

Stimulus, sinulus, it's one whale of a lot of money

The initial steps to financial recovery — well, that might be putting it a bit strong — have begun. Today, President Obama is scheduled to sign the stimulus bill in Colorado. The size of the stimulus bill would almost dictate the signing be held atop Pikes Peak.

If you can imagine what \$787,000,000,000 is, other than more debt, then there's a job for you in Washington. This \$787 billion is on top of the billions issued earlier by President Bush to bail out Financial, USA. These two handouts or whatever you can call them, exceed \$1,000,000,000,000 — yes, trillion dollars.

Here we sit as taxpayers knowing no more now than we did when the first batch of money went to Wall Street. Transparency is only as transparent as those shelling out our money want it to be.

The stimulus plan is expected to put people back to work. The jobless rate, so latest statistics show, is some where in the neighborhood of 7 to 7.5 percent nationwide. That's several million out of the many millions of people still on the job.

President Obama says we face a disaster if the stimulus plan is not approved by Congress. Well, it was, thanks to the majority party. Only three Republicans joined with the Democrats to approve this staggering sum of 'hope.'

Those who gave their blessings to the money tree, reason that "it's better to do something, than to do nothing at all." Time will tell.

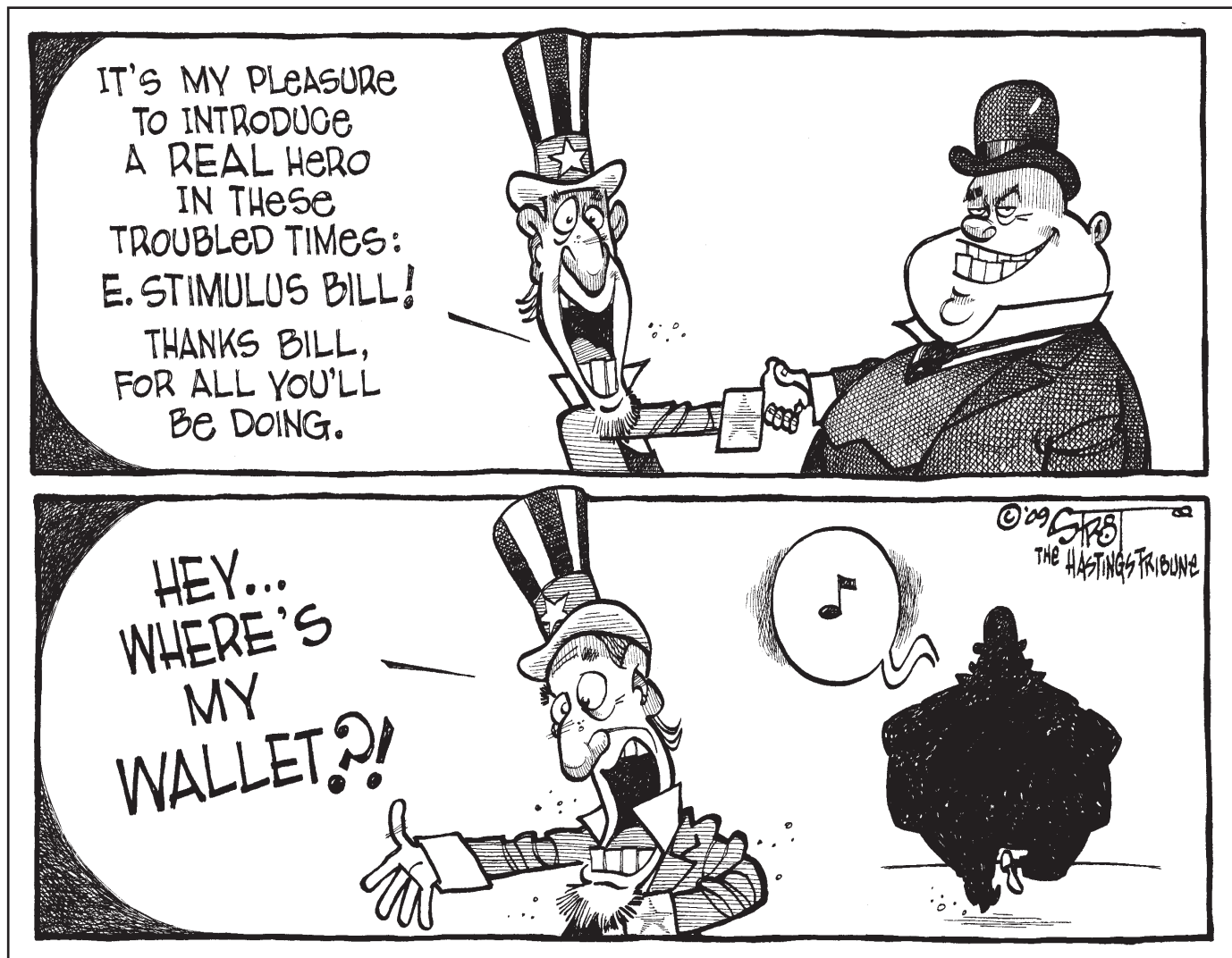
Not all of the money contained in the sinulus bill — if you want to look at it that way — is going to create jobs, which, we were told at the outset, was the reason for cranking up the money presses.

We don't know how much of that \$787 billion will find its way to Kansas. And if it does, will the chunk be sufficient enough to call the jobless back to work? Or will it be hand delivered by Dorothy and Toto and perhaps, knowing our 'luck', get sucked into a tornado.

Time will answer a lot of questions. And whether or not enactment of this bill will be a triumph for President Obama, or an anchor around his neck, remains to be seen. We want this president to succeed, because if he does the country does.

As we move into the post-stimulus era, keep your fingers crossed.

— Tom Dreiling



Romantic Jim left his prints everywhere

Imagine my surprise Saturday morning (Valentine's Day) when I came down the stairs to find the family room, bathroom, kitchen and laundry room festooned with red construction paper hearts. They were taped to walls, windows, mirrors, lamps and the television.

My sweet husband is such a romantic! We had looked at greeting cards the week before and showed the other what we would have purchased — IF — we were buying cards. Not that we're cheap. Well, I am, just a little. But, the point is, three or four dollars for a greeting card is absolutely ridiculous.

His homemade cards with sayings like "Fool 4 U!", "Be Mine", "I Luv U", and "1-4-3" (our secret code for "I Love You") meant more to me than the fanciest card ever could.

He has extended the Valentine season by leaving the lighted heart on the side of our barn on Main Street on for a few extra days. Some of the guys in town give Jim a bad time. They say, "Cut it out Plotts. You're making the rest of us look bad." I think, secretly, they wish they would have thought of it first

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



birthday, heed this warning. "Beware of the deluge of advertisements you are soon to receive regarding Medicare."

Jim is fast-approaching that magic number and for the last six months our mail box has been swamped with offers from dozens of insurance companies, each proclaiming their coverage to be the best. At first, I tried to study each one so we would make an informed decision. It wasn't long, though, before they all started to sound alike. Plan A, B, C, D. Then, here came Plan F for only \$1 more. What happened to Plan E? I even attended a workshop to learn more. It helped some, but, I'm still confused. The scare tactic used is if you don't choose a plan during the sign-up period, you will be penalized for the rest of your life with a higher premium. What to do, what to do?

-ob-

And, now, a word about the weather. We've had a relatively mild winter, so far. I've been told the Farmer's Almanac predicts a late season blizzard. Could it be a white Easter? I'll just parrot what everyone else is saying. "We sure do need the moisture."

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If you are approaching your 65th

Recovery is like the change of seasons

As I watch the weather changes, I am reminded about how our growth in recovery is like the seasons of the year. Recovery is not a steady climb out of addiction nor is it a one-time event. It is a life-long process which involves taking chances, making mistakes, learning from our mistakes, growing and then sharing with others. Sometimes it feels sunny and warm and other times dark and cold. I'm coming to realize that's the way life works but the addict in me sometimes still believes the lie that "if you are doing life right, you will never suffer."

Recovery cycles are like any other living organism in its existence. When I first came into recovery, I was in that cold dark place — it's kind of like the Winter. There are no hints that life waits under ground, things seem hopeless, dreary and lonely.

As I continued in recovery, the light of hope began to glimmer. I began to feel warmer on the inside and believed that maybe things could at least not get worse. I wasn't quite sure that they would get better. Insights came painfully. I had to face who I was and what I had done in my addiction to myself, my family, friends, the world in general. I began to include others (like my sponsor) in my struggle. I began to grow

Where There's Hope Carla Moore

some of the old things which kept me sick and at the same time settled into the new habits I had been working on. I also discovered that during this time the sense of restlessness, irritability and discontent were beginning to grow. These are familiar feelings for addicts and alcoholics and ideally they take us back to our roots — to begin working the basics of our Program. We recently discussed those — the 5 suggestions — these take us back into Winter, a time to rest and prepare for future growth.

This process continues today. I have learned there is wisdom in allowing people, places and things to follow their natural order which includes my recovery. My recovery seasons don't follow the natural seasons but I recognize them for what they are today and realize each brings lessons which are necessary for the next step in my journey. Winter can still be cold and lonely, Spring still hurts as I become aware of my character defects, Summer is still breath-taking and Fall is still a slowing down time. Today I am OK with the process because I realize it's necessity in gaining a full experience in life. I'm told that "normal" people experience these things too!

(If you have any questions or comments, you can contact me at cmoore@valleyhope.com. Namaste - Carla.)



To... Lyman and Georgia Rowh, for being selected Norton County's Sweetheart Couple. Good choice. (e-mail)

To... Scott at the post office, thanks for going above and beyond! (brought in)

To... Alexis Henson, Bethany Roy and Stanton Nelson, for each of them receiving a "I" rating at the Regional Piano Festival held recently in Hays. All three students now will compete at the State Piano Festival in Wichita on Feb. 21. Good luck and thanks for the beautiful music! (e-mail)

To... the county's Sweetheart Couple, Georgia and Lyman Rowh. And to the paper and the businesses involved for a nice contest. (called in)

To... Macy Kasson, for winning the title of Norton County Spelling Bee Champion. Go get 'em at the state bee in Great Bend next Month. (e-mail)

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

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