

You can call this 'music to our ears'

The sun is shining brightly as this is being written Monday morning. We just ended another weekend that featured, among other things, snow. It wasn't a lot of snow, but it warranted attention.

That said, we tip our hat to the guys who man the machines to clear our streets, roads and highways. They do their thing while most of us are asleep. And for those of us who were awakened by the sounds of the snow movers, that was music to our ears.

We are of the opinion that most of us just take the snow troops for granted. But we shouldn't. While clearing the driving surfaces is part of their job, their job is controlled not by man, but Mother Nature. And she doesn't issue a schedule and submit it for publication.

So, rest assured, snow movers, that your efforts and results are appreciated. And welcome.

—Tom Dreiling

Here's a topic in 40th Senatorial District generating lot of debate

Another legislative session is underway in Topeka. As usual, many topics are slated for discussion. Currently there is debate in the 40th Senatorial District concerning the introduction of the black footed ferret on property heavily infested with prairie dogs. Kansas Wildlife and Parks expert, Michael LeValley, admits that the ferret introduction is not intended to control the population of prairie dogs. The ferret needs a densely populated colony of prairie dogs for food supply. I will begin my newspaper articles this year by sharing my views on the introduction of the black footed ferret.

Please read this article, but do your own research concerning the introduction of the black-footed ferret to control established colonies of prairie dogs located in Logan County. My main concern is that we have a 100 year old law in place to help control prairie rodents, and this law has worked quite well to protect adjacent landowners.

It is my opinion that none of us will live long enough to see the day when the prairie dog population will be completely eradicated. As I understand it, in order for the ferret species to survive, the prairie dog population will have to be kept at a dense level. I do think we agree that a "dense" level prairie dog population will allow a greater chance of these rodents spreading out to adjacent landowners.

We proudly live in a land where the majority has always ruled. We respect personal property rights, but also must respect our neighbors. An elderly gentleman once told me "good fences make good neighbors." I would extend this to say "controlling prairie dogs also makes good neighbors."

I admit that my knowledge of the black-footed ferret is limited. I can only speak from my experience of how prairie dogs became a problem for me in the 1970s. In a matter of a few years, these rodents spread out over a 90-acre pasture that I own. Out of respect for my neighbors, I

Senate Doings Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer



completely eradicated the two colonies that had made their home in my pasture. Just this last summer, 30 years later, I have located evidence of re-infestation.

My point being that we will never get rid of this rodent because each landowner places a different level of priority in controlling them. I have found that eradication is time-consuming and very expensive. As long as Wildlife & Parks encourages and protects colonies of prairie dogs by introducing the black-footed ferret, neighbors will have a constant vigil to keep in order to control prairie dogs on their land.

Kansas Wildlife & Parks has mentioned that they will control adjacent property infestation using the boundary method. Will this treatment be on-going, or just a one time deal for neighbors of the properties on which they intend to release the black-footed ferret? Please consider the consequences to these neighbors because they will be faced constantly with possible infestation of prairie dogs on their property.

I realize that my stand against this issue may seem one-sided, but this issue is important to the constituents of my Senatorial District. We must respect the property rights of everyone, especially the people who are directly affected by this decision. We need to make sure the laws of Kansas protect the property rights of everyone, as well.

Senator Ralph Ostmeyer represents the Kansas 40th District. E-mail ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us, phone (785) 296-7399, write State Capitol, -262-E, Topeka, KS 66612-1504.

Remember, Friday is 'Thumbs Up' day

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

Office hours:
8 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri.
Phone: (785) 877-3361
Fax: (785) 877-3732
E-mail: telegram@nwkansas.com

STAFF

Tom Dreiling editor and publisher
Lisa Marie Henderson advertising
Veronica Monier staff reporter
Dick Boyd Blue Jay sports
Carolyn Plotts society editor
Sherry Hickman bookkeeping/circulation
Vicki Henderson computer production

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It's time for winter to take a hike

I am just about sick of winter. Don't get me wrong, I love the four seasons. I look forward to all the changes in the weather. In fact, I'd like to see a change. Right now! I'd like to see it change to sunny and warm. I'd like to see dirt again. I'd like to walk outside without wearing cleated shoes.

We have had nothing but ice, cold and snow for the last three weeks. And, quite frankly, I want it to stop! I'm tired of wearing a sweat shirt, sweat pants, socks and Jim's sno-pac liners to bed.

Several friends have fallen on the ice and broken bones. It's more than "not fun." It is downright dangerous.

I don't feel too bad, though. Jennifer, our daughter in San Antonio, said that it was 31 degrees there and they were expecting sleet and snow tonight. So much for global warming.

-ob-

Our granddaughter, Alexandria, had her 12th birthday Sunday. She was so excited to tell us about the "laser-tag" party she had. My girls used to play laser-tag

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



twenty years ago. I had no idea there were still such places.

For those of you who don't know, laser-tag is a combination of hide-and-seek, cops-and-robbers and Gunfight at the OK Corral. Usually found at a mall, a laser-tag arena supplies the players with a laser gun and a vest with receptors that signal when a player has been "shot" and keeps track of points.

During a play-period, the players enter the arena which has tunnels, corners, doorways and slides. The timer is set and the lights are turned off. Players sneak around the arena "shooting" other players. When a player is shot, their laser gun is inoperable for a set amount of time.

When a player shoots another player, they rack up points on the tote board. Whoever has the most points at the end of the play period, wins.

Anyway, Alex thought she and her friends had a grand time. She said they all went out for pizza and then had a sleep-over at her house. I'm sorry I missed it. I used to be a pretty good shot.

-ob-

Oh, to be 12 again. It was 1959, when I turned 12.

In 1959, Alaska and Hawaii were admitted to the Union; Barbie, with her out-of-proportion measurements, was introduced, Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and The Big Bopper were all killed in a plane crash; Ben Hur was playing in the movie theaters; and Rawhide and Dennis the Menace were on TV. It was pretty innocent stuff back then.

I remember being embarrassed when I heard someone say "pregnant" on television. Now, I'm afraid, children not only know pregnant, but they know conception, too.

Fence jumping cow tasted good!

Back Home Nancy Hagman



They say "Revenge is a dish best served cold." I'm not exactly sure what that means. Does it mean that it is best to wait until your head is cool in order to plan how to retaliate? Or is it because a cold dish would be harder for a foe to choke down? We'll get back to that.

This is the story of Paul's cow. I'm not saying she has "Mad Cow Disease." However for some reason she went a little crazy. She decided she did not want to stay with his herd. She became a "fence jumper." A term which also does not exactly make sense to me because she did not so much jump fences as plow through them.

She went up and down and round and round the neighborhood. The hubby thought it was deer that kept tearing down his fence. Then we started getting calls because she was out on the road. It is a busy road. We were the only ones who had cattle close.

He found out who she belonged to and tried to put her in our pasture. She would be there one day and gone the next. Finally they got her in someone's corrals. Then at least she lived up to her reputation. She jumped over the fence and was gone yet again.

Paul got a tranquilizer gun and shot her. Instead of working like a sedative, it gave her a jolt. Off to the races! At that point there was some discussion about shooting her, and taking her to the locker. But you can't slaughter an animal that has been given a tranquilizer until two weeks

have passed.

And by this time she was so fired up no one could get close enough to get off a shot anyway.

So she ran around the country with a tranquilizer dart hanging out of her hind quarter. (That's not how the guys put it but I don't think I am allowed to say what they said.)

In December, the hubby got his bulls and a couple of odd cows into their winter pasture. Fence Jumper showed up. He put her in with them. Not that he had to do that. She had made it quite clear she would go where ever she wanted, whenever she wanted.

For some reason she stayed. The Hubby takes pride in his cows. Like most stockmen, he knows many of them as individuals. There are a wide variety of styles when handling cattle. The Hubby is soft spoken. We don't use electric prods or get too excited. If an animal does not fit with our system it does not stay on the place (Paul's ultimate goal also!)

He told Paul to leave her alone until she

got calmed down. He began feeding them in the corrals. He would proudly report his progress, "She is the first one to come up from the creek when she hears me coming to feed."

There is a saying, "Pride goes before the fall." Maybe, maybe not. In this case the two things happened at the same time!

Paul was coming over to load her up. The Hubby got there first and went into the barn to move a panel. Fence Jumper, who the hubby is convinced was not so much mean as startled, decided it was time to leave the barn.

The panel was heavy and Hubby who was nursing a bum ankle from sliding on the ice earlier in the week did not move fast enough. The next thing he knew he was looking up, the panel was on top of him and the cow walked over them both.

Don't call. He was shaken up but is fine. Or I guess he is fine. "I'm only going to the hospital when it is so bad you have to call an ambulance," he says.

Someone asked me, "Is Junior really that klutzy or are you exaggerating to make a point?"

I'm a farm wife. I don't have to exaggerate to make my point. Farming is dangerous, please be careful!

Like they say, "All's well that ends well." Paul got her loaded and to the sale.

I've heard of farmers who consider eating beef as revenge. I never quite understood it. But today I had a hamburger. It was delicious. It tasted like revenge. In this case it was best served hot!

Share your thoughts with a Letter to the Telegram Editor
(E-mail tomd@nwkansas.com, fax 877-3732, mail 215 S. Kansas Ave.)