

## We aren't out of the drought yet

On the  
Prairie Dog  
Steve Haynes



Anyone who thinks we're out of the woods when it comes to the drought, just because we got some snow, is as optimistic as a New York commodities trader.

Which, come to think of it, might be why those folks sent the price of wheat spiraling down this week. The market knocked 58 cents, nearly 8 percent, off the cash price over the last two weeks.

So, we had a blizzard. Oberlin got maybe 15 inches in two storms, and that amounted to about an inch of moisture. That, according to wire reports, was about what most of the drought belt was reporting, though the farther east you go, the more water they got.

It brought our moisture for the year to 1.41 inches, which was .4 of an inch more than we had at this time last year. And that sounds pretty good – until you realize that last year we got only 11.35 inches all year. That is less than half our normal precipitation – and dangerously close to the 8 inches that defines a desert.

The wheat crop? Kansas Agricultural Statistics says it's a little better now, but 41 percent remained in fair condition and 36 percent is poor to very poor. Statewide, 61 percent of the fields were short to very short of topsoil moisture. Here in the northwest, however, fully three-fourths of the fields were dry.

What would it take to end the drought?

Not an inch of rain, not a foot of snow. Climatologist Mark Svoboda of the National Drought Mitigation Center in Nebraska told the Associated Press a foot of snow usually equals an inch of rain. That means, he said, it'd take two to four feet just to make up the deficit since fall, he said, and no one was asking for that – not all at once, anyway.

He estimated that we need 12 to 16 inches of moisture for fields and pastures to fully recover. So, the drought won't end anytime soon.

Still, an inch of water is an inch of water. Wheat plants that were beginning to parch in the sun now lie under the snow, protected from the dry winds of spring. When it melts, the moisture will keep them going for a while.

For a while. They'll need more in a couple of weeks, more after that. It's likely we'll get enough over the next three months to keep what's left of the crop going. We usually do.

With a dry fall, though, many fields were damaged. Some didn't come up at all. Farmers will be looking to plant milo or another crop in the spring – if there's enough moisture.

The price, down right now, will bounce around, jumping this way and that with news reports. There'll be a wheat crop, but nobody expects a good one.

One blizzard does not a drought break.

A couple dozen more might, but only a New York commodities trader would bet on that.

– Steve Haynes



## Representation is based on majority

Let's look at how representation works, or in some cases doesn't. It doesn't matter whether it is local or whether it is national. Representation is just that, representation of how the majority of the constituents voted. It does not matter if it is one vote or 1,000 or 1,000,000; majority rules in democracy.

At the time they were elected members to governing bodies, whether as council members or congressional delegates, they were seen as the best qualified candidate. In some cases, they were the only willing candidate, but regardless they were elected in good faith to represent the voters.

President Obama was elected, by both popular vote and Electoral College vote. The Senate is controlled by the Democrats and the House by Republicans. What matters is the functioning power of our government, both locally and nationally.

Whether Obama truly thought he

Phase II  
Mary Kay  
Woodyard



could jump start a failed Congress by signing the Sequester, really doesn't matter. As of today, unless something magical happened between the writing of this column and its publication, the government has suffered severe cutbacks both in money and in services. "...after the cuts take effect, that part of the federal budget will drop to levels not seen in five decades as measured against the size of the economy." Fifty years ago, 1963, population was less, government restrictions were fewer and the dollar was worth more.

Even with the cuts, we can pay our military personnel, because their

salaries, but not their health benefits, are exempt. Forget, however, providing them with any military supplies. Those are cut. We will put them in harm's way, but without the benefit of protection. We can't touch the congressional salaries either, and they probably wouldn't recognize supplies if they had them. We rely on the military to work together, obviously not a requirement for our elected government.

My biggest complaint with President Obama and probably most Democrats is this, they are idealists. President Obama, I think, believed the Congress would work together rather than bring the country to its collective knees. John Boehner tries to understand a party of helium balloons struggling to stay anchored. All the while, the American people are being held hostage.

I think Adlai Stevenson had it right when he said, "It is often easier to fight for a principle than to live up to it." Mail to: mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net

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There is a lovely Scottish story about the landowner who left his hired man in charge of the farm. He was outraged when he returned during a raging storm and found the man asleep in his bed. Then he realized the man had secured everything before retiring. Thus: "How to Sleep on a Windy Night!"

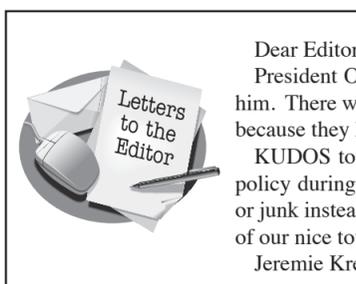
The philosophy is great, but in practice if you can't sleep and you can't figure out what it is you need to do to rest your mind, what do you do?

We have been entertaining colds at our house. My sister-in-law, a nurse, says Dayquil during the day and Nyquil during the night. I slept like a baby when I took Nyquil. But my cough is gone, so probably not a good idea to keep knocking back the Nyquil. Anyway it tastes terrible!

When I go to sleep I have such vivid and often scary dreams.

Gracie, age 6, and Jacob, age 9, were telling us a wild story about what happened in a horror movie. I inquired where they saw this. They were actually only retelling what they saw in a TV ad for a movie.

In the casual way of children they told of the experience with lots of (fake?) bravado. Oh no, they weren't



## Shutting off the brain and get a good night's rest

This Too  
Shall Pass  
Nancy  
Hagman



really scared. It was funny and cool!

I know Hollywood says watching violence had no effect on us. But I disagree. A commercial for a horror film shown on a channel their parents had deemed was appropriate for Gracie and Jacob affected them. They were talking about it days later, trying to figure out where such images fit into their view of the world.

Lots of people like macabre stories and movies. Perhaps it is not necessarily harmful but to my mind it desensitizes us to pain. It seduces us into a thought process of: if A and B are acceptable; why not push the boundaries and try C.

One of my recent dreams conjured up images from "The Exorcist". Wow; where did that come from? I remember the 70's only vaguely. I certainly thought I'd put "The Exorcist" behind

me. When we were doing Yoga regularly, we always did it in the mornings. Once we did a night session to see if we could involve more people. One of the women said she had the best night's sleep she had ever had after Yoga. Yoga is very soothing and helpful in lots of a myriad of ways. I need to brush up on it but it's not much fun by oneself.

I am exercising. I got a cute little elliptical machine. I am wondering if I should be doing it in the morning rather than night. Does exercise get you wound up and ready to take on the world or tire you out?

I'm even wondering about my bedding. Love the feather pillows but maybe I've developed an allergy. Maybe I didn't have a cold. Maybe I am coughing because of my pillow!

Or maybe it does have something to do with "Windy Nights". There is something I've left undone!

What could it be---write my column for the newspaper????

Okay, that's done! I promise something better next week. If I can get some sleep!

Dear Editor,  
President Obama is the only President narcissistic enough to nominate Jesus to serve under him. There would likely be more Republicans than McCain and Graham voting against it (only because they know Jesus is King), but they're probably the only two who'd get any air time.

KUDOS to Mary Jane Wahlmeier. Well said. Maybe the City would consider revising its policy during Spring/Fall cleanup to include everything in the front yard that looks like trash or junk instead of just what's by the curb. It won't cure laziness, but it would improve the look of our nice town.

Jeremie Krehbiel