

## Holiday Wishes to One and All

### AGRI-VIEWS

by Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent

Another year is drawing to a close. Hanukkah is over, Christmas and Kwanza are right around the corner and New Year's Eve hot on their tail. I swear that we just celebrated one New Year and I've finally gotten used to writing 2017 on everything. Somebody asked me what I had on my Christmas wish list this year and I said nothing. They looked at me somewhat shocked and I added, nothing that anyone can give me.

You see, my Christmas wish list is as much a New Year's Resolution list as it is a wish list. Most of what I want isn't material possessions. It's social, cultural, medical things that impact everyone but no single person can provide. It's changes in attitudes. It's changes, for the better, in how we treat each other and changes in how we view each other and the world around us. But since that one person asked, here's a portion of my wish list.

My wish list starts with "tolerance". It saddens me that so many Christmas cards use the phrase "Peace on earth, goodwill towards men" or some variation on that. It saddens me because we seem to see so much of just the opposite. We find it far easier to see the differences between ourselves and others, without realizing how much we have in common. We worry about our side "winning" when in reality, there is no "winning". Life isn't a game, it's life and it takes all of us working together to merely survive. We seem to spend so much energy and money fighting each other that we forget how much good could be accomplished if those dollars and energy were focused on meeting more serious needs. I wish that myself and others would find more tolerance of anyone who is "different" because that's basically everyone!

Next on my list is a better understanding of the natural world. The planet, and everything on it and in it, are not just resources to be used for our financial gain, they are our space ship, our home, our only sanctuary. We don't have a supply chain coming in from outer space other than sunlight. We are in a closed ecosystem and everything that we need to survive is right here, if we can just learn how to use it wisely. We are making so many decisions based on short term economics without examining the long term social and ecological impacts. The world has a lot to teach us but first we have to realize that the planet has finite resources and some times the best way to deal with a problem is not to create a problem. It doesn't matter what laws we make or how much money we throw at a "problem", we truly can not control nature. We can mess it up pretty bad, but we can't control it.

The last thing on my wish list is a cure. A cure for cancer, or heart disease, or mental illness. Sure, we bring many problems on our self by the choices that we make, but there are also so very many people suffering with so many health issues. Maybe we can never find cures for some issues, or maybe every time we find a cure we find a new issue. But there is so much need for so many resources to learn how to deal with these issues. If we could just focus our energy and funds on these problems...

So that's the start of my list. Is it impossible to achieve? Maybe, but that doesn't mean we don't try. I can't change you or anyone other than myself. But maybe if I'm a good example and keep trying, someone else may be inspired to try harder also. Start in your own house by spending extra time focused on your family during these holidays, instead of your phone. And until I see you again, have a very merry holiday season, whatever holiday you celebrate, and a very Happy New Year!