

Tuesday's ramblings...

- If our correctional facility is shut down (*and that isn't going to happen*), we'd have enough room to lock up all those critters in Topeka who thought that was the best way to trim the state's budget.
- The Stimulus Plan looks more like a Porkulus Plan.
- Michael Phelps. Role model. American hero. Michael Phelps. Drunk driver. Michael Phelps. Marijuana user. Is this the kind of character we want our kids to look up to? Don't think so. Michael Phelps' gold medals look tarnished today after his picture appeared in papers over the weekend smoking pot. He apologized (what else could he do?). And his apology was similar to the one he used when in 2004 he was hauled in for driving drunk. We'll see now if a different standard is used to ease the gold plated Olympian over this latest hurdle. And it will be interesting to see if any of his sponsors — he's making millions of dollars from them — jump ship!
- The former mayor of New York City, who was sure he would be our next president but never got to first base in his campaign — Rudy Giuliani — doesn't have a problem with all the excessive bonuses paid to corporate America. He said New York City depends on those bonuses to keep things going. In a mumbling conversation on one of the cable shows, Rudy said those bonuses are a big part of those CEO's salaries. But we don't know what their salaries are. Of course the ex-mayor is worth millions, so there again it's the rich scolding the poor.
- They're talking about \$800 billion to get Americans back to work. I don't even know what \$800 billion is, but it looks like you and I will be shelling out to make it happen.
- President Obama has a couple of problems with two of his cabinet appointees. They sort of *forgot* to pay some of their taxes. Hmmm, what was all this talk during the campaign about the GOP not vetting Sarah Palin?
Got any thoughts? Share them.

— Tom Dreiling

Jim's back playing his guitar

Since Jim shot himself in the index finger of his left hand with an air nailer, he has not been able to play guitar. That finger will not bend and he couldn't touch the strings to play chords. He made light of it, but I knew it pained him terribly to not be able to play.

I never expected an angel to look like our friend, Larry Henderson, but, I guess God has a sense of humor.

Sunday, we were eating at a local restaurant when Larry stopped by our table to visit. As always with Larry, the conversation eventually came around to music. An accomplished musician, Larry sympathized with Jim about his inability to play. But, in a matter-of-fact voice he said, "Well, Jim. Why don't you just tune it to the Key of E and then you can bar chord?"

You could almost see the light go on in Jim's mind. "Of course!" Jim said. "Why didn't I think of that?"

I had no idea what they were talking about. I love music but, I can barely play the radio. However, I could tell this revelation was big. Huge, in fact.

Jim could hardly wait to get home. He rushed in the door, grabbed his guitar that had been gathering dust in the corner, and began plucking the strings. A few adjustments and it was tuned to the right key. Then — he began to play. And, sing. Then he began to cry. It was so emotional for him to be able to make music again.

I called Larry and thanked him for

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



giving my husband the greatest gift possible. Then we began calling the kids so Jim could play and sing for them over the phone.

This was all going on during the Super Bowl. During commercials, Jim would hit the "mute" button and play a song. We sang every song we ever knew and then he went to the computer and found lyrics to songs we never knew. I finally drifted off to sleep as he sat on the edge of the bed, still playing.

Music is such a gift. It really does soothe the savage beast.

Why is it I received my first seed catalog of the year mere days before Punxsutawney Phil saw his shadow? He says six more weeks of winter while I'm beginning to eye the tomato bed. I've been told the Farmer's Almanac predicts a huge spring blizzard. I've seen snow on Mother's Day and Easter, so nothing should surprise me.

We can't hurry Mother Nature but, I know there are lots of other gardeners out there itching to dig in the dirt.

To... *Mary Kay Woodyard's* column last week. Amen! (*called in*)

To... *Dick Boyd*, for the outstanding honor. (*e-mail*)

To... *Mr. Boyd* of The Telegram, for being named the top sports writer. Heck, we've known that for a long time. (*regular mail*)

To... *Mr. Larry Henderson*, for the nice tribute to our favorite state. (*regular mail*)



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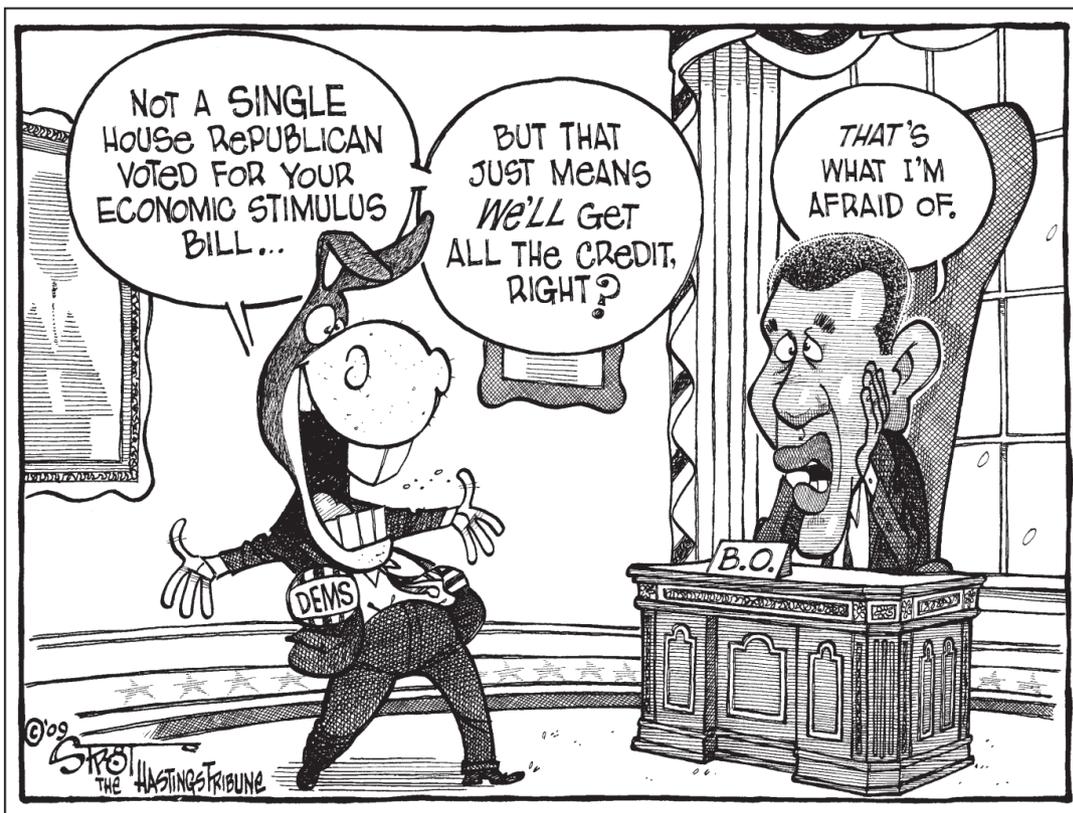
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No thank you, I have my own bucket list

Have you seen "The Bucket List"? A friend reported it was pretty good. Funny and touching, the story of the misadventures of two men who set out to accomplish all the things they always said they would do before they "kicked the bucket."

Perhaps I'll catch it sometime on television or maybe rent it. It's not something that is on my "Bucket List."

Recently I got an e-mail bucket list survey. It seems like a cute idea. But as I went through the questions my life came out a little sad. It asked things like have you ever seen the cherry blossoms in Washington DC?

Watched your grandchildren grow? Flown a plane? Sang Karaoke? Been to Africa? Cried yourself to sleep? Been on a cruise?

I've been to Washington DC; I'd like to go again. But it doesn't particularly matter to me if the cherry trees are in bloom. A cruise sounds fun but it's not on my bucket list. Travel to Africa? Since I haven't seen the cherry blossoms, I think I best explore the USA first.

As to grandchildren, I'm sure that is very nice but it seems wrong to judge the completeness of my life on the actions others take.

Love children and am amazed to watch them grow. But my kids don't have to furnish me with grandchildren so I can

Back Home

Nancy Hagman



appreciate the phenomenon.

As to crying myself to sleep? I can't remember that I have. I very rarely cry. I suppose the point of the question is, "Are you passionate about something?" Yeah, the problem is usually when I get all fired up about something I end up regretting what I do so I'm not a big fan of passion.

To my mind, bucket lists are much more personal than this survey allowed. And they are changeable. What seems important today may not matter tomorrow.

Actor Kirk Douglas, now in his nineties, in an essay on what old age has taught him related this story: "Years ago I was at the bedside of my dying mother, an illiterate Russian peasant. Terrified, I held her hand. She opened her eyes and looked at me. The last thing she said to me was, 'Don't be afraid, son, it happens to everyone.' As I got older I became comforted by those words."

Why do we make it so hard? Why do we make lists of things to do before it

happens? Why don't we just live? Such a gift our lives are and we squander them by constantly evaluating how things are going. By comparing ourselves to others; by checking to be sure we meet a standard? The only sure thing we ever will do is die. Instead of finding comfort in it we worry!

I do have a bucket list. After seeing my sister's pictures I want to see the Grand Canyon, but I'm not hiking to the bottom like she did! I'd like to go to Chicago and Washington DC with my husband because there is much to do in both cities I think we would enjoy together. I'd like to be out of debt before I die. I'd like to see my basement water tight and finished.

My list isn't too outrageous is it? Well, maybe the part about getting out of debt and the basement! Likely, the list will change anyway. Though I've been stuck on the Chicago thing for awhile!

We all struggle with death, particularly of the very young. There are no easy answers. We may or may not know the bucket lists of those who pass on. But we probably carry an idea of how their lists read.

Just rejoice in the things that got checked off and forget the rest. Here's a quote I like, "Most of us go to the grave with our music still inside us." Who cares if you've ever sang Karaoke, just as long as you sang!

Sound Off!

Editorial praising President Obama disturbing

I was a bit disturbed by the editorial in last Tuesday's Telegram. Mr. Haynes' glowing tribute to President Obama makes one wonder if God has abdicated his position and Mr. Obama is taking his place. Mr. Haynes writes: "Our new president embodies everything this nation stands for: hard work, independence, human rights for all." Hm-m-m. Does President Obama really stand for all of this? I don't really want to rain on Mr. Haynes pie-in-the-sky parade, but there is a question or two that I think must be asked. I have no problem with the fact that Mr. Obama is an African-American. In this country it should be a given that a qualified individual, regardless of color could become president. Hard working, yes, he has had to overcome a lot to get where he is.

Independence? If he is truly for independence, may I suggest he not be so free in giving out hard working taxpayers, money? How can anyone be independent when they are struggling under the tax burden that the average American is shouldering? If I have it right, about 30 percent of your paycheck goes for taxes. That means that for four months of every year, you are working to pay taxes. Add in property tax and this tax and that tax, etc., and the percent is even higher. With the way Congress, the Senate and our new president are already spending, it won't be too long before they will run out and we'll be looking at tax increases. I don't know about anybody else, but being more and more a slave to the government doesn't spell independence to me.

The third attribute Mr. Haynes gives to President Obama is "human rights for all." This is an attribute Mr. Obama should be very sensitive toward. But how can a man who supports spending American tax dollars to keep the abortion industry here in America going, as well as using those tax dollars to promote abortions in other countries be for human rights for all?

You can write me off as another one of those pro-life nuts if you want, but there is more to this pro-life/pro-choice debate than we realize. There is FOCA, the "Freedom of Choice Act" that is or will be soon going through Congress and the Senate. President Obama has said he will sign the measure into law. A friend gave me the following information which is from the National Committee for a Human Life Amendment. They state that: "If FOCA passes it will:

1. Eliminate regulations that protect women from unsafe clinics and unscrupulous abortionists
 2. Force American taxpayers to fund abortions
 3. Force every state to allow partial-birth abortions; its sponsors have said a primary purpose of the bill is to insure that killing partially born children will again be permitted nationwide.
 4. Run roughshod over conscience rights of physicians, nurses and hospitals that oppose abortion on religious, moral or ethical grounds
 5. Strip parents of their right and responsibility to be involved in their minor daughter's abortion decision.
- More information can be had at nchla.

org.

Let me add something personal. When I was taking an embryology course in college, we had to study slides of different tissues. One of the slides was labeled: "6-weeks fetus." There were about four little tiny dots on the slide. I put the slide under the microscope and focused it. Sitting there, staring back at me was, unmistakably, another human being! Not fully formed yet, but there was the tiny round bald head, the large, staring eyes, the skin folds that would soon form the nose and mouth, and the arm and leg buds in the right place. Everything there; all it needed to do was grow and develop. An experience and an image I have not forgotten all these years and will never forget. So please don't try to tell me that it is just a blob of undifferentiated cells, and its OK to terminate its life.

Therefore, if President Obama really believes in human rights for all, he cannot ignore the rights of the little ones who are unable to speak for themselves.

If you believe in God, you might want to read Jer. 1:4-5 and Luke 1:41. Neither of these verses would make sense, if the child in the womb was not a viable human being.

Oh, by the way, I pray every day that God will give our president and legislators the wisdom to make wise, practical and beneficial decisions. After all, their job is not an easy one and they need all the help they can get.

June Prout Norton