

## Unemployment worse when government helps

Experts say the economy is fragile, but the recovery is under way.

We hope so, but with unemployment approaching 11 percent, you have to wonder if this recovery will include many jobs.

October unemployment was 10.2 percent, highest in more than a quarter century, while the rate among teenagers was a whopping 27.6 percent.

And those figures are liable to get worse before they get better, especially if Congress insists on saddling employers with huge costs for a new health-care plan.

Much of the current problem can be traced to government "mandates" about employment, and that's especially true for the teenage depression.

Teenagers are not an employer's first pick for any job because they have no skills or experience. Couple that with the worst recession in half a century and an ideology-driven series of increases in the minimum wage, and you have a perfect storm for teens who need some income.

Here's how the Labor Law Center put it, referring to job prospects after the last increase in the minimum in July:

"For unemployed teen workers, job prospects look grim. In June, the U.S. Department of Labor reported a 24 percent teen unemployment rate, further adding to the uphill battle teens face when seeking employment."

Supposedly, that's not what Congress intended when it passed a three-year phased

increase in the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$7.25. But the result is, employers faced with an artificial minimum have to focus on hiring fewer and better workers.

It's no wonder unemployment is so high right now: it's not just the recession, it's the government. And teens, with the lack of experience, get hit twice as hard.

Then, if Congress makes having employees even more expensive, companies will be able to afford even fewer of them. It's not a question of ideology, but of what you can afford.

One version of the House health-care proposal — and who knows if it's still in the bill — would require employers to provide health coverage for all full- and part-time workers. That gives them a choice: buy two health-care policies for two part-timers, or just one for a full-time worker.

Hum, that's a tough one. How many part-time workers would be out of work in a matter of days. It's simple arithmetic.

That's what happens when we follow our hearts and not our logic. Some might even argue that it's OK to jettison teens and part-time workers for the greater good, but those people are neither teens nor part-timers.

The recession is bad and getting worse? Unemployment headed for record rates? And for teens, rates equal to 1930s unemployment?

Gee, wonder who's to blame? Congress? You guessed it.

— Steve Haynes

## Veterans are great citizens

When Gov. Ronald Reagan introduced returning prisoner of war John McCain at a speaking engagement in 1974, the future president asked, "Where do we find such men?"

He was speaking of many veterans, when he answered, "We find them in our streets, in the office, the shops and the working places of our country and on the farms."

He was referring to ordinary people accomplishing extraordinary things. And it isn't just the men.

Army Spc. Monica Brown was still a teenager when she went on a patrol as a medic in Afghanistan in 2007. Caught under insurgent fire in Paktika Province, she and her platoon sergeant ran a few hundred yards toward a burning Humvee.

Dodging rounds by only inches, Brown helped pull injured soldiers from the vehicle and rendered first aid. For her actions, she was awarded a Silver Star, the nation's third highest combat decoration.

When she enlisted at age 17, the native of Lake Jackson, Texas, had hopes of becoming an X-ray technician, but the Army convinced her that being a medic would offer her the greatest opportunity to help her fellow soldiers.

But to credit the Monica Browns and other heroes in our military with helping only their comrades is shortsighted. They are helping us. It is America, not America's military, that al-Qaida and other terrorists have declared war on.

Fewer than 10 percent of Americans can claim the title "military veteran," and what a list of accomplishments those 10 percent have



### On the Potomac

By U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran  
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written. From defeating Communism, Fascism and Imperialism, to keeping the peace during the Cold War and battling terrorism today, America owes a debt to her veterans that can never be fully paid.

Historians have said that Dwight Eisenhower was prouder of being a soldier than he was of being president. While relatively few veterans reach the rank of general, pride in military service is a bond shared by nearly all who have served.

The pride is on display on every obituary page in the country, where military service—regardless of how many decades have passed and subsequent achievements reached—is mentioned with the death notice of nearly every veteran.

Can any corporate president or Ivy League graduate truly claim to have more responsibility than the 20-year-old squad leader walking a patrol in Afghanistan or Iraq? While the successful real estate mogul may have sold hundreds of homes and raised a wonderful family, what single great tops the decisive actions he took during the siege of Khe Sanh, which saved the lives of several of his fellow Marines?

As leader of the nation's largest veterans organization, it is my job to recall the brave men and women

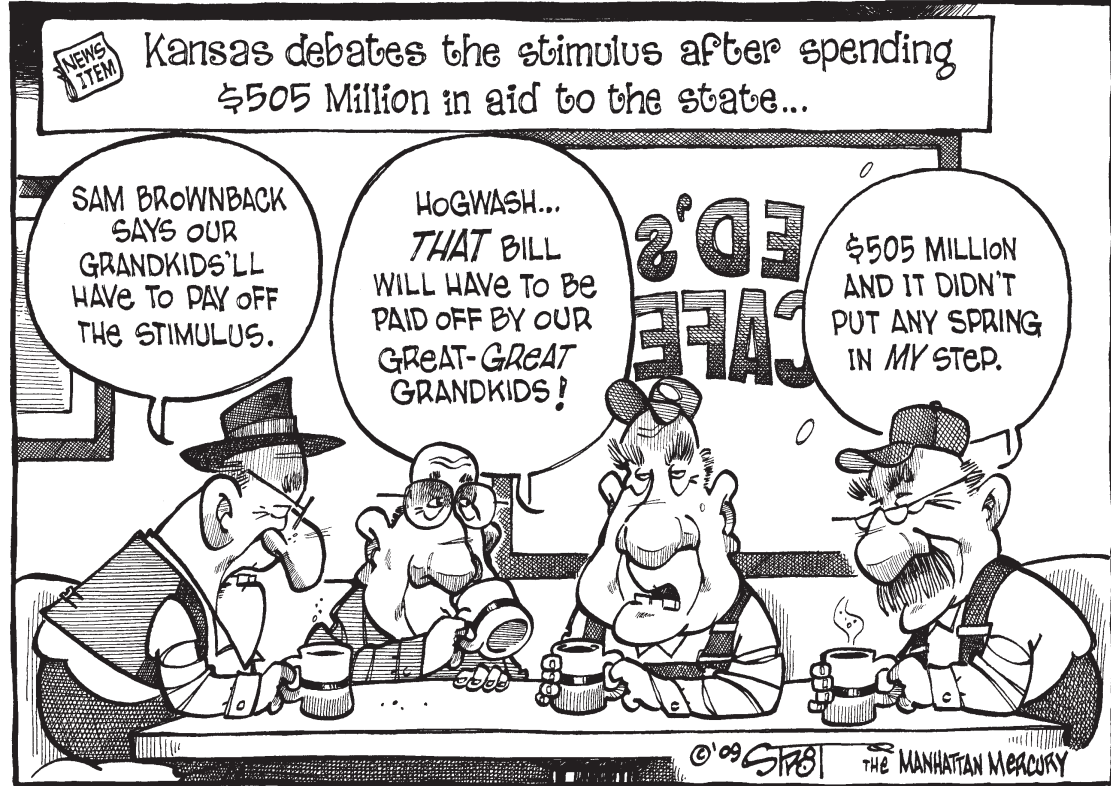
who have worn the uniform. The Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion calls on us to "preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in the Great Wars." But those who have not served, in fact, all Americans, should honor the patriots who have.

The American Legion supports our heroes through programs such as Heroes to Hometowns, Operation Comfort Warriors and ready-to-assist service officers. We support the families of veterans through a Family Support Network, the American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund and Temporary Financial Assistance.

We call on all Americans to thank veterans and let them know that their sacrifices are appreciated. Veterans Day is not about sales at the local mall. It's about our heroes.

While veterans are often ordinary people who accomplish extraordinary things, it is often an extraordinary family that supports the ordinary veteran. And it is the veterans who have given us this extraordinary country.

Clarence E. Hill is national commander of the 2.5 million-member American Legion, the nation's largest organization of wartime veterans.



## She hits after-trip letdown

I haven't been worth shooting this week.

Must be the let-down after the mission trip. Jim bounced right back and went to work two days after we got home. Me? It was all I could do to pack Jim's and James' lunches in the morning before heading back to the recliner.

They got cold cereal for breakfast and frozen pizza for supper two nights in a row because I didn't have the "umph" to cook. I didn't even unpack my bags until about Wednesday. Then only because I needed some clothes.

Slowly, though, things started to get back to normal, and by Friday I had hit my stride again. That's good, because I had to make three gallons of my green chile gravy for a supper the mission team is having to thank everyone who sponsored our trip.

I'd give you my recipe, but not too many people need a gallon and a half of green-chile gravy. My roaster will only hold one batch at a time, so I had to make two batches. It freezes well, so it's tucked away in the church's freezer ready to thaw and reheat the day of the meal. It sure is good over burritos and it's not too spicy, although it has a little "kick."

I found pork roasts on sale for 99 cents a pound. Since I was already cooking six pounds of meat for the



### Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts  
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gravy, I bought a roast for us, too, and cooked them all at the same time.

Jim thinks he doesn't like bay leaves, so I don't let him see them when I'm cooking a pork roast. But, he sure likes the taste. In fact, when I told him about the good sale price, he went to the store and bought six more roasts. We'll have enough pork to last the winter.

He's so funny. When he came home from the store with his sacks of groceries, he said, "Me kill. You fix." Oh, yes. The mighty hunter has returned.

Thanksgiving is going to be here before we know it. My Liberty-Star Club is having its Thanksgiving dinner Wednesday. I always make my crescent rolls, my mother's cranberry salad and a pie or two.

We have so much to be thankful for. The husband of one of our members has been ill. He is now home from the hospital and well

enough to come to the meal. One of our members had surgery but, she is recovered and with us again.

Another member took a nasty fall but, didn't hurt much besides her pride. And, we found we are gaining a new member, a lovely woman who has been our friend for years. Yes, life is good.

Thanksgiving, of course, means our annual trip to Texas. The kids are already planning who is going to sleep where and what we are going to eat for dinner.

If Jim wasn't such a traditionalist, we might have something besides turkey for dinner. But he thinks it isn't Thanksgiving without turkey. He helps fix it, so I can't complain.

The anticipation is half the fun. We play a lot of board games, stay up way too late, eat too much and laugh 'til we hurt.

It's what being with family is all about, and what I am most thankful for.

## Man claims paper 'misinformed'

To the Editor:

Shame! Shame! Talk about being misinformed! I am talking about the article in the Nov. 4 issue of *The Oberlin Herald* about Norcatur's mayor resigning. If you need to sell papers that badly, maybe you should start a gossip column!

May I suggest, next time you get all the facts before writing an article and talk to the people who are being pointed out in your article before you print their names. For you to print what Von Johnson believes without getting all the facts, all I can say again is shame, shame.

This is for everyone that wants to know the truth. The truth is that several citizens who attended Mr. Johnson's first City Council meeting as mayor (and several other meetings) were very "worked up" with the way he handled things. A citizen started putting together a way to ask him to step down. This was done entirely without the group of people who he believes started this.

No citizen was given "misinformed information." The citizens

### Letters to the Editor

were informed, as they attended the council meetings. So who was misinformed? That would be you! Mr. Johnson did not have to resign his position as mayor, but he chose to when nearly 80 percent of the voters from the last election signed the "unofficial petition."

The reason the petition was presented to him at his home, by guess, is that it was an "unofficial petition" and did not need to be presented to him at a council meeting.

As for the election that is coming up in December, a vote in favor of Charter Ordinance No. 4 will allow the Norcatur City Council to broaden the council's selection for the positions of city clerk and city treasurer, if those positions should ever need to be filled. Currently, we have two people who fill these positions and in my opinion are doing a wonderful job. Obviously, most of the council feels that way also,

since the ordinance was passed by an overwhelming majority of the council.

Again, I would like to suggest to your reporters to please get all the facts before writing an article. If you don't, then it is you who are "misinforming" people.

Doug Dempewolf, Norcatur city councilman

**Editor's Note:** The reporter did attempt to contact as many people as possible mentioned by the ex-mayor. Most had unlisted numbers or did not respond. Mr. Johnson did answer his phone, and make statements which, right or wrong, were his opinion of the situation. The story identified his statements as such. He was entitled to say what he left office. Anyone with other opinions is welcome to express them. — Steve Haynes

## Official sends e-mail about airport

To the Editor:

The day following the "community conversation" on the Oberlin airport project on Sept. 29, Ed Young, director of the state Department of Transportation's Division of Aviation, offered these e-mail comments to the city administrator on the initial planning for the runway improvement project involving both federal and state money.

Connie Grafel, marketing director Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp.

If there are questions about the 7,000-foot ultimate length for the proposed new runway at the Oberlin airport, I think there is a misunderstanding of the system that the Federal Aviation Administration and the state Department of Transportation use to plan and allocate projects.

While a 7,000-foot ultimate length does not meet the typical standard for a "micropolitan" (rural trading center) airport, the information presented at the public meetings I attended led me to believe that the 7,000-foot length might be a realistic target for Oberlin in the distant future.

adjutant general, I became a proponent of building an intermediate length and seeing what traffic a good marketing program could lure to Oberlin. If you pull 500 operations a year, two a day, in the King Air class, it would be realistic to think that you could pull two a day from a higher class, thus justifying a longer runway. There are literally thousands of fly-over aircraft bypassing Kansas airports en route to New York, Boston and Philadelphia.

If after building a 5,000-foot runway, the forecast is solid, the federal and state agencies might agree to pay to add another 2,000 feet to the runway. But if you don't plan for this ultimate length, the federal Flight Procedures Office does not protect your airspace. A tower of some kind is erected miles away and you cannot get a good instrument approach into the airport. Without a good approach, you cannot lure the traffic.

The state projects Oberlin as a 5,000-to-5,500-foot Regional Airport. In the system plan, we assessed the need for northwest Kansas and came to the conclusion that we support 5,500 feet. That means that the FAA will pay for 4,800 feet and the state's \$1 million can pay for

as much additional runway as possible. To draw more operations, a solid business plan needs to address a fuel system, customer service, reliable catering options and other factors.

The construction economic impact alone in Oberlin seems to me to be lucrative. If this project runs \$3 or \$4 million, you could see an influx of \$9 million to \$12 million in the area's economy. This type of data makes a strong business case for attracting the federal and state money.

At first blush, 7,000 feet was received with resistance. There is no guarantee that the state or feds will give you 7,000 feet. Oberlin would have to earn it. We will, however, help Oberlin earn it in any way the state can.

Ed Young, Topeka director, Division of Aviation Department of Transportation

### From the Bible

Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.  
Proverbs 4:23

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