

Along the Sappa

A Tide of Green,
an Avalanche of
Spring Trash

It’s spring now for sure; a wave of green has washed across Kansas.

The grass is growing, hills and pastures are green, trees have leafed. You can walk down shady streets, and the sun is warm enough some days to drive you under those trees.

The irises are blooming, the greatest flower show of the year.

Generally, I love spring. It’s the best season to be outside. Mornings are a little cool still, but we’ve been able start having lunch and sometimes dinner on the back deck. Afternoons are great for reading, better yet now that the trees give it a little shade.

You can walk anywhere, any time – except when it’s raining, but when is that? – and enjoy the weather. Between that and the grass starting to grow, I’m getting plenty of steps.

So, what’s not to like about spring?

I’ll tell you what: it’s a mess, and it’s all the trees’ fault.

Oh, they’re pretty with their flowers and their new green leaves. I love them, but I’d love them more if they didn’t make such a mess.

Just in our yard, there’s the Bradford pear. It kicks off the spring with the most audacious floral display, hundreds, maybe thousands (ours is a really big pear tree) of small, fragrant, white flowers. They’re a joy to look at, to sniff on the breeze, to take pictures of.

Then the mess starts.

The blossoms die and shatter. The petals blow around the yard, forming drifts that look a lot like snow – until they turn yellow, then brown.

That stage is followed by the fall of the tree’s (sterile) flowers, which since they can’t be fertilized, fall by the hundreds onto the deck, the yard and the driveway. Each one comprises a tiny dead flower, sans petals, and an inch-long stem. They pile up, and boy is that a mess.

Next come the elm trees, with their thousands of tiny seeds that drift and blow down the street. Oh, they’re pretty at first, green just like new leaves. The elms are out front, so they at least don’t mess up the deck and patio. They leave that to the ash tree out back. It was small and spindly when we moved in, but today it’s a big, mature tree.

And every branch sprouts not only tiny leaves but big, frond-like flowers. These are not pretty blossoms like the pear’s, but sort of brownish green and quite homely. And that’s just on the tree.

Wait until they drop. What a mess.

(It’s no better in the fall, when the ash sheds first its leaves, then the little foot-long sticks they grow on. But that’s for later.)

So at some point, someone will need to rake up the fallen flowers, sweep the deck and patio and generally clean up after the trees. (The browned-up petals seem to just melt away on their own, however.)

That someone would be me.

So while I love spring, and I mostly love the trees, I can get a little testy when they shed their collective mess.

I’m just glad when they’re done and I can enjoy mowing. That a job I get into; the lawn looks and smells so good when it’s done.

Don’t ask me about fall. Just let me enjoy the green season.

–Steve Haynes

COLBY FREE PRESS

155 W. Fifth St. Colby, KS. 67701 • Phone (785) 462-3963
(USPS 120-920)
Official newspaper of Thomas County, Colby, Brewster, Gem and Rexford.

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THE COLBY FREE PRESS (USPS 120-920) is published every Wednesday and Friday, except the days observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year’s Day, by Nor’West Newspaper, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701.

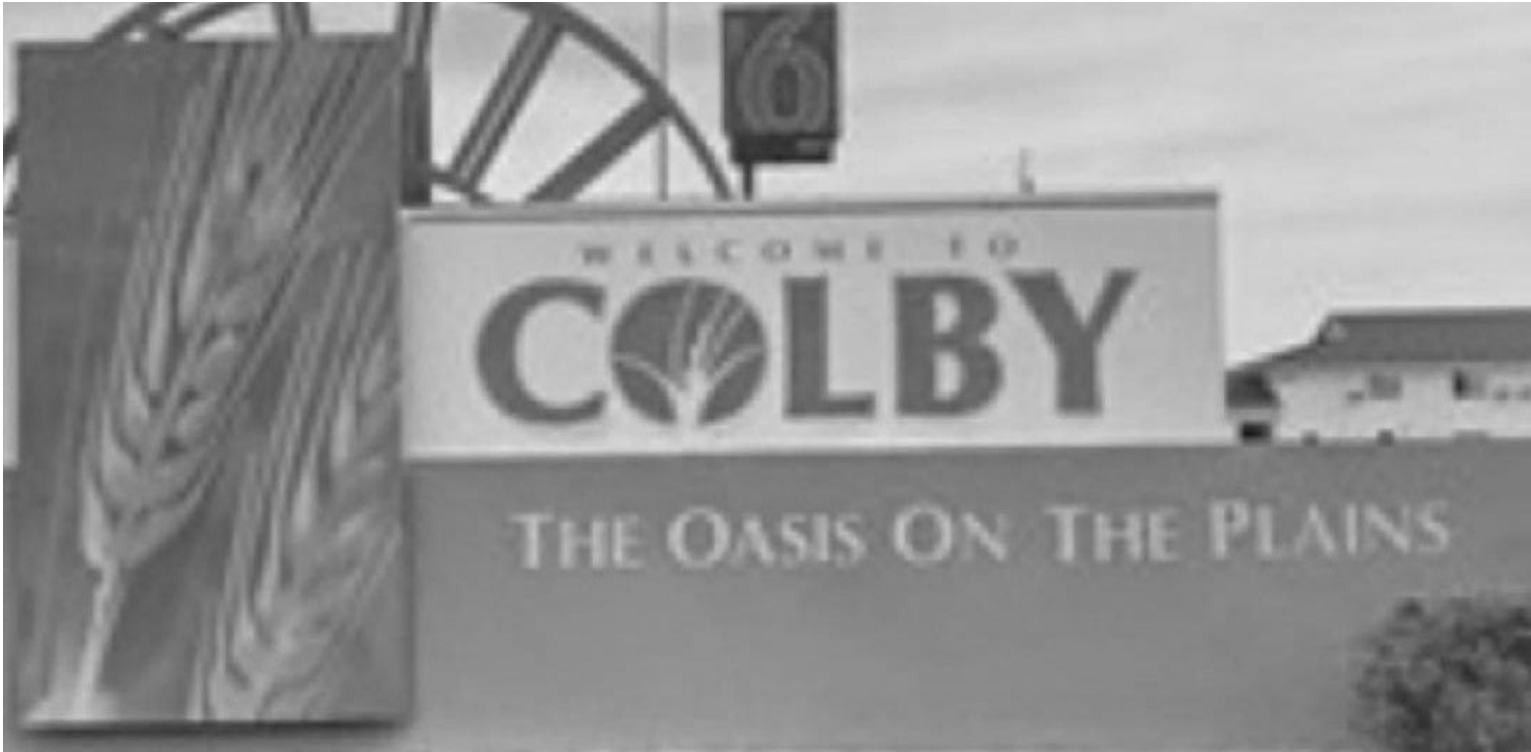
PERIODICALS POSTAGE paid at Colby, Kan. 67701, and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Colby Free Press, 104 W. U.S. Highway 24, Goodland, Kan., 67735.

THE OFFICE at 155 W. Fifth is open from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. M-F.

MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, which is exclusively entitled to the use for publication of all news herein. Member Kansas Press Association and National Newspaper Association.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: Delivery by carrier or mail in Thomas County and adjacent counties in the “677: ZIP code: three months \$32, one year \$84. By mail elsewhere in the U.S., three months \$42, one year \$94. Student rate: In Kansas \$69 (nine months); mailed once per week elsewhere in the U.S. \$79.



What’s Chocolate Got
to Do with It?



out to
pastor

• james snyder

Did you ever have a morning when everything went exactly as you planned? Well, neither have I.

I plan my schedule to include everything I need for the day. But, unlike The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, I fall way short of accomplishing that.

When I think I have my schedule in place, something undermines everything I’ve done so far. Oh boy, if I only had the scheduling gift of The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage.

She can plan a dozen projects simultaneously and complete them all at once, usually ahead of schedule. After living with her for 54 years, I still don’t know how she does it. I want to ask her, but you know how that would turn out.

Without her knowing, I could watch her and see how she is doing what she is doing at the time. No matter how much I watch, I could never figure out her multitasking secret. If I knew that one secret, imagine all the stuff I could do in one day.

I took a break one morning and went into the kitchen to get a cup of coffee. For some reason, I opened one of the cupboard doors and was surprised to find a Hershey chocolate bar. I’m not quite sure where that came from, but I was so excited to find it.

The thought in my head was, “Should I, or shouldn’t I?”

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage cannot eat chocolate. It gives her a headache, so she says. So, I don’t think she purchased that chocolate bar. Why would she? However, it did not matter where it came from; all that matters is where it’s going. I went to my easy chair with my cup of coffee and the amazing chocolate bar.

I can’t remember the last time I had a chocolate bar, but I was really anticipating enjoying this one. After taking a sip of coffee, I unwrapped my chocolate bar and looked at it briefly.

Do you know how wonderfully delicious a chocolate bar looks? I couldn’t keep my eyes off that amazing treat.

I took the first bite and found my world flourishing like red roses. I had forgotten how chocolate affects my attitude.

No matter how angry, grouchy, or frustrated I feel, one bite of a chocolate bar makes it all disappear.

Growing up near Hershey, Pennsylvania, I was very familiar with their chocolate. In fact, my father worked there for a short time and often brought home samples.

I sighed as I sipped my coffee. I stared at the chocolate bar and wondered who created it. Whoever created it deserves a Nobel Peace Prize.

After two bites, I had forgotten all my stress that morning. All I could think about were lovely roses floating in my mind and their amazing fragrance. Chocolate has a way of doing that for me. My best thoughts come while eating chocolate.

Suddenly, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage burst into the room where I was sitting and demanded, “Just what are you doing?”

At first, I was so euphoric that I didn’t recognize her. All I saw were red roses around her head. I smiled, and then suddenly realized who she was.

At that point, there was no way I could hide that chocolate bar I was enjoying.

“I’m just,” I said cautiously, “resting from a very hard morning.” I flashed a smile at her, but she wasn’t smiling at me.

“And where did you get that chocolate bar?”

It’s one thing to lie but quite another thing to lie to The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. There are reciprocations. My head was so euphoric that I didn’t quite know how to answer her.

“I just found it in the cupboard,” I said with a big smile.

She stared at me and said, “You found

it in the cupboard? I purchased that chocolate bar for our granddaughter’s birthday this week. You had no right to eat her birthday present.”

I wasn’t sure I understood what she meant, but eating that chocolate bar made me calm. It blocked out any negativity.

“That’s okay,” I said cheerfully, “I’ll go to the store and buy her a chocolate bar.”

My plan was to buy three chocolate bars, hide two, and give one back for our granddaughter’s birthday.

When I eat chocolate, I can think as clearly as ever. That’s why I like chocolate.

“Okay,” The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage said, “as long as you only buy one Hershey’s chocolate bar. That would be just perfect.”

I’m going to fix this problem somehow. But for now, I have at least three more bites of this Hershey’s chocolate bar.

As I was enjoying this chocolate bar, I had an interesting thought. Will there be Chocolate in heaven?

When I finished that amazing Hershey Chocolate Bar, I remember what Jesus said in Matthew 11:28-30, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Like everyone else, my days can be very stressful. A chocolate bar can only go so far. To truly experience peace from Jesus’ perspective, I need to come unto the Lord. This invitation requires that I act on it and come to the Lord.

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Home & Family
Food Allergies



from
other pens

• Melinda Daily

More than half of Americans have a food-related sensitivity. In the United States, an estimated 53% of people have a food allergy, food intolerance or food sensitivity, said Kansas State University food scientist Karen Blakeslee.

“Food allergies are life altering and can be fatal,” Blakeslee said. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that up to 200 people die annually from food allergies; others may experience serious health issues.

While most food allergies are diagnosed in childhood, data has shown that at least 15% of patients are first diagnosed in adulthood. Diagnosing a food allergy early and strict avoidance of the food allergen is the best way to manage serious health issues.

The top nine food allergens include milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, soy, wheat fish, shellfish and sesame. Tree nuts, peanuts, milk and shellfish are the most frequently reported food allergens.

Symptoms of an allergic reaction in-

clude hives, coughing, swelling of the face and tongue, difficulty breathing, and loss of consciousness. Anaphylaxis – characterized by difficulty breathing, swelling, low blood pressure and rapid heart rate – is the most serious reaction and requires an epinephrine injection immediately to stop the reaction.

Blakeslee said the Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act of 2004 (FALCPA) and the Food Allergy Safety, Treatment, Education and Research Act of 2021 (FASTER), require food manufacturers to list any of the nine major food allergens on package labels.

Allergens must be listed in parentheses following the ingredient, such as ‘lecithin (soy)’, ‘flour (wheat)’ and whey (milk)’; or immediately after or next to the list of ingredients with the word ‘contains’ – such as ‘contains wheat, milk and soy.’

Some food manufacturers may add an advisory statement, such as ‘may contain (allergen),’ or ‘Produced in a facility that also uses (allergen).

A food allergy reaction does not happen just at home, school or a restaurant; it can happen anywhere, including the workplace. Some examples at work include a shared kitchen, a party to celebrate staff, networking lunch or dinner, or traveling for conferences.

The best way to determine if you have a food allergy is to get a medical diagnosis. Some children may outgrow food allergies to milk, soy, eggs and wheat, but “always consult medical advice before adding these foods to a diet.

Melinda Daily is a Sunflower Extension District Family Consumer Science Agent