

### **By John Van Nostrand**

Coincidence?

People heard our pleas?

Christmas bills are coming in?

Maybe it was a combination of all the above?

The past couple of months we have informed our subscribers who receive their Free Press by carrier that if a carrier was not found for the route they live on, we would mail the paper to them. We did that to a few routes, but days after we started using the post office, people asked about taking a route.

As of today, another route is expected to be filled Wednesday leaving only one route that will still be mailed. That sounds a lot better than it did a month ago. We thank those people, and all our carriers for that matter, for what they do.

It's possible somebody really may not like the work after a day or two and quit (it has happened) but so far, so good.

If you know of anyone who may be interested in the route, please call our circulation manager Everett at 462-3963 or stop by the office at 155 W. Fifth St.

Thanks

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- John Van Nostrand is publisher of the Colby Free Press.

## About those letters ...

The *Free Press* encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be typewritten, if at all possible, and should include a telephone number and an address. Most importantly, all letters must include a signature. Unsigned letters cannot be published. We reserve the right to edit for clarity and length, and, likewise, reserve the right to reject letters deemed to be of no public interest or considered offensive or libelous.

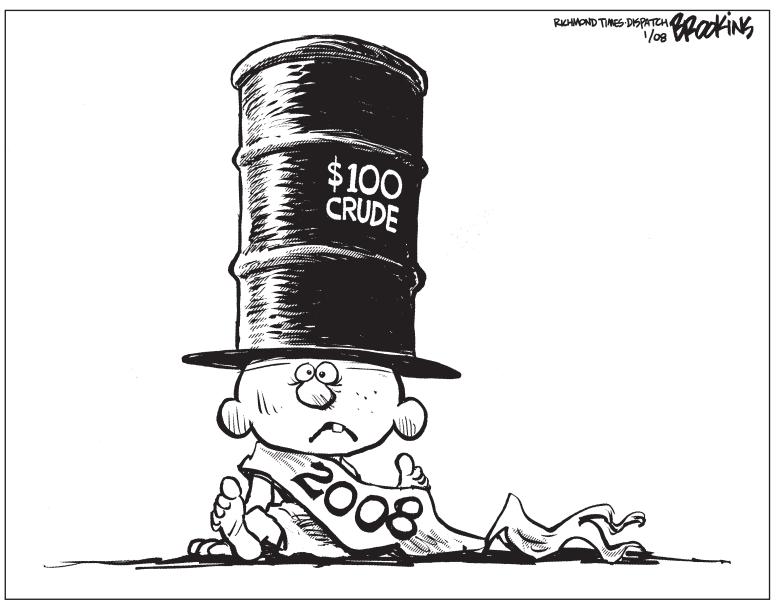
## Where to write, call

U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202/224-4774 U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202/224-6521

U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran, 2202 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. 202/225-2715 or Fax 202/225-5124

State Rep. Jim Morrison, State Capitol Building, 300 SW 10th St. Rm. 143-N, Topeka, Kan. 66612. 785/296-7676 e mail: jmorriso@ink.org web: www.morrisonfamily.com

State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, State Capitol, 300 SW



# Seasonal affective disorder

### By Karen Schueler

Education and Outreach Department **High Plains Mental Health Center** www.highplainsmentalhealth.com

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It is not unusual to feel sad or "down in the dumps" during and/or after the holiday season. Significant life changes and losses, or chronic health problems can be major factors.

In addition the stresses of the holiday season along with expectations that did not turn out well also contribute to "post-holiday blues".

Usually these feelings decrease and go away after the holidays are over and done. But for some people these feelings, sometimes described as the "winter blues", continue for several weeks or months, and can contribute to more serious health problems including depression.

has much to do with the lack of exposure to sunlight.

People living in the northern climates will be more affected. Symptoms can develop and increase because the hours of daylight are shorter during the winter months, the clouds will hide the sun more often, and people tend to stay indoors more when the weather is colder.

Symptoms of SAD include changes from usual behavior such as the loss of energy, increase in anxiety and irritability, difficulty concentrating, and loss of interest in previously enjoyable activities. Difficulty sleeping and changes in eating habits, particularly significant weight gain, may also be indications of this disorder.

Increasing exposure to sunlight and bright lights can help to reduce the symptoms of SAD. Those feelings may be a symptom of SAD It is a good idea to open up the drapes on windows

Seasonal Affective Disorder, a disorder that to allow sunlight into the house and to turn on additional lamps to increase the lighting. In addition, take a walk outdoors on sunny days. Get in the habit of practicing good stress management; get enough rest and exercise, eat nutritiously, and spend time with friends and family.

> Remember, most people experience times during the year when they feel "down in the dumps." But when those sad and hopeless feelings continue for too long, then it is time to ask for help from a medical or mental health professional. Mail questions to:

> High Plains Mental Health Center, PLAIN SENSE, Consultation and Education Department, 208 East 7th, Hays, Kan. 67601

> (Questions will be formatted and answered in a manner that insures confidentiality)

# Preparing Kansans for what may be the norm

From The Hutchinson News

constructed or on the drawing board, including good idea. A good compromise might emerge for driv- a number in Kansas – most U.S. automobiles

It prepares Kansans for what hopefully one day

10th St., Rm. 128-S., Topeka, Kan. 66612, 785/296-7399 ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us

Comments to any opinions expressed on this page are encouraged. Mail them to the Colby Free Press, 155 W. 5th St., Colby, Kan., 67701. Ore-mail jvannostrand@nwkansas.com or pdecker@nwkansas.com. Opinions do not necessarily reflect the Free Press.

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ers who debate whether or not to fill their autos with ethanol.

Some activity both in Washington and in Kansas could lead to mid-range ethanol blends becoming available at the pump, and even those blends would have dramatic environmental effects.

Some members of Congress, including our own Rep. Jerry Moran, have asked President Bush to direct the Environmental Protection Agency to begin testing higher blends of ethanol in gasoline.

Even though U.S. ethanol supplies are adequate — with many new ethanol plants being blends in all autos remains pending, this is a

are restricted by the EPA to fuel with no more than 10 percent ethanol. ...

Ideally, all new autos would be E85 compatible, and it would become a mainstream fuel about ethanol fuels. Consumers, too, need to option. It has been slow to become so, not only because not all autos can accept it but because retail outlets are sparse. Only 28 stations in Kansas sell E85.

But the Kansas Department of Agriculture is doing something. It announced last week that it would launch a pilot project to allow Kansas service stations to sell mid-range blends. ...

Even though EPA approval of such ethanol

will be the norm — service stations that offer a variety of options. ...

We need to raise consumer consciousness begin to experiment.

More research and, ultimately, EPA approval of higher ethanol blends - at least until all autos are E85-compatible - are critical to mainstream acceptance of ethanol. But, too, nothing drives an industry like demand.

As consumers, if ethanol is available, we should be trying it.

# The devil's in the details

#### **By John Schlageck Kansas Farm Bureau**

One of the main differences between farmers who make money and farmers who don't is cost control. Studies by land-grant universities bear this out.

In a recent study at Auburn University, researchers divided farms into two groups — those with the most and least profit. The farms reported similar proportions of owned and rented land, yields, crop mixes, debt levels and gross returns per acre.

High-profit farms gained small advantages for most other expense items. The research concluded farmers with the highest returns paid more attention to details and spent more time monitoring their businesses, than did the farmers in the lower-profit category.

High-profit farms were slightly larger, but the big differences among them were expenses. High-profit farms spent less per tillable acre for seed, chemicals and fertilizer. High-profit farms also spent less for power and equipment.

Several Kansas farmers this writer has visited with during the last few months would concur they have remained competitive is cost control - keeping costs at a minimum.

These farmers remain extremely cost conscious when buying for their farms. They don't spend money on fertilizer, animal health drugs or equipment that won't show a return.

As one farmer put it, "I don't buy machinery to avoid taxes, or because I like to wear out new paint. You can buy yourself broke."

Crop rotation and conservation tillage also keeps the weeds down and reduces the need for herbicides and pesticides. As farmers rotate crops, they use a different family of herbicides each time so weeds can't become resistant. It also takes less product which keeps expenses lower.

Kansas farmers, and their counterparts across the country, often work closely with crop consultants when applying herbicides, insecticides and fertilizers. They've cut their uses significantly in recent years.

Producers determine inputs for fertilizer, herbicides and pesticides with regular soil tests. This can be a real balancing act. They want to apply enough nutrients so they can realize top

with these findings. One of the major reasons yields on their land, but they can't afford to over fertilize. It's too expensive.

Most successful Kansas farmers have remained conservative machinery buyers also. Few have tractors newer than five years old. All keep accurate, concise records on both production and finance. All seek professional advice from accountants, marketing specialists and crop consultants.

The key to successful operation of any business, whether it is farming, banking, car dealership, etc. remains cost control, good record keeping and tight management in all areas.

Still many factors remain out of a farmer's control. Government regulations, foreign competition, trade sanctions, dollar value all have a direct impact on the financial conditions on the farm. By controlling factors they can, farmers can build toward a successful future in agriculture.

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.

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