Opinion

Let's save social security

With the election finally behind us, we can hope that our political leaders can now return to a rational discussion of the Social Security problem. Since the campaigns started early this year, those involved in politics have: (1) tried to avoid the subject, (2) blundered by talking about solutions, or (3) exploited it in a way that carried demagoguery to new heights.

Social Security is in deep trouble. November benefit checks for the elderly were covered with borrowed money. The retirement fund is expected to need $11 billion in loans from the disability and Medicare funds to cover its obligations during the balance of the current fiscal year.

Not only is the system in trouble, but there is no way of solving its problems without stepping on political toes. That explains why Sen. Robert Dole sees the coming lame duck session of Congress as a rare window of opportunity to come to grips with the issue of Social Security reform.

The National Commission on Social Security Reform is scheduled to meet the middle of November to take final action on what promises to be a controversial report summing up its year-long study. Alan Greenspan, the chairman, offers little comfort about what it will contain. The president and Congress, he says, may have to settle for the "least worst" of the options for putting the system on a sound financial footing.

But what is least worst may depend on one's point of view. The option of raising payroll taxes would not please President Reagan, who is trying to keep taxes down for the sake of economic growth. Nor, would it please younger workers paying into a system that promises only a distant and dubious return.

Advancing the age for eligibility for retirement benefits, or phasing out the early retirement option, would irritate those workers now nearing 62 or 65. Tinkering with the automatic cost-of-living increases in future benefits would be resisted by those now retired and accustomed to seeing their checks rise with the consumer price index.

Finally, the option of forcing employees of federal, state, and local government to meld their now-separate pension systems with Social Security would be perceived by them as a threat to their potential retirement income.

With all those political considerations, Dole thinks the best hope for action lies in putting Social Security on the agenda of the rump session of the 97th Congress convening at the end of November. Some members will be retiring at the end of the year, thus free of re-election considerations, while the rest will not have to face elections again for two to six years.

That the lame duck session would confront the issue is only a long-shot possibility. Its agenda already is crowded with major appropriations bills hanging over from the pre-election session. The familiar Social Security "crisis" may be greeting the 98th Congress when it convenes in January.

Whether it is an expiring Congress or a new one that finally tackles Social Security reform, there is precious little time to spend in debating the options offered by the Greenspan commission. Somewhere among the least worst choices is a formula that is workable and fair. The president and Congress must find it before Social Security falls under the approaching shadow of the 1984 elections and we are back where we started.

Agree or not

The legislature vs the governor

by S.C. Van Curen

All of the avenues for more independence and to strengthen its tripartite role in government were not closed to the Legislature by Franklin Circuit Judge Squire N. Williams' decision striking down some 1982 legislation.

Williams ruled the legislature had sought to encroach on the executive's territory through legislation that would empower the Legislature to have authority through the Legislative Research Commission between sessions.

This decision in no way curtails or limits the Legislature's authority to take away what it has given. This information comes from sources considered to be authorities on the Kentucky Constitution.

The right to reorganize state government by executive order between legislative sessions has drawn more criticism in recent years from legislators and state employees alike. Gov. John Y. Brown Jr. has done more reshuffling than any governor in recent memory. In another case Judge Williams ruled against the governor in his effort to take some of the authority away from the Commissioner of Agriculture's office, a constitutional post.

It is true that the Legislature has reserved the right to approve such reorganization moves in government, but the catch is the Legislature must wait until its next regular legislative session which happens every two years.

In other words, the biennial legislative session begins the first Tuesday after the first Monday in January in even-numbered years and must adjourn not later than April 15. This gives a governor a full 20 months to reorganize government operations any way he chooses so long as he stays within constitutional limits.

This presents a problem for the Legislature. How can the Legislature undo actions and contracts made under the reorganized government? The only thing left for them to do is to approve the reorganization. Their only other recourse after this approval is to take away the governor's right granted him through legislation to reorganize government between sessions. Then, the legislature can correct any reorganization wrong they think a governor has done.

If there is a need for reorganizing state government, and there has been in times past, a governor can present these changes to the Legislature while it's in session. If sufficient need arises for reorganization between regular sessions, then the governor can call a special session for that purpose.

Gov. Wendell Ford got the legislature to grant him authority to spend federal government sharing money and surplus funds in capital construction any way he chose. This was broad sweeping powers and it carried over through Gov. Julian Carroll's administration. Some of these expenditures through the blank check authority drew criticism from the press and from the public.

The Legislature granted Gov. Brown's administration blank check authority for approving non-taxable revenue bonds for such things as shopping centers and private projects, so to speak.

The Legislature also could strengthen its role by drafting legislation more precisely, thus eliminating much of the abuse of past years by state agencies drafting regulations between sessions permitting them to do what the Legislature refused to let them do by legislation.

Past Legislatures have complained that government agencies have made more law between sessions through regulations than the Legislature makes purposely during sessions.

During Gov. Ford's term, all regulations were wiped out at a specified future date which required agencies to draft new regulations and submit them to the Legislative Research Commission for review. LRC has the power of review, but not the power to veto a regulation if the government agency insists through a resubmission process.

Thus, LRC's effective power is limited to public exposure of proposed regulations. Then, it's up to public opinion and public opinion has stopped few regulations.

As to ambiguous legislation, consider the 1982 act that says Kentucky's first lady is to be chairman of the Mansion Committee. What happens if a woman is elected governor?

Tax oil and gas

What Washington gives, Washington can take. The old adage is proving true with taxes. First income taxes were levied, and then a whole series of new taxes were levied by the federal government.

Conspicuously missing from the latest tax increase was a tax on oil and natural gas. Perhaps it would have hurt too many large political donors.

Recently, Senate Majority Leader Howard Baker suggested a tax on all oil. This would include imports as well as oil produced in the United States. It is estimated that such a tax would raise $25 billion, which would greatly reduce the federal deficit.

In addition, an oil tax would raise gasoline prices, which would encourage Americans to conserve energy again. It also would reduce the unfavorable balance of trade with the OPEC nations.

In the future natural gas will be in short supply and a tax of $1 per 1,000 cubic feet produced would cut consumption and raise an additional $20 billion, according to experts.

These two taxes could raise enough money to reduce the projected federal deficit by nearly one-third. This would free huge amounts of money for investment, which would stimulate the whole economy. It also would help push interest rates down, thereby encouraging further economic growth.

If oil and natural gas taxes are adopted, it should be stipulated that consumer price increases could not rise by more than the new taxes. This would prevent windfall profits from being harvested by petroleum companies.

These taxes make fiscal sense, but members of Congress did not have the courage to enact them in an election year. Lack of courage, unfortunately, is a common weakness in our political system and oil companies do scare most politicians.

Letters from our readers

Calls for social reform

To The Carlisle Mercury:

I am a Carlisle citizen, 35 years of age. I was raised in Carlisle until I was 19 years old. At that time, I left Carlisle from lack of work as well as lack of social activities. I moved to Lexington and got a job with I.B.M. I worked and lived there for two and a half years. Lexington was, and is, a wet city and I came out no worse for the wear.

I then moved to Florida, where I worked for the Tampa Tribune. That city was also free to sell liquor through the week as well as on Sundays. Again I lived for 10 years without becoming an alcoholic. In my opinion a person who becomes an alcoholic and spends their families' rent and grocery money on liquor is going to, whether Carlisle is wet or dry. Their conduct depends on personal discretion. But those persons wanting to conduct themselves properly, prosper from a lighter tax burden as well as a strong economy.

I then moved back to Carlisle expecting to open a small business and live around my old friends, only to find a very poor economy, very high tax rates, and little or no social life.

Business is very poor, with little hope for improvement without social and economical reform. In my opinion this reform could start with Carlisle voting yes on the referendum for controlled alcohol sales in Carlisle.

Thank you,
David Kerns

Share the blame

To The Carlisle Mercury:

In these hard times public schools are being called upon to provide more and better services than ever before. Along with these services comes increased supervision and regulation of school personnel to make sure things are run smoothly and fairly. Gone are the days when a solitary teacher made all the decisions and performed all of her professional duties without supervisory advice. True, many have said that our public school systems are on a down-hill slide and out of control, but all the blame for the problems must also be shared by others as well. Today's teachers and administrators are better educated professionals and are supervised by more professionals than at any other time in history.

The blame must be shared by parents also, as they are still the greatest influence, good or bad, young people have today. As moral and social values change, parents must strive to see that their children are schooled in basic ideas of citizenship, cooperation, concepts of dignity, and above all, respect for themselves and others. Parents should work for public schools and apply constructive criticism when applicable to make schools a better institution of learning.

Sincerely,
Gregory A. Reid
Route 5
Denham Springs, LA 70726

P.S. Mercury workers: Keep up the good work — enjoy hearing the hometown news!

Thanks voters

To The Carlisle Mercury:

In the November 2 congressional election I was the candidate representing the Democratic Party for the Sixth District seat. We were unsuccessful even though we received about 50,000 votes from the people of 16 counties in Central Kentucky.

Although I would like to do so, it is impossible for me to thank each of my supporters individually. But I hope they understand the deep appreciation I hold for them. They upheld the principles of the Democratic Party in a losing cause and that says a lot to me about the depth of their convictions.

So I say to each — thank you for your unswerving loyalty to our cause, I hope we can meet soon.

Sincerely,
Don Mills

Down Memory Lane

Jaycees erect road markers

Thursday, Nov. 22, 1962

Members of the Carlisle Christian Church were delightfully surprised Sunday when the church received a gift of a pair of brass candelabras and vases from one of the former members, Lt. Gary Flora, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ray Flora. Lt. Flora and Mrs. Flora are living in Denver, Colo.

Congratulations are in store for the Nicholas County Jaycees for their newest project, erecting road markers on all county roads. Some 500 manhours and over $700 has been spent by the Junior Chamber during the past three weeks.

Bob Bustin, president of Carlisle Teenage 4-H Club, presented Miss Lavina McFarland, president of Nicholas County 4-H Council, a check for $50, proceeds from the last 4-H sponsored Soc Hop for the District Camp Fund Drive.

BORN — To Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Kimes, Ewing, a daughter, Rebecca Jean, Nov. 14 at Nicholas County Hospital. — To Mr. and Mrs. Jackie Randolph, a daughter, Ramona Carol, Nov. 17 at Nicholas County Hospital. — To Mr. and Mrs. Jesse Frank Mason, a son, Nov. 13 at Central Baptist Hospital.

MARRIED — Mrs. Mary Lois Jolly and Stanley McIntyre, both of Cowan, Nov. 17 by Rev. Frank Simons.

DIED — Charles Eldon Burroughs, 80, Sunday near his residence on Stroker Road. — Mrs. Laura Stanford Hall, 97, widow of Jesse L. Hall, Monday at the Barnett Nursing Home, Fleming County. — John William Hatton, 73, Saturday at home in Mt. Sterling.

Thursday, Nov. 19, 1942

Nicholas County's first official blackout is to be staged Friday, according to word issued last night by Civil Defense leaders.

J.H. Fulton, Carlisle barber and Nicholas County coroner, is ill at his home on West Main Street. His shop has been closed for several days, a fact which disappoints the many loafers who gather to hear the Captain discuss the war and spin tales every evening.

BORN — To Mr. and Mrs. Robert Collins, Independence, a son, Nov. 14 at Elizabeth Hospital in Covington. — To Mr. and Mrs. Hobert Hardin, Dayton, Ohio, a daughter, Nov. 7.

MARRIED — Miss Bernice Bromagen and Pvt. Charles R. Scott, Nov. 12 at Neosho, Mo. — Miss Dorothy Waugh and Pvt. Lemeon Carston Turner, Nov. 10 in Paris.

DIED — Mrs. Mayme Wahl Allison, wife of Leon M. Allison, at home in Winston-Salem, N.C. — Mrs. Frances Kerns Hawkins, 68, at home in Bethel. — John W. Hardin, Nov. 10 at home in Kansas.

Thursday, Nov. 23, 1922

W.G.P. Ledford of this city and Dr. L.K. Swango of Moorefield on Tuesday purchased from N. Effron the brick business house on Main Street occupied by Mr. Effron as a store. This is one of the most desirable business houses in Carlisle.

Winter weather has arrived this week, with the thermometer reaching as low as 32 degrees.

The firm of Ratliff Brothers has received a car load of potatoes from North Dakota, over which the freight was 27 cents per bushel. The potatoes will sell at 80 cents per bushel wholesale.

BORN — To Mr. and Mrs. Dan Stump of Paris, formerly of this city, a son.

MARRIED — Miss Mabel Brothers of Bourbon County and Claud Howard of this county, last Thursday in Maysville.

DIED — Beatrice Jones, four year old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Earl Jones, at her home near Crayton last Sunday. — R.M. Whaley, 77, at the home of his brother, Joe E. Whaley, of Moorefield. — James R. Grimes, 34, last Friday at his home at East Union.

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Warren R. Fisher ..... Editor & Publisher
Jim B. Wanke ..... Editor
Mrs. Katherine T. Fisher ..... Managing Editor
Mrs. Janie Duncan ..... Assistant-to-the-Publisher
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Op-Ed page

Light up your life . . . flambeing puts sparkle in your schnapps

Not many cooks on this side of the mountain practice the art of flambeing. It's just as well. This sort of kitchen arson can break up a home.

First time I saw such a spectacle was in a French restaurant in Fort Worth. When a fellow in a white suit dashed from the kitchen with a flaming sword, I made for the door. I thought the French and Indian War had flared up again.

That is the effect it is supposed to have on you. It lights up the joint, stirs your caveman instincts, smokes up the wallpaper and contributes very little to the food.

Any liquor containing enough alcohol will burn, but many connoisseurs prefer to fire up cordials, claiming it improves everything including the price of the meal. This I seriously doubt although I have had chili that burning was about the only thing that would have made it better.

At least lighting your chow is better than mixing your booze up in it. The flame burns calories and calories are what pounds are made of. Girls appreciate this. So the next time you take a girl friend into your penthouse for a cozy late evening snack, switch down the lights, turn on the soft music and fire up the groceries.

You may not win the gal's hand, but she will always remember you as an old flame.

— RM —

For those of you who like to curl up with a sordid television movie, I have some exciting news. An Atlanta Journal newspaperman, Lewis Grizzard, has written a sitcom for television that will curdle your tea. When you mix in a lot of sex and violence, you've got an instant hit by today's dirty movie standards.

Lewis has not yet hit on a title, but he's working on it. He wants something that indicates the program will include steamy lust and bloodcurdling violence and other despicable conduct. "Killer Sex" is the best title so far to come up with so far.

The setting for his show is a large trailer park just outside Ormond Beach, Fla. Hang onto your armchairs. Here's what happens in the opening episode: Arnold leaves Tanya, Gloria leaves Bernie. J. W. leaves Poopsie. Wanda leaves Leon.

Bilgewater the handyman leaves his toolbox unlocked, and somebody steals his pipe wrenches and a large tube of Super Glue. Arnold moves in with Gloria. Tanya moves in with Bernie. J. W. moves in with Wanda. Poopsie moves in with Leon. Bilgewater the handyman, who is very lonely, buys a duck.

Arnold murders Gloria by bashing her over the head several times with the wrenches he stole from Bilgewater the handyman's toolbox. Tanya gets tired of Bernie's constant complaining and puts the Super Glue she borrowed from Arnold in Bernie's coffee. J. W. asks Wanda for a divorce so she can marry Poopsie, who can't stand Leon by this time. Leon, crushed, flushes himself down the toilet of his trailer.

Bilgewater the handyman wastes an entire Sunday afternoon trying to get the water back on in the trailer park after the idiot Leon has flushed himself down the toilet. Tanya ask Bernie for a divorce so she can move in with Bilgewater the handyman. Bernie can't give her an answer right away because his mouth is glued shut.

Tanya calls Bilgewater the handyman, who opens Bernie's mouth with an acetylene torch. Bilgewater the handyman's duck

makes loud quacking noises and disrupts what is otherwise a nice funeral for the late Bernie. Leon is still missing and presumed drowned.

J. W. and Arnold go into the chinchilla business. Arnold murders J. W. in his sleep in complete control of the business by bashing him over the head several times with the same wrenches he stole from Bilgewater the handyman's toolbox to murder Gloria with.

Arnold discovers the gestation period of the particular breed of chinchillas in which he has invested is four years and flushes himself down Olivia Newton's John (How did she get into the plot?). Bilgewater the handyman, after getting the water back on again, leaves Tanya and moves in with Poopsie. Wanda becomes a Moonie. Bilgewater the handyman's duck becomes sick of the entire scrub brush and joins the Argentine navy.

I can't wait to watch this great American classic on teevee.

— RM —

Someone gave us a "Reagonomics Survival Kit" and here's what we found in the box:

- A tiny paper parasol labeled, "Limited nuclear protection."
- A paper ring labeled, "Tax loophole."
- An African mask serving of ketchup labeled, "Vegetable."
- A two-inch-tall tin animal called, according to the handbook, "the Rich People Most Endangered Species Trojan Horse"; instructions with it show how to make valuable donations to the White House for huge tax write-offs.
- A tiny budget-cutter axe.
- A little safety net made of thread for the "truly needy."
- A rubber inflatable balloon labeled "Paid in Full," for balloon mortgages.
- Two items under the joint label "social security," include a doll-size version of Nancy Reagan's White House china, with which your social status is secured, and a tiny white linen patch, for the holes in your tablecloth.
- A package of Constitutional amendments that champion school prayer, a balanced budget, no school busing, and the familiar Equal Rights Amendment with one small change: "Equality of rights under the law should not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex—unless she is pregnant," it says.

And, of course, the whole box is sealed with red tape. The election season novelty is the creation of an enterprising California company that sold it for $5 plus $1.25 postage and handling. And it probably would throw in Jerry Brown on request.

— RM —

A friend was talking about a business associate who was driving across Kentucky. A business friend, who had just bought a new Buick, was making the same trip.

Before starting out, the man told his friend, "Hey, you're lucky! The Kentucky state legislature has set toll-free days for certain American cars in an effort to stimulate sales. And today is Buick Day!"

The friend said, 'G'wan. You're kidding." But, at the first toll gate, the attendant smiled at him and said, "Like your new Buick." Then he waved the guy through the toll gate.

Same thing happened at the next toll gate and the next. The guy didn't have to pay any tolls and the attendants admired his new Buick. Really a great deal because Kentucky has quite a number of 50-cent toll gates.

But, at the fourth toll gate, when the guy started to drive through without paying, the attendant yelled, "Where the hell do you think you're going?" The guy said, "It's Buick Day!" The two had quite an argument, which the fellow in the car ahead observed through his rear-view mirror.

Driving in front of his pal, he had paid the toll for both cars at the first three gates and asked the attendants to compliment his friend on his new Buick. But he didn't pay his friend's toll at the fourth gate.

He can still hear the cry: "This is Buick Day! This is Buick Day!"

Onward, upward.

An editor's random thoughts . . .

by Warren R. Fisher Sr.
November 26, 1931

Up mighty betimes, for me, and find the morn shining and bright, though cool. And after breakfast to walk in my yard and look at the tiny grass blades and the swelling flower buds and pleased mightily to find the new finished nest of a robin among the white blossoms of my plum tree, very cunningly wrought and shaped with mud and twigs and lined with grasses, but open to rain and sun, there being no sheltering boughs above. And I wonder why she did not choose the eaves shelf, nicely tucked and protected and offered rent free to robin or phoebe these two years past. But set it down to the perversity of the sex, after the manner of puzzled males, and so to watch my purple martins, three of which are come to be and one, I think, a last year's tenant, for he does bobbie briskly around the porches on his weak, swallow legs, popping in and out of the rooms with much twittering. But another male bird and a female, his wife no doubt, soon to be, for they sit and talk with musical laughter rippling up from their throats, fear to come to the little grey house, fluttering about with startled cries to return to a nearby telephone wire. Whereupon my old tenant, of whom I now feel assured from the white patch on his wing, seeks to reassure them with talk and mellow martin-laughter, flying to the house with great breaks to show them.

***

Soon to the broad highway and on till we dip into the hills and along the winding road, very lovely in the moonlight. And so home, where my dog does greet us mightly joyfully, as always, making me fain to believe that Pope's "poor Indian" knew a thing or two in his "untutored mind," that no harm is in it, until at length they perch beside him, yet still too timid to stir from the roof. And I am set wondering if these two may be of the brood that left last August for the wide plains and deep jungles of Brazil and if memories of their new hatched days come dim and mysterious to fright them, as I am minded of the terrors of a little lad in the presence of a hollow stump on the slope of a Bluegrass woodland pasture, at which his grown-up uncle did maintain the "crows had left him as an infant." Mayhap such terror as caught at his throat, when the teasing relative disappeared behind a tree, such awe of this dank, woodland shrine of nativity, as seized me then, did grip my purple martin birds. Yet right soon they must lose their timidity and will, no doubt, else the rowdy English sparrow will pre-empt their house. A maddening, insolent bird, this Britisher and I wonder why I declare war on him so often, yet fail to set traps or spread poison. Right hard it is to imagine a yard or garden without English sparrows, yet oldsters remember when the song sparrow and the bluebird dwelt near us in singing peace, before the foreign invasion. And I smile to think with what excitement I did mark and identify through my glass last week the English starlings that are nesting at the home of H. Asbury. A suspicious, wary bird, this speckled fellow, darting into his flicker-made home and out again from the white patch on his wing, seeks to reassure them with talk and mellow martin-laughter, flying to the house with great breaks to show them.

***

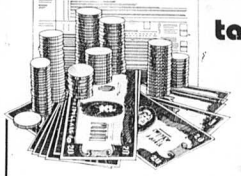
Each day of our lives is like the fresh, red, ripe strawberry, to be plucked and eaten only once, with the possibility of sudden "death" immediately afterwards.

I don't know about you, but living life anew is a whole lot more sense to me after I thought about that.

The story is told of the woman who bore a child out of wedlock. Her shame was such that she wanted to get rid of the child by giving it to a man in the community who was admired and announce he was the father.

She gave the child to such a man. Saying "thank you" he accepted the child and raised it, even though he was not the father. Years later, the mother regretted her actions and came to ask for the child back. He willingly gave it up saying, "thank you."

* See Random Thoughts, page 4



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FDIC

In this corner.....

Popular stuff from other religions

by Jim Butler Wanke

One of the popular Chinese Buddhist teachings that swept U.S. college campuses during the 1960's and early 1970's was to "conduct yourself as if you would be dead tomorrow."

That would you do today and how would you act today, if it was a fact that you would dead and gone tomorrow? That was the gist of the teaching.

"Twenty-four hours is all you have left on this earth! What will you do first? Tell your family that you love them? Make out your will? Perhaps many of these things you had been putting off until "someday" need to be done now?

"Now, remove the fact that you are going to be dead tomorrow...but all the things you needed to do? Do them anyway!"

"We will all leave this life one day, and it could be tomorrow, could it not? So many of us arrive at the door between this life and the next totally unprepared and don't have the time to do or say anything. We just pass on without even "tell" to the other side and leave all our relatives wondering."

"If you have something you specially need to say to someone you had better do it now."

This is basically what many Chinese believe.

How sweet

The story is told of the man who fell off the cliff. He was totally unprepared for the fall. Not on the way down he had the good fortune to grab a fresh, red, ripe strawberry with his right fist. The caption for this picture is..."My, how sweet the taste!"