

When positions are more important thanw the results

On the
Prairie Dog
Steve Haynes



The country will be stepping down an uncharted path this month as federal officials try to figure out how to cut 8.5 to 13 percent from their programs.

So far, despite dire predictions, no one has much noticed. The stock market hasn't bottomed out, the government keeps chugging along. Later, reports say, government employees may have to take one unpaid day off each week, state programs could be cut, the flow of federal money may slow, and the Department of Defense says it will lay off many civilian workers and contractors.

This was never supposed to happen, of course. When both parties agreed to the plan last year, everyone said it was too unpalatable ever to be allowed to go into effect. Then when the deadline came up two months ago, the two sides could only agree to put it off again.

The deal to keep things rolling at the end of the year covered tax breaks for nearly everyone and some of President Obama's tax hikes for the rich, though the 2-point reduction in the Social Security tax rate nearly everyone enjoyed was allowed to expire.

At the time, the Republicans said they wouldn't discuss any more tax increases. Apparently, they meant it.

Last week, Washington writer Bob Woodward reported that it was the White House that first suggested the plan and agreed to it. Now, the president wants to blame it all on the Republicans, who he says defend tax breaks for the rich.

Yet they tell us now, taxes on the rich are the highest they have been in half a century.

Who's right?
Who's wrong?
Who knows?

Blame it on a system where posture and position are more important than results. A system where inaction often produces the desired results, where no one wants to give an inch for compromise, not when they think they have the upper hand.

Today, it's Mr. Obama and the Democrats who think they have the better hand. The Republicans, in control of the House of Representatives, have to posture and delay.

Where once the Democrats had promised to negotiate program cuts, since the election they say they need more tax increases to keep spending up. The Republicans say they aren't willing to talk about that.

Meanwhile, federal workers, states and people who depend on federal programs all are waiting to see what happens. No doubt, many will be hurt as this progresses.

Across-the-board cuts, by their nature, are rough, unpredictable, messy. But there's been no drama. The government has not shut down.

The spending problem remains. The government has been borrowing 40 cents of every dollar it spends. Something has to change there, and if it takes sequestration, as they're calling the mandatory cuts, to bring an agreement, then maybe that's what has to happen.

It's way past time to talk about the issue.

— Steve Haynes



A long ways away from making sense

Okay, just so everyone knows, I loved to hunt as a kid and I think gun ownership is fine. I do have to wonder though about a country that places a do not smoke sign outside government buildings, schools, and restaurants and a sign alongside welcoming those with their concealed weapons. We register all vehicles and all young men (not women) between the ages of 18-25, but oppose registering firearms. A school suspends an eight year old student for fashioning a gun out of his breakfast pastry and this same mentality wants to arm his teachers. I am trying to get it, but I just don't.

Soon a gun bill will go to the Kansas House of Representatives for their approval. This bill will allow those with a concealed-carry permit to enter an expanded list of buildings. It goes so far as to allow school boards to determine which employees are eligible to carry a concealed weapon. Currently, most government buildings and school districts in the state prohibit concealed firearms. Under the new

Phase II
Mary Kay
Woodyard



information, we are proposing the kindergarten teacher carry a gun?

Concealed weapons on a college campus, really? Thirty-one percent of college students meet the criteria for alcohol abuse and six percent are rated as chemically dependent with college males consuming more alcohol than their female counterparts. Before graduating from a four year college, 25 percent of college women will be the victims of rape or attempted rape, according to a Department of Justice study. And we want to allow concealed weapons on campus, really? I just don't get it.

Guns are a part of our cultural history, no one would deny that, but common sense needs to prevail. Fear of others, of the unknown or fear of the government absconding with our firearms may be driving this, but at some point we have to put some balance into the equation and clearly we are a long way from that. Mail to: mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net

proposal, certain places, colleges and universities and some hospitals and nursing homes, can exempt themselves from the new provision for four years. An amendment to allow these places to extend their exemption did not pass. Believe it or not, an amendment which would have exempted community mental health centers failed, as well. I just don't get it.

Firearms kill 31,537 people every year or put another way, 282 die daily as the result of gun shots. A two and a half year study from the University of Pennsylvania found people who carried guns were "4.5 times as likely to be shot and 4.2 times as likely to get killed as unarmed citizens." Armed with this

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These are the days of our lives, reality show parity

There is a reason we have multiple televisions in our house. The hubby and I rarely agree on what to watch. He likes "reality" type shows. The manly stuff: Ice Road Truckers and Logging.

He used to faithfully watch a show where the family lived liked frontier settlers. He particularly admired how tough the woman was. She worked as hard as the man and still managed to kill a critter, serve it up in some delicious dish, using a wood stove, with wood she split herself, every single day! They went to the store twice a year or so.

I could see what he was thinking. I had to remind him more than once they also did not have cable!

Now he has found Duck Dynasty. In so far as I can tell it is harmless to my lifestyle (though it may be detrimental to his life span). From what I've seen it should come with a warning: Do not try this at home! The new season of Duck Dynasty just started. Judging from Facebook postings, Duck Dynasty is a hit.

Another show he likes is about tow trucks. I watched a bit of it and found it incredibly overly dramatic. There is also a show called "Farm Kings". I've only seen previews. Using the tow truck model of turning everyday occurrences into high drama; I'm thinking about submitting a script about Kansas farmers: "Ad Astra per Aspera".

Here is a sample: "Thursday!"
"The snow from the recent blizzard is melting, allying Junior's fears the house

This Too
Shall Pass
Nancy
Hagman



porch roof might collapse. He goes to the shop to complete work on the header trailer. The Saturday deadline looms large, in addition supplies for the project came in over budget.

"It is important to keep equipment in safe operating condition, especially when contemplating a long road trip. Fines levied by the Department of Transportation for violations cut into profits. And poorly maintained equipment increases the change of an accident." Narrative describes some grizzly accident with still photos.

(Cue up some light hearted music.)
"The family dog approached the shop. Junior takes a few moments to play catch; a well-deserved break."

"His productive afternoon, grinds to a standstill with a phone call from Josh."

(If you have been following the story you know Josh takes care of the cows.)

"Josh was attempting to feed when a hydraulic line on the loader tractor broke. The cows are confined in a small pasture about two miles away awaiting the birth of their calves. Supplemental feeding is critical during this time."

"The two mile trip turns into an 11 mile trek as the most direct route was never cleared by the county road crews." (Some shots of snow packed road 220 Road.)

"Knowing this Junior carefully selects supplies and tools before leaving his shop." (Special effects will be needed if production wants the shop to appear organized!)

"Night is fast approaching and repairs must be made quickly or the cattle will not receive their evening rations."

"The tractor repairs are more extensive than anticipated. Junior makes the trip back to his shop for more supplies. Aware it will not be possible to use the loader that evening, Josh feeds the cows bales rather than their usual ground mixed feed."

"Junior's frustration grows as he realizes he needs a socket wrench he does not have in his tool box and a third trip to the shop is required. The men agree to start fresh in the morning."

"Well after dark, Junior arrives home to a smiling wife and a hot supper of meatloaf and baked potatoes!"

(Whew----sure glad it was not a night when I just said, "sorry I didn't know when you would be home, you can fix yourself a sandwich!")

"The day is done. Tomorrow will bring even more challenges. Fixing the loader takes priority over the header trailer and the day will probably not be long enough to do both!"

"Be sure to tune in for next week's episode: FRIDAY!"



Thumbs up to Vick Robison and the Norton High School Art students. You are to be commended for the work that has been on display at the Hansen Museum. Brought in.