

What's next bailout?
Professional sports?

I guess I should stop reading sports stories. Just days ago, I read where Georgia quarterback Matthew Stafford was the top NFL draft pick by the Detroit Lions. OK so far. But here's what wrinkled my already partially-wrinkled face: a six-year deal worth guarantees of \$41.7 million and a maximum value of \$78 million. This to a youngster who, in all probability, never had any more than \$20 in his pocket at anytime. If that much. And then we wonder why these kids fall into tragic situations, believing the old saw that rich people are exceptions to society's rule and anything they do goes. Again it raises the old question — who is worth that kind of money? Nobody! Absolutely nobody! There's nothing to back up this fiscal insanity. And you and I gleefully trot to the professional sports facilities and shell out money that should be spent more wisely to watch some kid play football for the kind of money that is far greater than budgets of countless numbers of communities across the country.

I'll never understand it. I'm just shaking my head once again. Apparently the economic mess hasn't touched the sports world — yet! But I can see the day when the owners travel to Capitol Hill with tears in their eyes asking for a bailout.

Duh!?

I think you sleep in the bed you made.

I see where some of Notre Dame's alumni are planning a protest because the university is bringing in President Barack Obama as their graduation speaker. One of the alumni was to receive the school's highest honor but informed the university she definitely won't be present. And a speaker for Catholics nationwide - and I might add not all Catholics - has been extremely critical of the university's decision to bestow an honorary degree on the president. I can't remember his name but you've seen him countless numbers of times on the cable news networks.

I have no problem having President Obama on the stage addressing the graduates at Notre Dame. The free speech amendment certainly applies, but seems to be meaningless to some groups in this country. And having the president appear at the nation's most recognizable Catholic university, just might be the university's way of opening the door to a dialogue over some very controversial topics.

And I trust the president of that great university knows what he's doing, and I also think, as this issue rolls on, there will be some alumni with egg all over their face. He is the president — love him or hate him. Amen.

On the lighter side ... A Sunday school teacher asked Johnny, "Do you think Noah did a lot of fishing when he was on the Ark?"

"No," Johnny answered, "not with just two worms?"

The shower activity has certainly made the growing things come to life. And this month has really lived up to its billing as the *April Showers* month. If April showers bring May flowers we should have them growing out of our ears! Literally. Things are blooming. Even some of the wheat that didn't look too well is looking much better. There's just something rain can do that all of the other means we have at our disposal can't.

Remember the good old song Bobby Darin made famous, "Splish, Splash I was Taking a Bath"? Well, we senior citizens rephrased it a bit: "Splish, Splash, I Was Havin' a Flash."

I'm going to sneak in a word or two about my helper in the newsroom this week and what a great helper she was. Cynthia (Haynes) has spent quite a few hours taking photos and writing stories as we await our new news editor, whom I hope I can introduce you to this coming week. Cynthia has gone out of her way to make my life a little easier as we prepared each issue this week. She's a go getter. Thanks, 'C' for all you have done for us this week. For readers who don't know, Cynthia and husband Steve are owners of your Norton Telegram, The Oberlin Herald, Colby Free Press, The Goodland Star-News, The Saint Francis Herald and The Bird City Times. She and Steve are very dedicated to the mission of each of their newspaper holdings. Again, thanks!

Oh, I forgot, there's a song the Herman's Hermits made famous, "Mrs. Brown, You've Got a Lovely Daughter." Now the senior crowd is singing, "Mrs. Brown, You've Got a Lovely Walker."

We'll always find a way to keep the tunes going, but change the words. It's fun being a senior.

Have a good weekend! And as you attend the church of your choice this weekend, join in the singing.

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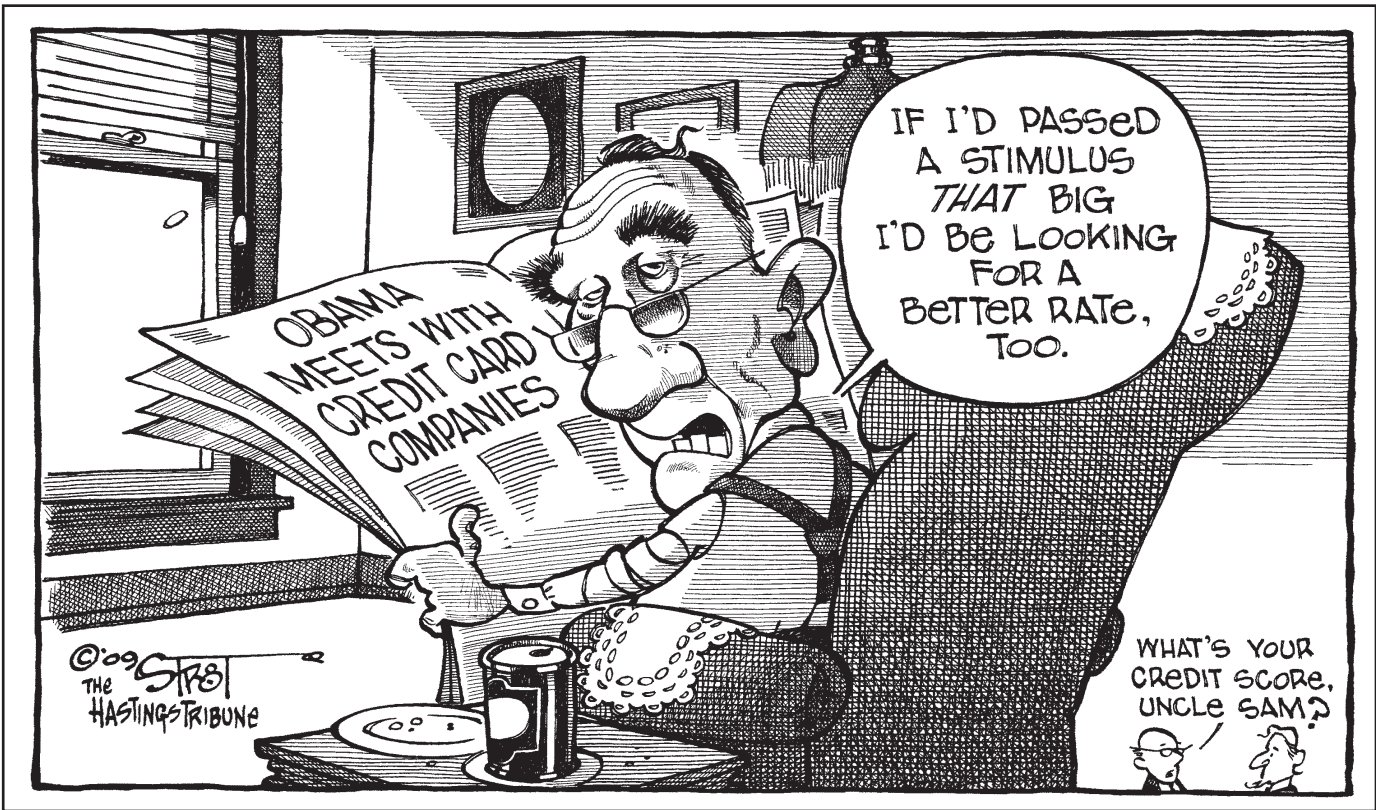
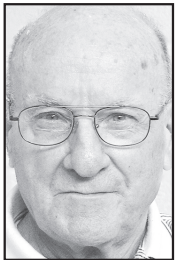
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Let's Chat
Tom Dreiling



Life's simple things count most

Couples are constantly bombarded with ads featuring expensive gifts, the underlying message being, "you deserve this". Even worse is the message if you can't afford it, 'you're a failure'.

Recently Carolyn Plotts in her column, OutBack, encouraged men to buy a couple of thrift store vases and every so often fill them with a yard flower for their wife. Not long ago, I awoke in the middle of the night to find a single caramel on the bedside table. Little things like the home picked flowers and caramels are the real bonds of a marriage.

Finding joy in the simple things truly enriches our lives, whether in a marriage, as a parent or a neighbor. As we've talked about before, one benefit of this recession may be the rediscovery of these simple things. Taking road trips versus a flight across the ocean or a picnic as opposed to a lavish restaurant

Phase II
Mary Kay Woodyard



meal are examples of those simple joys.

Our daughter's favorite dress growing up was a consignment shop find. Our children still talk about taking lunch to dad. It gave Jack and me quiet time (not easy to find with five children) and gave the children time at the playground. Neither the children nor Jack and I seemed to notice the cold or hot wind.

Our second son says his most memorable Christmas was when we made "Ice Planet Hoth" from "Star Wars". Jack and I secluded ourselves one Saturday morning and with Styrofoam,

an embroidery hoop, a cut up punch ball and a pattern from a woman's magazine proceeded to make his gift. Little did he know we did it because we had very little money. Money does not necessarily mean memories.

Children learn by example and when they see their parents thrilled with these simple gifts they will learn to find joy in simple things as well. Helping mom put notes in dad's suitcase as he prepares for a business trip. Seeing a message written in lipstick on the bathroom mirror or helping fix dad's favorite meal all speak of love.

I remember a young man saying, "Once you're married, you don't need to work at it."

His wife, our daughter, replied, "No, that's when the real work begins."

How true, but work does not need to be a bad four letter word, it can be a wonderful one. It is called love. (mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net)

Controlled prairie fires good for us all

Insight
John Schlageck

Not every cattleman burns his pastures each and every year as is sometimes portrayed. Instead, individual farmers, ranchers and landowners survey and decide each spring, which pastures will benefit and produce a healthier, lush grass for livestock after burning occurs. Often neighbors plan and burn together, giving them more hands to ensure a safe, controlled burn.

Kansas has been extremely dry since last fall. Fires have raged across Texas, Oklahoma and some in Kansas during late winter and early spring with the onset of windy weather.

Recent rains and snow have eased drought conditions enough for some burning of native grass range across Kansas. With additional moisture in the near-term forecast, this may lessen the wildfire hazard later in the spring when extremely dry and windy conditions could return.

"It's important for grassland owners and operators to burn during this open window of opportunity," says Steve Swaffar, director of Natural Resources for Kansas Farm Bureau. Producers are also being encouraged to burn breaks around farmsteads, barns and other agriculture buildings to protect those areas in case of wildfires.

Spring burning is also one of the easiest and most effective methods of

controlling the eastern red cedar, Swaffar says.

"There's nothing better for the control and eradication of this extremely invasive tree than to run a fire through the grassland every two or three years," he says.

Kansas State University experts recommend burning take place when wind speeds are between 5 and 15 miles per hour, relative humidity is from 40 to 70 percent and temperatures fall in the range of 55 to 80 degrees.

Landowners in all counties must have notification requirements to local officials prior to planned, controlled burns. This notification is a key to preventing planned burns turning into accidental wildfires and ensuring burning is allowed under the existing conditions.

The farm and ranch community is tuned into ever changing weather conditions and will continue to keep its controlled burning of the tall grass prairies confined to a minimum time period. This process is part of the culture of the rural communities that dot the Flint Hills region.

Prairie fires help Mother Nature rejuvenate the grasses that carpet her fertile hills. That means good things for cattlemen, for agriculture, for rural communities and the Kansas economy.

(John Schlageck is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. Born and raised on a diversified farm in northwestern Kansas, his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.)

A very good story. (e-mail)

To... Nina Melroy, on an awesome job for dedicated volunteering at the Andbe Home. You are probably older than most of the residents. (e-mail)

To... all the kids, who decorated the sidewalks at the courthouse. (brought in)

(To submit a salute, please e-mail tom.d@nwkansas.com, call 877-3361 or 877-6908, fax 877-3732, mail to 215 S. Kansas Ave. 67654 or drop by the office. Thanks for your input. - td)



To... the city, for the new ball park on West Wilton. Looks great! (called in)

To... Vesta Hobbs, thanks for your long-time service to the Farm Service Agency. You will be missed, but enjoy retirement. (called in)

To... Vesta Hobbs, on your retirement.

Today's chuckle

CLASSIFIED AD
Joining nudist camp. Must sell washer and dryer. Best offer.

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