



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Birthday surprise

For Jeanette Weishaar's 70th birthday Wednesday, she received a special surprise from her seven children to commemorate the occasion. They sent her seven bunches of 10 roses each, 70 in all. Her children, Kay, Kevin, Ken, Karen, Sharon, Sandra and Kurt each chose a different color to send to their mother. The roses are white, yellow, lavender, peach, pink, red and hot pink. "I've never had that many flowers in the house at one time before," she said. "I'm enjoying them." Kevin's sister-in-law, Joni Guyer with Prairie Rose Floral in Goodland delivered the roses. He said they wanted to do something special for her, and chose the roses to do it.

Good season for hunting mushroom delicacy

WICHITA (AP) — Recent wet, warm weather made last week one of the best in recent memory for hunters of the wild morel mushroom, fans of the wild fungi say. Business owner Danny Williams, of McPherson, was among those who tramped through woodlands looking for the delicacy after hearing from a friend that the morels were "so thick he couldn't get out his front door without stepping on them."

"It was the best day of mushroom hunting I've ever had," Williams said.

The recent weather was perfect for the mushrooms, which are a subject of devotion for many Kansans.

"If you get rainfall followed by a 55-degree night this time of the year, that generally means you can find them the next morning," said Spencer Tomb, a botany professor at Kansas State University. "Once they start popping up, they can do it in a hurry. You can look someplace in the morning, find none, and they'll be all over that afternoon."

People will drive long distances or go to great lengths to find the morels.

Tom Duckworth, game warden at Fort Riley, said he's seen vehicles from most Kansas counties and all neighboring states around the fort's morel grounds.

And Don Taylor of Manhattan said he uses his fishing boat in the quest.

"For one thing, it gets us to places where others haven't been," said Taylor, who's searched Council Grove and Tuttle Creek reservoirs for morels.

"It also seems that the year after there's been high water, you can go in and find lots of morels all around those lakes."

Besides competing with other people, morel hunters have to beat wildlife to the mushrooms.

And the morels generally appear under ideal conditions only through April and into early May.

Because the hunting requires only walking shoes, bug spray and a bag to carry the bounty, morel hunting is an inexpensive way to spend a few hours.

And, there's just the thrill of the hunt.

"It's kind of like an Easter egg hunt," said Kendall Shaw, one of Williams' partners. "Except morels are about 10 times better than any candy or egg I've ever eaten."

Panel says higher ethanol fuel blend key

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Boosting the level of ethanol used in fuel blends is crucial to continuing the alternative energy industry's rapid growth, a panel of experts said.

About half of the gasoline sold across the United States is blended with 10 percent ethanol, but that percentage needs to increase for ethanol to go from being merely an additive to a true alternative, said Don Endres, chairman and chief executive officer of Brookings-based VeraSun Energy Corp., one the nation's largest ethanol producers.

The Environmental Protection Agency, with a stroke of pen, could approve E-20 or even E-30 blends, which would help demand keep up with an ever increasing supply of homegrown fuel, Endres said Wednesday during a farm bill hearing hosted by Sen. John Thune, R-S.D.

"Then, I think, the free market takes hold here," Endres said.

More than 200 people gathered at South Dakota State University for the two-hour field hearing of the Senate Agriculture Committee's energy subcommittee.

Thune recently asked the EPA to approve the use of a 20-percent ethanol blend. He said an E-20 fuel could increase ethanol demand incrementally until car companies can produce enough special flexible fuel vehicles to make an E-85 fuel the norm.

Much of the prepared testimony at Wednesday's hearing focused on the possibility of the industry's transition from corn-based to cellulosic ethanol.

Jeff Fox, vice president of legal and governmental affairs for ethanol-maker Poet, formerly Broin Companies, said he'd like to see the government show its support for the fuel by extending existing tax credits and incentives offered

to ethanol industry producers and farmers.

Making ethanol from cellulosic or biomass sources such as switchgrass and wheat straw isn't yet profitable, and such efforts need governmental help to develop, he said.

"If you had to make it today, it's not competitive," Fox said.

Thune said incentives prompted corn-based ethanol's growth and that he doesn't think the industry needs to apologize for trying to bring the U.S. more energy independence. When the U.S. buys oil for \$60 or \$70 a barrel from countries such as Iran, Saudi Arabia or Venezuela, "you're essentially paying a ter-

rorism tax," he said.

"The oil industry has benefited enormously from those kind of incentives, and has over time," Thune said.

Poet, recently awarded a Department of Energy grant to build a cellulosic ethanol plant, is focusing its efforts on using corn stover and fiber in addition to the kernel.

"We think it does open up that next level of ethanol production," Fox said.

REMEMBER, THE TIME TO SELL ANYTHING IS WHEN YOU HAVE A WILLING BUYER.

ANTIQUE JEWELRY & OLD WATCHES WANTED!

I am a Graduate Gemologist, a jeweler in Wichita. I travel buying antique diamond jewelry. I also buy vintage men's wristwatches, mostly steel, by many makers, moonphase & chronograph watches (extra buttons & subdials) by most makers. I buy these as-is. They need not run. *No battery watches.* I buy all men's 1930s to 1970s Rolex watches: Cosmograph, Explorer, Submariner, etc. I pay cash (no checks). I make house-calls. Or we meet at your bank, if you prefer. Call toll-free for more information. I will be in this area soon. (Mr.) Kim Shaffer

1 (800) 326-4901 ~ SPECIALTY ANTIQUES

CHIEF: SAVE THIS AD. YOU WILL NOT SEE IT AGAIN! ONLY VISIT EACH AREA ONCE.

VAP CONSTRUCTION, INC.

FINANCING AVAILABLE WAC

Post Frame Barns...

for the everyday farm and ranch

Barn Special: \$17,600

40' x 56' x 12' fully erected, colored metal, engineered trusses on 4' centers, posts on 8' centers, 2"x 6" wallboards on 2' centers, #2 lumber used on roof purlins and wallboards. Includes: 1- upgraded walk door, 1-12' slider, rat guard, eve trim, top and bottom closure strips, tax, and a one year guarantee. Additional freight may apply.

1-866-492-1978 **785-626-3121** **785-626-5110**

Vap Construction, Inc. • Owner: Jeff Vap • vaps@sbcglobal.net

nwkansas.com

Get connected to the Internet with us!

We have local technical support.

Get connected *today!*

Call 462-3963 **Check out our low rate of \$14⁹⁵ per month.***

(*When you pay \$169 for eight months we give you four months free.)