

Once again, businesses will foot the bill

Democrats and Republicans in Washington now agree, the changes in Internal Revenue Service form 1099 regulations hidden in the Obama Health Care bills last year just have to be changed before they strangle business in this country, big and small.

The 1099 provisions were little noticed when the thousand-page-plus bill was in Congress, but the damage they could do is quite apparent by the light of day. Businesses are frightened by the cost of reporting every transaction, even with corporations. And the irony of the situation is the IRS probably can't handle the influx of information the plan would produce.

Issuing 1099 forms is nothing new. Businesses have had to deal with them for years, but most requirements apply to payments to individuals outside the withholding-tax system. IRS thought for years that it was getting cheated by people who didn't report income for home businesses and investments like savings accounts and stocks.

Years ago, the service got Congress to require reporting for payments to individuals. Most businesses managed to comply, though for some, such as banks, the requirements can be expensive and unproductive.

Banks, for instance, have to report interest payments as small as \$10. You can rest assured that IRS knows about your kid's bank account and expects it to be accounted for on someone's income tax return. Now, however, businesses will have to report millions and millions of corporate transactions, which will be nearly impossible to match to tax returns.

One problem here is that while the government expects to reap the rewards of this program through increases in tax payments, it's the businesses that foot the bill. In some cases, that may be higher than the benefit to the government. Never mind that. The government will benefit, and it makes the rules. We don't.

It's time for that kind of thinking to stop.

Now, a bipartisan movement may be developing to eliminate the new rules, which would produce millions more forms and cost billions more to produce. Sen. Mike Johans, a Nebraska Republican, and Sen. Max Baucus, the Montana Democrat who chairs the Senate Committee, both have amendments in to remove this burden.

The issue that will have to be settled is to how to "pay" for the change, since it's recorded in federal books as bringing in \$17 billion a year to reduce the federal deficit.

The main difference is that Sen. Johans identifies ways to make up for the loss by, while the Baccus bill simply repeals the requirements. That will have to be compromised to get a bill through the Senate and House before the end of the year, an act of bipartisanship that might be akin to a minor miracle.

The Senate amendments, by the way, would be appended to something called the Food Safety Act. Go figure.

Our own Rep. Jerry Moran was early to get on the bandwagon, helping to sponsor a House amendment which would accomplish the same thing. Hopefully, the repeal will gain traction and move before he becomes Sen. Moran.

Business groups, including the National Newspaper Association, have united against this outrage. Everyone who realizes the importance of jobs and small business to the economy ought to do likewise.

We call on Congress to get this issue dealt with before the end of the year, when tax forms have to be finalized and distributed. Repeal is urgent, time is short. Get with it, ladies and gentlemen.

—Steve Haynes



Thumbs up to Rosalie Schulze for requesting that the Christmas lights on the courthouse remain a tradition. I wonder how the other towns put Christmas lights on their courthouses? Emailed in.

To render a Thumbs Up write: dpaxton@nwkans.com or nortontelegram@nwkans.com

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THE NORTON TELEGRAM

ISSN 1063-701X
215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, KS 67654

Published each Tuesday and Friday by Haynes Publishing Co., 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, Kan. 67654. Periodicals mail postage paid at Norton, Kan. 67654.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Norton Telegram, 215 S. Kansas, Norton, Kan. 67654

Official newspaper of Norton and Norton County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, and the Nebraska Press Association

Nor'West Newspapers
Dick and Mary Beth Boyd
Publishers, 1970-2002

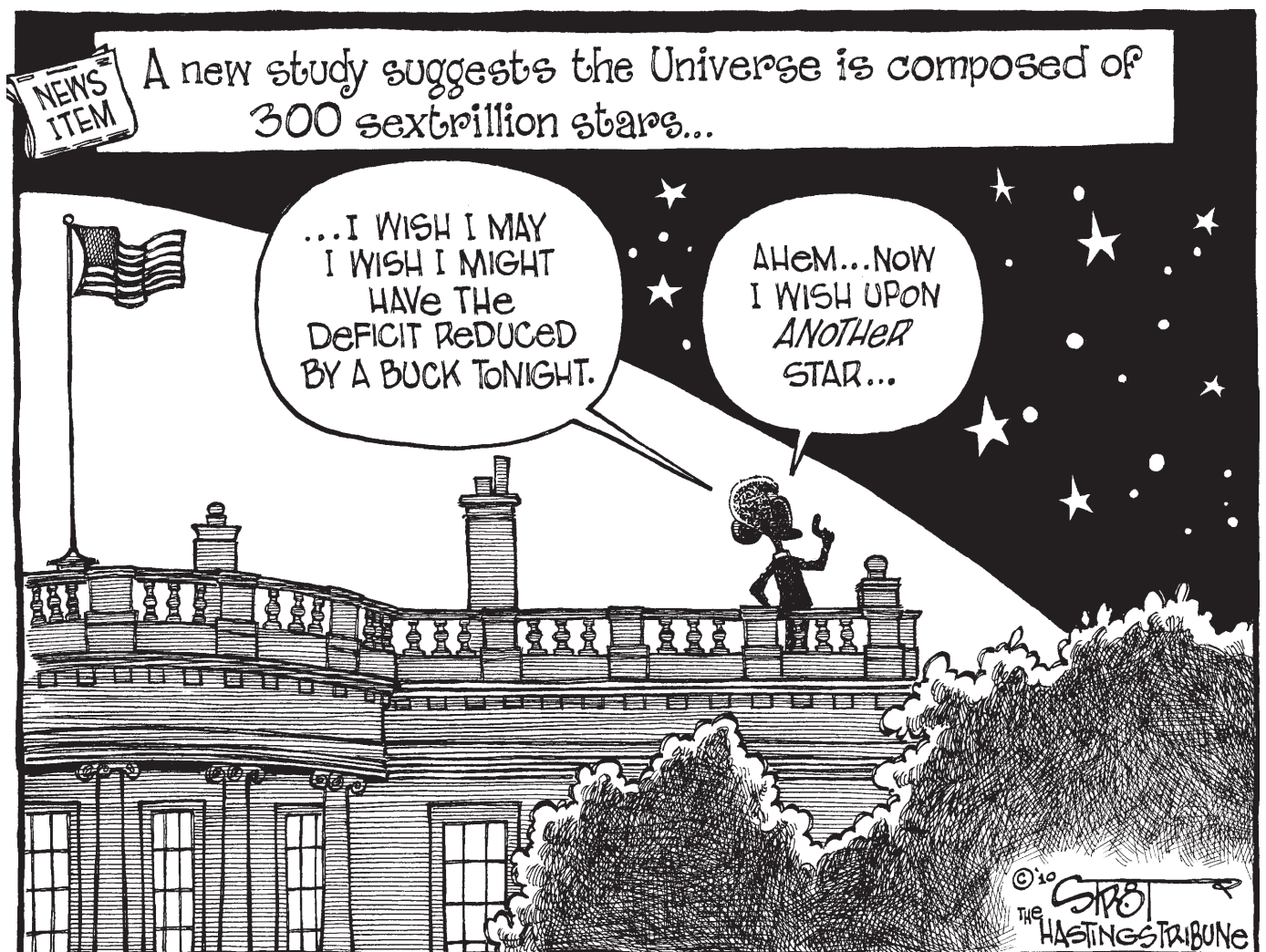
Kansas Press Association



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The dangers of cell phone use and driving

It's been said that you shouldn't fly faster than your guardian angel can fly. Well, I wasn't driving too fast but, my guardian angel had to do some pretty speedy maneuvering.

Jim got a job putting a metal roof on a home about 30 miles away and I am his "ground man". That just means I'm the "gopher". I go for the power cord; I go for the screw gun; I go for the ridge cap; I go for everything. Still...it's better than being on the roof.

Anyway, we were on our way home one afternoon and I was driving the pickup. We were on a flat stretch of road and there was only one vehicle in sight. A late model, bright, red Chevy pickup truck, ahead, in the oncoming lane. Suddenly, that pickup drifted over into my lane and kept coming. I thought surely, the driver would correct and get back into their lane. But, the truck kept coming and coming until, I had no choice but to head for the ditch.

The driver (and, I hate to admit it was a woman) was still talking on her cell phone when she went past us, still in our lane. She drove about a quarter of a mile before she got back over into her lane. I'm not sure she was even aware of how close she came to not only killing herself, but of killing us too.

We considered notifying the police but,

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



without a license tag number or a positive ID of the driver we knew nothing could be done. I just hope she reads this and comes to understand how dangerous her actions were and vows to never do anything foolish like that again.

-ob-

I called my new daughter-in-law, Charlotte, a few days after the wedding and said, "Hello, Mrs. Plotts." You could hear the smile in her voice when she said, "That sure sounds good to me. Hello, to you too, Mrs. Plotts." I just realized that Charlotte and I now have the same initials. We could share monograms.

Saturday morning Jim and I called James and Charlotte to say, "Happy Anniversary". After all, they've been married a whole week.

-ob-

I've been watching the television series, "Sarah Palin's Alaska" and, I find myself liking her more and more. She is the kind of woman I would like to hang

out with. She knows how to work; she values her family above all else; she is a Godly woman; she doesn't take herself too seriously she is dead-serious about causes she believes in; her husband is a real working man; she is a good shot and a good mother.

I was settled in to watch the segment where Gov. Palin and her father go hunting for caribou. A disclaimer flashed on the TV screen: "Warning: This broadcast may contain material objectionable to some viewers."

I asked myself what anyone could find objectionable in a show about Alaska. Then I remembered the hunting scenes in the "teaser commercials" leading up to the broadcast. There would, surely, be someone who would object to her killing an animal. Never mind that she dropped it in one shot or that it was food to feed her family.

The impression I got was that she and her father had a deep love for the land and a respect for the animals they took as food. Her father said he had raised her that way and that he was proud of her.

As parents, isn't that all we could hope for? To be proud of the way we raised our children and of the adults they have become.

Know what to do before winter gets here

Insight

John Schlageck

If you're even a casual observer of weather, you know the East Coast was brutalized with the season's first round of snow and blinding winds that brought the New York state region to its knees.

And while winter isn't officially here yet, it won't be long. With the continual winds and strong gusts this late fall, this season may be a real doozy.

It's never too early to begin preparation for winter travel, and the trials and tribulations that may be associated with it.

If you're caught in a winter storm in a car or truck, stay with the vehicle. Disorientation occurs quickly in blinding, wind-driven snow and cold.

Run the engine 10 minutes each hour for heat. Open the window for fresh air to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning. Make sure the exhaust pipe is not blocked.

Make yourself visible to possible rescuers by turning on the dome light at night while running the engine. Tie a colored cloth to your antenna or door and raise the hood of your vehicle indicating trouble after the snow stops falling.

Exercise from time to time by vigorously moving arms, legs, fingers and toes to keep blood circulating and to keep warm.

When you're at home or in a building and a winter storm hits, stay inside. Be sure to use proper fire safeguards and ventilation when running a stove, fireplace, space heater or other alternative heat.

If heat is not available, in the case of a power outage for example, close off unneeded rooms; cover windows at night and stuff towels or rags in cracks under doors. Better yet, install insulation strips before frigid weather arrives.

Always continue to eat and drink because food provides the body with energy for producing heat. Keep the body replenished with fluids to prevent dehydration.

What happens if you're caught on foot in a winter storm? How do you weather it out?

The first thing to do is seek shelter. Try to stay dry and cover all exposed parts of your body.

If there is no shelter, prepare a lean-to, windbreak or snow cave for protection

from the wind. Do not eat snow. It will lower your body temperature. Melt it first.

Staying informed with the most up-to-date weather information is the best way to avoid winter storm problems. Forecasts and weather conditions change rapidly. Before traveling out on the roads or in harsh winter weather conditions, it is vital that you are current on what is happening in your area.

The most reliable way to keep track of winter weather, or any weather, is through NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) Weather Radio. Weather radio is operated and programmed directly from local National Weather Service offices.

The latest and most comprehensive information is available 24 hours each day, seven days a week. Other sources of weather information include your local radio and television stations, the weather channel and even more convenient weather news on your cell phone.

There's plenty of information available to keep anyone current on weather conditions this upcoming season. The key is to listen, stay informed and be prepared.

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