

Bob's Corner

Ah, Christmas — the season of frantic efforts to finish shopping and wrapping gifts, getting and decorating a Yule tree, planning that special holiday meal, maybe having or attending Christmas parties, not overeating or drinking too much spiked eggnog, getting together with family, and on and on.

Can be difficult to maintain a Ho-Ho-Ho attitude in the face of so much stress. Sometimes we lose our happy outlook, and our Ho-Ho-Ho becomes No-No-No. Or Ay, Ay, Ay. The “holiday season” is supposed to be a joyful time, depending on many factors.

Christians revere it as an occasion to celebrate the birth of Jesus the Christ. Others are more inclined toward marking it as the birth of Santa Claus. Still others, because of their religion or personal inclinations, might see it as simply a time of colored lights. It's all quite personal, and we should respect however someone else feels about the occasion.

Ye olde editor remembers Christmas Past as a time of celebrating the birth of a savior, plus a visit from jolly St. Nick. That's my background; the one given my younger brother, Steve, and I by our late parents. I remember how difficult it was to wait for them to get up on Christmas morning so we could rip into our presents. My bro and I would be up by 5 a.m. Mom & Dad might struggle out of bed by around 7. Then they had to fix coffee and take care of other morning stuff while Steve and I suffered, as we struggled with being patient.

Once we began opening packages, one at a time while the rest of family watched, Mom would make note of which relatives gave what gifts so that “Thank you” cards could be sent. Dad, meanwhile, was busily making sure that there would be no wrapping debris on the living room carpet. He was a neat-nik. And both parents tried to ensure that we saved all the wrapping paper, boxes and bows that could be used next year.

I always enjoyed some gifts more than others. My favorite: Electric model trains, of course. Followed by any other sort of fun items, including model airplane kits, Tonka toys, squirt guns, plastic soldiers, board games, cap pistols, Lincoln Logs and Erector Sets.

Least-favorite gifts: shirts, socks and pants. Absolutely least-favorite present: underwear! I know we had to wear it (still do), but as a Christmas gift, it seemed way out of line.

We're in the holiday season; let's have a holiday mood. I hope that we can relax; and avoid anxiety, tension, hassles and other such trauma. Let us strive for a cool Yule while avoiding brain strain. And whether you subscribe to Christ's Mass or not, let us enjoy our friends and family in a spirit of happiness. That would be a gift even better than model trains.

Letters to the Editor

(Editor's Note: Views and commentary, including statements made as fact, are strictly those of the letter-writers.)

* * *
Typed, double-spaced letters are considered for publication. Hand-written letters that are double-spaced and legible also can be considered. “Thank you” submissions are not accepted as letters.

Journalistic standards? From Anita R. Savio O'Brien

As a former newspaper reporter, I am concerned about several lapses in journalistic standards of objectivity in last week's lead article,

(“Robinson: Climate science politicized,” *Illinois Valley News*, Dec. 2, 2009).

The first sentence states that “renewed and valid (my emphasis) debate” has been spurred by the release of the East Anglia e-mails. To say that debate is “valid” is to express an opinion. Journalistic opinion belongs in the editorial or op ed page, not in a news story.

If the opinion about the validity of debate came from Robinson, then it should have been attributed to him. If not, it should have been left out.

Also of concern is the last sentence in the fifth paragraph: “More than 32,000 scientists have participated in the petition project.” My understanding of the global

warming debate is that the overwhelming majority of climate scientists believe that climate change is, at least in part, caused by humans.

At any rate, this is what nationally and internationally respected news sources have consistently reported.

Finally, the absence of quotes from contrary sources of information or opinion on this highly controversial subject is problematic. The reporter should have taken the time to research at least one contrary opinion, or called at least one academician with a differing point of view, and included that in the article. The fact that this was the lead story in this week's issue makes the failure to include an alternative point-of-view

even more serious.

Let me be clear. I have not given my opinion on the global warming debate, have I? Whatever my opinion happens to be, or the reporter's happens to be, is irrelevant to accepted journalistic standards. Why are they accepted? Because we, the readers, have the right to expect news in the news pages, and opinion in the opinion pages. That helps us tell one from another. I do hope that this courtesy to your readership be adhered to in the future.

Merry Christmas From Steve Lyons Cave Junction

Want to have some fun this Christmas? Send the
(Continued on page 3)

Point of View: A phony ‘fix’ for health care

**By Ed Feulner
The Heritage Foundation**

“You can fool some of the people all of the time,” Abraham Lincoln said, “and all of the people some of the time.” Apparently Congress agrees. Indeed, lawmakers are counting on it: In an effort to fool just enough people for just long enough, they're engaging in budget tricks to ram through health “reform.”

In essence, they're making promises that won't be kept. Here's how.

Years ago, lawmakers declared they'd control the rising cost of health care by limiting the amount they paid doctors who treated Medicare patients. They created a formula that linked doctor pay to the overall economic growth rate, and claimed they'd use the formula to rein in spending.

Price controls never work, of course. Nor do administrative pricing updates that have no rational relationship to market realities. And in this instance, they've failed spectacularly. Year after year, when it's

time for their own formula to go into effect and reduce physicians' spending, lawmakers vote to stop their own handiwork from being implemented.

No politician wants to run on the platform “I cut doctor pay.” And if the physician Medicare payment formula really did go into effect, many doctors would stop seeing Medicare patients, making it even more difficult for older people to get needed care.

But Congress keeps pretending it's going to make spending cuts that everyone knows will never be made. That's fundamentally dishonest.

The American Medical Association wants to settle the whole matter for good. Leaders of the group recently cut a deal with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi: If she'd eliminate the formula that guarantees the Medicare spending cuts, AMA officials would support her 1,900-plus page bill overhauling the American health care system (whether its members, doctors who are taking care of real patients, liked the bill or not).

But eliminating the Medicare payment update

formula, which is current law, carries a big price tag. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that it would cost \$210 billion in the next decade alone. Tom Savings, a former Medicare trustee, says the bill would total \$1.9 trillion over the next 75 years. Faced with these numbers, congressional leaders opted for more dishonesty.

Because President Obama has vowed he won't sign a health bill that “adds a dime” to our federal deficit, House lawmakers acted as if their \$210 billion in payments to doctors wouldn't be part of overall health care reform. They pulled that spending provision out of the health care legislation, to make it look cheaper, and passed it without explaining how they'd pay for it.

That simply adds the additional Medicare spending to the deficit, which hit a record \$1.4 trillion this year. But it also highlighted an important point: congressional leaders are trying to pull a fast one on spending.

The president vowed health reform would “bend the cost curve” and lawmakers likewise promised to

hold the line on new spending. As we've seen, one way to at least *appear* to be doing so is by taking the \$210 billion “doc fix” off the books. Another is by promising to slash some \$500 billion in Medicare funding in the years ahead.

Having watched the House's sleight-of-hand on the “doc fix,” does anyone believe lawmakers would actually make those deep cuts? It's far more reasonable to believe we'll get nationalized health care and still pay the full price for Medicare -- a double whammy that would drive the cost of the proposed reform far above \$1 trillion and lead to a sea of red ink stretching to the horizon and beyond.

There's a reason the spending portion in the health care bills the House has passed doesn't take effect for years, while the taxes would begin almost immediately: Lawmakers are trying to fool us. They are trying to look fiscally responsible, when they are just the opposite.

We need to call them on it -- or we'll all be paying a steep price for years to come.

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Weather Watch

Cave Junction

Wednesday, Dec. 16
Rain
High--48 Low--30



Thursday, Dec. 17
Cloudy
High--50 Low--32



Friday, Dec. 18
Cloudy
High--52 Low--32



Saturday, Dec. 19
More clouds
High--53 Low--33



Sunday, Dec. 20
Rain
High--48 Low--32



Monday, Dec. 21
A thick cloud cover
High--48 Low--37



Tuesday, Dec. 22
Cloudy
High--50 Low--38



Following are the high-and-low temperatures, rainfall and snowfall recorded at The End of the Road in O'Brien by Cheryl & Harry Johnson:

*Fri.,	Dec. 4	37	30	.00	.00
*Sat.,	Dec. 5	38	24	.00	.00
*Sun.,	Dec. 6	33	21	.00	.50
*Mon.,	Dec. 7	33	14	.00	.00
*Tue.,	Dec. 8	34	13	.00	.00
*Wed.,	Dec. 9	30	12	.00	.00
*Thu.,	Dec. 10	31	11	.00	.00

Following are the high-and-low temperatures and rainfall recorded at Oregon Builders Guild in Cave Junction:

*Fri.,	Dec. 4	36	30	.00
*Sat.,	Dec. 5	40	24	.00
*Sun.,	Dec. 6	36	21	.00
*Mon.,	Dec. 7	36	15	.00
*Tue.,	Dec. 8	39	13	.00
*Wed.,	Dec. 9	36	12	.00
*Thu.,	Dec. 10	37	11	.01

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