit rain and high winds around Salina. By the time we were west of Hays, the sleet started and by WaKeeney, we knew we were in a full-fledged blizzard. It made driving, that tense, straining-to-see-the-road kind of effort. At one point, we even slipped off the road on a steep embankment. Some fancy driving got us back up on the road and the grace of God kept us on it.

The lights of our little hometown looked mighty good to us. That meant electricity was still on and we would

### Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



have heat. We were safe, warm and had plenty of food.

Little did we know that circumstances were unfolding to make for an interesting evening.

Despite our strong objections, Jennifer was determined to go on to her home. A short distance from our house, she encountered travelers who were bound for Colorado Springs. She knew the road on west was closed and advised them to turn around.

A quick call to us assured them they had a place to stay. She led them back to our house and soon three adults, four children and two dogs came straggling through the blinding snow.

As they peeled off jackets and wet shoes, we were introduced to Camie, her husband, Jared, their four children, Breannah, 10, Mehkenzie, 9, Gavin, 5, and Halle, 22 months, Jared's brother, Nick, and two Sheltie dogs, Thunder and Cheyenne.

It was already late and everyone, including us, were exhausted. The first order of business was to get a place for everyone to sleep.

Floor space is at a premium in our little house, but an air mattress, the extra bed, a foam mat, two recliners and the sofa soon found everyone bedded down for the night.

They had been in Iowa with family for Thanksgiving and were on their way home to Colorado. Nick is a personal trainer, Jared is a Schwan's man and Camie is a stay-at-home mom. The men called their employers and told them they will be there when they get there. There is nothing else to do.

We've had ham and hash browns for breakfast. Beef and noodles and mashed potatoes are on for lunch.

The wind was still howling on Monday and road reports don't look encouraging for them to leave even on Tuesday.

There was nothing moving in town on Monday. Usually the local men have to get their tractors out and push some snow.

This time, no one was even tempted to go out.

That was okay, though. We had plenty of food, plenty of fuel and plenty of time.

## Football games filled the weekend

My son Alan had asked if I would like to attend the Kansas State versus that other college, oh yes, Kansas University football game.

Sure, why not, and then on "the way" would I like to go to the game Friday evening between the Colts and the Lions, sure, why not. Actually the Colts are from Campus High School, Haysville and the Goddard Lions.

Campus lead the entire game, they tried for a two-point conversion on one touchdown and failed, but with only one second left in the game the Goddard team made a touchdown which left them one point behind, then completed a two-point conversation to win by one. It was a good game and a wonderful evening, so it's only a game.

On Saturday morning we were up early to arrive for a tailgate party at Manhattan that was sponsored by the company that Alan works for, what wonderful and abundant food.

There is a lot of conversation about the game, but KSU won and it's so fun just to be in the crowd. I agree with many other people that the trip is worth it just to watch the KSU band....what a

### Memories

Sonya Montgomery



band. I'm sure no one is out of step and the sound also is wonderful

My grandson sang along with one of the songs they played and he told me to sing along, of course it was nothing I knew the words to, so he and some of the younger people around were laughing that I did not know this "very popular" song. So I told them I would sing something from 50 years ago and see if they knew those songs, they laughed and we had a good time.

On the way home both my grandchildren and Alan sang along with CD's they had brought along. What a way to spend a weekend.

I always enjoy attending church with Alan in Wichita since there are quite a number of former Norton residents as well as college friends of Michael and Alan who had been in our home vari-

ous times, so it's great to see everyone as well as worship.

After church and lunch Alan and I attended a Walking Tour of The Wellington Place and Park Place Historic District in Wichita which is sponsored by Historic Midtown Citizens Association.

What an experience to see these massive old homes that have been wonderfully restored, some still in the process of being restored. One of the properties is owned by the owner of a nursery and his back yard is certainly a wonderful experience all it's own. He also had three young men playing the banjo, mandolin and guitar with old southern songs. He has banana trees, one of which had bananas on it nearly ready for harvesting and had other bananas in the kitchen which came from the tree. He also has magnolia trees, and many other wonderful plants and trees.

Then it was back home and work again, but what a delight to spend time with family.

*Editor's Note*— Sonya's column got lost in the computer but we thought it was fun enough to pull it out and run it a month late, anyway.