

from our viewpoint...

Giving money away leaves good feeling

Our congratulations to the top two winners in the Christmas on Us contest, who picked up their \$2,000 in scrip Saturday afternoon.

It was a pleasant day, and there was a great crowd to check their ticket numbers as the kids drew them out of the tub. About the only thing that would have made it better was a little less wind, but since it was coming out of the north, the buildings blocked quite a bit of the chill.

This is the seventh year for the Christmas on Us contest, and our hats off to the merchants who make it possible to give this much money away. It is an advantage for them as well, because it helps keep money in Sherman County, and that helps keep businesses open. The 30,000 tickets that were handed out represent about \$300,000 in spending over the four weeks of the contest alone.

In terms of economic impact, \$300,000 is quite a bump, and the people of Sherman County can be proud of the amount of shopping they do at home. The total impact could be more than \$2 million, and the contest probably kept part of that from being spent in some other town. It gives people a reason to shop at home.

We know that not every dollar is going to stay in the community, but those that do stay help keep door open. We all benefit.

Giving away the money and getting to talk to the kids a little are part of the fun. We know there were a lot of people visiting with friends and neighbors while waiting for the numbers to be drawn.

Our congratulations also to the 10 instant winners of \$50 who picked up their scrip as part of the weekly promotion. We were happy to have given all of them out before the grand prize drawing. These spread the money further and keep the program in the minds of the merchants and the customers.

For some reason, a lot of us feel cheery and outgoing during the holiday season, and when you think of all the fun surrounding Santa Claus, it is hard not to be cheery.

Looking back, this has been something of a tough year, and we hope the new year is better.

To our men and women serving in Iraq and other parts of the world as part of the American military, we wish them a safe and happy holiday season.

As the special day approaches at the end of this week, and families and friends take to the roads to travel, we wish them a safe trip, both to their destination and as they return to their homes.

Merry Christmas. — *Tom Betz*

Letter Policy

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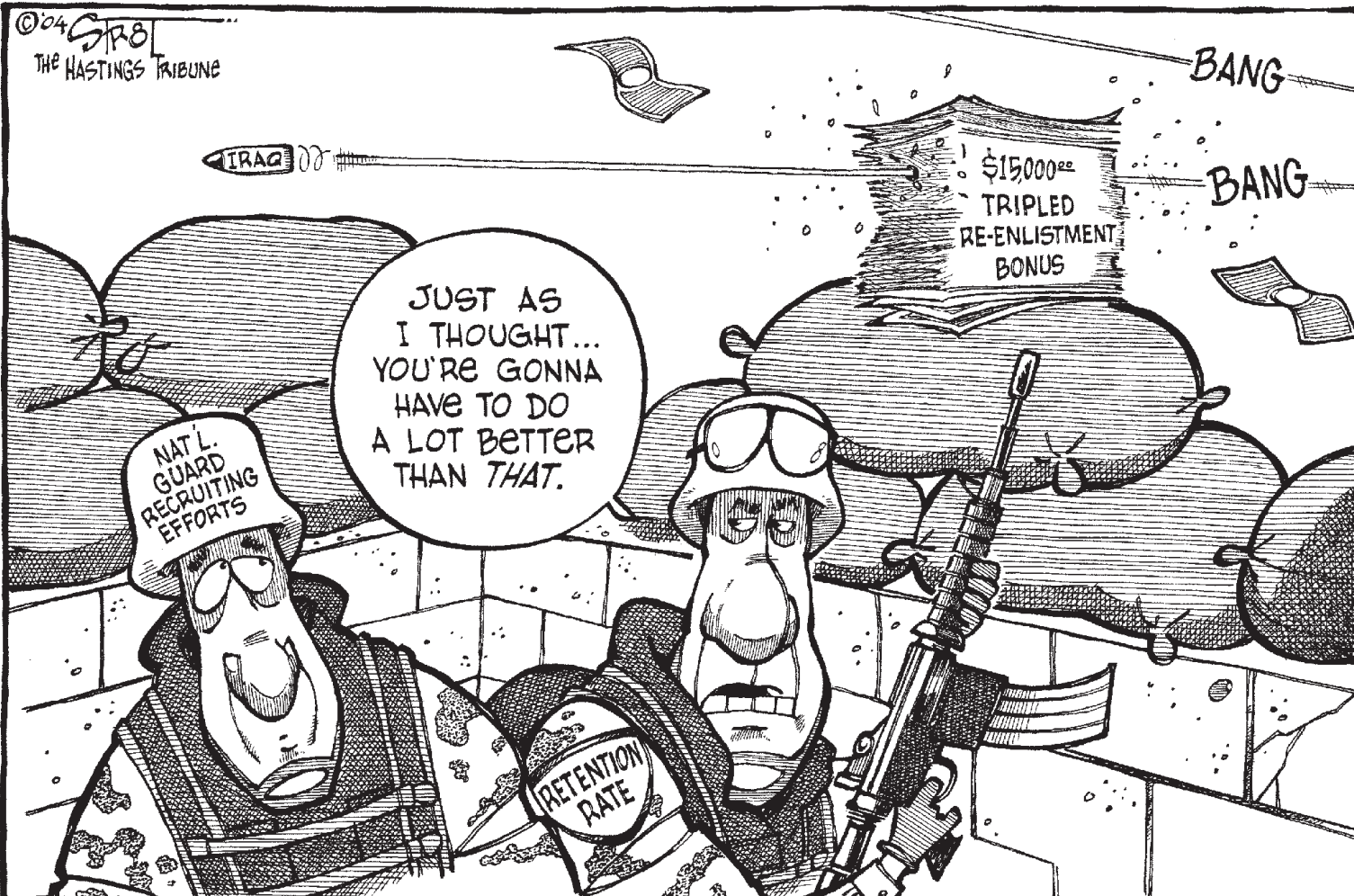
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Holiday season time to review diet success

As we head from one holiday to another, it's time to review my diet.

I've finished 15 weeks of the "eat-just-half-of-it" diet and it's working pretty well. My plan was to lose a pound a week.

I started at 172 pounds, with a goal of getting down to 150. Then Steve, my ever lovin' (I'll get him for this) husband, said that if I kept it up for a year at a pound a week, I could get back down to 120 pounds, just what I weighed when I got my driver's license at 16.

Ah, the lure of youth. I would love to be 120 pounds again. I haven't been 120 pounds since my freshman year in college.

There was another lure. Since I'm trying to lose weight, I tend to read anything about that subject.

Pick up any woman's magazine, and there will always be an article about losing weight.

The first one I found gave me a body mass index chart. The chart gives pounds on the top and height on the side. On the grid are numbers starting with 16, for those folks who are 6-foot, 6-inches tall and weigh 120 pounds, and go up to 60, for those who are 4-6 and weigh 250.



cynthia haynes

- open season

At 5-1.5 and 172 pounds, I was a 31. According to the chart, that's obese.

I hate that chart.

After 15 weeks of dieting, I'm down to 153. That means I've lose 19 pounds, about 1.25 pounds a week. I would have been down more, but while I didn't gain any weight over Thanksgiving, I didn't lose any either.

According to the chart, I am now a 28 and am merely overweight.

I hate that chart.

According to the chart if and when I get down to 120 pounds, I'll be a 23, and that is a healthy weight.

Whoopee, only 33 pounds and five numbers to go.

Actually, the diet has been pretty easy. I now

eat half a bagel with half a glass of orange juice in the morning. At lunch and supper, I eat all my vegetables but only half the main course. I try to avoid potato chips, french fries, candy, snack crackers and desserts. This doesn't mean that I don't have an occasional bite of dessert, but I'm really firm on the potato chips. I love chips, and if I start, I won't stop.

I've always asked for a doggie bag at restaurants and eat the second half of my meal for lunch later in the week.

The biggest dangers to this diet are the buffet and the potluck. You always take too much at a buffet, and it's not considered good form to ask for a doggie bag. At a potluck, there is sooooo much food and it all looks soooo good that you want to taste a little of everything, which loads your plate and expands your waist.

Thanksgiving wasn't too bad, but then I ate leftover potatoes, gravy and dressing for three more meals. Not good, according to 'the chart.'

I hate that chart — which is probably why I have it on my refrigerator door. After I'm a 23, it goes on the dart board.

High price hotels stick you for the extras

There must be a rule in the hotel business that the more you pay for a room, the more they stick you for extras, especially Internet service.

As you drive the Interstates today, the \$50, \$60 and \$70 hotels are draped with "free wireless Internet" signs. If you have occasion to stay at more expensive hotels, chances are they'll charge you for Internet, and it won't be cheap.

Part of the problem may be that "better" hotels got into the high-speed connections earlier, when they were expensive to install.

Also, these are the same hotels which are used to soaking people 50 cents to \$1 for a phone call. We've stayed at convention hotels where they had wired the whole place for DSL (digital subscriber line) service, then charged \$10 through a third-party service to get on the Web.

That's a common price for "broadband," \$9.95 for a day. It may not sound bad until you figure you can buy a cable or DSL connection at home for as little as \$29.95 per month.

It doesn't take much figuring to see that someone is raking it in. Most of these hotels now are stuck with contracts with their providers, though. Many are installing free wireless "hot spots" in the lobby to deflect criticism, but customers can't be to happy about it.

In two trips to Kansas City and beyond last week, staying in four hotels — and boy am I tired of that — we found free wireless in most. One, admittedly, hadn't figured out how to make the system work yet. A clerk said she thought they were missing a card or something for their server.

The worst service, and the most expensive, was at the tony Fairmount in Kansas City, where the fee was \$14.95 for a day. I used the hotspot in the lobby the next day.

That wasn't a bad idea, I guess, since I met several women who stopped to admire my laptop.

"Oh, I've never seen one that small," one cooed.

I had no idea.

Wireless cards have revolutionized computing. Most new laptops come with a wireless card, or at least a spot to put one in. Open your computer, and generally, you'll connect to the Internet.



steve haynes

- along the sappa

People are putting wireless networks in their homes and offices. Speeds can be as fast or faster than wired connections, and you can use a printer or server hooked up to the base station.

If you put your antenna up high enough, your



garfield

