

Op-Ed

Shooting for 8 a.m. arrival

I've been semi-retired for about a year, and have loved every minute of it. When asked if I miss working outside the home I always reply, "I miss the people and being 'in-the-know'." but, I don't miss the daily grind."

So, why did I agree to fill-in for the society editor while she had surgery? Because I miss the people and being "in-the-know". At the newspaper office where I used to work, my schedule was kind of "loosey-goosey". When I asked what the hours were at the office where I would be filling in, I was told, "We like people to be here by 8."

"Oh, Lordy!" I said. "I haven't been anywhere by 8 a.m. in years."

But, I've been giving it my best shot and making it in by about 8:15. Thankfully, son James, has been kind enough to help me with morning chores so I can get out the door.

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Jim's 92-year-old father is "Dad" to both of us so we wanted to do something especially nice for him on Father's Day. However, there

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



is absolutely nothing he "needs" and since his accident a year ago, his lifestyle has been limited to the long-term care facility where he now lives.

What we could give him, though, was an experience. Through the generosity of a kind family who owns a handicapped-accessible van, we were able to take Dad on a Father's Day outing. Where did we take him? The only place he wanted to go: his farm. We pulled into the yard and his faithful dog, Lacy, came to greet him. As we pushed his wheelchair through the grass, Lacy played by his side and howled on command when he asked her to "speak". Dad's cherry tree is loaded with almost-ripe fruit. He had to pick some of

the ripest cherries and eat them. They're too tart for me, but he ate a handful before he said, "I better stop." However, he made me promise to come pick all I want. On one condition: that I bake him a pie. Done deal. That's a fair trade because his tree produces the best pie cherries.

Next on the agenda was a drive through the pasture to check the cattle. Cattle are a curious bunch and did not run from the vehicle. We opened the doors on the side of the van and let Dad look out while the cattle looked in. He thought the calves looked good.

The final stop was the wheat field. We unloaded Dad from the van and with James pushing and Jim pulling we took Dad out into the field. He was able to check the heads like all good farmers do and "feel" the berries for ripeness. He's convinced it'll make 40 bushels: at least.

It was hot like Kansas is in June. But, the sky was beautiful like it often is in Kansas in June. It was a good day to be a farmer. One we hope Dad will remember for a long, long time.

Angel Flights outlook grim

Each month, volunteer pilots from *Angel Flight Central* fly patients needing specialized medical care, including chemotherapy and dialysis, to hospitals throughout Kansas. Many of these patients are from rural areas and would otherwise be hard-pressed to receive the care they need.

These flights are part of General Aviation (GA), which includes all flying except the scheduled airlines and the military. Right now GA is being imperiled by misguided plans in Washington, D.C. If these proposals are enacted, the outlook could be grim for patients who use *Angel Flight Central*, as well as for millions of other people throughout the country who depend on General Aviation for services and jobs.

Among the proposals are new costs and regulations. Since *Angel Flight Central* pilots already donate their time and planes and pay for their own fuel, these increased costs could ground them. The impact on patients who live in rural Kansas could be devastating, because they would have to drive long distances to receive care.



The new charges and regulations would involve not only medical volunteer organizations. With an estimated 65 percent of General Aviation flights conducted for public service and business, many industries and services would be affected, including agriculture, emergency medical evacuation, law enforcement, aerial fire-fighting, package delivery and the Civil Air Patrol.

In addition, millions of jobs depend on GA, which pumps more than \$150 billion into the U.S. economy. Two members of Congress deem GA so essential that they formed a caucus to educate their peers on its value to the American economy and transportation system.

Recently, the Aircraft Owners

and Pilots Association (AOPA), the world's largest pilot organization with more than 415,000 members, launched General Aviation Serves America. The goal of this national grassroots campaign is to educate policymakers, opinion leaders and the public about the vital role GA plays in our local communities and the nation's economy. Actors Harrison Ford and Morgan Freeman, both avid pilots, are volunteering their services in support of the campaign. (To learn more about the General Aviation Serves America program, please take a few minutes to visit www.gaservesamerica.com.)

The importance of GA and its impact on the citizens of Kansas cannot be overstated. For more than 80 years, General Aviation has played a significant role in the lives of millions of Americans across the country. I hope you will join me in our efforts to ensure that it's around for another 80 years, and well beyond.

Craig Fuller, President Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association Frederick, Md

Races

(Continued from Page 1) they must complete, including hobby stock, sport models, modified, stock and 305 sprints.

The classes range in price. Both said the community support has been wonderful.

The track is owned by the City of Norton. Mr. Bantam said the city allows them to use the facility.

The track is beneficial to Norton because it brings people in and they spend money in town, he said.

"If the track wasn't here the economic impact would be phenomenal," Mr. Schwab said.

"It's a public service that will return money to Norton," Mr. Bantam said.

Mr. Bantam said concessions in previous years had been run by track staff. This year concessions will be run by 4-H clubs, the boy scouts and the girl scouts.

"This gives money back to community organizations because they keep the money they earn," Mr. Bantam said.

Mr. Schwab and Mr. Bantam agreed that racing is a cheap, family oriented activity.

Mr. Bantam said he is planning

some improvements to the track.

The pit area will be moved outside the track. People will have a better view of the races.

The track crew is also planning to purchase radio receivers for all of the drivers. Mr. Bantam said this would help them to line up the drivers faster, and they would be able to warn the drivers if there was an accident.

Mr. Schwab said in previous years the races would end around midnight.

"We're going to do our best to get them out of there at a decent time," Mr. Bantam said.

Jubilee

(Continued from Page 1) to be at the jubilee.

A combination of the 12 owners travel to various events with the bus. Mr. Drees said they have been on eight trips including taking a 1,000 mile tour of central Nebraska, going to Kansas City, Kan. twice and a car show in Des Moines, Iowa.

"The jubilee was a reason for us to take the bus out," Mr. Drees said.

The bus was supposed to make an appearance at last year's jubilee, but a scheduling conflict prevented the group from making the trip, he said.

Mr. Drees said the City of Lenora has not made an effort to buy the bus, and it is not for sale.

"You had a parade, and we came here. That's just how we are!"

The bus brought back memories for many parade spectators.

Cheryl Scott went to school in Lenora.

"It looks an awful lot like my old bus," she said.

"It was great to bring that nostalgia back. We don't have a high school anymore, and it was great to see that history again," Scott Sproul, president of the jubilee association said.

Besides the parade, the jubilee included events all day Saturday. There was a community-wide garage sale, the Y102 Sanctioned Pedal Pull, Wobble Trap Shoot, balloon buffoon, creature races and an inflatable carnival.

There were also concerts Friday and Saturday nights.

Mt. Sproul said the events were very well attended.

"Across the whole board, attendance has been average or above average."

He said 60 percent of the audi-

ence was from local communities and 40 percent was from outside areas such as Colorado, Nebraska and Oregon.

"There is lots of different community representation here. It has been a boost to Lenora's economy," he said.

Mr. Sproul said he hopes the success of this year will propel the Lenora Jubilee Association into planning the 2010 event.

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Tip: Invest in grain sorghum

While it's not considered the golden child of Kansas crops like its cousins corn and wheat, grain sorghum remains a sure bet to produce a crop in the High Plains. Farmers in this hot, dry area from South Dakota to Texas grow grain sorghum like Corn Belt farmers produce corn.

Often called milo, this small, BB-sized bronze-colored grain has been called the "water-sipping crop." It is especially suited for growing in semi-arid climates and uses approximately one third less water than its water-thirsty cousins. Grain sorghum generally out yields other grains under conditions of limited moisture. Until the early '50s and the beginning of irrigation in the Ogallala aquifer, milo was second only to wheat production in Kansas and many Central and Southern Plains states. For decades this hardy crop took root and flourished on millions of acres in the High Plains. During peak production in 1966-67, 13,902,000 acres of grain sorghum were planted in the central United States. Today, Kansas producers still grow more than 40 percent of the nation's grain sorghum every year. Kansas is the nation's leading producer of grain sorghum with 214 million bushels grown on 2.65 million acres.

Kansas growers like Osage County farmer Jeff Casten value grain sorghum because it is well suited to perform in many types of soils and weather. Casten operates a diversified farm growing wheat, milo, corn and soybeans in the rich bottomland of the Marais

Insight John Schlageck

des Cygnes River Valley. He's been elected to the Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission for several years and currently serves as chairman. He's also past president of the National Sorghum Producers and serves as secretary of the newly formed United Sorghum Check-off Program.

Kansas is a diverse state with soils ranging from sandy to clay to loam, and summertime weather patterns ranging from hot and humid in the east to hot and dry in the west. With these varying weather and soil conditions throughout Kansas, grain sorghum is a crop that Kansas farmers can depend on.

"I grow milo as an insurance policy," Casten says. "In Kansas, dryland corn has to have everything just right to grow a good crop. Beans are the same way and a dry year with low yield on either crop can really kill you. But with grain sorghum, it'll weather the dry conditions and punch out a pretty good yield."

And while this water-sipping crop has battled high temperatures and dry-weather conditions to a stand still, there's another adversary that's threatening. Dwindling sorghum acres and production have led to decreased private investment in sorghum. These declines have brought about a "technology gap" between sorghum and other crops such as corn,

cotton and soybeans. Casten believes this technology gap can be overcome by producers investing in their own research through a national check off.

"Funding hasn't been forthcoming to put into research for grain sorghum," the Osage County farmer says. "We haven't had significant research and development for this crop for 20 years."

The investment of check-off funds can address a lack of yield improvement, bolster sorghum market development and promotion and stimulate lagging ethanol research and promotion," he said.

"Our objective with the National Sorghum Check-off funding is to increase crop yields, technology improvement, market enhancement and increase awareness of sorghum as both a food grain and a feedstock for ethanol production."

Check-off rate for grain sorghum is 0.6-percent of the harvested crop value. It is collected at the first point of sale. The check-off value for forage sorghums is 0.35-percent per ton above 5,000 tons.

"I feel really good about our grain sorghum check-off program," Casten says. "It's inspiring to see producers take it upon themselves to invest in their own industry and their future."

(John Schlageck is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. Born and raised on a diversified farm in northwestern Kansas, his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.)

Ants are coming, so what to do?

Solitary scout ants have already started this spring's search for food and water.

Lines of ants will soon follow. They'll be marching along a chemical trail laid by a scout from their colony, marking the way to a good find.

Their target may very well be a home or restaurant kitchen. What to do?

Other than calling an exterminator, this leaves just two control options — sanitation and baits.

"Ants use the most easily accessible food sources," K-State experts say.

"That's why eliminating their access to crumbs, grease, scraps and other foods helps to discourage invasions.

"It's also why baits can work — especially since the ants will take some of the toxic food home

for their queen and colony members."

Most ant baits now come pre-packaged in a child- and pet-resistant "station." They're slow-acting enough to allow worker ants time to return to the nest — extra bait in jaws or claws — before finally dying, he said.

But, not all ants are attracted to the same bait. So, people may have to try more than one product.

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