

Price of gas will fall in your lap Nov. 4

Gas prices have eased a bit this week, dipping to \$3.62 in Goodland and even lower in eastern Kansas, where they are down to the \$3.50 level, but the price remains higher than many feel it should.

A central debate in the past few weeks has been a lifting of the ban on offshore oil drilling by President George W. Bush, who called on the Democrats in Congress to lift their ban on the basis this would encourage more oil exploration and help lower the gas prices by reducing our dependence on foreign oil.

Ironically, it was Bush's father who signed an executive order in 1990 to ban coastal oil exploration, and President Bill Clinton extended the ban until 2012.

Much of the discussion has been about allowing oil exploration in the Arctic National Wildlife Reserve in Alaska and expanding exploration in the Gulf of Mexico.

Both presidential candidates, Republican John McCain and Democrat Barack Obama, have taken positions on the question.

If the price at the pump continues to fall, as some analysts predict, the pressure may lessen, but it will remain an economic issue throughout the campaign.

An example of how public sentiment changes as prices go up can be found in California where the Public Policy Institute of California's latest survey showed a change of heart, with 51 percent in favor of more drilling. This was the first time since the question was first asked five years ago that a majority of Californians have favored drilling, while 45 percent oppose drilling.

The Republicans are pushing the issue as a way to embarrass House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who is from California. They'd like to claim that her refusal to allow a vote on the offshore drilling question makes the Democrats responsible for the higher gas prices.

The truth is, as in most debates, both sides have their points.

Researchers believe great untapped oil reserves can be found off the outer continental shelf, both along the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, plus the western Gulf of Mexico. This would be billions of barrels, enough to reduce the amount of foreign oil to some degree. The problem is the amount of time and money it will take to develop these areas.

Environmentalists, who are being described as extremists, believe the oil companies have not explored all the offshore areas where drilling is allowed. The National Resources Defense Council says even if the ban were lifted today, it would be at least 10 years before any new oil would reach the American public.

The main question is whether it is worth the risk to explore in the offshore areas. The survey in California appears to show the American public can be persuaded by economics to change its position and favor taking the risk.

People who live in Alaska remember the Exxon Valdez spill in 1989, and the people of Santa Barbara, Calif., remember the black sludge that covered 35 miles of coastline in 1969 from an oil drilling rig blowout.

Drilling proponents say the technology and safety measures since these disasters has reduced the risk, and that offshore drilling is the safest way to increase America's independence.

The offshore question seems a long way away from our state, but the recent debates over coal-fired power plants and the determination of Gov. Kathleen Sebelius to push for more wind power makes the issues relevant.

In a debate, a judge or panel of judges has to decide who wins. In the energy debate, it will be up to the voters in November.

— Tom Betz, *The Goodland Star-News* editor

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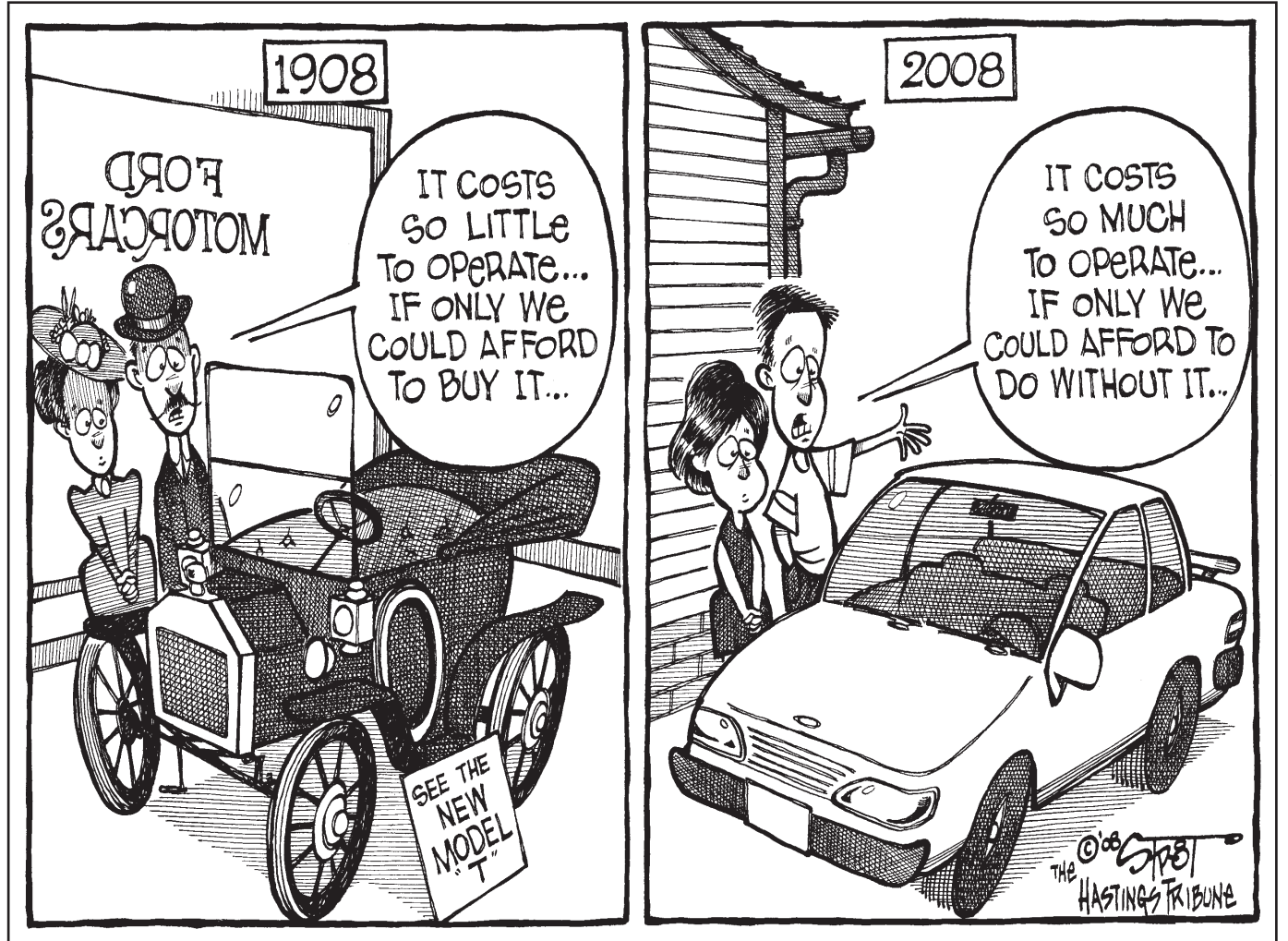
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Bet you can't guess what I made now?

I had a Tom Hanks moment this week. Remember the movie, "Castaway"? And, the exaltation he felt when he made a fire? He danced around crowing, "I made fire! I made fire!"

That's the way I felt when I made cheese. Not just any cheese. It was mozzarella cheese. I had prepared for the moment. Bought the organic milk (at \$12 a gallon), liquid rennet, citric acid and cheese salt. Following the step-by-step instructions and using a candy thermometer, I mixed, stirred, watched the temp and (hardest of all) waited.

Slowly, the whey started to appear; then the curds began to appear. Finally, the temperature was right, I spooned the curds into a colander to drain. After squeezing out as much water as possible, I made four balls of the curds and lowered them back into the hot whey to heat up. Then, lifting the balls out of the whey and wearing rubber gloves, I kneaded the curds, distributing the heat evenly.

This process was repeated several times until the moment when I felt the

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



elasticity of what was now cheese. As it cooled, it looked more and more like the mozzarella cheese we all recognize. No, I didn't make it into the long, sticks of what we call "string cheese." This was left in small mounds to be sliced. And, it was delicious.

However, I did tell all I shared it with to be sure they enjoyed it. Yielding only about 16 ounces of cheese, I figured it cost about \$1 a slice. Next time, I'll use the cheap milk.

-ob-

Artistic people are temperamental. I wouldn't know, I can't even draw stick people. On the other hand, my nine-year-old granddaughter, Taylor, has an interest

in art and to encourage her, her parents bought her a nice, portable easel, paints and a supply of canvases. She has been working on a painting to enter in the Open Class at the county fair. It's not coming along like she would like and she asked my advice.

I said, "Honey, it's your picture. I don't know how you want it to look. G'ma can't tell you what to do." Not the answer she wanted to hear. But, I'm confident she'll figure it out. Sure hope so. We have to have entries in by noon today.

I'll leave the art to Taylor and I'll bake another apple pie. My pie got a blue ribbon at another county fair I entered this year. Let's see if my luck holds.

Jim always encourages me to enter. He knows he'll get the "reject".

-ob-

Speaking of baking pies... Taylor's father, Adam, has requested a cherry pie. And, since we're taking Taylor back home later this week, I better keep the pie crust mix out and keep baking. With this heat, I wish my oven was outside.

My very first car got us as far as Denver

Seems like yesterday I got my first car. I paid \$75 for it. I earned the money setting pins at the bowling alley in Norton. I was paid 6 cents for each game. That's 1,250 games.

Our family lived at 510 N. Jones Street. The house is now gone and I must say some good memories linger on. The misty scent of a summer rain, the amber fields of waving grain, a ride on the doodle bug train and a motor scooter ride with my friend Wayne.

I got the car in the summer of 1950. It was fresh from the farm. It was a faded green color. My friend Wayne said he would help with a paint job if we could drive out to Denver. We got the brushes and painted black on the fenders and blue on the body. The car had juice brakes. But the shoes were thin. It just needed new shoes. After the shoes were installed, we had to bleed the air out. We soon ran out of fluid.

We also wanted more leg room in the cabin so we removed the big hand brake lever. Next, we elected to drive downtown to get fluid (not good thinking). I was going west on Main Street and started to park in front of the liquor store across from the courthouse. Wayne wanted to

Those Were The Days Dean Huffman

park on the corner at the bank. Plenty of room and plenty of wide sidewalk. (Good thing.) My thinking was we would stop when we hit the curb in front of the bank. No so. Wayne turned the key off and we stopped in front of what is now Bozie Barber Shop. I didn't want to back up so we turned down the alley. We did not stop for a haircut! We got back to the house just fine. Later, we just walked downtown for the brake fluid. That looked better and we did not want a meeting with Scotty, our town policeman.

The next day or so, we got word Scotty was looking for the guys who drove down the sidewalk at the bank and barbershop. We didn't think he was looking very hard but we did not know for sure. Wayne was sweet on a little gal from Denver and this looked like a good time to go. We headed west out of Kansas with that destination in mind. We were running from Scotty and whatever he had in mind.

We were on a tight budget and so we stopped to work some of the way. One job was painting a big barn. The pay was good the first night. The second night we realized we had company. It was a big bull snake. It looked 10-ft. long. I am sure it was not. At first I thought Wayne was going to jump. I am glad he didn't. That was our last experience sleeping in a hay loft.

We were not over financed when we rolled into Denver. But Wayne had family there. We found work at a bowling alley so we could eat and see things some.

Wayne fell hard for the little gal at Denver. For a while I thought he had lost his mind. Next thing we got homesick. We headed east out of Denver. Soon we hit the plains of Western Kansas. We stopped for gas going east and Wayne helped a family fix a Studebaker car. Got them going again. He would help anyone. He has since gone to his reward. We were lifelong friends.

As for the little gal in Denver, that's a whole other story.

Dean Huffman grew up in Norton and lives in Cleburne, Texas. Mail can reach him at 108 McAnear St. Cleburne, Texas 76033. (817) 202-8717.

Thumbs Up

To... **Kristy and Mark Keilig**, for outstanding work organizing junior golf, and making it fun for the kids. (called in)

To... **Mark Miller and Jacob Green**, for placing first in the junior golf tournament. (called in)

To... **Norton's** merchants, for having such nice, friendly people helping out during Crazy Daze on Saturday. Thumbs up for the vendors, too! And a special thanks to Annette for the gift of a rose. I will enjoy it over and over! (e-mail)

To... **an overlooked group** of volunteers: church ushers! We appreciate all you do. (e-mail)

To... **Rural Telephone**, quite an honor; re: story in Aug. 1 issue of The Telegram. (e-mail)

To... **Larry and LeeAnn**, you added a lot to the downtown sales event Saturday. Awfully good music! (e-mail)

(To submit a name, or names, please e-mail tom.d@nwkansas.com, call 877-3361 or 877-6908, fax 877-3732, mail to 215 S. Kansas Ave. 67654 or drop by the office. No charge. Thanks for your continuing input. -td)