

from our viewpoint...

'Poison pill' scare from Washington

It's the latest scare: the "poison pill" in the law creating the Joint Committee on Deficit Reduction, better known as the "supercommittee," this fall.

The committee is supposed to come to an agreement cutting \$1.2 trillion from the budget, or automatic cuts totaling the same amount will be taken from all federal programs across the board. And that is going to hurt — a lot.

No one envisioned the committee would deadlock so tightly that it could not come up with a plan. The across-the-board cuts would be painful for both parties, especially with a possible \$600 billion cut at the Pentagon.

Even measures designed to mitigate the recession and continuing high unemployment would be slashed, including unemployment benefits and aid to states.

The deadlock probably means some sleepless nights for the supercommittee, which includes six senators and six representatives, three of each from each of the two major parties.

The panel has less than a week, until Wednesday, to come up with a bill. Then Congress has until Dec. 23 to pass it without changes — or reject it. If that does not happen, the "poison pill" clause goes into effect, slashing all budgets for 2013.

A poison pill is a provision inserted into a law or, say, a corporate charter that's so bitter, it's assumed no one will swallow it. Corporations use poison pills to prevent hostile takeovers, but this one is designed to force two parties to compromise.

It may yet work. Washington is a place where last-minute reprieves do exist.

But if it doesn't, a lot of lawmakers are going to be sorry they voted for this law.

The supercommittee itself has been deadlocked over party-line issues: Republican opposition to any tax increase, and Democrats' insistence "new revenue" must be included in any budget solution. Republicans want to cut or curb "entitlements" like Medicaid and Social Security, while the Democrats want to tax "the rich."

That's the split that prompted Congress to invent the supercommittee to start with. There's been no shift so far by either party. Nor is there any sign of one — yet.

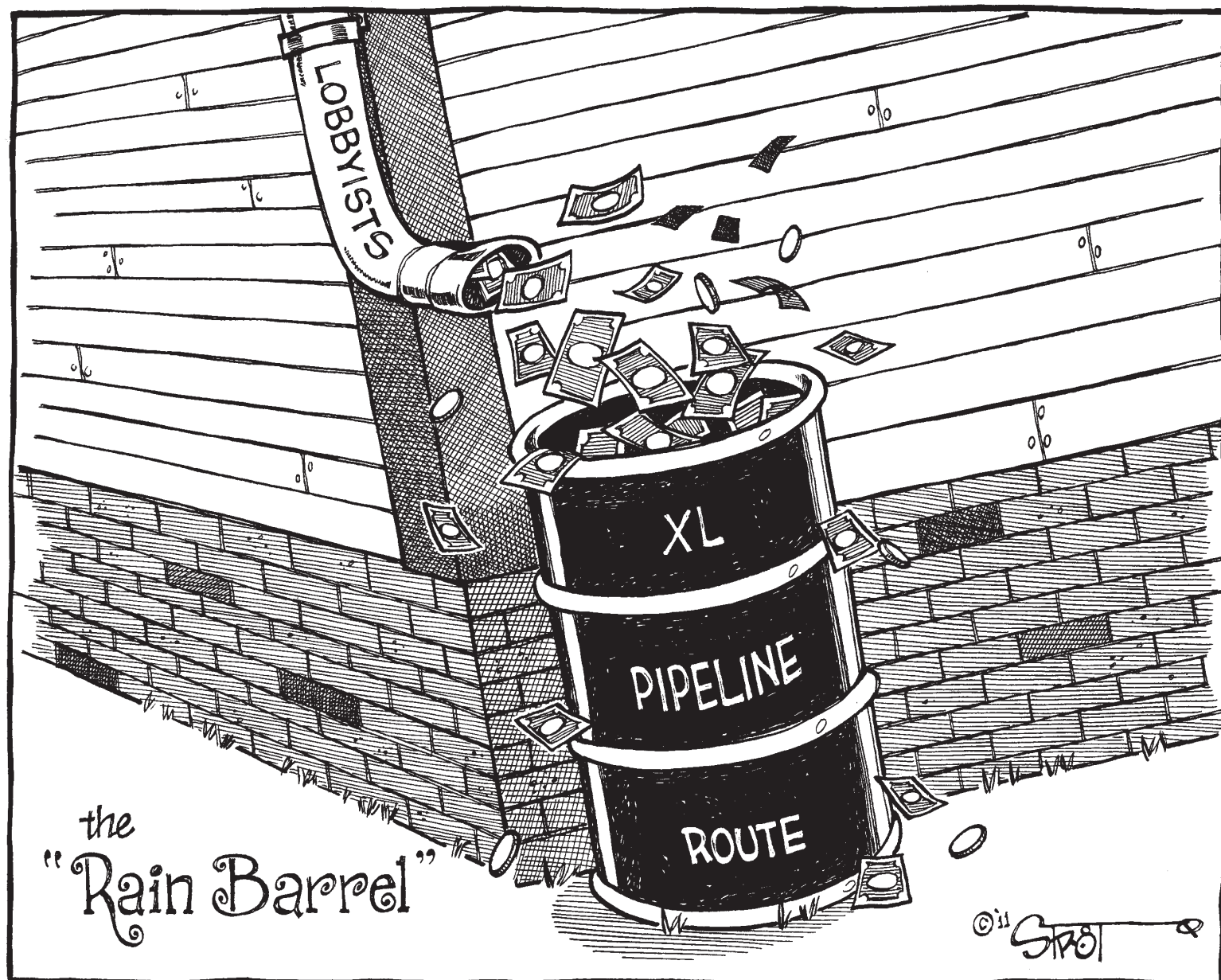
Compromise is required here. The Republicans may need to agree to some "revenue enhancements," and the Democrats will have to come around on retaining some of the popular Bush-era tax cuts. Unless both sides give a little, nothing can happen.

And we're pretty sure, people want something to happen. Like most of Europe, the U.S. needs to learn to live within its means, and needs to start before a worldwide panic sets in, not after.

That means the supercommittee — and Congress — need to come to an agreement by Wednesday. If they don't, the price the members pay could be severe, come November 2012.

The rest of us face all manner of problems, from a likely new recession to higher prices and higher interest rates. It's that important.

It's time for something to give in Washington. — Steve Haynes



Finding out about Mom's first love

He was my mother's first boyfriend, her first love, I'm told.

He was not my father; in fact, I never met him, but when Mother died in June, I found the old newspaper clippings among her things. Apparently, they'd grown up together in the tiny town of Dardanelle, Ark., on the river west of Little Rock.

"Dardanelle Marine Killed in Pacific Area," the yellowed headline read. "Pfc. Charles McClure is Killed in Action." "Final Rites Tuesday For Dardanelle Hero."

Charles McClure. I'd heard that name all my life. Every time my mother would relate some story of her youth and growing up in that small Arkansas town, she would mention his name along with other friends.

He was a second brother to her in these stories. Charles, her brother Jeff Jr. and she would go fishing, climb trees, play hooky and generally take on the world together.

He had died in the war.

When we went through Mother's photo albums and invited Uncle Jeff and our cousins to take the photos they wanted, Jeff asked for the page that had the notices mother had saved about Charles. I said fine, but send me copies.

When the copies came, Jeff, who had served in the Navy during the war, wrote this:

"Cindy, here is the story of Charles McClure's death on Saipan. We later learned that Charles was killed during a mopping up operation during the invasion. He was shot by a Jap in a spider trap. A spider trap was a hole



cynthia haynes

• open season

dug that a soldier could stand up in and had a camouflaged top to make it blend in with the environment. As Charles approached his position, he shot him just under his chin and the bullet came out the top of his head."

Love, Uncle Jeff.

P.S. "I forgot to tell you, Emma dated Charles a lot when they were in high school. He lived just two blocks down the street from us. I spent many a day in their home."

The copies I received were not complete — maybe the originals weren't. It doesn't make any difference. Here are some excerpts.

"Mr. and Mrs. W.H. McClure were notified Tuesday afternoon by the War Department that their youngest son, Pfc. Charles McClure, age 19, of the U.S. Marine Corps, had been killed in action in the Pacific area."

Another clipping contained a tribute to Charles.

"Remember the little tow-headed McClure boy you have seen around home so much — the one you watched grow up into such a pretty big guy at eighteen? Well, he gave his life for you people not long ago; gave his life trying to make this world a better place for you to live.

"I don't know if he really realized what he died for — he probably didn't — but that was it.

He just knew he had another job to do — something that was required of him. That's about what they all think when they go into battle; just 'let's get this thing over with so we can go home — back to Arkansas Tech and home.'

"I don't know what he thought about when the Chaplain had him kneel down for that last prayer. The kid wasn't very religious, kind of took God for granted, like he did life. So I imagine instead of asking God to spare his life, he thought of the folks at home — wondered how his mother was, and if dad's crop was going to come out all right this year. He was really hoping the folks weren't worrying too much about him.

"He was always willing to do and to give more than his share, in his work, school, play or anything.

"There isn't a question in my mind but that he would have made one of the best citizens Dardanelle ever produced."

Charles was the first soldier from that tiny community to die in the war. He wouldn't be the last.

They brought him home and laid him to rest just after Christmas 1944 in the cemetery where my grandparents and mother's two sisters and their husbands are buried.

Apparently, Mom moved on. During college, she met a young soldier and married him right after the war. They went to live near his home in Kansas.

When Mom went home, though, we always visited the family plot and the McClure plot.

I never quite understood why before now.

Journey's end?



Insight this week

• john schlageck

more places to buy fuel and food — and these businesses stay open 24-hours each day.

All good answers, but what if I were to ask, what hasn't changed?

The answer is the journey's end. That remains the same, Kansas City.

Today the latest/greatest technology is just around the corner waiting to be purchased. There will always be the next generation tablet, smart phone or laptop for those with the money or desire to possess them. We have been conditioned or conditioned ourselves to believe we must have PCs with us at all times and all places.

How can we live without them?

My question is how can we truly live with them?

That is the real challenge. We have become slaves to each new wave of technology; we replace our obsolete models with the latest, greatest version. At the same time, we trick ourselves into believing each new change will result in communication being done quicker..

Quicker?

Possibly.

Better?

Don't bet on it.

There is no relationship between the tools used in writing and the ability to write or communicate. Instead the results can be far worse because we often labor forever over the copy or in most cases, we simply schlock words out there for the world to see without protocol including misspelled words, incomplete sentences, improper and unnecessary punctuation

and incorrect grammar. Today in our haste it's all about garbled garbage and plenty of it.

Regardless of the technology we use, the destination or journey's end remains the same. Good letters, text messages, stories and communication that informs, reveals and motivates other human beings to action not consternation and confusion.

Remember, it is not the tool we use to communicate that is necessary, it is the thought we hope to convey to others. After thinking about what we wish to communicate or the story we hope to convey, we write it, edit it, review the piece again and rewrite the final draft. Strive to do your best.

All around us are examples of great speeches, letters and broadcasts — the Gettysburg Address, the radio broadcast of the Hindenburg crash, FDR's fire side chat, "The only thing we have to fear, is fear itself..." President Kennedy's quest to land on the moon, "We choose to go to the moon in this decade... not because they are easy, but because they are hard..."

These carefully chosen and crafted words had power and meaning. They described scenes, situations and events with riveting anticipation and spontaneity.

The main reason for their greatness and longevity is no matter how plain and primitive the tools used to convey them, those who uttered these words never lost sight of the destination.

As we work with the latest technology, never forget this. After all, what good is the message if the recipient cannot understand and is not moved to action?

John Schlageck of the Kansas Farm Bureau has been writing about farming and ranching in Kansas for more than 25 years. He is the managing editor of "Kansas Living," a quarterly magazine dedicated to agriculture and rural life in Kansas.

The Goodland Star-News

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

Member: Kansas Press Association

Inland Press Association Colorado Press Association

National Newspaper Association

e-mail: star.news@nwkansas.com

Steve Haynes, President

Tom Betz, Editor

Pat Schiefen, Society Editor

Advertising Department

Jessica Corbin, Jeff Dreiling and Michelle Etrick

Sheila Smith, Circulation Manager



Nor'west Press

Richard Westfahl, General Manager

Jim Bowker, James Jackson,

Lana Westfahl, Kris McCool, Stacy Brashear, Tracy Traxel,

Gary Meyer, Judy McKnight



nwkansas.com

N.T. Betz, Director of Internet Services

(nt.betz@nwkansas.com)

Evan Barnum, Systems Admin. (support@nwkansas.com)

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@nwkansas.com.

Advertising questions can be sent to: goodlandads@nwkansas.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).

Incorporating:

The Goodland Daily News
1932-2003

The Sherman County Herald
Founded by Thomas McCants
1935-1989

THE SHERMAN COUNTY STAR
Founded by Eric and Roxie Yonkey
1994-2001

Nor'West Newspapers
Haynes Publishing Company