

Social Security takes inspiration from Dr. Seuss

By James Feyerherm
Social Security District Manager in Hays

The National Education Association's "Read Across America" celebration is an annual reading motivation and awareness program that calls for every child in every community to celebrate reading on March 2, the birthday of beloved children's author Dr. Seuss.

Taking some pointers from the gCat in the Hat, h Social Security's own Mouse in the House has something for you to read. You may learn a thing or two.

The sun was not shining. Outside it was wet. Grandma was whining, all full of regret.

I sat there with Granny. Just looking outside.

I asked, "What's wrong?" Then she almost cried.

She said, "I'm unhappy. You want to know why?"

I turned 66, and it's time to apply! But outside it's so wet and so slick and so cold, When the weather gets better, I might be tooold!"

Every Onehere in Oneville, when they reach the right number, Applies for Social Security. To forget is to blunder.

But all we could do was to wait, wait, wait, wait.

To wait for nice weather. It wasn't so great.

And then, something went CLICK! That click made our hearts tick!

We looked, and remembered what we had in our house. We looked and remembered! Our house had a mouse!

The mouse said, "I know it's bad weather for driving. But today's just the right kind of day for onlining! I know a good website, one that you'll love. And I call it Social Security dot gov!"

We logged on the computer and went to the site.

In a matter of minutes, Granny's smile was on tight!

The mouse said, "Online is the way to apply!"

With a grin on her face, Granny said "Oh my!"

Granny cheered, "Look, look!" And she shook with glee.

"I'm done applying! That was so, so easy! The application was so slick and so fast and so fun, Let's go dance in the rain, now that I'm done!"

Then Grandpa woke up, looking quite down.

His pajamas were frumpy. On his face was a frown.

His age was rising and so was the water. "I don't want to go out in that rain, but I oughter."

"What will I do," Grandpa asked about later. "I need to apply, and I'm not a good wader."

Granny and I did not know what to say. Should we tell him about what we'd done here this day?

Should we help him get to Social Security online? We did. And now Granny and Grandpa are fine.

When retirement age comes to someone you love,

Take them to Social Security dot gov.

Some herbicides can work well during crop dormancy

Some herbicides can work well even when applied during the dormant part of the season, while others perform best if the crop and weeds are actively growing. According to Dallas Peterson, K-State weed scientist, the key difference relates to the degree of soil activity provided by the herbicide.

Herbicides that have good residual activity, such as Glean, Finesse, Amber, and Rave can generally be applied in January and February when plants aren't actively growing and still provide good weed control, assuming you have proper conditions for the application. Most other herbicides, which depend more on



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• extension district

foliar uptake, will not work nearly as well during the mid-winter months, when the wheat and weeds aren't actively growing, as compared to a fall or early spring application.

Spring herbicide applications can be effective for winter annual broadleaf weed control as well, but timing and weather conditions are critical to achieve good control.

Spring applications generally are most effective soon after weeds are still in the rosette stage of growth, and during periods of mild weather. Once weeds begin to bolt and wheat starts to develop more canopy, herbicide performance often decreases dramatically.

Another important consideration with herbicide application timing is crop tolerance at different application timings. For example, 2,4-D should not be applied in the fall or until wheat is fully tillered

in the spring. On the other hand, any herbicide containing dicamba can be applied after wheat has two leaves, but should not be applied once the wheat gets close to jointing in the spring. Herbicides containing dicamba include Banvel, Clarity, Rave, Pulsar, and Agility SG.

There has been some discussion about wheat tolerance to herbicides, especially when applied with fertilizer carrier. The best advice regarding crop safety with herbicide-fertilizer combinations and application timing is to follow the label guidelines.

We generally see very minimal crop injury and no yield loss from

topdress fertilizer/residual herbicide applications during the winter months. However, these combinations can often cause considerable burn to the wheat if applied when the crop is actively growing and with warmer weather. The foliar burn is generally temporary in nature and the wheat usually will recover if good growing conditions persist.

Research at Hays several years ago found as much as 47-percent injury to the wheat four days after treatment following a late March treatment of Amber plus 2,4-D, but wheat recovered and yields were not reduced. However, research in Nebraska did show some yield loss

from Ally plus 2,4-D applications with fertilizer applied in late April to more advanced wheat and with moisture stress conditions. Crop injury with herbicide-fertilizer combinations will depend on the total amount of fertilizer applied, dilution with water, and the addition of surfactant. Again the herbicide label provides the best guidelines regarding if, when, and how herbicides can be applied with fertilizer.

Certificate has earned a poor reputation; uses tests

Don't expect to drive through the beautiful campus of Western Governors University. There is no campus. Established in 1997 by 19 western governors – not including Kansas – to "solve" the teacher shortage of the prior decade, this "university" is completely online. And it operates on the same philosophy as the General Educational Development certificate: forget actual coursework and just take a test.

The General Educational Development certificate has earned a poor reputation. With a few exceptions, students who drop out of high school but take the continue to earn wages equivalent to those who never completed high school. Those who attempt post-secondary community colleges or universities drop out at a much higher rate than those who completed regular high school. And the military finds over the last two decades that nearly 40

percent of General Educational Development and virtual school students fail to complete their three years of military commitment.

Similar to the General Educational Development certificate, Western Governors University substitutes the test for the education. Instead of awarding credit hours, it is "competency based," simply another term for test-driven. This philosophy for training teachers may sound good until you apply it to other professions. Skip medical school and go straight to the medical boards – pass the boards and you are a medical doctor. Skip law school and go straight to the bar exams – pass the bar and you are a lawyer.

Of course you do not learn to conduct surgery or prepare a court case in studying for an exam. Veteran teachers know that our exams are only a partial dipstick measure of the richer experiences that students

gain in classes. Our tests do not replace our coursework.

I train biology teachers, so I was particularly interested in how Western Governors credits lab work. They charge an extra \$350 and send the student a "home science lab" so they can do shoe box experiments. I look down my science hall at the hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of DNA analyzers, centrifuges, autoclaves and other equipment that a real university uses to train real biology teachers. Modern biology uses CSI-type equipment; Western Governors sends their biology teachers a Mr. Wizard kit for the kitchen sink.

"A scholar must not confuse an education with an examination" cautioned Chu Hsi, a Chinese educator in the year 1199. Yet 900 years later, this operation that abandons real experiences for testing has hoodwinked both regional accredi-

tors and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education into blessing this college General Educational Development certificate.

Its real appeal is "convenience." The fact that it is cheaper than the for-profits and was started by governors gives it a political legitimacy that it does not deserve.

But the convenience of staying home combined with taking tests instead of courses goes a long way.

Governors of Texas, Washington and Indiana – apparently all education experts – have just welcomed Western Governors into their states, not just for teacher education, but so students who do not succeed in

regular colleges and universities can "succeed" at Western Governors in a broader range of fields. Stop and think just what that statement is really saying. The dilution of the value of U.S. college degrees has already become a common topic at European and Asian education conferences.

So far, Kansas is holding the line – requiring genuine coursework and real universities.

But if you see Western Governors "University" come to Kansas, you will know that the decline of bonafide university credentials is underway in Kansas too.

Atwood man places in contest

Nathan Franklin of Atwood recently won second place in the No-Till/Strip Till irrigated division of the 2011 National Corn Growers' Association's Corn Yield Contest in Kansas. Franklin won with Pioneer brand hybrid 33D49, which yielded 288 bushels per acre.

Franklin earned one of the 411 state titles in this year's contest. Growers planting Pioneer hybrids won 66 percent of all state awards.

The contest is an annual competition among corn producers with the goal of producing the highest yields. Growers compete within a broad range of corn production classes, including non-irrigated,

no-till/strip-till non-irrigated, no-till/strip-till irrigated, ridge-till non-irrigated, ridge-till irrigated and irrigated classes.

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