

# Opinion



## Guest Viewpoint

## Tip: Communication key to reducing stress

Worry has been labeled the root of all evil. It has also been linked to accidents on the farm.

Worrying about finances, weather or personal problems while operating powerful farm equipment can place farmers at risk. When a farmer loses concentration or focus on the task at hand, or makes hasty decisions, accidents can happen.

For many agricultural producers this is an extremely busy period. Crops remain in the field, ready to be harvested. This time of the year weather can turn cold and wet almost any time. Days are shorter, so those hours of sunlight are precious and often farmers try to cram too much in an already extremely busy day.

Anything a farmer or rancher can do to reduce physical, mental or emotional stress can help reduce the likelihood of injury or illness. Friends, family and professionals who deal with stress can help. The key is to seek assistance if the screws of stress are tightening down on you and your farming operation.

While it has been said before, and bears repeating, communication remains a major key in reducing stress.

If you are concerned about finances, you may want to visit with your banker. You may also want to talk to family members. Remember, you don't have to share exact figures, just some of your major concerns. The important thing is to talk with someone who is interested in you and your operation. Keep the communication lines open.

Another method to fight stress includes renewed involvement in church, school or community. This helps a person's sense of purpose and self-esteem.

Approaching tasks and challenges early with an "I can" and an "I care" attitude can also help prevent stress. If you try to tackle a problem while bogged down with doubt, the results can be less than favorable. It's important to maintain and work on your self-esteem.

Short breaks or vacations from the farming operation can also help farmers ease stressful situations. Doing so can provide a fresh perspective. Agricultural tours and field days can provide farmers with such opportunities.

Even if it's for a short weekend — such time away from your routine can often relieve some tension and clear the mind. It also allows you to visit with others who may be facing similar challenges and just talking may lead to insight or solutions.

Scheduling a yearly physical, especially for farmers and ranchers over 40 years of age, is also a good way to reduce stress. Going to a family doctor and receiving a clean bill of health can do wonders for a person's peace of mind.

Eating healthy and watching food intake can help prevent illness and result in better decision making because people feel better about themselves.

Remember, set realistic goals for yourself, family, land and livestock. Allow enough time for a restful night's sleep and make quality time for yourself and your family.

Don't forget that the time spent on tasks is not important if the end result is not productive. Most farmers and ranchers know when to let up physically, but they may not recognize how mental strain can take it's toll. Keep the communication lines open with your family and friends. You will be safer and healthier in the long run. — *John Schlageck, managing editor of "Kansas Living," a magazine dedicated to agriculture and rural life in Kansas.*

### About those letters . . .

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**Tom (TD) Dreiling - Publisher**  
td@nwkanssas.com

### NEWS

**Patty Decker - Editor**

pdecker@nwkanssas.com

**Darrel Pattillo, Sports Editor**

colbysports@nwkanssas.com

**Michelle L. Hawkins, Family and Religion**

mhawkins@nwkanssas.com

### ADVERTISING

**Crystal Rucker - Advertising Manager**

crystalr@nwkanssas.com

**Derek Bell - Advertising Account Manager**

dbell@nwkanssas.com

**Flo Rodriguez - Ad Composition, Legals**

**BUSINESS OFFICE**

**Lea Bandy - Circulation Manager**

**Pattie Stevens - Office Manager, Want Ads**

**Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator**

support@nwkanssas.com

### NOR'WEST PRESS

**Jim Bowker - General Manager**

**Richard Westfahl, Lana Westfahl, Ron VanLoenen, Judy McKnight**

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## Don't let those fall colors fool you



Tom Dreiling

### • My Turn

Internal Security to the effect that employee pilferage of company material continues at an excessive rate. The only things not stolen lately have been the clock and the toilet seat. Everybody's watching the one and somebody's always sitting on the other.

#### THOUGHTS to ponder

- Make love, not war. Or get married and do both!
- Drawing on my fine command of the English language, I said nothing.
- In court, why do they ask if you swear to tell the truth? If you're planning on lying, do they really think you would tell them?
- If you jogged backward... would you gain weight?
- What would you call a pocket calculator in a nudist camp?

**INALITTLE** over a week we'll be doing the clock thing again. Every six months we either turn it up an hour or turn it back an hour. No wonder you don't see many clocks any more with smiling faces. They are confused. The time changes officially at 2 o'clock in the morning on Sunday, Oct. 27. However, you'll probably want to adjust your clocks before going to bed the night of Oct. 26. We will be turning the clock BACK one hour to Standard Time. We will be catching up on that hour of sleep we lost last spring.

That's about the only plus I can find in the fall time change.

**AND** in case you forgot as we hurry into the Christmas season, there still is a Halloween and this year it falls on a Thursday. Better stock up on the treats now

**WHEN THEY** talk about the fall colors in Kansas, especially this year, bet you think they are talking about the changing colors of our landscape — the beautiful reds and oranges and yellows as trees begin shedding their cover, shrubs and grasses also getting in on the act, and anything else surrendering to autumn. But they aren't. They are talking about those *other* fall colors — the colors of yard signs promoting various candidates for various offices. I have noticed quite a number of those signs popping up all over the place within the past few weeks in advance of the general election on Nov. 5. I don't have a yard sign; I don't have a yard. Well, that's not totally accurate, either. I do have a yard in the back of the place; the front consists of slabs of concrete on which I and the other three parties in my complex park their vehicles. There is no place in front of the complex on Hill Street for yard signs. In the 2000 election I placed signs of my favorite candidates in the front upstairs window, but I'm sure that didn't benefit my choices. When placed at ground level they are hidden by the parked cars. And if I put them in the back yard, the only people who would see them is Mike and his family who live across the way. Fall's colors.

*Speaking of the election, the last day to register to vote is Monday at 5 p.m. Questions regarding voter registration can directed to County Clerk Tracey Perkins at 462-4500.*

**DID** you see that football brawl on television? The one featuring moms and dads and players? A little league setting. What a shame! What kind of example do we, as parents, set for our kids with that kind of behavior? Sports, at the youngest level, are beginning to sadly resemble sports at the top. Maybe we are just a bunch of unruly fanatics. I wonder if we get that upset off the field when grade cards come home with other than expected marks.

**MEMO** to employees of a large firm in a distant city reads: We have received a disturbing report from

## What's the rush, Mr. President?

Along with probably a few billion others on this planet, I keep asking, "What's the rush, Mr. President?" The Bush administration seems intent on going to war with Iraq over the objections of most nations. In the face of questioning from prominent leaders, we get few specifics. There is no evidence of an immediate threat to any of Iraq's neighbors, let alone to the United States, yet the administration insists that it is urgent to act. Responding to the recent Iraqi offer of unconditional inspections, the administration virtually ridiculed the proposal, while most nations have held out the possibility of a peaceful solution to the current crisis.

We must ask, again, why the rush? In order to come to a conclusion, we must set the background. While it is true that the regime of Saddam Hussein is brutal and dictatorial, this is nothing new to the United States. Hussein was brutal and dictatorial when he was our ally. He bombed the Iranians and the Kurds with poison gas then, but little was said. So, brutality cannot be a reason for the urgency.

The Iraqi military is in disarray. Most observers have concluded that it is a shell of its 1991 self. The Iraqi air force has been virtually destroyed, and its missile capability is limited, certainly making it highly unlikely that Iraq could represent a threat to the United States. Further, there have been no indications of Iraqi troop movements on the ground signifying preparation for an invasion of a neighbor.

The Bush administration has made much of the

Bill Fletcher, Jr.

### • Another Viewpoint

possibility of an Iraqi nuclear or chemical/biological threat, but it has no current, credible information. In fact, when asked for such information the administration carries out a dance that would have made Fred Astaire proud.

The Bush administration has few allies on this foray. It has been able to convince Britain's Tony Blair to support it, but this is tricky since Blair has so little domestic support for his stance. The Israelis support Bush, apparently with an interest in diverting world attention from their own war. No one else is with us. There is no force in the real world that is demanding immediate action on Iraq.

Finally, there is the credibility question facing the Bush administration when it demands that the United Nations act to ensure implementation of its resolutions. But many nations, including Israel, have ignored significant United Nations resolutions, and the United States has never insisted upon implementation, let alone threatened war over such a failure.

while the selection is good and plentiful. You don't want to disappoint the little ones as they make their merry rounds and familiar cries, "Trick or treats!"

*Speaking of trick or treat, don't forget that on Sunday young people will be making the rounds in the annual "Trick-Or-Treat So Others Can Eat" drive. They will be collecting non-perishable items for the Genesis Food Bank. You may leave your food items on your front porch marked "Genesis." Girl Scouts, United Methodist Youth, Catholic Youth Organization and other volunteers will be going door-to-door from 2-4 p.m.*

#### HAPPY Birthday to...

Oct. 18 — Don Kready

Oct. 19 — Paul Wintz, Barbara Bickner, Steve Vaughn, Marvin Cloe

Oct. 20 — Kathleen Zerr

Oct. 21 — Denise Mentlick

Oct. 22 — Alexandra Finley, Shaughn Hendrix

**HAPPY Belated Birthday to...**

Oct. 16 — Gayona McDonald

**HAPPY Anniversary to...**

Oct. 19 — Darrel & Pat Follis (50th)

Oct. 20 — Marvin & Carol Lovenstein

Oct. 21 — Byron & Nada Jarnagin

Congratulations!

Call us at 462-3963 or email td@nwkanssas.com to have your special day mentioned. And please keep us advised of any changes in any listing.

We need your help, thanks!

**HOW** often have you run into this statement on applications or other forms: "Who is to be notified in case of an emergency." I've always been tempted to jot down, "A darn good doctor."

**HAVE** a good evening and a good weekend!

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*Dreiling is publisher of the Free Press. His column appears Wednesdays and Fridays. td@nwkanssas.com*

So, we return to why the rush. As cynical as it may sound, the answer appears to be entirely political. As many predicted, the so-called war against terrorism is dragging on, becoming a guerrilla war in Afghanistan and an undefined campaign in other places. More importantly from the standpoint of politics, the November 2002 congressional elections are upon us and the issues that have received the most attention — the sluggish economy and corporate corruption — are not to the advantage of the Bush team. In other words, the administration seeks to refocus people's attention on an external and allegedly imminent threat and keep their minds off issues that could strike at them and their families immediately.

So, the reality is that there is no reason to rush to war. Unfortunately, the war's pretext has to do with keeping us oblivious to one fact: the Bush administration has a domestic agenda at odds with the interests of the vast majority of the electorate. Given this, the administration is prepared to lead a dash into potential disaster.

I hate to admit that the cynics were right on this one.

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*Bill Fletcher, Jr., is a long-time labor activist and currently president of TransAfricaForum, a Washington, D.C.-based non-profit organizing and educational center formed to raise awareness about issues facing the nations and peoples of Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America. He can be reached at bfletcher@transafricaforum.org.*

Doonesbury

• Gary Trudeau

