

Tuesday's Snippets

The number of people jumping on the Snippets train is growing. The comments this week are again interesting, some very brief, some needing extra space. But whatever, they are your thoughts.

Here's what YOU said:

• "I will still call it the Sears Tower."
• "Would you turn down a bonus if your boss gave one to you?"
• "How do you go about getting a job at AIG and get in on those big, juicy bonuses?"
"Congress is just jealous because they haven't found out a way to give themselves a bonus!"
• "I want to congratulate you (the Snippets author) for offering a very responsible perspective on the AIG bonus fiasco rather than biting on the red meat the silly pols keep throwing all over the cable networks. It was sickening to listen to them rake Ed Liddy (AIG, CEO), who volunteered his services for \$1 per year. These same politicians who act so offended that Mr. Liddy was adhering to contracts written before he arrived (which were surely known about by these high-minded congressman and their staffs) and live themselves off the taxpayer largesse. It has really irked me, and I think you nailed it. Salaries aside, who else enjoys the kind of perks and benefits as these "public servants"??? In any case, I thought you spoke uniquely to the anger I have been feeling over this, as opposed to the anger the politicians and the media have been trying to stoke to deflect attention from their own failings."

• "We should not give them (AIG) the remaining \$30 billion. They proved they weren't good stewards of money with the mess they created, and once again — spending money that isn't theirs. We need to take the checkbook away!"
"As you said, Congress needs to point the finger at themselves. They are to blame for the mess!"

• "Reprehensible as they are, the AIG bonuses might well have been legal. Trying to summarily quash them could've put the government on the technically wrong side of a legal dispute — a dispute which, in the courts, could have squandered hundreds of thousands of taxpayers' dollars, only to result in a verdict in favor of the CEO's."

The ironic thing is that those outrageous bonuses, enormous as they might seem to Jill/Joe Q. Public, constitute a minuscule component of the current financial crisis, yet they are commanding a disproportionately large amount of attention that should be spent on far more productive endeavors."

• "A coin is a coin and folding money is folding money... and in all probability many people have probably forgotten In God We Trust is printed on all of our money. They see the numbers \$1, \$10, \$100, etc. and that's all. Why we need to depend on money to remind us of God is a mystery. Money, an old saying goes, "Is the root of all evil," so why would we even want to put God on something that creepy? Would you turn down \$100,000 if In God We Trust wasn't printed on those Federal Reserve Notes? Bet not!"

• "60 Minutes" Sunday night devoted part of the hour to an interview with President Barack Obama. The guy doing the interview picked up on the president smiling several times while being questioned about certain aspects of the country's economic crises.

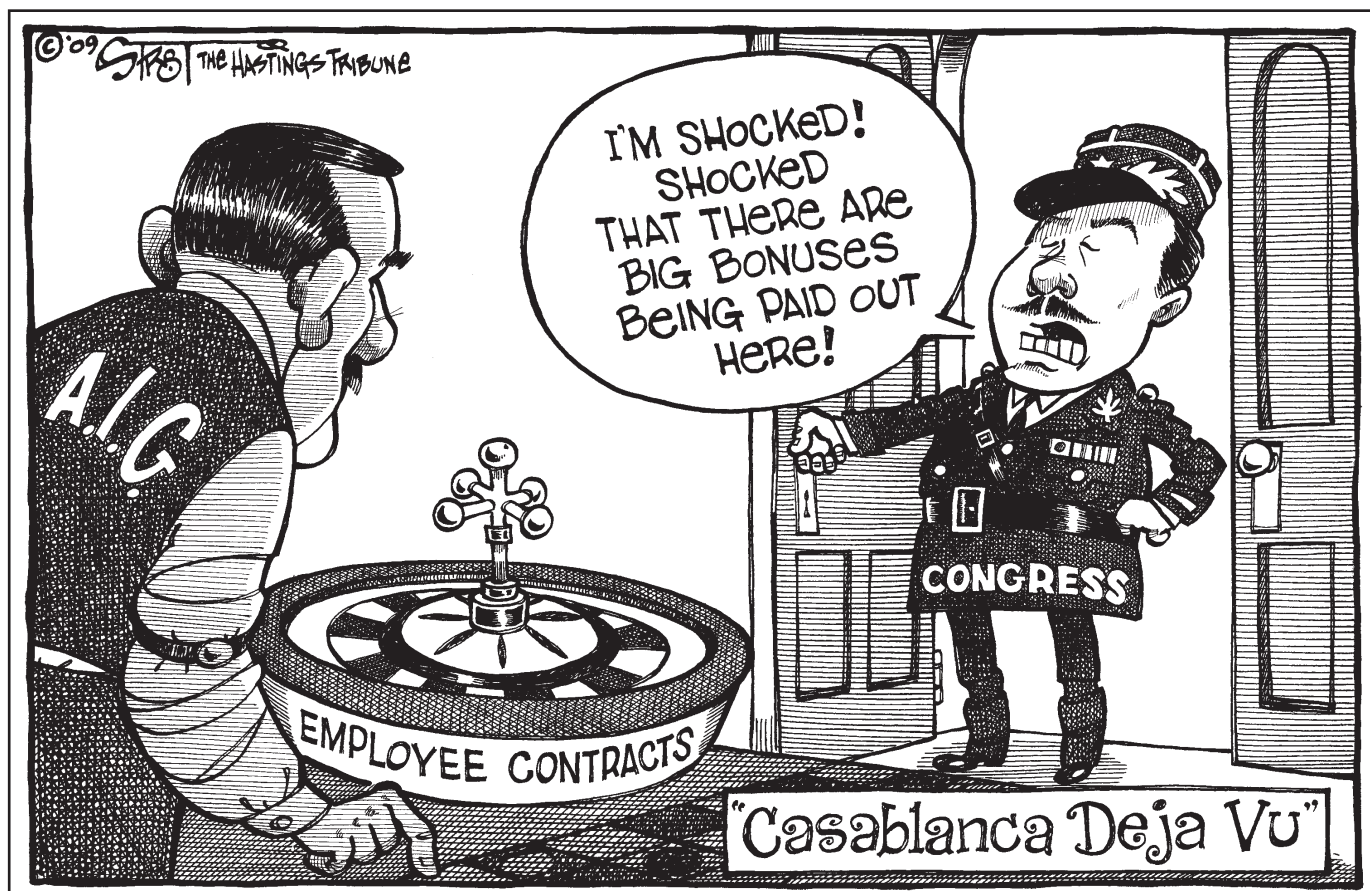
I think the prez was doing what a lot of us do when confronted with adversity that simply overwhelms. I know I do that, often. Shove my chair back, shake my head and laugh. They say laughter helps relieve stress.

Gov. Ed Rendell of Pennsylvania is of the opinion the stimulus package should involve a large part of infrastructure needs but on a long range basis. He's probably right. Those so-called shovel-ready projects aren't ready. It's nothing more than a catch-phrase.

While watching a morning show television host Monday, I came away with the conclusion that she was talking so fast her brain was unable to process her thoughts. This speaks true for a lot of those — what I call — standup *newscomedians*.

(Your comments are solicited. Names not used, unless so indicated. E-mail tom.d@nwks.com, mail to 215 S. Kansas Ave. 67654, fax to 877-3732. Thanks for joining in the conversation.)

Stop Look Listen
Tom Dreiling



Graduated driver's license explained

House Bill 2143, **Graduated Drivers Licenses: HB 2143 modifies the driving permit** and license requirements for drivers under the age of 17.

Instruction Permit

The bill requires adults holding a valid driver's license who accompany drivers with instruction permits to be at least 21 years old. Instruction permits can be suspended or revoked like all other driver's licenses. The minimum age for instruction permit holders remains at 14.

Farm Permit

Farm permits are available to individuals between the ages 14 to 17. The bill continues to allow farm permit holders to drive in connection with farming purposes and to and from school. Farm permit holders who are 16 or older can drive any time between 5 a.m. and 9 p.m. and while going to or from authorized school activities.

Restricted License

Applicants for restricted licenses must hold an instruction permit for at least one year. The current requirement is six months. If younger than 16, the applicant must complete a driver's education course. Fifteen year old applicants are required to have at least 25 hours of adult supervised driving. Fifty hours of adult supervised driving is required for 16 year old drivers, with 10 of those hours consisting of adult supervised night driving. Also, drivers 16 years of age or older can drive at any time between 5 a.m. to 9 p.m. and while going to or from authorized school activities.

Restrictions on Nonsibling Passengers

Drivers under the age of 16, who have a restricted driver's license or farm permit, are prohibited from having nonsibling minor passengers in the vehicle with them. If older than 16, farm permit or restricted license holders can have one passenger under the age of 18 who is not an immediate family member in the vehicle with them.

Restrictions on Use of Wireless Devices

Drivers with instruction, farm, and restricted licenses are banned from operating a wireless communication device while driving with the exception of reporting illegal activity or to call for emergency help.

Lifting of Restrictions

Holders of farm permits and restricted licenses who are 16 and older are no longer restricted on nonsibling passengers or the time of day when driving if the holder has not violated the restrictions for at least six months.

Full Licensure

First-time applicants have to be at least 17 years old to have full driving privileges in the bill. If under the age of 18, full licensure applicants must complete at least 50 hours of supervised driving, with 10 of those hours at night.

Penalties

The bill makes several changes to penalties for violating driving restrictions. If a farm permit or restricted license holder has violated restrictions or had two or more accidents of their fault, the bill requires the suspension of the permit or license for a minimum of one year. If a permit or license holder is under the age of 16 and has been convicted of two moving violations on separate occasions, they are

Senate Doings
Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer



not eligible for unrestricted driving privileges until the age of 18. For those guilty of violating permit or license restrictions, the bill suspends driving privileges for 30 days upon the first conviction, 90 days for the second conviction, and for one year for a third or subsequent conviction.

The conditions, limitations, and restrictions listed in HB 2143 do not apply to individuals holding any valid driver's licenses or permits as of January 1, 2010. HB 2143 passed 35 to 5 on Thursday, March 19.

House Bill 2134, **Distinctive License Plates:** HB 2134 exempts the "In God We Trust" distinctive license plates from requirements that a sponsoring person or organization submit a nonrefundable amount to defray the development costs of the plate to the Division of Vehicles. The bill delays the manufacturing and licensing of the plates until the Division has received \$40,000 from the collection of the required \$40 personalized license plate fee. Also, the bill increases from \$10,000 to \$20,000 the nonrefundable amount a sponsoring organization or individual is required to submit to the Division of Vehicles to offset the development costs of the plate. HB 2134 was approved 37 to 3 on Thursday, March 19.

Senate Bill 22, **No-Fund Warrants:** SB 22 authorizes the issuance of no fund warrants by school districts boards of education without approval from the State Court of Tax Appeals for the purposes of paying teacher salaries, if the district does not have the funds available to do so. The district can pay the warrants back with any available revenues. If revenues are not available or insufficient to pay for the warrants, the board of education can make no more than two annual tax levies after the issuance of the warrants. School boards have the authority to issue warrants until June 30, 2012. SB 22 passed 23 to 17 on Thursday, March 19.

Senate Bill 75, **Government Consolidation and Reorganization:** SB 75 authorizes a city or county to establish a consolidation study commission by a joint resolution for the purposes of preparing and adopting a preliminary plan for city-county consolidation and to address abolishing other political and taxing subdivisions in the county. A final consolidation plan must be submitted to voters in the next general election asking if a city and county should be consolidated and if the political and taxing subdivisions located in the county should be abolished and the duties transferred to the consolidated city-county. No city could be consolidated with the county if the majority of voters do not approve of the consolidation. If separate votes are required, the consolidation must be approved by a majority of voters in the county's unincorporated area and within each city. SB 75 passed 27 to 11 on Thursday, March 19.

Senate Bill 238, **Woman's Right to Know Act:** SB 238 makes many changes

to the Woman's Right to Know Act. The Act requires additional information to be provided by a physician to a woman before an abortion is performed. Among the additions is the requirement that physicians provide pregnant women with the opportunity to hear the unborn child's heartbeat or view an ultrasound of the unborn child at least 30 minutes prior to the procedure. Physicians are also required, by the bill, to meet with each woman for no less than 30 minutes prior to an abortion to answer questions and provide information about the procedure. Documentation of a physician's diagnosis that continuing a pregnancy will cause substantial and irreversible harm to a woman or other reasoning for terminating a pregnancy must be on file for a minimum of 10 years. SB 238 passed 32 to 6 on Tuesday, March 17.

Senate Bill 285, **KAN-ED Funding:** SB 285 amends statutes on expenditures from the Kansas Universal Service Fund (KUSF) to provide \$10 million in funding to the Kan-Ed program through June 30, 2012. SB 285 passed 37 to 3 on Thursday, March 19.

Senate Bill 313, **Contingency Reserve Fund:** SB 313 temporarily removes the six percent cap for funds going into a school district's contingency reserve fund. The cap is removed until the 2012-2013 school year in order to allow districts to prepare for possible future funding cuts. SB 313 passed 32 to 7 on Thursday, March 19.

House Bill 2096, **Kansas DUI Commission:** S. Sub. for HB 2096 creates the Kansas DUI Commission, amends current law on DUI penalties, revises the duties of the municipal court, and creates statewide driver improvement clinics. The bill creates the Kansas DUI Commission for the purposes of reviewing Kansas DUI statutes and DUI statutes in other states; for evaluating treatment and supervision enforcement practices and penalty structures proven to change DUI offender behavior. They are also charged with developing a legislative proposal for streamlined record keeping and collecting and reviewing information from all groups and committees working on DUI issues. The bill strengthens penalties for third and fourth time DUI convictions. Penalties for third time convictions of DUI are increased to a nonperson felony requiring a 90 day minimum sentence and fine of \$1,500 while fourth DUI convictions is a nonperson felony punishable by a minimum of 180 days in jail and \$2,500 fine. HB 2096 passed 40 to 0 on Thursday, March 19.

Update on **Abolishing the Death Penalty:** SB 208 proposed to abolish the death penalty in the State of Kansas after July 1, 2009. For individuals sentenced to death before July 1, 2009 the penalty would still apply. After three hours of debate on Monday, March 16, the Senate, by voice vote, sent the bill back to the Judiciary Committee for further work.

(Please feel free to contact me at any time. I can be reached by writing to: Senator Ralph Ostmeyer, State Capitol, 300 SW 10th Street, Room 262-E, Topeka, Kan., 66612, or call 785-296-7399. My E-Mail address is ralph.ostmeyer@senate.ks.gov. Please let me know, if you would like to be on my mailing list.)

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