

Parties must lay politics aside to prevent disaster

Congress simply has to act this fall. Otherwise, the nation could plunge off the “fiscal cliff” created by failure of the two parties to compromise on important tax and spending issues — straight into a new recession.

Each party blames the other for the chasm, but in truth, both are to blame. The Senate is also tied up in party infighting that it has not been able to pass a budget in more than three years. Neither party has the votes to push through its bill, and neither has been willing to back down.

The Republican-controlled House has plenty of solutions, but the Democrats aren't buying any of them.

The betting is that the two can get together in the “Lame Duck” session after the election, when political posturing will no longer mean much, and pass some compromise bills. It's either that, or the Bush and Obama tax cuts will expire, along with a lot of other legislation, and billions in automatic, across-the-board spending cuts will go into effect. The impact on the economy could be more than \$600 billion.

Combined, experts say, that could shrink the U.S. economy by 3 percent next year, plunging the world into a new recession. U.S. unemployment could jump to 9.1 percent. That's just what a shaky economy needs, with Europe already in crisis and the economy just plodding along.

The approaching “cliff” already is making investors nervous, holding back the stock market and probably the housing industry as well, the Associated Press reports. Beyond that, investors are worried about a possible round of tax increases if the president is re-elected, which appears more and more likely.

Without a deal, which could take some bloody infighting to achieve, the consequences are too great to ignore. But Wall Street observers predict that twists and turns in negotiations themselves could send the market into fits and starts, plunging and climbing on the daily news from inside the Beltway.

Be that as it may, the parties know they have to come together this time. It'll be mostly up to the Senate to come up with a compromise, then to sell it to the more conservative House. That means a lot of wrangling before the end of the year.

If the markets falter, it'll put even more pressure on the parties to get together. And that should produce a recession-saving bill.

Then, if Europe can keep its economy afloat, maybe we'll see continued recovery next year — and a return of prosperity. If not, well, we don't want to go there. Neither, we suspect, do the incumbents, who stand to lose their seats to a voter reaction that'll make the Tea Party look like an ice cream social.

We think voters are tired of posturing and delay, and they won't be happy if it wrecks the entire economy.

— Steve Haynes

Saying goodbye can be hard

Her hair is longer than it used to be, and the face has a few more lines, but her fingers are still on the pulse of the community. If you want to know what's going on, you just need to visit her neat little cabin on a side street.

Mary J., we call her. She's one of the few Marys I know who doesn't use a middle name.

She doesn't get out much any more. She's in a wheelchair and she said she's left her home just 10 times in the last five or six months. Each time was a doctor's visit.

She still remembers when Steve hired her to work for the paper. That was back in the mid 1980s. She said she just hired her to do a couple of stories.

Steve needed someone to cover the City Council the day Mary walked into the office. They got to talking, and before she knew it she was working for the paper.

“I thought I was retired,” she said with a twinkle in her eye.

Before coming home, she had gone to work for Wal-Mart in southwest Missouri and won a prize for the speed at which she could run the check stand.

She said she met Sam Walton just a few days before she was to retire. She had no clue who he was when she met him in the break room. He asked her to stay on because she was such a good checker, but she told him no.

After her retirement, she returned to Creede, the tiny mountain community she had adopted as her own in the 1940s, when she arrived in the middle of winter to find the snow up to her knees and the thermometer at 40 below.



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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Now at 89, she still writes for the paper. Not like she used to, but enough to keep her busy two or three days a week. She's been doing a column on her memories of those days back in the '40s, when she got off the bus and wondered why she had ever come here.

But, she told us, her store of memories — and her supply of old notebooks — is getting slim. She figures she'll have to turn to her friends for ideas. She noted that she is one of the youngsters in the group, since Margaret is 92 and Edna and Nell both are 91.

She noted that Margaret lives just across the street now. She gets up at 8 and turns the light on and goes to bed at 10 and turns the light off. Her son comes by every day to

check on her.

Mary checks on her, too. If she doesn't see that light come on at 8 in the morning, she calls the son. Poor Margaret never gets a chance to sleep in. Mary makes sure of it.

We had a nice visit with Mary and we hugged her thin frame as we prepared to leave. The hospice worker saw us out. Who knows, this may be our last visit. Maybe not.

About a year and a half ago, Mary left the state veterans' nursing home she had been moved to when she had broken both legs. She wrote that she was going home “for the duration.”

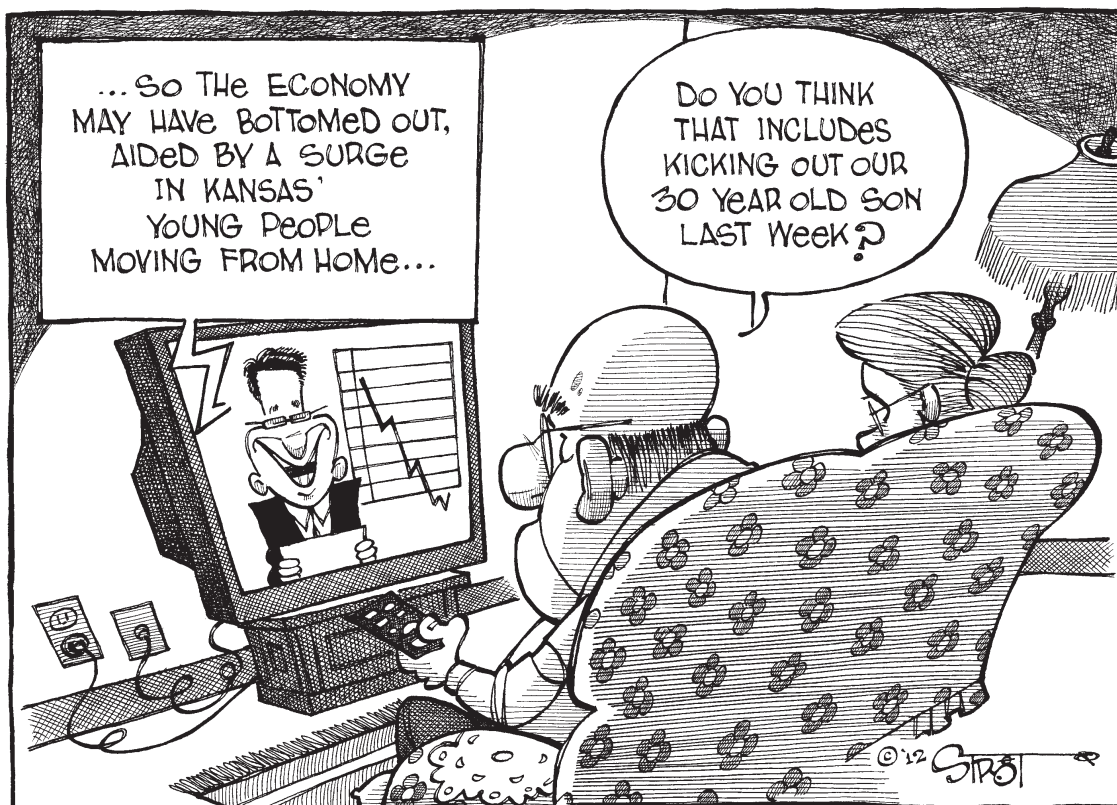
Now, she's watching the birds at her feeder, checking on the neighbors and keeping her finger on the pulse of her tiny mountain town.

From the Bible

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and

upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

— Hebrews 1:1-4



Hitchhiker sneaks into van

“Out! Out of the car!” I shouted to the hitchhiker in the back seat of our van. “What do you think you're doing?”

To which our uninvited passenger answered, “Meow, meow, mee-oow.”

In cat language, that probably translates, “Well, you left the door open. It's all your fault.”

Jim and I were leaving for town with a week's worth of plastic milk and water jugs, tin cans and cardboard recyclables piled high in the back. We had driven about a block when we heard Bootsie, our white-footed part-Siamese, let out a mournful yowl. During the loading process, she apparently had climbed in — probably found a soft, warm spot for a nap — and there she was when we drove away. We hit reverse and backed up, opened the side door and kicked her out.

Cats, notoriously, don't like riding in cars, so she didn't hesitate. But she didn't leave without some vocal protest.

-ob-

This round of egg-hatching may be another bust. We expected to see some kind of action by Wednesday or Thursday — Friday at the latest. The weekend passed and still nothing. Two more days, and then I'm calling it.

Actually, I'll be calling Jim. Do you have any idea how explosive undeveloped eggs can be that have been in an incubator for a month? Do you have any idea how toxic the contents can be?

I'll say, “Dear, Honey, Sweetie Pie.”

It might help if I have a chocolate crème pie in my hands when I say this.

“Would you mind disposing of these unhatched eggs for me? You're so good at stuff like that.”

He'll probably do it, because he



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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really is better at stuff like that than I am. He'll put them in a sealed container and take them to the trash barrel.

Come to think of it, our military could save a lot of money on developing new explosives. Just arm our troops with a bushel or two of rotten eggs to lob at the enemy. A few direct “hits” and they'd surrender in no time.

-ob-

Just heard on the news this morning that a manufacturing plant in Japan exploded and it will have dire consequences on America. What could that possibly be? you ask. Seems that particular plant produces one fifth of the world's supply of a component used in making disposable diapers.

Wow! Now there's a tragedy. A shortage of disposable diapers. Imagine what would happen if people actually had to resort to using cloth diapers. Why, landfills wouldn't be full, families might save some money and kids would be potty-trained sooner.

The flip side, however, is you that can't find cloth diapers, even if you wanted to use them. They are probably only sold in novelty stores now. I doubt if new parents would know how to operate a cloth diaper if they had one.

I only had two children; but I changed diapers. A lot!

Oh, sure. There's the disgusting diaper pail and the whole rinsing in the toilet thing. Other than that,

there's not much difference. They both accomplish the same purpose. One just costs a whole lot less than the other, and produces a lot less waste.

I actually sort of enjoyed folding freshly laundered diapers, especially when they had been dried on the clothesline. They smelled so fresh.

Personally, I preferred the triangular fold, sort of like a kite. It was reassuring to see that huge pile of clean “nappies,” neatly stacked in the diaper bag. Kind of like a safety net.

I'm probably not doing a very good sales job on the benefits of cloth diapers. Most modern-day parents would tell me their time is worth something and they don't need to spend it doing load after load of laundry. Or they would say their daycare providers insist on disposables. Whatever. Cloth diapers are another thing of the “good old days,” like rotary-dial phones and record players.

In the U.S.A.

“Don't expect to build up the weak by pulling down the strong.”

— Calvin Coolidge, 30th president, 1923-1929

Honor Roll

Welcome and thanks to these recent subscribers to *The Oberlin Herald*:

Elsewhere: Sherri Shaw, Redwood City, Calif.; Robert Borton, Arvada, Colo.; Duane Waldo, Tucson, Ariz.; Dr. C.R. Rasmussen, Lansdale, Pa.; Leroy Muirhead, Alma, Neb.; Linda Fergie, Richmond, Texas.

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Area: Wes DuBois, Norton; Rawlins County Sanitary Services, Mrs. Ron Fikan, Atwood; Greg

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Oberlin: Decatur County Farm Service Agency, Elton Mark, Merle Shirley, Laurene VanOtterloo, Dick and Donna Kelley, Caleb and Sarah Hauling, Wilma May, Brice Meitl, Lowell Holmberg, Ardythe Cederberg.

Knights to raise cash for disabled

To the Editor:

Every year, Knights of Columbus chapters across the state conduct their Tootsie Roll Drive for the benefit of people with disabilities. The people served by Developmental Services of Northwest Kansas have been the fortunate recipients of many gifts from this fund raiser. For many years, the generosity of the Knights has allowed us to offer additional support to those we serve.

One of those ways is our Consumer Medical Fund, established due to the contributions made through the drive. Thanks to the Knights, our agency has been able to help clients with the cost of medical items and care that are not covered by Medicaid, such as dental expenses and adaptive equipment.

So as the area Knights gear up for this annual fund raiser, we would like to take the time and wish all of them the best of luck and encourage everyone to stop and support their efforts. We appreciate their kindness and support.

Steve Keil,
Hays
director of development
Developmental Services of
Northwest Kansas

Letters to the Editor

City prosecutes eyesores

To the Editor:

With the current controversy in Oberlin about run down housing, I thought this article, “Neighborhood Eyesores, Arrests Compel Cleanup,” from *The Kansas City Star*, might interest you. (It's true; they arrest people in Kansas City for not cleaning up their property!)

The last time I was in Oberlin, about a year ago, I was very disap-

pointed and distressed about the condition of some of the housing. When we left Oberlin some 25 years ago, the town was in much better shape. In order to attract more doctors, I think the overall looks of the town must improve.

Ed Stillions,
Shawnee
Former mayor and
city councilman

Photo Policy

The Oberlin Herald wants to emphasize photos of people doing things in the community. If you know of an event or news happening that we should attend, please call 475-2206.

Please be sure to allow a couple of days' notice so we can arrange to be there.

Space in the paper is limited and so is the time of our staff, so we may not be able to get to every event, but we will try.

Because space is so limited, we cannot run team or group photos,

any pictures of people lined up or of people passing checks, certificates and the like. (We will always try to make room for a story about any of these events, however.)

We do run wedding and engagement pictures and “mug” shots with stories and obituaries, when they are provided to us. Please remember that we need a clear, sharp picture. Dark or fuzzy prints will not work.

We cannot return photos unless you submit a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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