

AROUND OUR COMMUNITY

Typhoon prompts giving spirit

When Hobbs Freshman schoolteachers and students found out one of their own was suffering due to the typhoons that hit the Philippines, they sprang into action.

First-year teacher Warren Panaligan's family's home was flooded and his family was forced to evacuate in the Philippines after two typhoons hit the southeast Asia country hard. His family lost all their worldly possessions and had to leave their home.

His fellow teachers at Hobbs Freshman School, hearing the news immediately began gathering funds to help. Then students began collecting money. A garage sale at City Park is planned for today to raise even more funds.

Panaligan said he is giving half the money to his family but has decided to give the other half to others who are in need in the Philippines. There are people worse off, he said, than even his family.

Between the staff, the students and Panaligan, the spirit of giving and helping one's fellow man, even if they are halfway around the world, is alive and well in Hobbs. We salute those who gave and stepped forward to help.

The value of walking to school

It is almost silly to say but walking to school is almost a lost art. With the convenience of vehicles, so many children now ride to school. They never get the exercise walking to school can provide.

But this past week, groups at several area schools made the special effort one morning to walk to school as part of the international Walk and Roll to School Day. It was day to remind even the youngest that sometimes, a short walk it an O.K. thing to do.

Part of the special day was also to remind everyone how to be safe when walking or riding to school. Tips include walking with a friend, sticking to a safe route and don't chase and shove each other when near the street curb.

Mothers always seem to be saying to their kids, "Go out and get some fresh air." Walking to school on occasion is one way to make that happen.

Plight of adoptees needs to be a priority

As our health care system is debated in Congress and we continue to face down pro-choice challenges in the bill, I want to take the time to remind all of us of another vulnerable segment of our population. This is one area in which we should be in full agreement, but still one we too often overlook: the thousands of children in need of adoption by loving families who are instead consigned to a struggling foster-care system.



Michael Reagan

Commentary

These are children who have been through so much already, who have lost their parents to tragedy, to the streets, or who have been pulled through the trauma of abuse or abandonment by the very person who should love them the most. Through no possible fault of their own, these young ones have seen the hardest side of humanity, and they desperately need a steady and loving hand to guide them.

As much as we may bicker over the politics of life and the role of government in our social services, on a fundamental level the hardship of these children deserves nothing less than our compassion, support, and perhaps the very opening of our homes. We must understand this, not as a peripheral issue, but as a true crisis of child welfare, and a battleground for our future.

In this country, there are 129,000 children waiting to be adopted. Most of those are already legally severed from their birth parents and could therefore be adopted into new families with no delays. But last year alone, more than 28,000 children were left without families.

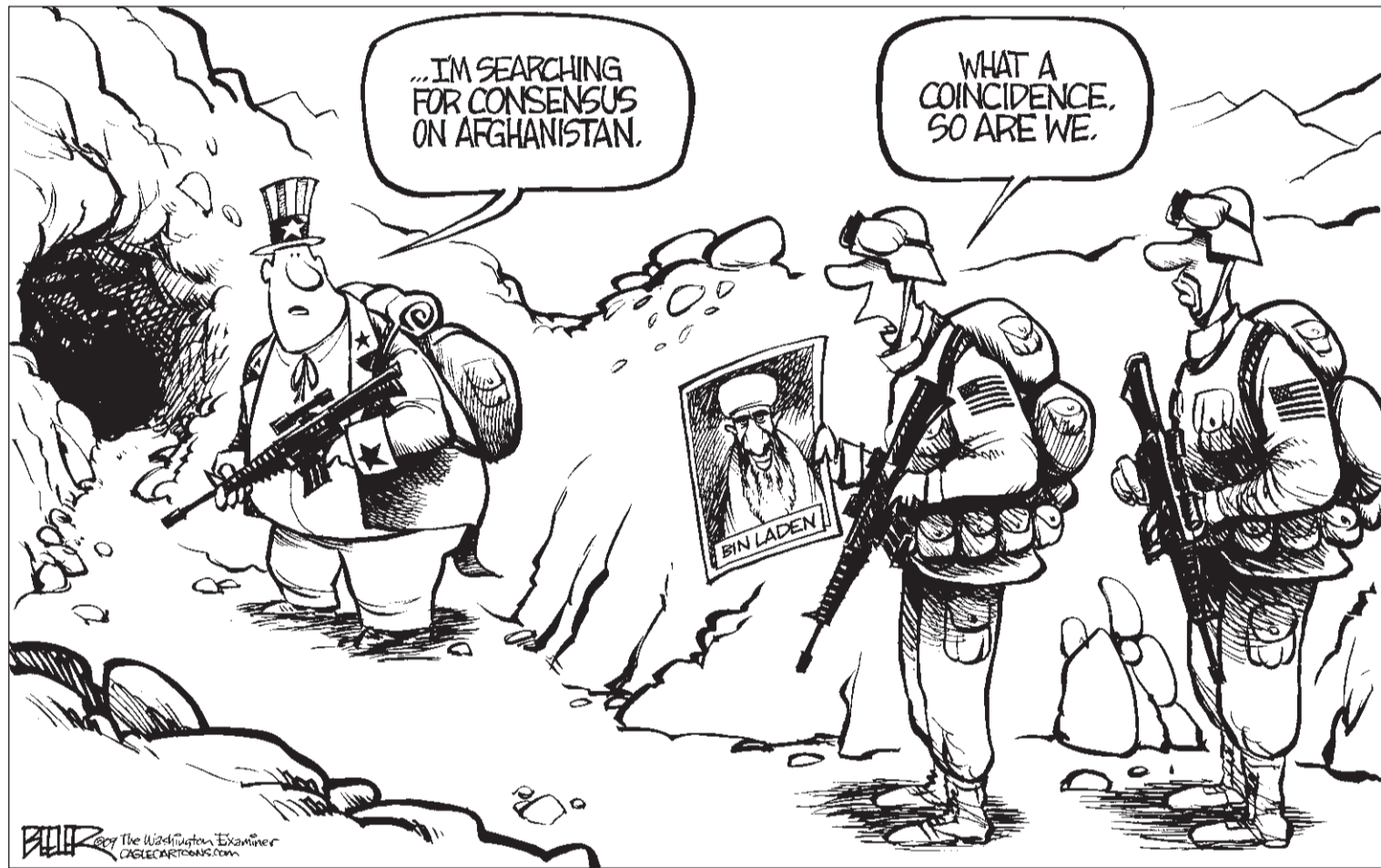
This does not need to be the case. Improvements to the adoption system in our country have made the process smoother, faster, and less expensive than it once was. Children in foster homes can be adopted without legal complications. Those who choose to adopt an infant can be paired with their child from before birth and even build a relationship with the birth mother.

Over and over again, in personal stories and in comprehensive studies, we

are shown the overwhelming benefits of adoption. Children left in foster care not only struggle with being bounced from place to place in shifting relationships, but also face a terrible struggle when they leave the system and are left with no family support, no adequate resources, and a lack of practical preparation. Conversely, children who are adopted – either as infants or later in life – have proven that strong, successful families do not require ties of blood, and children can rebound from early trauma and experience deep healing and love.

Many of you know that I myself was adopted as an infant. I can think of no greater blessing than the family I was brought into, of the chance for a new life from the start. Every child is a gift from God, and every child deserves a loving family. As individuals and as a nation, we must make that understanding a priority moving forward.

Mike Reagan, the elder son of the late President Ronald Reagan, is heard on radio stations nationally as part of American Family Radio. E-mail comments to Reagan@caglecartoons.com.



Bill Barry The Washington Examiner CAGLECARTOONS.COM

Obama

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"I do not view it as a recognition of my own accomplishments, but rather as an affirmation of American leadership on behalf of aspirations held by people in all nations," Obama said, casting the prestigious honor in terms grander than himself when he appeared in the Rose Garden several hours after the Nobel committee's announcement.

"To be honest, I do not feel that I deserve to be in the company of so many of the transformative figures who've been honored by this prize — men and women who've inspired me and inspired the entire world through their courageous pursuit of peace," Obama said.

The president said he was accepting the award as a "call to action — a call for all nations to confront the common challenges of the 21st century," including nuclear weapons, climate change and conflict between Israelis and Palestinians.

Obama, 48, is the third U.S. president to win the prize while in office, after Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson. Former President Jimmy Carter won the prize in 2002, more than two decades after he left office.

Obama will travel to Oslo, Norway, in December to accept the award. It comes with a \$1.4 million cash prize that White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said Obama will donate to charity. Several charities, yet to be named, are likely to benefit from the windfall, Gibbs said.

In 2007 and 2008, Obama and his wife, Michelle, made sizable contributions to the

United Negro College Fund, which received a total of \$75,000, and the international relief agency CARE, which collected \$60,000.

The award surprised Obama and his staff on what already was a busy Friday.

Washington was still asleep under dark and starry skies when reporters informed Gibbs that Obama had won the 2009 prize. Gibbs then telephoned his boss with the news, and Obama's appearance in the Rose Garden was quickly arranged.

Later in the day, Obama met in private with five people who told him about hardships they blame on financial industry practices, then held an event in the East Room to press Congress to pass an overhaul of industry regulations, including stronger protections for consumers.

The president also scheduled another meeting with his national security team, including by videoconference Gen. Stanley McChrystal, the U.S. commander in Afghanistan, to discuss the situation there and in Pakistan.

Obama also met with Sen. Jim Webb, D-Va., and had lunch with Vice President Joe Biden. In the evening, he and first lady Michelle Obama were throwing a picnic for Secret Service members and their families.

"Well, this is not how I expected to wake up this morning," Obama said. He described his interaction with his two daughters.

If Obama sticks to tradition, he will attend the annual Peace Prize music concert on Dec. 11, the following day, and travel to Stockholm to speak to the Riksdag, or the Swedish parliament.

Lovington

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personal vehicles to and from work, using the city's vehicles only during on-duty hours.

"It comes from the fact that we're in a recession," Leighton said. "Our gross receipts taxes are suffering. We're having to tighten the belt a little bit."

Leighton said the new restrictions aim to reduce drive time and gas consumption. He said it will not impact LPD's ability to serve the public. However, Leighton said the city will be emphasizing a

"community-style patrol."

Officers may be doing more parked patrols and will likely be getting out of their vehicles more to go into the community, Leighton said.

LPD Chief Chan Kim said the department will have to do some strategizing to become more effective on their patrols after the restrictions take effect.

"We're asking the (officers) to basically stay in the heavy crime areas," Kim said.

Leighton said the restrictions will remain in place "for the foreseeable future."

The city is eyeing other

options for reducing costs. Leighton said Lovington has instituted stricter energy controls, restricted overtime and is looking at four-day and 10-hour work weeks for some departments.

He said city business and public safety should not be impacted negatively as a result of the mandate. So far, he said, their efforts have been received well by the employees and should help the city's budget.

"There's been a very positive response from our employees," Leighton said.



LEVI HILL/NEWS-SUN

Hobbs firefighters assess how to attack a fire at a former Hobbs grocery warehouse at Leech and Marland. The warehouse burned to the ground on Friday afternoon.

Fire

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cover the rest of the city. Three engines and two aerial trucks were at the scene.

The fire ignited two primary poles and knocked power out to more than 1,000 customers for a short time in the Broadway area.

Xcel spokesman Wes Reeves said the power outage was "pretty big" but according to data provided by Xcel personnel in Hobbs, power was restored in about 11 minutes.

"Fortunately the duration was pretty short," he said. "It looks like there will be some work done on our facilities in the future there."

Reeves said Xcel isolated the area and re-routed power to restore electricity to customers in south Hobbs.

The building, with corrugat-

ed tin siding and a wooden frame, is probably most known as the former Hobbs grocery warehouse.

Although the exact age of the building is not immediately known, it is about several decades old. At one point in its history, as groceries came into Hobbs by train, the building was the main distribution point to surrounding grocery stores. The building still contained at least one large freezer. The floors were thick wood and several feet off the ground.

Caprock Diesel, with its main headquarters across the street, owned the warehouse building. The building primarily held parts and storage for the company. Several employees of Caprock Diesel also had personal items stored in the building.

"Some of my son's oldest baby clothes were in there," said employee Misty Steele right after announcing "there

it goes" as the section where her items were stored collapsed.

She said the employees at Caprock Diesel were at the main building across the street when they first learned of the blaze. She said they moved new Hyundai tractors so they would be spared from the flames.

"Most everybody was gone for lunch," Steele said.

To her knowledge, Steele said no one was in the building they often referred to as "the castle."

"Thank God nobody was in it," she said. "Material things can be replaced."

The company had talked about remodeling the building to expand the business, she said.

"I'm sure it's not a dream that we can't start over," Steele said. "... It's a shame. It really is."