

from our viewpoint...

What we want politicians to do

As Congress and the president come down to the wire next month, we're sure they will come up with a deal to raise the budget ceiling and avert a financial disaster.

When they do, they need to keep in mind what the American people want. That, we believe, is nothing less than a new approach to federal spending and the economy.

So what do we want? Here's a wish list:

- An end to endless deficits. As the states have been doing, the federal government needs to wake up and realize that resources are finite. We only have so much money, and we can't continue to overspend our income.

- With Europe finally coming to its senses, Washington is about the last place on earth where financial reality has not settled.

- A simplified, fair tax structure, where everyone pays his share, rich and middle class alike. The tax code should not be about winners and losers, just about raising revenue and doing it fairly.

- This may take time, but a general agreement is required now.

- No tax increase. The government has plenty of money. Instead of increasing the tax bite, except where fairness demands changes, the government just needs to learn to live with its income.

That's what the rest of us, taxpayers, states and local governments now have to do. The federal government needs to do the same.

- Transparency. The public needs to know what happens, what deals are struck, what the consequences will be. That will be especially tough for Congress and the White House. They are used to putting whatever "spin" they feel like on the news.

This time, they need to come clean. The American people are tired of getting the runaround. We're tired of those in Washington putting off hard decisions and letting the government drift from crisis to crisis, all the time telling us they are taking care of things.

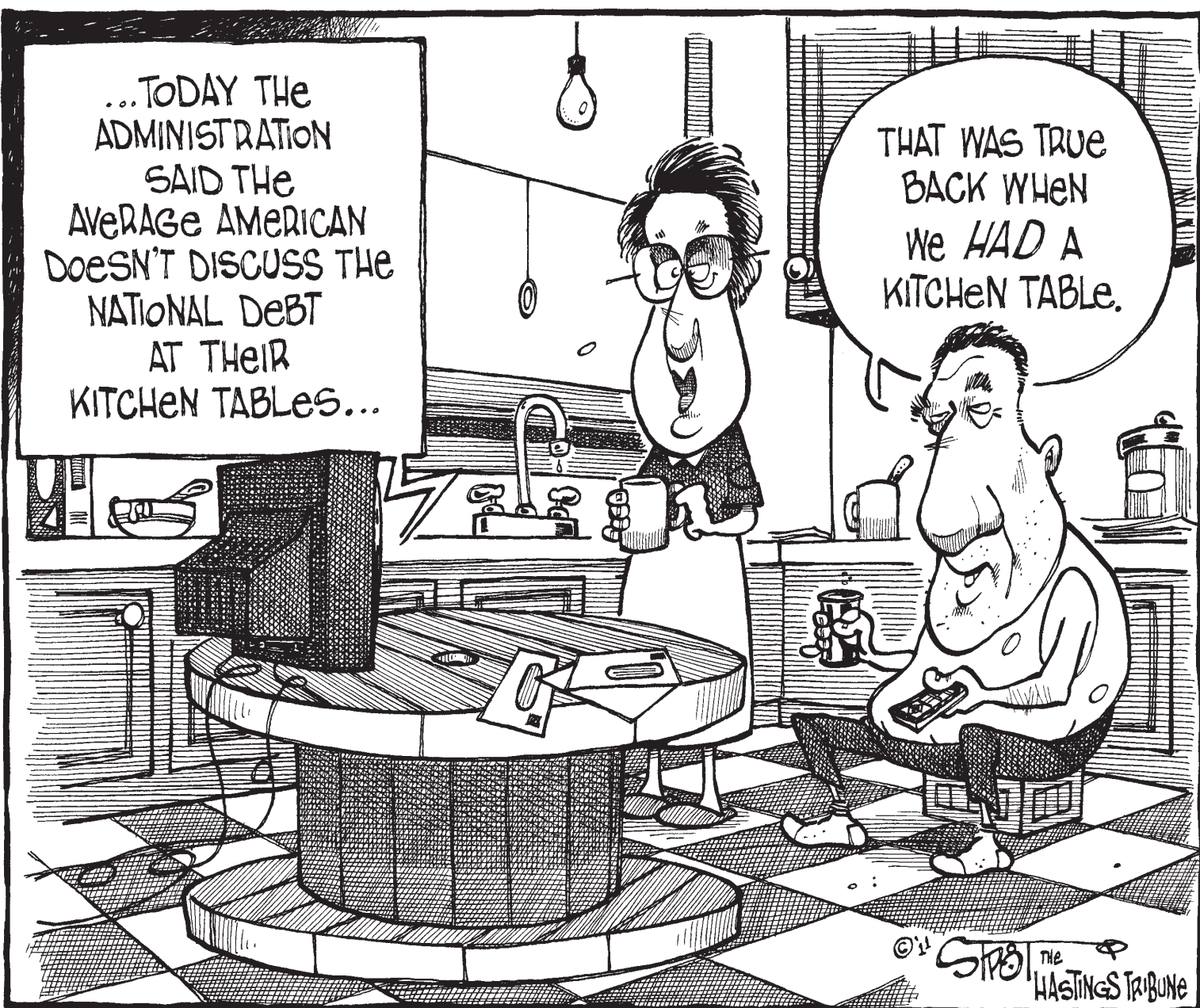
If things had been taken care of, we wouldn't be in this mess, would we?

- A pledge that this is the very last time we'll have to put up with an increase in the debt limit. Everyone has been nodding and agreeing when the Treasury asks for more borrowing power. The "tea party" members are right when they decry this kind of business-as-usual approach to the deficit.

The national debt has piled higher and higher. This is the time for everyone to agree that enough is enough.

- As the smoke fades, a return to true bipartisan government, where the opposing forces put aside the next election and just do what's right for the country.

And if all that happens, maybe we'll re-elect some of them next year. Just maybe. — *Steve Haynes*



Diabetes can hit any family member

Diabetes is a nasty disease.

My father-in-law had it, and it was hard on the whole family.

Steve watches his diet, has his blood sugar checked regularly and exercises faithfully. But sometimes, nothing you do is enough and a member of your family succumbs.

We knew she had a problem. She started drinking increasing amounts of water. Then she started urinating — not just where and when she was supposed to, but everywhere and only small amounts at a time.

We both were pretty sure what the problem was, but we waited for the expert's opinion.

We were right. The doctor took a small blood sample and checked it on his meter. Her blood sugar was over 300, with normal being just over 100.

Molly has diabetes. She'll need at least one insulin shot every day for the rest of her life.

And that's not as easy as it sounds since Molly is a cat. Our gray and white, slightly overweight, very bossy cat, to be specific.

This is going to cause a major change in all our lives.

The veterinarian suggested that they keep her for a few days to get her stabilized and then show us how to give her the shots. Oh, and did we want to give the shots in the morning or the evening?

After some discussion, we decided on morn-



cynthia haynes

• open season

ings. We tend to get going about the same time every day, but our nights can be really hectic. Sometimes we get home at 6 p.m., sometimes at 9 p.m. and sometimes it's midnight to 1 a.m.

That didn't seem to be a very good regimen for insulin shots, which should be given at about the same time each day.

And since it's mornings, I'm sure I'll get to do the deed most days.

I never wanted to give shots. When Steve took allergy shots in the early years of our marriage, I told him he'd better learn to give them to himself because I didn't do shots.

And I didn't. For more than 60 years, I happily didn't give shots.

Then I was told if I wanted to keep my pharmacy job, I would learn to give shots.

I learned to give shots, and last year I gave flu shots to several dozen people.

Now, the operative word here is people. In fact, it's people who asked for a shot, not a cat which doesn't know what's good for her and definitely doesn't want a shot.

The technician says to grab the skin on the back of her neck and jab the 5 units of mixed fast and long-acting insulin in before she knows what's happened.

That's all well and good, but you gotta have the cat before you can give it a shot.

The vet's suggestion: Take up the big food bowl in the basement. Provide food once a day when it's time for the shot. This way, instead of searching a three-story house plus yard and garage for an elusive cat, she will come to me.

That's a good idea. Unfortunately, it means that the other three felines in the house will all have to start living under this new diet. They're not going to like it. I can guarantee that.

I emptied the big cat bowl this evening. In the morning, I'm picking up Molly at the vet for my injection lesson and a vial of insulin. I don't think I'll be late. I expect by about 6 a.m., there will be three cats on our bed complaining because the food bowl is, not only empty but, gone.

I'll report back in a couple of weeks as to how well everyone is adjusting to the new schedule.

I'll admit I'm a little skeptical. But then again, I swore I'd never needle Steve, and not only have been doing that for 40 years, I gave him his flu shot last fall.

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The Goodland Star-News

(USPS No. 222-460. ISSN 0893-0562)

Member: Kansas Press Association

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Published every Tuesday and Friday except the days observed for New Year's Day, Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas Day, at 1205 Main Ave., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

Periodicals postage paid at Goodland, Kan. 67735; entered at the Goodland, Kan. Post Office under the Act of Congress of March 8, 1878.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Goodland Star-News, 1205 Main Ave., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

TELEPHONE: (785) 899-2338. Editorial e-mail: star-news@nwkans.com. Advertising questions can be sent to: goodlandads@nwkans.com

The Goodland Star-News assumes no liability for mistakes or omissions in advertising or failure to publish beyond the actual cost of the ad.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: In Sherman County and adjacent counties: three months, \$29; six months, \$46; 12 months, \$81. Out of area, weekly mailing of two issues: three months, \$39; six months, \$54; 12 months, \$89 (All tax included). Mailed individually each day: (call for a price).

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Wal-Mart decision: next steps for women

A sharply divided Supreme Court ignored more than 40 years of established jurisprudence in its Wal-Mart v. Dukes decision, which severely restricts the ability of employees to fight discrimination as a class-action group.

In a deeply misguided opinion, the majority ruled the women of Wal-Mart cannot band together nationwide and stand up as one against the biggest retailer in the world.

It's hard to manage the court costs and find the courage to keep going. We only wish the women of Wal-Mart would not have to do that.

Yet the high court decided they did not have enough in common to pursue a nationwide class-action suit, a sadly ironic twist for former employees of the great homogenizer of American retail.

The court's decision was not related to the merits of the case, however, and the women of Wal-Mart are already planning how to proceed next, either individually or in smaller, reformulated class-action cases.

In fact, Wal-Mart may rue the day it fought against allowing a single class-action case. The company's gamble — that if it could throw



from other pens

• commentary

up enough barriers, the women would quit — is not going to pay off, and the Goliath retailer may soon end up with more Davids than it ever wanted to fight.

Unfortunately, many other employee class-action cases are now destined to be stuck at a red light, while employers are getting the go-ahead to continue to rely on highly subjective gender discrimination practices, hurting women and their families.

And this disturbing ruling extends beyond class-action certification, echoing other recent stories of institutions that were "too big" to be held accountable. First, the banks were too big to fail, and American taxpayers bailed them out even as they were losing their homes and jobs. Now, Wal-Mart is too big for justice, even though American women still face a persistent pay gap that not only undermines their

families' economic security but undercuts the nation's recovery as well.

But American women will press on as we always do, emboldened again by a Supreme Court majority that just doesn't get the realities of the modern workplace.

Wal-Mart plaintiff Edith Arana's moving story of her fight against discrimination drew big applause at American Association of University Women's recent national convention — an indication of our continuing support for the women of Wal-Mart.

We'll be looking into other options to deal with this wrongheaded decision. The court has been wrong before — as we know all too well — but our government is structured so that we can right those wrongs through other channels. Perhaps this decision will give Betty Dukes her own bill or motivate Congress to finally pass the Paycheck Fairness Act, which aims to stop unfair pay before it starts and came within a hair of passing last year. We're sure the Obama administration and its multi-agency Equal Pay Enforcement Task Force will be brainstorming to address this latest misstep from the court. This kind of injustice demands action.

Setbacks in achieving women's equality aren't new. Ever since women started claiming our rights and fighting for equal opportunity, the powers that be have tried to thwart our plans.

Although we wish the Supreme Court had understood the need for women to band together and fight, this decision is just one more battle in the ground war women have been fighting for years. It's just a chapter, not the end.

The authors are Lilly Ledbetter, the namesake of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, lives in Alabama, and Linda Hallman, executive director of AAUW.

The American Forum, a nonprofit, nonpartisan, educational organization, headquartered in Washington, D.C., provides views of experts on major public concerns in order to stimulate informed discussion.

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