

Outback

Upholstery

I think Jim would be pleased to know his upholstery equipment went to someone who 1) knows what they’re doing and 2) appreciated the opportunity to go into business for himself.

When a friend called to see if I was interested in selling Jim’s equipment, I replied in the affirmative ... with one caveat: he HAD to take all the materials and tools that went along with the actual sewing machines. What good would bolts of material and yards of cording do me if I didn’t have the sewing machines?

My new friend, Roger, is a transplant to this country, but he had been in the upholstery business for 20 years. It was something he was good at, he said, and he wanted to pursue it here. Upholstery work is getting to be a lost art, so I was more than happy to give him a slight advantage with everything he would need to set up his own business.

To show his gratitude, Roger has recovered a small chair I had and covered a valance to match; both for my upstairs lounge room. I am thrilled with his workmanship and his winning personality. I am not his booking agent, but if you need a truck seat covered or grandma’s old sofa, give me a call or send an email. I’ll put you in touch.

OK, so I’m a wuss. But this recent cold snap caused me to turn the furnace back on. At first, I was going to brave it out – the furnace had been off for days – but when the temperature continued to drop, I finally gave in.

Really, what was the sense of wearing a coat around the house in May?

Memorial Day dawned cold, overcast and rainy, and I admit to watching the services from the comfort of my vehicle. However, I have nothing but admiration for the Legion members, who braved the elements to pay tribute to fallen comrades, firing a salute, standing at attention while “Taps” played.

My flowers were all but gone by Memorial Day. I took a bunch of purple iris and pink roses to Lyle, where my folks and little sister are buried, leaving me just enough for a nice bouquet to place on Jim’s grave. He loved flowers.

A friend who accompanied me commented that she normally didn’t like cemeteries, but this one made her feel good. Which prompted me to recall something my mom used to say: “You can tell how people will treat the living by the way they treat the dead.”

—Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts

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.

NEWS
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ADVERTISING
Contact the Office Manager for obituaries, legals or public notices, and classifieds.
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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.

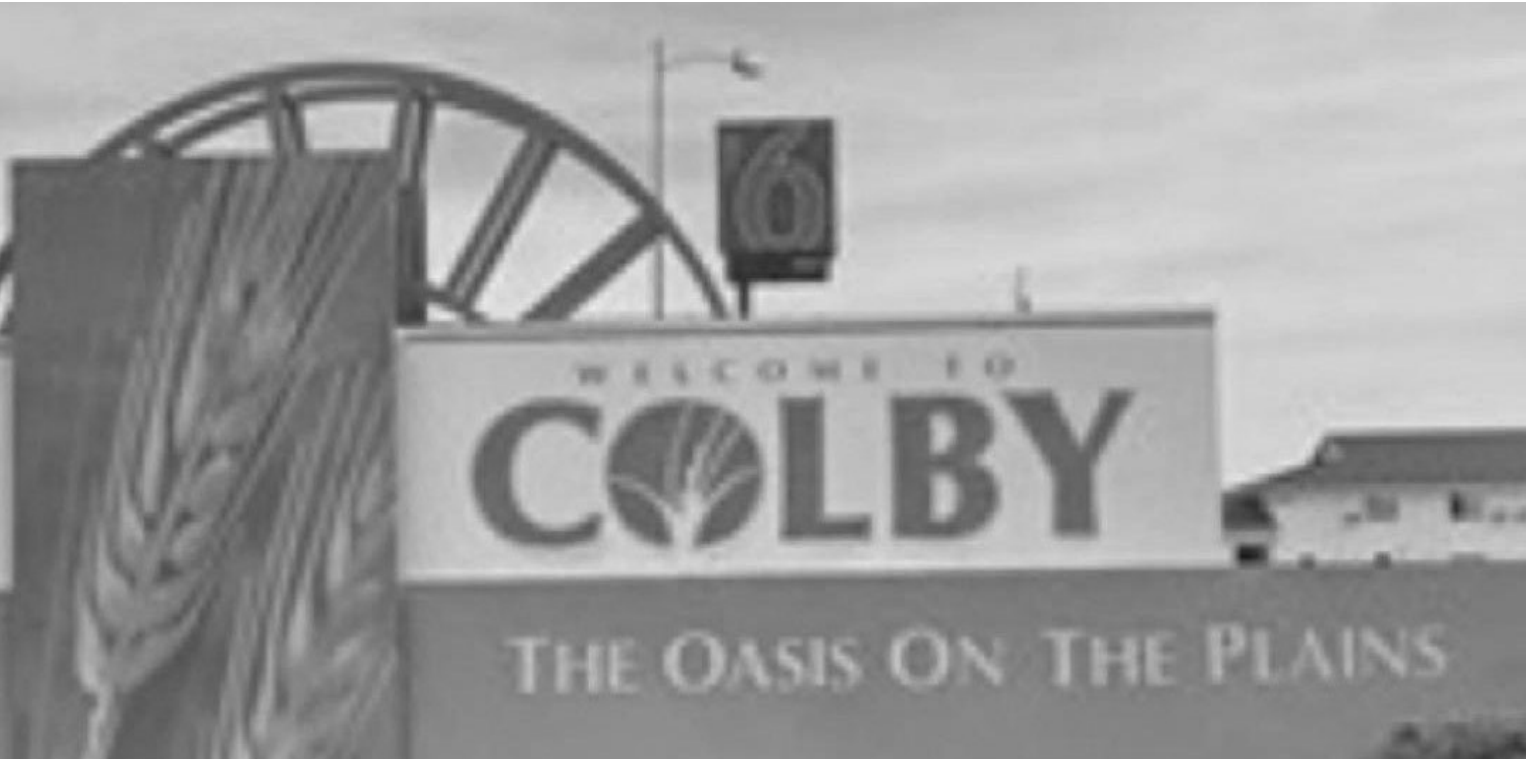
PERIODICALS POSTAGE paid at Colby, Kan. 67701, and at additional mailing offices.

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.



To Be or Not to Be, That’s My Confusion



out to
pastor

• james snyder

After many years of denial, I finally realized how easily I am confused. Why it took me so long to realize this, I will never know.

If only I could go back to my wonderful teenage years when I knew everything and nobody could tell me what to do. Why do those days go by so quickly?

Now, I’m at the stage where I’m looking at life a little more realistically than I did back in my teenage years.

The main problem with this is not only can I get confused, but I rarely know when I’m confused. That in itself is confusing to me.

I am not blaming old age because, as I look at my life, I’ve been confused throughout although I didn’t know it at the time. I have no idea what old age contributes to my state of confusion each day.

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage is the one person in our home who is never confused. I’m not sure how she has done this all these years. It can’t be easy living with someone like me, who’s always confused.

I’ll be working in my office, she’ll step in and say, “Are you ready to go?”

A little surprised, I look up from my desk and say, “Go where?”

She looks at me for a moment and says, “Don’t you remember you have a doctor’s appointment today?”

What,” I will say, “do I have a doctor’s appointment for?”

At that point, I am in a real state of confusion. But I had to ask, “It’s not a psychiatrist, is it?”

“Oh, I wish,” she says and walks away.

I could not remember my doctor’s appointment for today. Do I really have a doctor’s appointment? Or is she taking me to see her doctor?

Surely, there must be some advantage to being confused. I’m going to search for it until I find it, and until then, I will operate in my confused mode.

When I grab my truck keys and head

for the door, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage often asks, “Do you know where you’re going?”

I don’t think I would’ve been confused if she hadn’t asked that question. Obviously she knows something I didn’t know. I look back at her, smile, and ask, “No, where am I going?”

On my way to the door, I thought I knew where I was going. I carefully planned everything out: where I was going and what I would do and when I would return home. But when she questioned me, all that came up in my fuzzy mind was confusion. Do I really know where I’m going?

I wouldn’t say this out loud, but I sometimes think she does that intentionally to confuse me. And boy, is she an expert at that. When I’m confused I’m easy to manipulate.

When working on a writing project I am never confused. I know exactly what I’m doing and quite content and what I’m doing.

My biggest problem is knowing if I should do something or not. I can never figure that out. “To do, or not to do?” That seems to be my confusion.

I get up early in the morning, take my coffee to my easy chair, and enjoy those few moments of quietness. During that time, I think of my schedule for the day.

It’s easy to think of what I could do, but my most demanding job is figuring out what I should not do. If I do everything I want to do, I’m never going to finish anything. I need to learn to manage my time so I don’t sink into the swamp of confusion.

Thinking along this line, it occurred to me that if I could figure out what not to do I believe I could get much more done. Differentiating between “do and don’t” is

very hard for me.

If I do what I don’t have to do, it takes away time to do what I should do. Oh boy, this is very confusing.

I recently spent a week observing The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, watching her every step. I wanted to see her aspect of “do and don’t”. The end result of that week was I couldn’t find anything she didn’t do. She is the Do Queen of the Parsonage. I could not find one thing she didn’t do.

I wish I could understand how that happens and differentiate between “do and don’t”. That would eliminate some of my confusion, I think.

Perhaps that is why people get old and forget things. Maybe it’s a good thing to forget some things. If only I could select the things to forget, my life would be a lot better and less confusing.

Until then, I will wallow in my confusion.

While pondering this I was reminded of a verse of Scripture in Philippians 3:13-14. “ Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

With all of the things in front of the apostle Paul, he boiled his life down to just one thing, “forgetting,” and then “reaching forth.” To know what to forget enables me to understand what to reach forward to. That certainly will simplify my life.

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Home & Family

Natural Dyes



from
other pens

• Melinda Daily

Spices, fruit, vegetables and even insects could be used to make new dyes in our future.

The U.S. government’s move in late April to phase our petroleum-based synthetic dyes from the nation’s food supply will challenge food manufacturers to use more natural sources of ingredients in colorful foods, said Kansas State University food scientist.

Karen Blakeslee notes that the source of food colors in the future may come from spices, fruits, vegetables or even cochineal (scale) insects.

“For the home cook,” Blakeslee added, “some colorful foods could be used, but the flavor of those foods would also be included in the final product.”

As an example, grinding up freeze-dried strawberries will provide pink color to a food, but also add a strawberry flavor.

Another issue is how the natural color reacts with other ingredients in the recipe. The overall acidity or any heating of a finished product can change color considerably.

It is possible that natural colors may not be as bright and colorful as current colors used in food manufacturing.

On April 22, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration initiated a process to revoke authorization for two synthetic food colors – Citrus Red N. 2 and Orange B – within

the coming months. Several other colors are expected to be eliminated from the food supply by the end of 2026.

Including last year’s decision to ban FD&C Red No. 3, there are nearly a dozen color dyes that will be removed from food production.

Blakeslee said that natural dyes are expensive and consumers will eventually make the final decision on whether they like the new food products.

The methods to make natural food dyes will determine the cost in the end, plus the source availability for that color. “Research and development programs will also have to conduct consumer sensory evaluation to determine acceptance. These dyes will have to be approved by the FDA for food safety, including the risk for food allergens that may be present.”

Melinda Daily is a Sunflower Extension District Family Consumer Science Agent