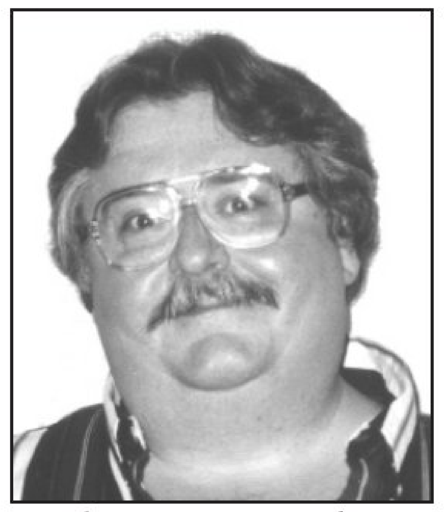
Plain Talk

No Excuses: Get Out and Vote!

COLUMN BY ROB BUKSAR



Soon after you receive this edition of the *Exchange* it will be the time to elect a new president of the United States. In my lifetime I don't think there has ever been an election more important than this one. No matter what you would like to believe, these two candidates are as far apart as the east is from the west. Sometimes they sound similar because they're addressing the same problems. The real issue is how these problems will be addressed, if at all.

David Gergan is presently one of CNN's political analysts. He has been a personal adviser to more than a few presidents. He's on CNN almost every day and understands the big national picture because he's always been in a spot to see it. Almost without exception, when Gergan comments he prefaces his statements with, "Whoever the new president is, he will inherit an economy and financial circumstances more dire than those before the Great Depression."

If that's not sobering enough for you, try this one on for size. Saturday, September 6, I'm sitting at my desk cleaning up some paperwork around noon. CNN is tuned in on my office tube and I hear them announce at 12:30 p.m. CST they will interview David Walker, the former comptroller general of the United States. Walker wasn't on CNN to plug a candidate or sell a book. He thought America might be interested in what kind of financial shape the good-ole USA is in today.

Walker didn't hesitate or mince any words. He said our present financial circumstances threaten our standard of living, national security, and our country's ability to function as an independent self-sustaining nation. Presently our national debt exceeds 9.6 trillion dollars. That's over $31,000 of debt for every man, woman and child that lives in America. The budget controls that were in place ran out in 2002. Since then, Congress and the current administration have been spending money like drunken sailors.

Walker said without sound fiscal management, which we have not had, our country stacks up bills and liabilities just like a household with no financial discipline. Sooner or later all the bills come due (balloon) and have to be paid. There is no more robbing Peter to pay Paul. When you're broke, you're broke and in trouble with your creditors.

According to Walker, we are only a few years away from a 53 trillion dollar debt which will balloon in approximately eight years. By the way, this killer debt is growing at the rate of two to three trillion per year. This debt is comprised of interest payments, government pensions, and something called "off budget liabilities."

The United States no longer does its own banking according to Walker. We're broke and now depend entirely on foreign banks. If our financial house isn't put in order immediately, the big foreign banks that finance us daily will discontinue doing so.

Presently, the U.S. cannot exist without daily borrowed money. We are talking about a problem of unimaginable proportion, whoever the new leadership is in the White House. If they want to prevent a national default they will have to do as follows immediately:

- recognize the problem,
- initiate reform,
- reduce our national consumption, and
- conserve as much as possible.

Friends, I did not dream this stuff up. This was a full-blown admonishment from someone who knows what he is talking about in reference to financial matters. Look for yourself at www.CNN.com Sept. 9, 2008, 12:30 p.m. CST.

The conclusion of the matter is simply this: Vote! It's not all you can do, but it's the first step in real political activism. This time around, your vote is more important than you'll ever really know. Make an informed choice and vote. Do it for yourself, your children, and your country.

God bless America.

Rob Buksar is owner of Hoosier Electric Co., Gary, Ind.

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