

Dollars and sense

Not for so much as a nano-second do I consider myself an authority on economic matters, especially on a national or global scale. Nonetheless, the overall economic picture, even to a layman, appears to be somewhat on the bleak side - particularly in this country.

That isn't exactly news. However, considering that our economy is spiraling downward like a train wreck, and defense spending has escalated from \$552 billion to more than \$700 billion in less than a year, and gas prices at the pump have actually surpassed the price of bottled water in many cases, I believe we must ask ourselves a simple question. Why would anybody in their right mind want to be elected president of this mess?

When selecting our candidates, perhaps we should be questioning their mental stability more closely than their records of political accomplishment. Somehow, it doesn't make much sense to me why anybody would want to willingly sit in the driver's seat of a system that is destined to fail. I'm not convinced that anything short of a miracle could turn the economy around.

Consider being a candidate for a minute. First you're going to work yourself to near death in an electoral system that even the political parties don't understand, just to get nominated to run for office. When you really stop and think about it, the complex, unregulated system of nominating candidates makes about as much sense as sterilizing a needle for a lethal injection. The process is downright confusing.

Then, as a candidate, you're going to have to work even harder to keep your war chests filled so you can afford to run a cam-



You can't beat a system you can't understand

By Sam Bari

aign for a position that doesn't pay very well. Our president is one of the most poorly paid of all the world leaders. It's embarrassing. The CEOs of any Fortune 500 company make more than he does.

This isn't the first time the country has been an economic disaster zone at election time. And it certainly isn't the first time that management has changed hands in the middle of a war or some kind of conflict. During the great depression, both of the world wars, and during the threatening years of the Cold War, candidates were still fighting tooth and nail to get the top, although thankless, job.

If you believe the analysts, however, things are a bit different this time around. Time has run out. The buck can't be passed from one administration to the next any longer. Everything from social security to health care, and immigration to education must be addressed, and problems must be resolved. Our thirst for affordable energy must be quenched. The budget at some point needs to be balanced. And I suppose it would be nice if the federal deficit were at least manageable.

These are just the problems that we common folk recognize because they are so blatantly obvious. Without a doubt there are many more. Like getting our troops home without leaving the world in a state of turmoil is one

of the biggies. Another is to plug the dam and close the floodgates that are allowing all the jobs to leave this country by outsourcing to the Third World.

If trends stay consistent, the Third World is going to be a contender in the race for economic supremacy in the not too distant future. They will soon control the global labor market if they don't already do so. Manufacturing in this country is close to non-existent.

The intent of this column was not to paint a picture of obvious doom and gloom. Unfortunately, we're accustomed to living with the aforementioned scenarios. My point is that whoever wins this upcoming election is going to need the undivided support of the American people.

We have a history of being quick to blame and point fingers at the top when things go awry, whether it is the fault of the administration or not. The next president is taking over at a perilous time, and will need America to believe and not abandon ship—particularly corporate America. The bottom line mindset of big business has got to change if our country is to recover and regain its status as an economic leader.

If the political parties can actually succeed in pulling off an election with their smoke and mirrors process, I encourage all Americans to participate and support whoever emerges victorious. I'm going to continue to believe that the person who wants to fill that post is courageous, not crazy. Nonetheless, the next administration will need all the help it can get running a system that none of us really understand.

Housing plan is available to the public

In accordance with the requirements of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998, the Jamestown Housing Authority is in the ninth year of its Agency Plan. The plan is available for review at the Authority's office at 45 Pemberton Avenue in Jamestown between the hours of 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., Monday through Friday.

There will be a public hearing from 1-2 p.m. on Wednesday, April 2, 2008, in the Pemberton Apartments Community Room, 45 Pemberton Ave. The public is invited. The housing authority will accept written comments on the Agency Plan until 2 p.m. on Thursday, April 3, 2008.

Ballet closes season with Swan Lake

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School panel discusses capping unused funds

By Michaela Kennedy

Capping the unreserved fund was the topic the School Committee took up at their March 6 meeting. The draft outlines that funds exceeding the cap will be returned to the town's general fund.

Committee member William "Bucky" Brennan provided copies of the proposal to panel members. The policy, prepared by Brennan, will allow the balance of the school district's unreserved fund to be up to five percent of the overall school budget if approved. The committee spent most of the meeting discussing the language of the policy and revising the wording of the document.

School committee chairwoman Cathy Kaiser suggested approving the limit on the fund. "Whatever we need can come from the capped amount," she said. Kaiser focused on the language of the draft, and stressed the need to fund unanticipated expenses, including but not limited to capital projects. "It would give us a peace of mind that we would be able to look to the town to bail us out," she added.

According to the Education Resources Information Center, school districts can improve their chances of avoiding financial difficulty by

developing unreserved fund balance resources specifically for contingencies.

The committee went on to read an updated draft of the summer school policy, which outlines opportunities for remedial instruction for students who have not achieved the standards on the state or local assessments, or on quarterly report cards.

Committee members agreed that parents must be made aware of the ramifications of a student not successfully completing summer school. Wording included in the proposed policy read, "Advancement is not guaranteed."

Additional wording in the policy stated that students are expected to maintain a ninety percent attendance rate during the summer school period, and the behavior code will be followed throughout the session. Also stated in the draft was a note that nothing in the policy should be interpreted as an interference with the extended school year provisions of the Board of Regents Regulations Governing the Education of Students with Disabilities.

The committee scheduled readings of the unreserved fund and summer school draft policies for the business meeting on March 20.

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