

Tuesday's snippets

Congressman Jerry Moran of the gigantic First District, announced a week or so ago that he will seek the U.S. Senate seat being vacated by Sen. Sam Brownback, who said he'd serve two terms and then call it quits. Well, his quits are about up. We don't know who else will be running for the post, but Rep. Moran is 69 counties up on whoever the other wannabes might be. That leaves only 36 counties up for grabs.

**Stop
Look
Listen**
Tom Dreiling



An economist from Nebraska was on the radio Monday morning and he said the economy is not as bad as it is being made out to be. He said it is not a crisis and it is not as bad as in the 1980's nor the Great Depression. He said this country's leaders need to be more positive. Then he went back into his cave.

The stimulus package, if we understand it correctly, will give the average wage earner an additional \$60 a month. If it is implemented starting March 1 as the president wants it to start, then that'll be an extra \$600 in your pocket this year. Who wouldn't take an extra \$600?

Some governors are now saying they will not accept any of the stimulus money earmarked for their state. Yep, and we have a guy that flies around the world in a sleigh propelled by a bunch of reindeer!

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius said she hasn't had any contact from the Obama administration reference her being the front runner for the Health and Human Services Cabinet post. We get the feeling she's probably tossing a garment or two in her suitcase each day so when the call finally comes all she needs to do is zip it up and head out!

If in fact popular radio talk show host Rush Limbaugh is the voice of the Republican Party, as he declares, then the party's new official chairman, Michael Steele, might have to get his own radio talk show to put a damper on Rush's seemingly uncontrollable fire.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is back from her first journey across the pond, and with all eyes focused on our economic mess, her headlines were nil. Welcome to a Cabinet spot vs. the Oval Office!

President Obama will address a joint session of Congress tonight, and of course we'll all get in on it via television. He's expected to reveal how he is going to cut the deficit in half by the end of his first term. Wonder how big that scissor is.

Someone said the other day that Kansas is again searching for some kind of eye-catching phrase to sell the state to potential residents. We'll toss this one in the hat, "Come see for yourself."

—Tom Dreiling



It's all about communicating

“What we have here — is a failure to communicate.” I love that line from the movie Cool Hand Luke. The warden in a tough southern prison uttered that phrase, in the broadest southern accent, to the character played by Paul Newman.

Communication is the foundation of all relationships. And, miscommunication can lead to horrible foul-ups.

Take recipes, for instance. Yesterday, my oldest daughter, Halley, called to get some tips on making stew. We had discussed the obvious like browning the meat, adding vegetables and a thickening agent (I prefer barley. My friend, Barbara, touts the excellence of instant tapioca). Anyway, I suggested Halley might want to add some Kitchen Bouquet for extra flavor.

“Oh, yes,” I remembered. “And, don't forget to put in a bay leaf.”

“Yuck,” came Halley's reply. “Why would I want to put Bailey's in stew?” “No, honey. Bay leaf, bay leaf. Not Bailey's.”

Out Back
Carolyn Plotts



Can you imagine the consequences of putting Bailey's Irish Creme into a meat stew instead of a bay leaf?

Here's another one. My friend, Barbara, has led an interesting life and lived in many different places. She used to own and operate a beauty salon in the Colorado mountains and shared the story of a slightly “ditzzy” client that came into her shop one day.

During the course of their conversation the client asked, “So, where do you come from?” Barbara answered, “I come from all over Colorado.”

Then, she laughed and said, “I think that poor girl is still studying a map, looking for All Over, Colorado.”

One more and, then I'll stop. When

I lived in Texas I worked in an office of mostly women. I think we had one token man. We were all taking our lunch together in the break room when the conversation turned to cooking. The featured subject of the day was soups.

I volunteered that I had recently found a delicious new recipe for gazpacho. “The only trouble with it,” I said, “is it makes so much, you have to mix it up in the bathtub.”

One of the young women on staff said, in all sincerity, “Isn't it really hard to get the bathtub clean enough?”

Honest. She did. I couldn't make this stuff up.

—ob—
One day last week we were both working outside when I screamed, “Jim! Come here!” Poor man. He thought I'd been shot or something equally as serious. Instead, I said, “Look! The crocus are coming up!”

After the blood came back to his brain he said, “Don't do that again.” Sorry, dear. I'm just so excited to see signs of Spring.

Thin line between profound, profane

I had several favorable comments about my “Bucket List.” One even went so far as to declare it “profound.” Today's topic proves there is a mighty thin line between profound and profane. It's calving time on the farm!

The hubby (who has told me more than once he prefers to have his adventures left undocumented) has in recent years decided to avoid calving in snowstorms. Calving the first of March was a good idea that turned morphed into the Ides of March or the first of April.

I don't care what he does as long as he leaves me out of it! Last spring the replacement heifers and a very amorous bull got into too close proximity. Rather than fight the situation Junior opened the gate and let the bull in.

Then he started worrying. “I need a shed for those heifers. They are going to calve in February.” The thing is he always worries but it is very, very rare that we would benefit from a calving shed. Three years ago he was renting a place that had nice sheds and we had a big storm and still lost calves. It's why old farmers consult “The Old Farmer's Almanac”; if the stars are misaligned there isn't much you can do about it.

But thinking he had nothing else to do he located a nice little barn a couple of miles south of his preferred calving site and enlisted the help of the “Pickin's” (Wendell and brother-in-law Dave) to move it.

How do I explain about the “Pickin's”? Used to be they were part of the Red Barn Opry, a group of musicians that entertained in the area. That group has waxed and waned. Another smaller group was formed and is known as “Nacho and the Chips”. At the most recent

Back Home
Nancy Hagman



performance (and great one it was) they were down to a trio and related a new name: Slim and the Pickin's. I'm not here to judge but Galen thinks he is Slim so I guess Wendell and Dave are the Pickin's.

Dave sacrificed a little skin during the barn moving but we just expect that. When Dave first joined our family there was a little incident with his ankle. His injuries have since become legendary. And there is a family joke that marriage into this clan should require a physical. Our new son-in-law gets a look of fear in his eyes whenever the subject comes up, but God bless him, he still said, “I do.”

Junior has been working on getting the barn finished up, wiring in, etc. He's almost there. He even penned up a black heifer he guessed would be the first to calve. He asked Wendell, “Do you ever pick the right one?”

“No!” was the reply!
That brain trust being exhausted, Friday Feb. 13 arrives. I sat in the house, looked out my south window and decided although the wind was really howling our “blizzard” amounted to about an inch of snow. About 4:00 the hubby comes to the house with the good news: we got the first calf of the season, out in the lot of course!
Remember the part about how I'm

just happy if he leaves me out of it? Well, it worked for moving the barn. Where are those Pickin's when you need them?

The east-west road to the barn was nearly drifted shut. Here is a revised snow report: one inch on the fields where it would do some good and 18 inches on the minimum maintenance roads.

Junior had already carried the calf up to the barn and we plugged a space heater in. I watched the baby while he went to get the mama. I talked to “Little Red”, trying to encourage her to get up. She didn't. But the barn warmed up good. I worked up a sweat and I wasn't even working! We got some warm milk down the calf, put the mama in with her, locked the black heifer in the other half of the barn and headed home. Mama and baby are doing fine!

Helping out a first time Mama in a blizzard isn't on my Bucket List, it's just one of those things that make you want to cuss. As is the fact that there have been two more calves; neither born the black heifer that was supposed to be first! And that one of them was born dead on a fine sunny morning, yet.

There is a cattleman's term: acceptable death loss.

But I'm pretty sure a cattleman didn't think that one up. To a true cattleman no death loss is acceptable!

Despite that setback I like where this is leading. Spring is coming. Soon the pasture will be full of babies. What a wonderful life: a new barn and the Pickin's to pick us up if things get really tough!

Profound, indeed!
(gneph@yahoo.com)



To... Norton community school teachers and staff, for your willingness to assist those laid off in our community with resume preparation and job search skills. I am continuously amazed at the generosity of those in our community. (e-mail)

To... the people at The Norton Telegram, for giving the community a really nice newspaper. (in person)

To... the county treasurer, your help was so much appreciated. (called in)

To... Opal Rolland and Ivy Rolland, on your 95th and 96th birthdays, respectively. (e-mail)

(To recognize someone in this column, 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. Birthdays and anniversaries are encouraged. No charge, just a way to brighten someone's day. -m td)

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