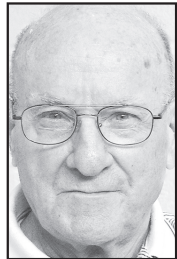


## Weighing in on one's eating habits

Man of the Plains  
Tom Dreiling



Funny, what we depend on to get us through each day, and what we do, but shouldn't, to satisfy our quest for food.

For me, getting through each day means use of a cane and a magnifying glass! Boy, I'd be lost without both.

A portion of my right eye went on the fritz a few years ago, and in the process I lost a lot of vision. So, when reading newspapers or magazines, or letters or greeting cards, it comes in awfully handy. Even when writing brief notes to family and friends, the magnifying glass sort of keeps me on the 'highway of penmanship' so I don't wander off into the ditch, which I still sometimes do. The cane keeps me balanced, thanks to neuropathy of both feet and legs.

Twenty months ago I weighed slightly more than 190 pounds (I am 5'8). When the doctor's office weighed me on Jan. 16 I was at 155! Thus, I have a lot of clothes hanging in my closet that I don't think I'll ever wear again. For laughs, however, I slipped into several dress pants and couldn't believe my eyes! Even my sports jackets and suit coats no longer qualify as choice items.

The weight loss for this 'Man of the Plains' started 20 months ago with the move to Colorado. It really wasn't planned - it just happened. The main thing was not to stop for a hamburger and fries for lunch or dinner three or more times a week, and for an egg and sausage McMuffin and hash browns a couple of mornings each week for breakfast. And because I had sold my pickup when I moved out here due to vision problems, I depend on my kids to get me around and that doesn't include stops at those hamburger houses. That's what I meant when I said my diet just happened!

When I finally got around to believing that my weight gain started at the burger and fries places, I also concluded that it wasn't their fault that I couldn't practice a more responsible eating habit. They didn't rope me in when I drove by, I freely pulled in on my own. Fingers should be pointed at people like me, and parents too, who irresponsibly patronize those restaurants with their kids.

I need to credit my kids for not stopping each time we pass a McDonald's or other-like hamburger house. They did me a healthy favor.

But the question now surfaces: did I perhaps shed too many pounds? Some family members think so. I am assessing that situation and will adjust as necessary.

I might add that when I received my discharge from the United States Air Force on Jan. 31, 1963 (4 years active duty, 4 years standby status) I weighed 158 pounds. So, here I am 49 years later at 155. (I must confess that at one time I weighed 219. But that is a story for another column.)

In a nutshell, if you are serious about losing weight - if you are a lover of fries and hamburgers - might I make this suggestion: drive by, not in just because you are in the neighborhood.

Speaking of weight, former House Speaker and presidential hopeful Newt Gingrich comes awfully close to the obesity classification. Looking at him I often wonder when during the day he doesn't eat.

Your comments on anything that appears in your favorite newspaper coming from my computer, are always appreciated, regardless of the tone. Simply email me at mail to: milehitom@hotmail.com



## Change is the constant in our world

My mother used to say, "The only constant in the world is change."

Seventy-seven years ago in January of 1935 she wrote, "Times don't change much. The local paper says that 50 years ago everyone was complaining of colds. They still are. People were getting married then. They still are. Old-timers said that was the coldest winter they had experienced in years. Old-timers still say it."

No times don't change much. In that same column she commented on how Franklin Roosevelt's son was always getting in scrapes. Politician's kids are still getting in trouble. Probably always will.

-ob-

Seed catalogs have been flooding the mail box. It's making my mouth drool to preview the new tomato plants and the "umpteen" varieties of cucumbers. Even more than the vegetables, though, I can't get enough of the flowers. I really want to try my hand at hydrangeas this year.

Our daughter, Jennifer, grows them and they are beautiful. But then, Jennifer can grow anything. When she lived here in Kansas, her lawn, landscaping and flower beds were picture perfect. Now that she lives in Texas, with practically a year-round growing season, her place is like out of House Beautiful. She's about to run

Out Back  
Carolyn Plotts



out of planting beds.

Unless she turns the entire lawn into one giant flower garden. She definitely has a green thumb.

-ob-

The seed catalogs make me think of spring, and spring makes me think of baby chicks. I imagine this is the year we need to be bringing in a replacement crew. The old girls have done good for about three years, but their eggs will be running out soon.

I had my first hint that their egg laying days are waning. Gathering the eggs one day I found a little egg in the nest no bigger than a grape. Just like when they start to lay, their eggs are small, I think the same thing happens when their productive days are about over.

Introducing new chickens into the flock is always tricky. Where do you think the phrase, "pecking order" comes from? But, by the time we raise chicks up big enough to be layers, we'll know for certain if the older hens are really

and truly done.

-ob

My nephew, by marriage, Terry Welzen, died last week. He married my brother, Bob's oldest daughter, Sherry, and he was instantly welcomed into the family. I'm not sure of Terry's ancestry, but his family was all blonde and blue-eyed. German perhaps or Norwegian. Terry had a great sense of humor and was a super story-teller. Which endeared him to my dad right off the bat. And he had that Michigan/Wisconsin/Minnesota kind of accent which made him fun for us "flatlanders" to listen to.

Just a couple of years younger than me, Sherry was my parents' first grandchild to marry and it was a blow-out of a wedding. My oldest daughter, Halley, was the flower girl and Sherry's little brother, Patrick, was the ring bearer. They, of course, stole the show when Halley was trying to carefully drop the petals, one-by-one, and Patrick said, "Hurry up." Terry was so kind to Halley and I think she fell in love with him, just like the rest of us.

Terry had been ill for a long time. Surgeries and treatments had not been kind to him. I imagine he was just plain sick and tired of being sick and tired. Still, he was too young and I know he'll be missed.

## The work, wonder and worry of a winter wheat crop

A recent swing through northwestern Kansas reveals a winter wheat crop that looks really good. Stands are uniform, the color is a dark green and even with the mild temperatures so far this winter, most of the wheat has not grown too quickly and may escape the specter of winter kill.

Even in southwestern Kansas, that region of the state hit the hardest last year, the wheat crop looks good. Favorable growing conditions began the end of September and early October when this year's crop was being planted.

Rains from three to six inches were reported in much of southwestern Kansas, although some of the cropland near Elkhart, Sublette, Satanta and Meade didn't receive plentiful rainfall.

A similar weather pattern swept through this part of the state a week before Christmas. More than a foot of snow blanketed a large area of southwestern Kansas from northern Morton County north to Syracuse and east all the way to Ellis County where 14" was reported at Victoria.

Scott City recorded 15" of snow and moisture totaled six inches or more from the rain and snow that stayed on the ground throughout half of January.

Wheat growers remain optimistic this year's wheat crop is far better off than one year ago. The significant rainfall

Insight  
John Schlageck



and snow will go a long way in helping this year's crop enter the spring growing season with a leg up.

Most long-term forecasts predict normal precipitation throughout the upcoming spring season with another dry summer. Should this hold true, this year's wheat crop will at least have a better chance than last year of being harvested. With a few timely rains in February and March there may be far fewer acres abandoned if any.

Many southwestern Kansas producers consider the current condition of their wheat crop ideal at this time. Because of the month-long snow cover, most of the crop hasn't broken dormancy yet. Temperatures have been cooler than in other regions of Kansas where record high winter temperatures have been recorded.

Less growth than normal means healthier wheat at this time. There's less chance the crop will green up, grow and then face the possibility of being hammered by freeze this spring

when it begins to warm up.

Drive through southwestern Kansas and one thing becomes apparent quickly and that's the amount of wheat in the fields. This year's acreage is tabbed at 9.5 million acres up from 8.7 million in 2011.

As already stated, planting conditions overall were much better this year than last. High wheat prices have also driven this increase, but continued dryness in some areas of the central and southern Plains also led to more wheat planted. Compared to more thirsty crops like corn, milo and soybeans, wheat tends to survive drought while producing a decent crop.

Subsoil moisture remains a concern for every farmer throughout much of western Kansas. Shortfalls vary from almost no subsoil moisture in the south-western counties to several inches in some of the northern tier Kansas counties.

Yes, it's a new year and with it comes new hope of harvest in June. While all farmers know that's a lifetime away, as eternal optimists they'll hope and pray for moisture, better-than-average growing conditions and storms that stay away from their land. And once they harvest the wheat, they begin wondering, worrying and wishing for a successful fall harvest.



Dear Editor,

This letter was sent to Norton Community High School Wrestling coach Bill Johnson and sent on to the Norton Telegram.

It has been a week since the Newton Tournament, but I wanted to let you know you and your team impressed me Saturday night. As we often do, when we look over the crowd and you can see a lot of different things from the gym floor, what I observed was a well coached team, sitting together, in your school warm ups. That was very impressive to me and the other officials, even though you did not have anyone in the finals you and your team were watching the finals together. They were not running around, laying around but sitting, observing and learning together. I just wanted to tell you and your team thank you and I enjoy working on the mat when Norton comes up. Your guys are a class act and I wanted to wish you good luck the rest of the year and into the State Tournament. As you may or may not know, this is my final year, 40 years is a long time, but I have enjoyed the friendships I have made with the wrestling family, and will remember the good times always. I can still remember duals at Douglass with the two Johnson boys wrestling before the high school. Again, Good Luck and I will be watching Norton.

Larry Alley  
Douglass, Kansas

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