

Economy fragile

Experts say the economy is fragile, but the recovery is under way. We hope so, but with unemployment approaching 11 percent, you have to wonder if this recovery will include many jobs. October unemployment was 10.2 percent, while the rate among teenagers was a whopping 27.6 percent.

And those figures are liable to get worse before they get better, especially if Congress insists on saddling employers with huge costs for a new health-care plan. Much of the current problem can be traced to government "mandates" about employment, and that's especially true for the teenage depression.

Teenagers are not an employer's first pick for any job because they have no skills or experience. Couple that with the worst recession in half a century and an ideology-driven series of increases in the minimum wage, and you have a perfect storm for teens who need some income.

Here's how the Labor Law Center put it, referring to job prospects after the last increase in the minimum in July:

"For unemployed teen workers, job prospects look grim. In June, the U.S. Department of Labor reported a 24 percent teen unemployment rate, further adding to the up-hill battle teens face when seeking employment."

Supposedly, that's not what Congress intended when it passed a three-year phased increase in the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$7.25. But the result is, employers faced with an artificial minimum have to focus on hiring fewer and better workers.

It's no wonder unemployment is so high right now: it's not just the recession, it's the government. And teens, with the lack of experience, get hit twice as hard.

Then, if Congress makes having employees even more expensive, companies will be able to afford even fewer of them. It's not a question of ideology, but of what you can afford. One version of the House proposal — and who knows if it's still in the bill — would require employers to provide health coverage for all full and part-time workers. That gives them a choice: buy two health-care policies for two part-timers, or just one for a full-time worker.

Hum, that's a tough one. Our guess is part-time employees would be out of work in a matter of days. It's simple arithmetic.

That's what happens when we follow our hearts and not our logic. Some might even argue that it's OK to jettison teens and part-time workers for the greater good, but they are neither teens nor part-timers.

The recession is bad and getting worse? Unemployment headed for record rates? And for teens, rates equal to 1930s unemployment?

Gee, wonder who's to blame? Congress? You guessed it.

— Steve Haynes

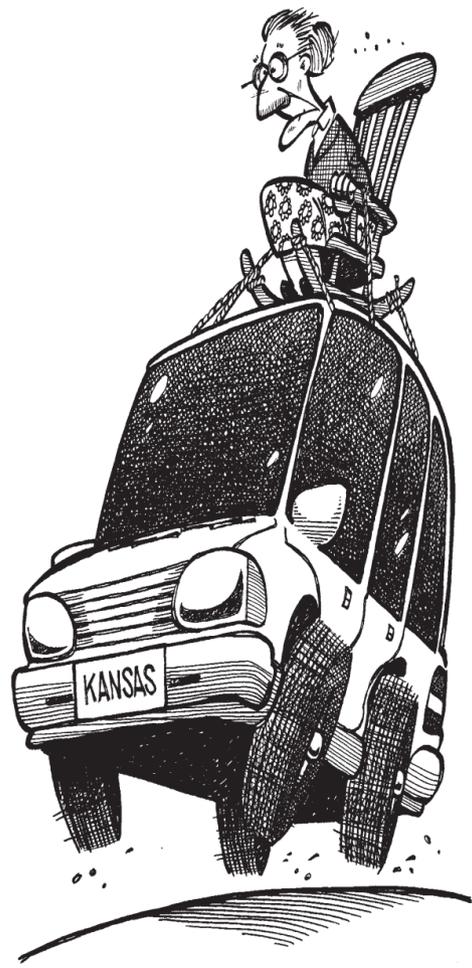
Over the river
and through the woods
with credit cards in tow,

Searching for ways
to spend holidays
and afford the gas to go.

The prices rise
before our eyes
the closer the holidays get.

To save cash, we fear,
by moving grandma here
would've been a safer bet.

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Not worth shooting

I haven't been worth shooting this week.

Must be the let-down after the mission trip. Jim bounced right back and went to work two days after we got home. Me? It was all I could do to pack Jim and James' lunches in the morning before heading back to the recliner. They got cold cereal for breakfast and frozen pizza for supper two nights in a row because I didn't have the "umph" to cook. I didn't even unpack my bags until about Wednesday. And, only then because I needed some clothes.

Slowly, though, things started to get back to normal and by Friday I had hit my stride again. That's good because I had to make three gallons of my green chile gravy for a supper the mission team is hosting to thank everyone who sponsored the trip. I'd give you my recipe, but not too many people need a gallon and a half of green chile gravy. My roaster will only hold one batch at a time, so I had to make two batches. It freezes well, so it's tucked away in the church's freezer ready to thaw and reheat the day of the meal. It sure is good over burritos and is not too spicy, although it has a little "kick".

I found pork roasts on sale for 99 cents a pound. Since I was already cooking six pounds of meat for the gravy, I bought a roast for us, too and cooked them all at the same time.

Jim thinks he doesn't like bay leaves, so I don't let him see them when I'm cooking a pork roast. But, he sure likes the taste. In fact, when I told him about the good sale price, he went to the store and bought six more roasts. We'll have enough pork to last the winter. He's so funny. When he came home from the store with his sacks

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



of groceries he said, "Me kill. You fix." Oh, yes. The mighty hunter has returned.

Thanksgiving is going to be here before we know it. My Liberty-Star Club is having its Thanksgiving dinner Wednesday. I always make my crescent rolls, my mother's cranberry salad and a pie or two. We have so much to be thankful for. The husband of one of our members has been ill. He is now home from the hospital and well enough to come to the meal. One of our members had surgery but, she is recovered and with us again. Another member took a nasty fall but, didn't hurt much besides her pride. And, we found we are gaining a new member. A lovely woman who has been our friend for years. Yes, life is good.

Thanksgiving, of course, means our annual trip to Texas. The kids are already planning who is going to sleep where and what we are going to eat for dinner. If Jim weren't such a traditionalist we might have something besides turkey for dinner. But, he thinks it isn't Thanksgiving without turkey. He helps fix it so I can't complain. The anticipation is half the fun. We play a lot of board games, stay up way too late, eat too much and laugh 'til we hurt. It's what being with family is all about and what I am most thankful for.

Halloween brings memories of blackouts

I was sitting in a local restaurant on Sunday morning, digging through my purse when I came across the headband from my Halloween costume! I had to laugh for a moment. How many times have I opened my purse, looked around my house, etc. after a holiday or weekend (read party here) and NOT known where I had gotten something! What a blessing it is today to be able to remember where I have been and what I have done the night before.

Of course, this brings to question the idea of "blackouts." For those that do not know, blackouts are a period of time that the alcoholic/addict cannot remember what they have done, who they have talked to, or where they have been. We are not "passed out" (meaning asleep) during this time. We are still up and moving around but for some reason, our mind is not recording the things we have done. This can last just a few minutes to days, depending on the person.

Many times family members do not believe we do not remember the things that were said and/or done...that we are "just trying to avoid responsibility" for

Where There's Hope

Carla Moore

our actions. Imagine what it must be like to wake up in the morning and have people talk about your behavior from the night before and have no memory of it. Or, to wake up and have your family angry with you and not even begin to know what has happened!

I have a friend who was in a blackout and remembers leaving the bar, flashing lights and then waking up in the hospital handcuffed to the hospital bed. He found out at that time that he had been involved in a head-on collision earlier in the morning and had killed an entire family. He often shared what it was like having to go through the trial, look into the faces of the remaining family members and not have a single memory of what he had done. He wanted to believe that it was not possible for something that drastic to have happened to him, but he could not deny the

evidence against him. It was a part of his past that continues to haunt him.

On the other side of the coin, if you are the one who has the blackouts, imagine what it must be like for your family and friends to have experienced the anger, sarcasm and bitterness addicted people are notorious for and know you will not get an apology for behavior that is genuine. Or, there will be an argument about the behavior with you (the alcoholic/addict) stating you "did not do/say such a thing!" and finally, the nagging knowledge that this is not a one-time event. Your family will probably have to endure this behavior any number of times if they decide to stay with you. What a hopeless place to be and unfortunately, most of us deal with the guilt and shame by continuing to drink or drug which ensures more of the same behavior. Although things appear hopeless, there is a solution for both the addicted person and the families.

Enjoy your day. If you have any questions or comments, you can contact me at cmoore@valleyhope.com.

Namaste - Carla

Hunting infers courtesy

Insight

John Schlageck

ensure a lasting relationship between you and the landowner.

Agree on who, and how many, will hunt on the land. Specify number and furnish names. Talk about specific times and dates you plan to hunt.

Phone each and every time before you plan to hunt, and let the landowner know of your intentions. The landowner may have forgotten about your original conversation.

It's just common courtesy to say hello before hunting and ask again for the opportunity — or privilege, as I consider it — to hunt on someone's property.

Determine the exact location on the land you have permission to hunt. Some areas may be off-limits because of livestock or crops. This may be especially true this year with the wet weather.

Always, and I can't stress this enough, leave gates the way you find them. If they are open, leave them that way. If they are closed, shut them after you pass through.

If you ever leave a gate open and a farmer's cow herd gets out of the pasture, "Katy bar the door." You'll never be invited back to hunt. Don't even ask.

Once you've enjoyed a successful hunt, stop by to thank the landowner for his generosity. Offer to share the game you bag.

After the season, write a note expressing your appreciation for the opportunity to hunt. Consider offering a gift as a token of your gratitude.

Leasing of land by the hunter from the landowner is becoming more popular in Kansas. Such agreements allow a hunter a guaranteed hunting site. It also provides the landowner income necessary to recoup some of the investment he needs to leave habitat suitable for wildlife to survive and prosper.

If you enter into such a lease, make sure it is written and includes all provisions both parties deem necessary. This should include a clause for the landowner and his/her family to hunt on the land.

Always remember that the hunter and landowner should discuss the terms of the hunt before hunting begins. This is extremely important. Hunters never forget, you are a guest and it is a privilege to hunt on the owner's land.

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.

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