

High gas prices may lead to some good

The soaring price of gasoline has generated some really bad ideas, including demands for price controls and an ill-thought-out plan to cancel motor fuel taxes when prices spike.

We tried price controls in the 1970s, during the first so-called "energy crisis." They didn't lower prices, but they did produce long lines at the pump, spot shortages and major aggravation. Memories are short, though, and many Democrats are again calling for controls. They won't work any better today — you can't increase supply by cutting prices — but demagoguery being what it is, politicians can't resist an easy target.

The truth is, prices are already going down, backing off the record peaks and settling into a more "normal" level. The second truth we have not learned is that this "energy crisis" isn't going to go away.

High prices are the product not of greed or "excess profits" by oil companies, but by spiraling demand for oil in the face of tight supplies. This push comes not so much from the U.S. and Europe today, but from China and India, where awakening economies allow more and more people to own a car.

Someday soon, oil will be too expensive to burn as fuel and we'll have to find a replacement.

The government doesn't have to do anything. It'll happen when we decide we can't afford gasoline for our cars. We'll demand a cheaper fuel, and industry will produce one.

And that's how it'll be. We won't run out of oil, exactly, but it'll become too valuable for industrial users to just burn. There are other fuels, but the world will need plastics, tires and a million other products. We'll find ways to replace many of those uses with renewable resources, too, as oil gets more scarce.

In a way, the oil companies are doing us a favor. The sooner we switch to alternative fuels, the sooner we'll not have to worry about global warming and pollution from internal-combustion engines. That's not bad.

Then there is the plan to repeal the federal gasoline tax when prices average over \$3 per gallon. That's about the worst thing we could do, encouraging people to drive more when fuel supplies are tight and oil is expensive.

This bill, backed by Kansas freshman Rep. Nancy Boyda, shows the liberals talking out of both sides of their mouths. One day, they want to cut global emissions, the next they want to encourage driving.

That makes no sense, and it could ruin the federal highway program, which depends on the 18-cents-per-gallon tax to supply money for road repairs and rebuilding.

The federal Highway Trust Fund already faces the threat of bankruptcy as high prices, more efficient vehicles and the shift to alternative fuels depletes revenue in the face of inflation and increasing demand for roads.

Ms. Boyda's answer: tax the oil companies. But they need the money to fund the search for more oil and reduce dependence on foreign sources, especially in the Mideast and Venezuela.

Well, you can't have your cake and eat it, too. High fuel prices may hurt, but they will spur us to better things. Just remember that the next time you fill up. And smile, if you can. — *Steve Haynes*

ELECTED OFFICIALS:

- ★ **Governor Kathleen Sebelius**, 300 SW 10th Ave., Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-3232
- ★ **U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774; fax (202) 224-3514
- ★ **U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback**, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521
- ★ **U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran**, 2443 Rayburn HOB, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715; fax (202) 225-5124
- ★ **State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer**, State Capitol Building, Room 262-E, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-7399
- ★ **State Rep. John Faber**, 181 W. Capitol Building, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-7500

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

ISSN 1063-701X

215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, KS 67654

Published each Tuesday and Friday by Haynes Publishing Co., 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, Kan. 67654. Periodicals mail postage paid at Norton, Kan. 67654.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Norton Telegram, 215 S. Kansas, Norton, Kan. 67654. Official newspaper of Norton and Norton County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, and the Nebraska Press Association

Office hours:

8 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri.
Phone: (785) 877-3361
Fax: (785) 877-3732

E-mail: telegram@nwkansas.com

STAFF

Tom Dreiling editor and publisher
Christie Anderson advertising
Veronica Monier staff reporter
Dick Boyd Blue Jay sports
Carolyn Plotts society editor
Sherry Hickman bookkeeping/circulation
Vicki Henderson computer production

Nor'West Newspapers

Dick and Mary Beth Boyd
Publishers, 1970-2002

Incorporating the Norton County Champion
Marion R. Krehbiel, editor



Bathroom safe haven for 29 chicks

They say history repeats itself. It was about 13 years ago when I came home from work to find 200 baby chicks living in a refrigerator box in our bedroom.

This week, I came home to find about 30 little peepers ensconced in my bathroom.

We didn't have much luck trying to hatch our own. The first incubator we used couldn't hold a constant temperature, so we borrowed a different one and set about three dozen eggs.

We thought, "We have a rooster; we have hens; ergo, we should have fertilized eggs."

Apparently not.

After the required 21 days, we saw a crack in one of the eggs, then another and another. Five chicks hatched. One never made it out of its shell and another appeared to be partly paralyzed. So we ended up with three healthy chicks out of 36 possibilities.

Evidently, Jim didn't think that was enough, so he came home with two dozen more. Except the store sent him a "baker's dozen" and we really have 26. Add that to our original three, and we're up to 29 chicks.

Twenty-nine chicks smell just as bad as 200. And, frankly, I'm ready for them to find a new home. But right now, the only

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



safe place for them is the bathroom — with the doors shut.

If we left the door open, our two cats would think we were providing a drive-through restaurant. They would never be satisfied with Meow Mix again.

As it is, they hear the chicks and just loiter hopefully around the bathroom door. So far, they've never been able to get past us.

-ob-

There's one other inevitable thing besides death and taxes: weeds.

Maybe not in your yard, but in ours, there's not a flower bed, a tree line or a corner that doesn't harbor dandelions, cheat grass or the dreaded bindweed.

I've challenged myself to pull weeds somewhere every day. However, it's one of those tasks that has no end. Where do you stop?

I have to set a limit, either time or space, and say, "That's it for today." Otherwise,

I would never get to work. I would be pulling weeds all day.

The chickens love me. I toss my daily gatherings in to them. Now, when they see me coming, they rush to the fence to greet me.

-ob-

I'm a list maker. Jim shudders when I come up with a "honey-do" list for him. But when we sat down to talk about what needs to be done before our kids come to visit this summer, a list was the only way to keep track.

There are some things that HAVE to be done. And then, there are some things I want done.

We HAVE to finish a bedroom and, at least, the television room so people will have a place to sleep.

I WANT the crown molding up before they come.

We HAVE to install the central air conditioning, but I WANT the kitchen drawers finished.

I want the porch screened in, I want the built-in ironing board installed, I want the balcony finished.

You get the drift: my "wants" outnumber my "needs."

Ultimately, though, I just want our kids and grandkids to come home, because I really need them.

Wedding preparations are a breeze

Plans for the big October wedding are progressing nicely. At least that's what I'm told.

As the mother of the bride, I might be the logical one to do the planning. However, since daughter is almost 30 and getting married in Augusta, Ga., she gets to do her own thing and Steve and I get to pay the piper — and the preacher and the caterer, etc., etc., etc.

I do know a little about what is going on, since I get regular requests for cash. (The happy couple gets a set amount from us, and anything they don't spend is theirs to keep — or spend. Any expenses over that are also theirs.)

So far, Lindsay reports, they have purchased the rings and are waiting to have them engraved with their initials and the wedding date.

She has her dress. It's white with a train that would have made Princess Di jealous. Lindsay took us to the fitting when we visited earlier this month. I got to carry the dress, and I think that it may weigh more than she does. But, it is gorgeous, and so was she when she stood there in the mirror with a seamstress hemming everything in sight.

This gown has more hem than a house full of curtains.

Open Season Cynthia Haynes



The kids decided to get married and have the reception in Aiken, S.C., because they could rent a garden attached to an old mansion in the park for a lot less than any place available in Augusta. Of course, that raises a whole different set of problems, since it's in a different state than they originally planned.

Georgia doesn't require blood tests and they weren't sure the minister was licensed to marry people in South Carolina. As of Monday, the word was the minister is OK but they still don't know about marriage requirements in South Carolina.

They had decided to say their vows once for the record at home in Augusta just before leaving for the wedding. Now maybe they won't have to do that, especially since Steve claimed he might raise an objection that they were already married when that part of the ceremony comes

around.

He would be sooooo in trouble if he tried that, and I hope they don't tempt him.

Other details, which I'm sure you're waiting breathlessly for: the wedding party colors apple red and silver. The bridesmaids will be getting their dresses at a wedding shop, where they can choose from several styles in the same colors. It's an obvious attempt to circumvent the ugly-bridesmaid's-dress problem that has bedeviled women for years.

The kids plan a buffet supper and dance after the ceremony. I'm in charge of picking a song for the official father-daughter dance. I'm choosing a swing dance. Steve should have a good time swinging a 90-pound woman in a 100-pound dress.

Lindsay said that she's chosen the deejay. He's called Freak Boy.

OoooooK. Sounds like our kind of music.

The groom and his dad have set up the rehearsal dinner. I think they're expecting the Atlantic fleet or all our combined relatives — whichever comes to more people.

Pick a song, buy a mother-of-the-bride dress and send money.

I think I've got the wedding thing down pat. I just can't figure out why people say these things are so much work.

Don't forget Friday is 'Thumbs Up' day in The Telegram
E-mail tom@nwkansas.com, call 877-3361, or 6908