



Free Press Viewpoint

Budget not fixed

So, at the final hour, Congress and the president reach agreement on a budget compromise that will save the economy. We are not yet out of the woods.

The agreement calls for cuts of \$2.5 trillion, which sounds like a lot of money, but that's not enough to balance the budget. It will take real structural change to do that.

The deal is a start, but only a start. The first billion or so is the low-hanging fruit. It comes from capping all spending except the so-called entitlements – Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, government pensions – at 2012 levels.

That is not a spending cut, in other words; it's just limiting the formerly unchecked growth in the budget.

In fact, \$2.5 trillion in cuts over 10 years averages just \$250 billion per year, while the country faces a deficit just this year of \$1.645 trillion. The government is borrowing 40 percent of what it will spend this year; \$250 billion won't change that.

It's pretty easy to see, we've got a long ways to go until we can balance the budget. Congress and the White House will have to find some way to cut another \$1.4 trillion a year.

Part of that is projected to come from growth in the economy, but in the present situation, that's not happening. The government projects the deficit to drop by more than half, to \$650 billion a year, by 2016. That's only a guess, however; spending has been well above growth for years.

A bipartisan committee is to be appointed to craft another \$1.2 trillion in cuts over the next 10 years, to be voted on by fall. That's another drop in the bucket.

Still, it's a start. We owe the "Tea Party" a favor: they went to the brink to show the country how important solving this problem is. Until they did, and it's not been pleasant, neither party paid more than lip service to deficit reduction.

With government spending, everyone wants some, but no one wants to pay. Republicans stand against tax increase, while Democrats say, "tax the rich." Yet one estimate is the assets of American billionaires amount to about \$1.3 trillion. We could take it all and still have a \$350 billion deficit this year.

Any approach including tax increases will have to include us all. Relying on growth in the economy might work for a while – until the next recession – but eventually, that, too, will fail.

Cuts will have to be much deeper. What has to happen?
 • Most of the budget is tied up in "entitlement" social programs dear to Democrats. We will have to let go, not of the programs, but of the way they are planned to grow. That means caps on spending and cuts in automatic increases.

But as we've seen, increases in Social Security and other programs have become an "entitlement" in themselves. Supporters cry retirees "need" this money. But to cap borrowing, we'll have to face reality.

• Tax reform. Sometimes a euphemism for a tax increase, this means rewriting the tax code to make it less complex. But will people let go of favorite deductions, such as the home-mortgage write-off? Will tax lawyers block simplification?

• Real cuts, across the board, in programs from defense to farm subsidies. Those who depend on federal spending – who doesn't – will suffer. But just as your family cuts back when income shrinks, we'll all have to take a piece of the pain.

None of this is easy. We may have to go to the brink again. But the compromise shows the system, slow and cranky, still works. All will have to keep the pressure on to move us toward a sane and rational budget, a less complex, more fair tax policy and – down the road, after the next recession – a chance to reduce the burdensome debt that put us in this hole.

The country will have to take it one step at a time, but this is a – very small – first step. A great deal more effort – and a lot more pain – will be required. – *Steve Haynes*

COLBY FREE PRESS

155 W. Fifth St. (USPS 120-920) (785) 462-3963
 Colby, Kan. 67701 fax (785) 462-7749

Send news to: colby.editor@nwkansas.com

State award-winning newspaper, General Excellence, Design & Layout, Columns, Editorial Writing, Sports Columns, News, Photography. Official newspaper of Thomas County, Colby, Brewster and Rexford.

Sharon Friedlander - Publisher
sfriedlander@nwkansas.com

NEWS

Kevin Bottrell - News Editor
kbottrell@nwkansas.com

Kayla Cornett - Sports Reporter
colby.sports@nwkansas.com

Marian Ballard - Copy Editor
mballard@nwkansas.com

Tomi Miller, Christina Beringer - Society Reporters
colby.society@nwkansas.com

ADVERTISING

colby.ads@nwkansas.com

Kathryn Ballard

Advertising Representative
kb Ballard@nwkansas.com

Kylee Hunter - Graphic Design
khunter@nwkansas.com

BUSINESS OFFICE

Robin Tubbs - Office Manager
rtubbs@nwkansas.com

Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator
support@nwkansas.com

NOR'WEST PRESS

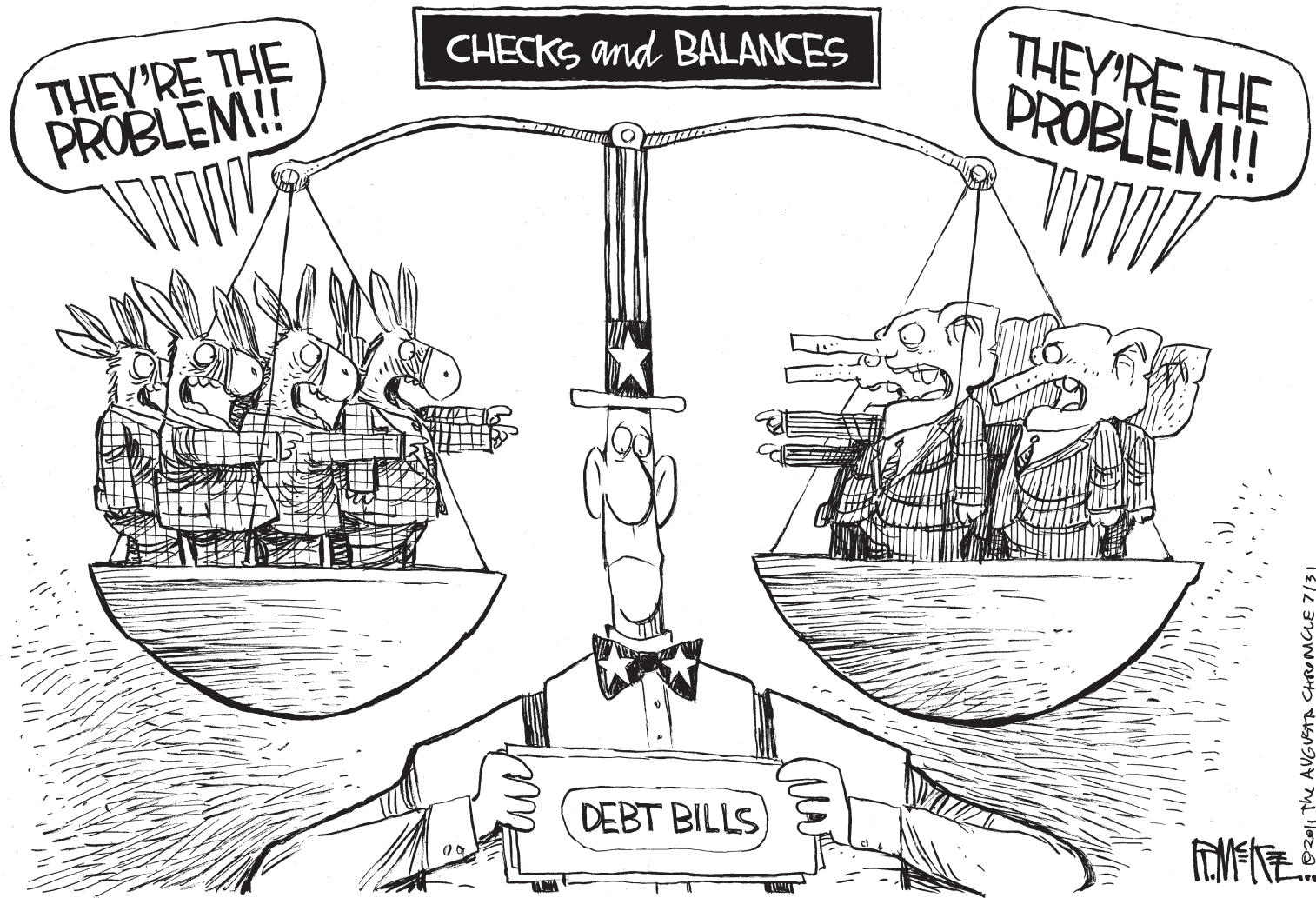
Richard Westfahl - General Manager
 Lana Westfahl, Jim Jackson, Betty Morris, Jim Bowker,
 Judy McKnight, Kris McCool

THE COLBY FREE PRESS (USPS 120-920) is published every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, except the days observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, by Nor'West Newspaper, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701.

PERIODICALS POSTAGE paid at Colby, Kan. 67701, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Colby Free Press, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701.

THE BUSINESS OFFICE at 155 W. Fifth is open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Friday, closed Saturday and Sunday. MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, which is exclusively entitled to the use for publication of all news herein. Member Kansas Press Association and National Newspaper Association.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: In Colby, Thomas County and Oakley: three months \$35, one year \$85. By mail to ZIP Codes beginning with 676 and 677: three months \$39, one year \$95. Elsewhere in the U.S., mailed once per week: three months \$39, one year \$95. Student rate, nine months, in Colby, Thomas County and Oakley, \$64; mailed once per week elsewhere in the U.S. \$72



Hoppers are hopping under big lights

As July turns into August, summer just seems to be hopping along out back. I mean really hopping.

Two of the toads I've found this spring have taken up posts on each side of our big double garage door.

Each night, we leave the yard lights on until 11 or so, and the toads have found great pickings under the big lights.

The biggest one – I call him Toadaly – has staked out the south end near a patch of grassy irises.

When we first saw him, Hoppy, the smaller toad, was also on the south end of the garage. He soon moved to the north end, where he has refuge in the onion patch that grows next to the spirea bushes along the alley.

At nightfall, the lights come on and almost on cue the toads come out to feast on the myriad of insects they draw in.

The other night, Steve came in laughing. He had been watching Toadaly chase a cricket. The cricket would hop. Toadaly would hop after him. The cricket would hop. Toadaly would hop. Steve finally had to give up watching this odd ballet because he had other things to do, so we never found out if the cricket outhopped the toad or if someone doesn't have a conscience anymore.

There was more hopping going on out at the park as we took the dog for a walk on Satur-



Cynthia Haynes

• Open Season

day.

The warm, wet weather seems to be perfect for grasshoppers, and all the tall grass out at Sappa Park, a prairie area with walking trails.

The grasshoppers drive both me and the dog nuts.

I hate the feel of them. You don't feel most insects that land on you. They come. They go. And, unless the bite, you don't notice them.

Grasshoppers, however, have claws. They cling, and it feels like a burr has jumped on you.

I don't dislike grasshoppers – not like ticks, yuck – but, I jump every time one lands on me. When I walk in an area with hundreds of them, I'm as jumpy as a cat in a roomful of rocking chairs.

The dog, on the other hand, loves grasshoppers. She thinks them a tasty, fun snack. For her, catching grasshoppers is sort of like eating popping popcorn.

She jumps. She hops. She whirls. She bites

the air. She snaps. She turns her head so fast she should have whiplash.

Walking her in the park now is sort of like taking a small tornado out for stroll, and jumping every time you get hit by the debris, which is all the time.

In short, it's more exercise than your usual "walk in the park."

For anyone who's interested, our cat Molly is doing well on her insulin injections. The once-a-day-feedings haven't been as popular or successful, but we're still working on that.

I put out three small yellow bowls. Each morning, I put about half a cup of food in each and stand back as three cats attack the food. When they are done, I put them outside and go get Jezabel. She's so skittish, she would starve rather than try to eat with the others. After she's eaten, I let everyone back in for another round of scarfing.

I'm still working on how to test Molly's blood sugar. The vet says I can use a regular glucometer, but I still have to figure out how to prick her ear and get a drop of blood.

Cynthia Haynes, co-owner and chief financial officer of Nor'West Newspapers, writes this column weekly. Her pets include cats, toads and a praying mantis. Contact her at c.haynes@nwkansas.com

Discuss issues, but argue fairly

Time and time again I have overheard discussion or arguments where participants polarize.

The one who knows the most attempts to stay on focus providing ever more points to show his case. The less informed cannot stay focused, as he has run out of specifics. He resorts to one of five techniques: spraying, changing the focus of the topic, repeating over and over again the few points he does have, making the argument personal and name calling. Sometimes he uses a mixture. Let us examine each.

Spraying is the term used for those who, in essence, travel around the world in three minutes or less bringing up everything related or not. The informed seek clarity or relevance on the first point only to notice that his opponent, ill-informed and lacking depth, has switched to yet another aspect. The ill-informed stays in control of the argument only because the more informed cannot keep up.

Like a shotgun blast the intent is to blow the better informed over with a mass of non-specific, semi-related data so he drops the discussion. The less informed wins only because he is left standing. Sprayers also gain power by increasing their volume. Their thought processes do not allow them to realize the extent of their ignorance.

Focus changers also run out of counter arguments or choose not to deal with the logical next step and turn instead to changing the focus of the argument. Instead of dealing with the legitimate issues raised by the Tea Party Movement – the need for both major parties to provide candidates who endorse fiscal responsibility, limited Constitutional government and free market economics they call them racist or mobsters.

The argument now moves to defending against racism. The establishment media initially relied on this technique to undermine the

Other Opinions

• **Harold Pease**
 Liberty Under Fire

movement, but it failed because the movement was a microcosm of the population itself and one might find his normally non-activist mother leading the charge.

Repeaters, yet another technique for the less informed, likewise run out of counter arguments and try to win by constantly restating their initial two or three points. Normally, like sprayers, they also raise their voice on each restatement. They too have no depth but it does not matter to them.

The art of sounding informed when not includes personalizing the argument. I once published a column that dealt with a plan to cut the bureaucracy by laying off 10 percent per year but allowing them, for ten years, to continue receiving their former pay, reduced by 10 percent each year, until they received nothing and sought new productive employment. A colleague, rather than debate the idea, fired off a negative memo suggesting that I be first to go. The debate was personalized with my value to the institution.

Name-callers seek to destroy your credibility by linking you, or what you advocate, to something unpopular, sometimes called labeling. This allows them to write you, or your issue, off without having to deal with your evidence. The favorite label is liberal or conservative. It gets worse. The mere word "McCarthyism," the suggestion that there might be a single communist in the government, Hollywood or the media, was used for decades to

destroy proponents of such or any real investigation into the evidence. Those who question the need to have our troops in 31 countries of the earth are called "isolationists." Those who even dare question Barack Obama's Birth Certificate are degraded by the term "birthers." Even Congress was "cowed" into silence. Those who question global warming as being manmade are called "flat-earthers." Those advocating that we get back to the Constitution as designed are called "strict constructionists" as though this were a venereal disease of some kind. You get the picture. How many of these things are true I do not know as the opponents won by silencing proponents. Who comes up with these labels? Opponents. And who uses them the most? The least informed.

So what should the most informed do? First, make certain that they are the most informed and are not using any of these techniques to further an argument that may not be totally correct. Second, let it be. The majority is normally ill informed. Relate where you can and move on to other friends. Someone else will have to reach them and perhaps that won't happen either. In America we do not shoot you for disagreement or ignorance. At least not yet!!!!

Dr. Harold Pease is an expert on the United States Constitution, studying the writings of the Founding Fathers and applying that knowledge to current events. He has taught history and political science for over 25 years at Taft College. To read more of his weekly articles, please visit www.LibertyUnderFire.org.

We encourage comments on opinions expressed on this page. Mail them to the *Colby Free Press*, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701, or e-mail colby.editor@nwkansas.com. Opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the *Free Press*, its staff or the owners.

Mallard Fillmore

• **Bruce Tinsley**

