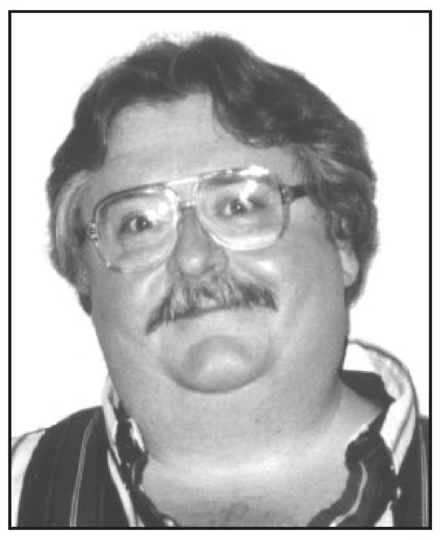
Plain talk
As real as it gets

COLUMN BY ROB BUKSAR



Our economy is in free fall. Personally, I don't think anyone with functional gray matter should be surprised. The signs and evidence of this coming was clear and evident years ago.

No disrespect to anyone's political persuasion but let's face it folks, the last administration was asleep at the wheel. I doubt if there is a businessman anywhere who isn't aware of the condition of his company without the benefit of staff or advisors. We know because we're paying attention, that's our job, that's how we stay in business. To wake up one morning with a busted banking system, an economy with no cash, and be surprised, in itself is astounding and tragic.

I have to believe our new administration has our country's best interest at heart. Yet, at this point, the president is swinging at shadows no matter how you cut it. His stimulus package sure gives the appearance of little more than fulfilling campaign promises and paying back supporters. Sooner or later, and I pray sooner, this administration must realize that to fix our country, we are all going to have to start investing in our own country again and consider our national best interest priority one.

Congress has no problem spending billions on repairing highways, bridges, schools and public buildings. That spending creates jobs and the repairs are overdue. Where the disagreement arises is where to buy the materials to do the work. This is where you find out who's in whose pocket.

This is all about saving our bacon. We are in greater trouble than ever before and presently, the future is real scary looking. We're talking about massive government spending via a jobs/business stimulus package. It's amazing there is any sort of disagreement concerning whether to buy materials domestically or offshore. Frankly, the offshore supporters need to be voted out of office.

Most of you have seen the movie Patton. George C. Scott did a remarkable job. At the beginning of the film, Scott gave a rendition of a speech that Patton gave to his officers before he went to Europe. I want to paraphrase an aspect of that speech because it's applicable to the time and circumstances we're living in: Winning a war has nothing to do with dying for your country; it's letting the other guy die for his.

Our economic circumstances have taken on war-like characteristics. Are you willing to give up a lifetime of work and sacrifices to keep shops in Mexico and China working? Your financial choices are going to determine the outcome of all of this.

The addiction to cheap offshore product is rooted deep. This is worth repeating so here it is again: Are you willing to die so the offshore guys can prosper? Think hard on this one because how, and especially where, you spend your dollars from here on out will really make a difference. It doesn't get any more real than this!

God bless America.

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