



Free Press Viewpoint

What business does Uncle Sam have in business?

What's the problem with the government "rescue" of General Motors?

What's to like? Where should we start?

Bankers complain the takeover will disrupt financial markets by destroying investor confidence in the corporate bond market. Restructuring the company is being given precedence in bankruptcy court over the rights of bond holders, who thought they had a mortgage on the company's assets.

So much for corporate bonds.

Worse yet, though, is that with the government and the United Auto Workers owning a big chunk of the reorganized company, and wielding even more influence, it's not likely that GM will ever be competitive again.

Some might argue that the company floundered because it was not competitive doing what it was doing, but that's only partly true. By and large, GM and Ford Motors, the other big American automaker, had finally learned the lessons of the market. They'd started making more cars people wanted at prices people would pay. Reliability came close to matching vaunted German and Japanese standards.

But GM, Ford and Chrysler Corp. all committed the "sin" of catering to the market. They built vehicles people would buy, not vehicles someone thought they ought to buy. That means trucks and large SUVs when Democrats thought they should be building electric cars.

GM and Ford built those too, but maybe too little, too late for the high gas prices we saw last year. Then, stuck with lots full of big vehicles, they had nowhere to turn.

What will happen with the auto workers union and the administration in charge, though?

Is the union going to want to lay off workers when the market calls for it? We're not betting on it.

And when people's tastes turn back to big pickups and big SUVs, will the government allow the automakers to build them and make money? Or will it force them to sell tiny cars at a tiny profit, ensuring that they will forever be irrelevant?

This is no small matter, because markets do not respond as we think they should, no matter what our beliefs, but as they will. People buy what they want and drive what they want. That may mean "green" vehicles one year and SUVs the next, with no logic involved in the switch.

The models for government-run enterprises set by the Soviet Union and the British socialists after World War II do not suggest a bright future for government-run carmakers in this century. Maybe our leaders know better how to run an enterprise than the Brits, but we doubt it.

Lastly, the end result of the Chrysler and GM restructuring will be a strengthening of the European auto industry at America's expense as Italy's Fiat takes over not just Chrysler, but also GM's European operations, including Opel and Saab.

For a nation that has lost so many of its basic manufacturing industries, including steel and clothing, electronics and so many others, this could be a bitter pill to swallow.

How many of Detroit's jobs, in the end, will we export to the Continent or the South?

This reorganization may be slightly better than nothing, but in the end, it blows an ill wind. Little good can come of it.

— Steve Haynes

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LEGAL SCHOLARS DEBATE: IF JOE BIDEN YELLS "SWINE FLU" IN A CROWDED THEATER, IS HE PROTECTED UNDER FREEDOM OF SPEECH?



Tornado's coming – what do you grab?

As I left the Pioneer Memorial Library after hearing Janice Haney review her book, "Greensburg, the Twisted Tail," I found that I was asking myself a lot of questions:

If my house was destroyed by a tornado, would I have enough insurance to replace it? If my car was blown away, could I report the make, model and license number? (I know that might not be a problem for men, but for us women it might be.)

However, the biggest question was, if I had only a minute or so to get to the basement, what would I grab to take with me?

Haney said she took a couple of flashlights, her scanner and a cell phone. I would have never thought of flashlights, but it was lucky for Janice that she did, because, she said when she and her husband crawled out of the basement that night after the tornado, she said, she had never seen such darkness. There were no street lights, no house lights, nothing. Heck, there weren't even any houses, nothing left.

That tornado was two miles wide and the wind was blowing 200 miles an hour when it hit Greensburg, according to an article in the latest *Good Housekeeping* magazine.

As it turned out, the cell phone did her absolutely no good because the tower had been taken down by the storm.

The people who came by to help the Haney's get out of the basement told them to make their



Marj Brown

• Marj's Snippets

way to the location of the Dillons Store. That's where the flashlights came in handy, she said, because nothing was as it had been. There were trees and parts of houses everywhere and dangerous power lines laying on the ground, but they were able to finally make it to Dillons.

Janice's report has caused me to do a lot of thinking about the possibility of a tornado hitting here. It's not impossible, you know. I asked myself, what I would want to take with me if I had to take cover in the basement. I wouldn't take a cell phone, because I don't have one. I never used the one I had, so I canceled it. No one called me on it, because I'm home most of the time and they just called me on my house phone.

My cell phone rang one time, and by the time I figured out where that music was coming from and got it out of my purse, they had hung up. I think a battery-operated radio would be the best bet.

I would take flashlights, that's for sure, and maybe extra batteries in case we didn't get out of the basement right away. I would need

a couple of bottles of water also and maybe a large folded-up piece of plastic in case the basement caved in and it was still raining and we needed to cover up with it.

One of the women mentioned in magazine article, said when she heard the warning on the television, she and her husband ran through the house taking favorite paintings off the walls and gathered up pieces of her glass collection as they headed for cover. I wonder how they planned to use those after the tornado got through with them?

Haney suggested that we make sure our homeowner's insurance is always kept up to date, that we make copies of all of our important papers and give them to an out-of-town relative so that we don't have to spend hours standing in a line after a tornado to get them replaced, and, most important of all, prepare a small bag of items you will need to take with you to the basement so you can grab it in a hurry.

Also, don't forget to shut off the electricity on the way downstairs and turn off the water to the house when you get to the basement — if you have time. These things might save some problems afterwards.

Marj Brown has lived in Colby for 62 years and has spent a good deal of that time writing about people and places here. She says it's one of her favorite things to do.

Reminder – Iran is a threat

The real and dangerous threat Iran poses to national and international security must not go unnoticed amid the myriad of economic issues currently challenging America.

The world got a reminder of the seriousness of the Iranian threat during an April United Nations anti-racism conference. On the opening day of the summit, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad used the forum to attack Israel, belittle the Jewish people and question the Holocaust.

Those that dismiss the Iranian leader's remarks as just rhetoric risk becoming complacent to the threat a nuclear-armed Iran would pose to Israel, the United States and the security of the world.

Ahmadinejad's aggressive and intolerable words are not just rhetoric. They reflect the policies of a government which supports the terrorist groups Hezbollah and Hamas and has enabled them to carry out attacks on Israel and kill innocent civilians. His words must be taken all the more seriously in view of Iran's continued violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions on nuclear facilities and



U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran

• Capitol Notes

the enrichment of uranium.

In February of this year, the International Atomic Energy Agency reported Iran has enough low-enriched uranium that, if further processed, it could produce a nuclear bomb.

Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons is an existential threat to the people of Israel and a danger to the rest of the world. Congress cannot afford to wait. The situation becomes more urgent each day. We must act.

Congress can begin by approving two pieces of legislation. HR 1327, the Iran Sanctions Enabling Act, gives state and local governments the authority to divest their assets from any company that invests \$20 million or more in Iran's energy sector. By allowing state and

local governments to withdraw their investments in companies doing business in Iran, we can increase pressure on the regime to change course.

Congress also should sanction any company engaged in activities that contribute to Iran's ability to import refined petroleum by approving HR 1985, the Iran Diplomatic Enhancement Act. Although Iran has a wealth of oil, it lacks the ability to turn much of that into fuel. As a result, it imports about 40 percent of its gasoline. The threat of such serious sanctions might lead Iran to negotiate and forgo its pursuit of nuclear weapons.

Israel is America's closest ally in a most important region of the world. The Obama Administration must back its policies of engagement with tougher sanctions and guard against Iranian diversions and delays.

Our country must respond to the serious threat Iran poses to the peace and security of the world and approve the Iran Sanctions Enabling Act and the Iran Diplomatic Enhancement Act.

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

