

Gasoline deliveries to Shortgrass ranches are becoming uncertain. At the end of June, some 29 customers were waiting for fuel in our area. I was saved at the ranch because of the hot weather. I just don't burn much fuel in

Around the coffee houses, everybody claims they are staying home more than usual. Over the fourth, the kids in Mertzson nearly blew down the town shooting fireworks, the result I suspected, of being grounded.

The local council of government furnishes a minibus to haul the elderly to San Angelo for groceries and medical care. I think the service is going to have to be expanded to ferry teenagers on Saturday nights, or we'll have some cases of fuzzy cheeked stall fever that'll put the town into hysteria.

Two of my sons have agreed to use the same car on dates except for special occasions. After gasoline passed the 80-cent mark, these two very mobile gentlemen decided that their private transportation needs could be unitized. Also, I helped them make up their minds by holding a short credit card burning afternoon in our living room.

Fire, I think, is a more forceful way to make your point than, say, using a plow or a food grinder to dramatize your cause. Flames and smoke seem to make an argument come through. I was pleased that I wasn't buying any more gasoline.

I have begun to reshape my energy policy in another way. When Mr. Carter gave the farmers' diesel allotment to the truckers, I had a flashback on all that ruckus the tractor jockeys raised last winter in D. C.

Secretary Bergland, you'll recall, tried to tell those upset planters that they'd better go back home and cool off. Mr. Bergland knew, and I knew, that citizens violating the privacy of their elected officials was going to cause trouble. Instead of waving their hands and hats in front of the television cameras, they should have been holding their hats in their hands across their chests. Politicians want a bunch of home folks around the big town about as much as they want nosy reporters on hand. I knew there was going to be a fine for that indiscretion. I just didn't know what the price would be.

So I've been trying to guess who the energy czar is going to be in our country. A fence is a lot easier to patch before an old cow has jabbed her head through the hole and stretched the wires.

I'm being nice to everyone up at the courthouse, from the J.P.'s to the government officials. On any occasion when I'm in the company of an official worthy, I mention that seven of our children are of voting age. I've shaken so many hands and done so much hat-tipping that my wife heard

down at the beauty shop that I was back in politics. Gasoline is precious, but it's not worth that sacrifice.

Once the rationing books and the stickers and the stamps come out, it'll be too late to make friends. I'd sure like to have enough gasoline to see the futurity on Labor Day in Ruidoso. Parts of the Southwest are so distant that it takes a pair of field glasses to see the mirages. For this one time, I'm going to be on the winning side.