

Congress is not serious about budget balancing

If the new Congress is serious about balancing the federal budget, the first thing it would do is give the president a line-item veto over spending bills.

Of course, Congress is not serious about balancing the budget, and the last thing it would do is give the president more power. Especially over Congress.

If the president had a line-item veto, he could pencil out the hundreds, make that thousands, of "earmarks" members slip into spending bills.

The number mushroomed while the Republicans were in power, but there's no sign the Democrats will do anything about the earmarks. Heck, Democrats like earmarks as much as Republicans.

What's an earmark, you ask?

It's a provision slipped into an appropriation bill, often unrelated to the earmark, which directs federal money to a specific project, usually in a member's state or district.

While these are easy for a congressman to get, lobbying firms offer to cinch them — for a price. The system corrupts the entire federal budget, but there's not much a president can do.

Under the Constitution, he can sign a bill or veto it, but if he signs it, he must take the whole thing. Earmarks just slide through because, usually, the bill is vital to running the government and the president can't risk a shutdown.

How easy is it to get an earmark? A couple of years ago, Rep. Jerry Moran was talking to people in Oberlin about restoration of the old Works Progress Administration facilities at Sappa Park, just outside the town.

"What can I do to help," he asked.

Someone replied that he could get money to buy

shingles to restore the old shelter house. He got an \$8,000 earmark for the shingles and remarked later that someone told him it'd have been just as easy to get \$8 million.

How bad is the problem? In 1994, when the Republicans came to power in Congress, *National Review* reported 4,126 earmarks in 13 appropriation bills worth maybe \$10 billion. In 2004, 14,000 for nearly \$28 billion. This year's highway bill had a record 6,371.

The most famous may be the \$220 million "Bridge to Nowhere" in Alaska, which serves an island populated by about 50 people. We hope they appreciated it.

Earmarks pay for roads, community centers, parks, you name it. Most, doubtless, are worthy projects, but the government can't afford them. It can't afford its regular expenses, let alone all these extras.

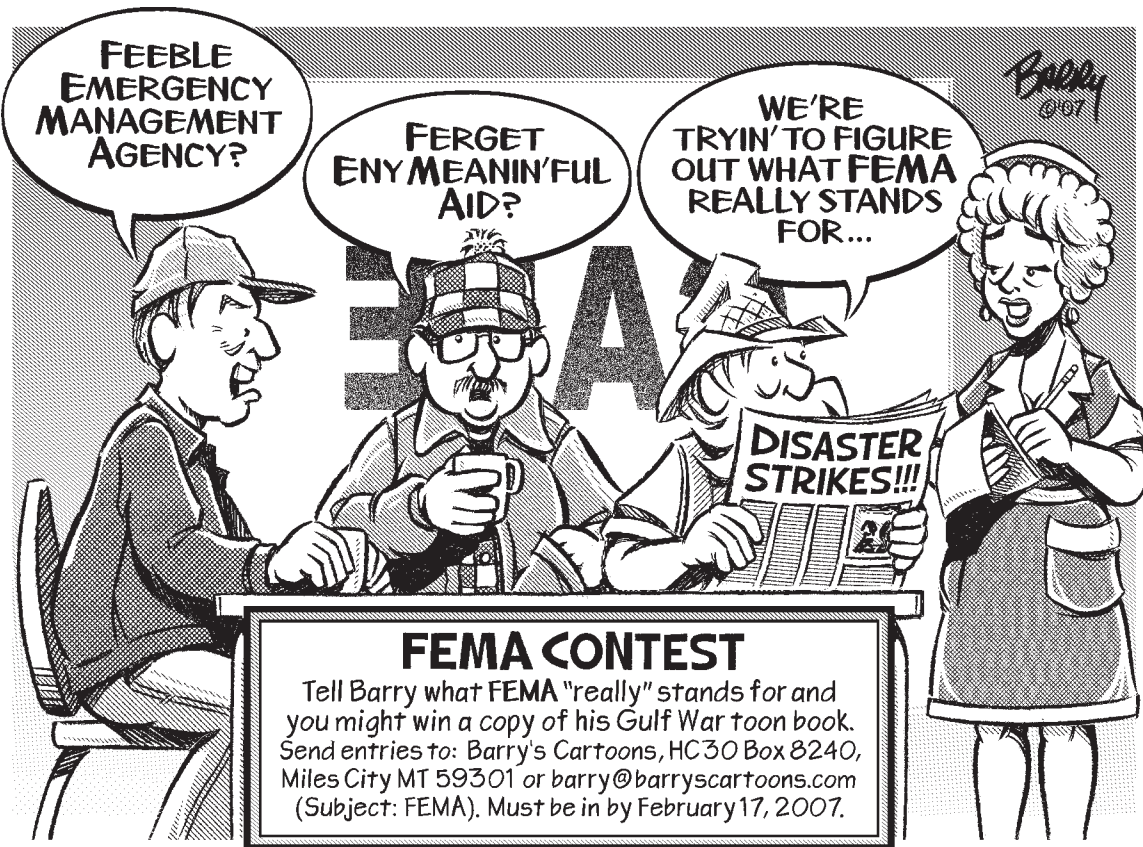
Usually, earmarks are inserted with no debate and without anyone really knowing what happened. They're so small compared to a single appropriation bill that no one notices 99 percent of them.

Now everyone says we have to balance the budget and learn once again to live within our means. Except for the earmarks, of course.

You really think Congress is going to give up this sweet little pork barrel? They corrupt the system and drive up the deficit, but everyone who benefits loves them.

This is small change in the federal budget, but it's wrong. Let's demand that someone put a stop to it.

— Steve Haynes



FEMA CONTEST

Tell Barry what FEMA "really" stands for and you might win a copy of his Gulf War cartoon book. Send entries to: Barry's Cartoons, HC30 Box 8240, Miles City MT 59301 or barry@barryscartoons.com (Subject: FEMA). Must be in by February 17, 2007.

News From the Past

15 years ago - 1992

Federal Land Bank Association celebrated 75 years in Cheyenne County on Dec. 23 with an open house. The outpost office now has a sign on the Jaqua Abstract building.

The Cheyenne Theater renovation is still in progress. Volunteers are needed for a number of details to help meet the tentative opening date in March. Recently participating members of the St. Francis Area Chamber of Commerce presented a free movie to area residents.

Cheyenne County lost its drivers license examiner's office last September but recently the Kansas County Treasurer's Association came up with the idea to establish examining stations in the county treasurer's offices.

Members of the junior high academic bowl include Heather Linen, Kenny Sanchez, Heather Draper, Amanda Milne, Jim Keller, David Lewis and Kristen

Lindsten. Brenda Day is the sponsor.

Cheyenne County Hospital Board member Mary Lee Frewen has retired from the board. Her place will be taken by Sondra Bracelin.

It is hard to believe that the 1930 population of Cheyenne County was 6,948 residents. This is approximately 3,700 more people than live in Cheyenne County today.

40 years ago - 1967
Holiday decoration winners have been announced. The Riley Wieck home won the honor in the religious scenes and the B. L. Zweygardt home in the mixed or novelty scenes.

Ben Andrisc has been named chairman of the board of County Commissioners of Cheyenne County. Other commissioners are Don Kehlbeck and Bill Wellman.

A preliminary meeting to organize a Cheyenne County Historical Society was held and it was the unanimous decision to form the so-

ciety. Mayzee Schultz acted as temporary chairman during the meeting.

Myrtle Tapp retired on Dec. 31 after 31 years with the postal department. She carried mail on rural routes for 20 of those years and is proud of her record of over 300,000 miles without an accident.

L.D. Laird, former teacher in the St. Francis and Bird City schools, and former publisher of the Bird City Times, has been named president of Lamar Junior College in Lamar, Colo.

Gwen Miller is the new Honored Queen of Bethel No. 52 of the International Order of Job's Daughters. Teresa Cook is the Senior Princess and Jacque Hawkins the Junior Princess.

50 years ago - 1957
About 80 trucks of the P.I.E. freight line between Kansas City and Denver have been transferred from Highway 36 to Highway 24.

Hangin' With Marge

The night the lights went out

By Margaret Bucholtz



When I was expecting my third child my husband told me that we were going to a banquet for one of the many organizations he belonged to.

Not knowing anyone, I didn't want to go, but knew that choice was not going to even be offered.

When the big night arrived, I was ready on time and as we walked out the door I glanced in the mirror and sure enough I looked like someone wearing lipstick and a tent from the army surplus store.

Arriving at the café it was even worse than I had worried about. Harlan knew everyone and was hurrying around like a social butterfly when I, on the other hand, was still over at the coat rack fiddling around just waiting on some nice lady to at least smile at me.

Ten minutes at the coat rack and I decided it was time I moved on or people would start to think I had some kind of social problems. As I glanced around the room I noticed everyone was already in their little groups and I still didn't

recognize anyone, but what I did see was the perfect spot to stand.

On one side of the coat rack was a small space between the rack and the kitchen door. I had to study it a little to see if I could really fit into it. When I decided I could, I took that final sweep of the room to make sure no one was watching as I inched my way over to the spot.

I fit!! As I started to relax I leaned against the wall and closed my eyes so I could rehearse my speech for when I got home. You know the one "I will never go with you again because I don't know anyone and you won't introduce me, kind of speech."

I am not sure I ever got all the way through the speech when I heard people screaming. As I opened my eyes the room was in total darkness. It was then that I felt hands on my face and heard a woman's voice say, "I'm sorry madam, but the light switch is back here," and then the lights all came on.

There I stood, the cooks hands on me and the wall switch. The switch I had shut off when I leaned my head against the wall.

That was the night that everyone got to know Harlan's wife, but I'm sure it wasn't for the right reason.

Honor Roll

New and renewed Herald subscriptions: Katie Trout, Sequin, Texas; Chad Kincheloe, Des Plaines, Ill.; Gene Kincheloe, Evans, Colo.; Walter Kincheloe, St. Francis; Kay Bakke, Bird City; Charlie Nipps, St. Francis; Harold Nolan, St. Francis; Merle Moberly, St. Francis; Raythell Reuber, Ludell; Brenda Whatley, Bartonville, Texas; Kenneth Bandel, Arvada, Colo.; Roger Lewis, Bella Vista, Ark.; Don and Elaine Topping, Springfield, Ill.; Earnest Amsberry, Synder, Colo.; Leonard Rose, St. Francis; Luke and Julie Juenemann, Gem; Jim Anderson, Bird City; Delbert Powell, Bird City; Kenny Voeller, St. Francis; Geraldine Thacker, St. Francis; Sam Goodale, St. Francis; Tom Hnizdil, St. Francis; Bill Fiedler, Gem; Uplinger Farms, Great Bend; Gary Pittman, St. Francis; Rogers Kamla, Lake Charles, La.; Mary Zimbelman, McCook, Neb.; McDonald Grocery, McDonald; Krien Pharmacy, St. Francis; Benkelman Post, Benkelman, Neb.; Homesteaders Motel, St. Francis; John Knodel, St. Francis; Western Sprinkler, St.

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GOD SAYS
But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul.
Proverbs 6:32

Casey's Comments

By Casey McCormick



Writers wonder what impact their works have. Art Buchwald joked before his death that he hoped his writing would last at least three years after his passing. He also quipped that, "I hope I don't die the same day as Castro."

Not that I dream of ever being in his league, but one of the greatest American humorists of our time has left this world and left a lasting legacy.

Art Buchwald died on Jan. 17. He was 81 when his time came. Many thought it would be sooner after he checked into a hospice to wait to die. Rather than dealing with the discomfort of dialysis he went to "a place where you go when you want to go."

Buchwald cheated death for over a year, to the surprise of all, and took time to continue writing his column and a book, "To Soon to Say Goodbye."

I had the privilege of seeing him address a graduating class at Arizona State University in the 1980s. I've been around some pretty funny people in my life, but Buchwald was hilarious. I don't think he took anything very serious, especially himself.

I'd like to share a few of his quotes:

"Just when you think there's nothing to write about, Nixon says 'I am not a crook.'" Jimmy Carter says, "I have lusted after women in my heart." President Reagan says, "I have just taken a urinalysis test,

and I am not on dope."

"Have you ever seen a candidate talking to a rich person on television?"

"On Richard Nixon; 'I worship the quicksand he walks in.'"

"It is easier to find a traveling companion than to get rid of one."

"Every time you think television has hit its lowest ebb, a new program comes along to make you wonder where you thought the ebb was."

And, I'd like to leave you with this gem;

"Whether it's the best of times or the worst of times, it's the only time we've got."

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