

commentary

from other pens...

Preserving Flint Hills better than wind farm

The Topeka Capital Journal on wind farms:

Environmentalists are facing a dilemma in Kansas trying to choose between an undepletable alternative energy source — wind — and protecting the native tallgrass prairie.

The state already has one wind farm at Montezuma in southwest Kansas. It boasts 170 turbines that produce 110 megawatts of electricity. ...

The wind farms are a big boost to the local economy, especially with prices for the usual farm products so low and drought conditions holding yields down. ...

In southwest Kansas, where much of the land already has been tilled and used for agricultural production, the farms are less controversial than in the scenic Flint Hills, where the native tallgrass prairie remains undisturbed.

Nevertheless, the Butler County planning commission recently approved a proposal for a 6,000-acre site south of Leon in those very Flint Hills. However, the county commission has sent the issue back to the planning commission for reconsideration.

Many defenders of the Flint Hills, including some landowners and Audubon of Kansas, disapprove of the disturbance of one of Kansas' most precious natural resources. ...

People go to New Mexico and Arizona to see the scenery and feel in touch with nature in its original state. You get that very same feeling in the Flint Hills.

Do we really want to spoil that? ...

Wind farms certainly have their place, but not at the expense of the state's most treasured resource, its natural prairie.

The Iola Register on budget cuts:

Gov. Bill Graves' final budget cuts sting.

Most state agencies have been told to cut spending by 3.9 percent. The Kansas Department of Transportation won't get the \$95 million back that it "loaned" to the state general fund, social services will be slashed further, higher education will take a big hit and state transfers to city and county governments won't happen, which means local governments will get \$48 million less than they had already budgeted to spend.

The cities and counties howled at the news. They have no way to raise more money, they complained, because budgets have already been adopted and tax statements have been mailed.

What to do?

They must do what state agencies are doing: Remake their budgets to fit their diminished income. ...

The coping exercise will be instructive. If all the essential work gets done in a timely fashion, we'll know that there was fat in those budgets, after all. But if the public feels the pinch because promises couldn't be kept, pressure to restore budgets by tax increases at the state or local level will rise.

Much the same observation can be made at the state level. ...

How the people fare when its public agencies are put on a bread-and-water diet should tell the new governor and Legislature whether to deal boldly with the new economic reality or throw up their hands and tell the people of Kansas to learn to believe that less is more; that second rate is what our state is meant to be.

Letter Policy

The Goodland Daily News encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be typewritten, and must include a telephone number and a signature. Unsigned letters will not be published. Form letters will be rejected, as will letters deemed to be of no public interest or considered offensive. We reserve the right to edit letters for length and good taste. We encourage letters, with phone numbers, by e-mail to: <daily@nw-kansas.com>.

The Goodland Daily News

(USPS No. 222-460. ISSN 0893-0562)

Member: Kansas Press Association
The Associated Press

Inland Press Association Colorado Press Association
National Newspaper Association
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Published daily except Saturday and Sunday and the day observed for New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day, at 1205 Main St., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

Periodicals postage paid at Goodland, Kan. 67735; entered at the Goodland, Kan., Post Office under the Act of Congress of March 8, 1878.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Goodland Daily News, 1205 Main St., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

TELEPHONE: (785) 899-2338. Editorial e-mail: daily@nw-kansas.com. Advertising questions can be sent to: gdnadv@nw-kansas.com

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SUBSCRIPTIONS: In Sherman County and adjacent counties: three months, \$25; six months, \$42; 12 months, \$79. Out of area, weekly mailing of five issues: three months, \$30; six months, \$45; 12 months, \$80. By mail daily in Kansas, Colorado: 12 months, \$115. (All tax included.)

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**The Sherman
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Try crepes for breakfast

Crepes are light wraparounds for a variety of sweet, vegetable, cheese or meat fillings. Crepes freeze well so they can be made a day, a week or months ahead. Separate with two layers of wax paper, stack in a bag and store in glass or plastic container. Thaw at room temperature. This information and recipes are from "Quick Lunches & Brunches" by Cyndi Duncan and Georgie Patrick.

Basic Crepes

- Basic Crepes
- 1 cup flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 eggs
- 3/4 cup milk or cream
- 1/2 cup water
- 3 tablespoons oil or melted butter
- Dessert Crepes - Add to the basic recipe
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- Light Crepes - Substitutions in basic recipe
- Use skim milk
- Use only 1 egg
- Omit oil or butter
- Easy substitutions and/or additions
- Use whole wheat flour
- Add a tablespoon or two of cornmeal
- Add 1/2 cup sour cream
- Use chocolate milk

Beat all ingredients in a large bowl until well blended. Lightly grease and heat a 6 inch skillet or large griddle. Remove from the heat and spoon in 2 tablespoons batter. Tilt skillet to spread batter evenly. Return to the heat and brown one side only. Slide onto paper toweling. Repeat until all



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• postscript

batter is used.

Turkey and Cranberry Crepes

- 2 cups cooked turkey, chopped
- 1/2 cup unpeeled cucumber, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup onion, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup light mayonnaise or salad dressing
- 20 crepes
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch
- 1 16 ounce can whole cranberry sauce
- Heat over to 375 degrees. Spray a 9 x 13 baking dish with non-stick cooking spray. In a bowl combine turkey, cucumber, onion and mayonnaise. Spread 3 tablespoons filling onto unbrowned side of crepe, leaving 1/4 inch around the edge. Roll up crepe. Place with seam down in the baking dish. Repeat. Cover with foil and bake 20 minutes. While the crepes are baking, heat cornstarch and cranberry sauce until thickened and bubbly. Take crepes out of the oven and place on plates. Spoon sauce over each crepe. Serves 10.

Leftover cranberry salad can be used instead of canned cranberry sauce. Fresh cranberries can be stored refrigerated for several months and frozen for years without the quality suffering. Unthawed cranberries become soft and need to be used immediately.

Ham and Cheese Crepes

- 1/2 cup butter or margarine
- 1/2 cup flour
- 2 cups light cream
- 2 cups cooked extra lean cubed ham
- 1 cup cubed Swiss cheese
- 2 4 ounce cans mushrooms in liquid
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 24 crepes
- sauce

Cheese sauce

- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 2 cups light cream
- 2 tablespoon wine, sherry or apple cider
- 1/2 cup shredded Swiss cheese
- Dash salt and pepper
- Preheat oven to 375 degrees and spray a 9 x 13 baking dish with non-stick cooking spray. In a medium pan melt margarine. Remove from the heat and add flour. Gradually add cream. Stir often until mix is smooth. Cook until thickened stirring constantly. Add ham, cheese, mushrooms, salt and pepper. Stir until cheese is almost melted. Spoon filling into center of each crepe. Roll and place seam down in the baking dish. Cover crepes with sauce. Bake for 45 minutes covered. Remove cover and broil 3 to 5 minutes. Serves 12.

Cheese sauce

In a pan blend butter and flour and gradually add cream. Stir until thickened. Stir in wine, cheese, salt and pepper until the cheese is melted. Thin with water if the sauce is too thick.

Check the store policy on holiday refunds

Dear Kansas Consumer:

With the Christmas shopping season upon us, my office reminds consumers to be aware of the return policies of the various stores they shop at for their Christmas gifts.

If the goods that are purchased are free of defects, and the sale was otherwise free from deception or unfair acts by the seller, a store is not required to issue a refund. A store should post its refund policy in a clear and conspicuous location so that consumers are fully informed as to that store's policy. If such a notice is not displayed, consumers should ask about the store's return policies prior to making the purchase.

A store may choose not to issue refunds, exchanges or credit. If a store does offer cash refunds,



carla j.
stovall
• consumer corner

it may wait for a certain time period before issuing a cash refund if a consumer has paid with a check.

This is usually done to protect against bad checks.

Some stores will issue refunds, credit, or exchanges without a receipt, but this is not always the case. It is best for the purchaser to keep the receipt or to ask for a gift receipt that may be given with

the gift. Do not assume, however, that the store will offer a refund if the receipt is kept and asked before the purchase is made.

Attorney General Carla J. Stovall offers this public service to help you avoid becoming a victim of consumer fraud. Although some of the details have been changed, the cases appearing in this column are based on actual complaints.

For further information or to file a complaint, please write Attorney General Carla J. Stovall, Consumer Protection Division, 120 SW 10th, 2nd Floor, Topeka, Kansas 66612, or call the toll-free Consumer Hotline, 1-800-432-2310. Leave your name, number and subject of your inquiry with the receptionist and your call will be returned promptly.

Holiday greetings from The Fergusons

Dear Friends and Family,
Happy Holidays!

If you're saying to yourself, "That doesn't look like a picture of the Fergusons on the front of the card," you're right. There was a bit of a mix-up down at the photo store but it was too late to have the cards done over. As you know, Bob and I only have two kids, not four, and neither of us has ever been skiing, but other than that, it's not a bad picture. And we got them for half price, which is a good deal because we've had to watch our pennies ever since Bob got downsized. But we still wonder, who's sending out our pictures this holiday?

Sorry we haven't written sooner but neither of us has been in much shape to write this year. I donated a kidney to my brother-in-law Joe, but he rejected it. It turns out he needed a liver. I always get those two mixed up. Liver, kidney, kidney, liver, what's the big difference? We had a good laugh about it and I'm happy to say that Joe died with a smile on his face. Sometimes laughter "is" the best medicine.

Josh and Amber both got into the community college. Josh is majoring in Body Piercing and Amber is waffling between Assistant Nail Technician or Tattoo Artist. As you know, there were times when I thought they'd never get out of high school. I kept telling them and telling them, "If you don't get good grades you're not going to amount to anything." I'll bet they're glad I nagged them now.

Bob's dad only has to wear the ankle restraint for another three months and then he's off house arrest. He still swears he has no idea what happened to the church's money and that he's just the fall guy. He's already planning a nice long vacation in the



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• the village idiot

Cayman Islands as soon as he gets off parole.

Bob's working at the Big Pig BBQ until another "employment opportunity" shows up. The manager is pretty happy with his work because he says a lot of times older people aren't quick enough to work in the fast food business. Funny, I never thought 46 was all that old. Yet even at his advanced age, he thinks they may make him afternoon grill manager.

It seems my job as a grief counselor is not recession-proof either. After their first consultation with me, more and more people find they have the courage to face this most difficult time alone. When they leave my office almost all of them thank me and say, "You've made me realize that it could be worse. Much, much worse." I guess I was doing my job too well. I'll miss it because it's so rewarding to be able to help people.

Bob's mother is living with us now and it's like having an extra pair of helping hands every day. She's too frail to actually do anything but she does what she can to motivate people. "Who taught you how to do dishes?" she might say helpfully, or "You call that a pie crust?" The kids just love her. If she forgets to say "Are you going out looking like that?" when they leave the house, they feel neglected. Everyone loves her, she's such a people person.

We don't hang stockings over the Yule Log anymore since the accident last year. Who knew a sock

could burn like that? Not Fluffy, that's for sure. Most of her fur has grown back, but she still won't sleep on the mantle like she used to.

That's about it for us, but here's wishing you'll have as happy a holiday as we will this year.

Your friends,
The Fergusons

Jim Mullen is the author of "It Takes A Village Idiot: A Memoir of Life After the City" (Simon and Schuster, 2001). He also contributes regularly to Entertainment Weekly, where he can be reached at jim_mullen@ew.com

berry's world

Dear Santa,
Please bring me
some clothing and an
educational item.

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I WONDER
IF THIS WILL
BLOW HIS
MIND?

