



J.W.J.

John W. Johnson

Notwithstanding the risk it runs of further promoting the popular notion of being the political party for only the rich and business class, the Republican party says it wants to enter into a contract with America.

The contract's essential elements were released in late September, not coincidentally about one month before the November 8 election. The contract was designed to help the GOP cause; and perhaps it did because Republicans made as many gains as predicted, if not more, in particular in the House of Representatives.

Many in the GOP want to continue putting forth this so-called contract and further tap into what is now troublesome for Americans. It's essential elements (and attendant commentary) are as follows:

A balanced budget amendment: The idea of a balanced budget amendment has been around for more than 40 years. It is a superb notion in theory, but it requires legislators of virtue and political courage; those who would vote for what was good for the country, not necessarily what would be good for an individual constituency. As such, and while the idea of having a balanced budget is heady political rhetoric, it is an idea whose time — and given human nature — is not likely to ever come.

Anti-crime measures, tougher sentencing and death penalty rules and more prisons: To be sure, more prisons are needed...and fast. Prison overcrowding is rampant, and more and tougher sentencing is only

GOP 'contract' promises more than it can deliver

going to make that problem worse. Death penalty rules also need to be changed. The average death row inmate spends 17 years on death row...which begs the death penalty initially imposed, and the political courage of those who claim to support it.

Cuts in welfare spending, and a ban on welfare for minor-age mothers. Minor according to whom? Each state decides at what age a child achieves majority. A ban on welfare for those 16 and under might make more sense. Of course, most of those seeking such a ban also don't want that 16 and under child to have government funded abortion services. So, GOP, what do

Good principles don't always make good sense

we do with the children? **Family reinforcement measures, including a tax credit for elderly dependent care:** The elderly care tax credit makes much sense...but there is much to worry about when a political party (any political party) wants to instill (impose) so-called "family" values.

A \$500 per child tax credit: For what reason, GOP? And is this in addition to individual child deductions otherwise claimed on our tax returns?

Increased defense spending to restore "essential parts of our national security:" Interpret this to mean, putting people back to work in those defense-oriented states of California, Connecticut, New York and elsewhere, who've been hard hit by defense cuts, and the end of the Cold War.

Repeal of 1993 increase in taxation of upper-income individual's Social Security benefits: Dead wrong, GOP. Not only

should those increased tax rates stay in place, those in the upper income brackets should have some sort of means test applied to any SS benefits received. If you don't need it, leave it for those who do.

A cut in taxes on capital gains: This is perhaps the only element in the contract which makes complete sense. Much investment and reinvestment in this country (real estate, in particular) dried up when the capital gains tax was increased. The theory was to change the system whereby it was beneficial for real estate owners to make a profit, rather than show a loss. The problem is that, and with more and more government-subsidized housing (the writer of this column is a rental property owner), the government is in direct competition with private owners, making it virtually impossible to make a profit. A reduction in the capital gains tax would cause more turnover in real estate, and be of long-term health to the general economy.

Limits on punitive damages from civil suits; reform of product liability laws: In a society which now views the legal system as a lottery in which to make money, these reforms are long overdue.

Congressional term limits: As with the balanced budget amendment, at first blush, a term limit sounds like it makes sense. It is both theoretically (and often, factually) true that the longer a politician stays in office, the more he or she uses power for personal benefit and the less to benefit constituents. At the same time, it would be a shame to throw out a perfectly good Senator, simply because the allotted time was up. Perhaps the compromise would be to elect a president for one six-year term; senators for one eight-year term; and congressmen for two, three-year terms.

As I was saying



Jack Hilsner

Earlier this year several of these columns were devoted to extolling the benefits to seniors of collecting stamps. There were also junior benefits mentioned but I do not kid myself that any of them paid the slightest bit of attention. Nor can I claim the subject, dry as it was, climbed to the top of a readership poll, but that is only because we have no such poll. Yet!

Stamp collecting is a hobby of many sides. It is not expensive. It is entertaining and relaxing. It is said to be a growing hobby and the U.S. Postal Service firmly believes there are untold hordes of both actual and would-be collectors out there. In fact, they have set themselves a goal of extracting one billion dollars from stamp collectors by the year 2000!

This is a vastly different outlook from the one our post office management demonstrated in 1887, when a third assistant postmaster, hand-written on official stationery, mailed this note to young Master Vance Gowdy of Kentucky: "I beg leave to inform you the government does not buy old postage stamps, cancelled or

Watch out for the hype if collecting stamps today

uncancelled, and has no use for them. It does not see any good in their collection by private parties and endeavors in every way to discourage such a practice."

Well! Do you suppose their recent change of heart had something to do with the fact that last year they cleared (maked that read: CLEARED!!) some \$36 million from Elvis Presley stamps which were bought and kept by fans and collectors? Never to be used as postage! The service

Most new 'commemoratives' make money for the Post Office, not for collectors

claims there are more than 20 million collectors in the U.S. alone, a number I believe to be horribly inflated. Using their logic, if each of those millions bought a mere fifty bucks worth of stamps by the year 2000, they'd have their billion easily. But don't count on it guys.

It is sad to recall all the department stores which used to have stamp counters, and all the little stamp and coin shops which used to be in every town, and all the kids in the block who used to collect. All those "used to be's" hardly add up to half of the P.O.'s estimate.

But they won't be deterred.

They recently sent a half-million of the new \$9.95 Moon Landing 25th Anniversary stamps on a NASA shuttle mission to outer space. That could be \$5 million which could have been clear profit since the stamps obviously would never be used as postage.

Far better than merely selling them over-the-counter is their ingenious plan to print specially-designed souvenir envelopes, which will each contain one of the \$9.95 Landing stamps but will sell for \$25 each, or, if autographed by artist Keith Birdson, for \$69 each!

The envelope with stamp will be enclosed in a "gold-stamped" portfolio case, according to Postal Service spokesman Robin Wright. Of the half-million stamps sent into space, 10,000 will be allocated to the signed envelopes. Thus, if every one is sold the P.O. counts on grossing nearly \$13 million.

I suppose I sound disenchanted with my country's postal output. I am. In 1993 there were 116 different U.S. stamps issued, which is ten times too many of what is needed, and ten times too many to collect.

My final advice to you, if you insist on collecting U.S., is to get an album that goes up to about 1960. After that commemorative issues exploded for no good reason (except the dough they brought in) and it became both silly and boring to play catchup with a collection! Don't even try!

Library news

Library friends set sights on snowblower

By NANCY KOZEMCHAK

The Back Mountain Memorial Library 'green jar' campaign, "Help for Heat" has concluded with the total amount collected of \$84.00. This money will be put into the budget to help with the heating cost of the coming winter. The 'Friends of the Library' group sponsor this project and we are grateful to them. The new campaign will be 'Money for a Snow Blower'. The library would like to purchase a snow blower for the sidewalks around the library and this green jar money will help with that project. The current campaign was not one day old when pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters and even a dollar bill appeared in the jar. This makes for an easy way to get rid of some extra change and bills. Come feed the 'green jar'!

The 'Friends of the Library' also conducted a bake sale on election day, Tuesday, Nov. 8 in the entry way of the library. The baked goods were donated by 'friends'

and this projected netted \$88.00 for the library and provided some delicious snacks for the voters.

Children's Book Week will be held from November 14 through the 19th. We are celebrating the week with special activities in the children's room. The theme of the week is "Time To Rhyme" which is honoring Mother Goose. There is a mobile hanging in the library featuring Humpty Dumpty, Little Bo Peep, the Cow Jumping over the Moon and the little dog laughing; and Mother Goose. Young readers should be fascinated with the timelessness of Mother Goose. A staple in childhoods for centuries, these delightful rhymes, full of nonsense and whimsy, captivate even the most reluctant reader. There are some special plastic book bags; bookmarks for the children; stickers for special projects and nursery rhyme pins for the staff to wear in order to promote Mother Goose's Children's Book Week. Bring the children in!

The November meeting of the Book Club will be held on Monday, Nov. 21, at 1:30 in the reference room of the library. Members and guests are welcome to attend.

New books at the library: "Dark Rivers of the Heart" by Dean Koontz is the story of a man and a woman—she is a figure of mystery, he is a mystery even to himself—when they meet by chance in a Santa Monica bar. Suddenly—first separately, and then together—they are fleeing the long arm of a clandestine and powerful renegade government agency.

"The Lottery Winner" by Mary Higgins Clark features a beloved character in a brilliant collection of interconnected tales of sleuthing and suspense. Alvirah Meehan, struck it rich in the lottery and narrowly survived a stalking killer. Here are Alvirah and Willy, ensconced in their condo, surrounded by the rich and famous, solving dastardly crimes.

Medical

(continued from page 1)

Family Practice. These providers will further augment the quality of health care services available in this area. The construction of this new state-of-the-art facility further demonstrates our long-standing commitment to the residents of the Back Mountain area.

The two-story, 34,000-square foot facility, expected to be completed in the spring of 1995, will house Dallas Family Practice, an extremely busy and growing medical practice consisting of five physicians board certified in family medicine and support staff which currently treats many resi-

dents in the Back Mountain.

"This new building is the fulfillment of years of planning and will enable us to better serve the needs of our patients. We are very impressed by the commitment and sensitivity shown by Wyoming Valley Health Care System to our need for additional space," commented Dr. Jacobs.

"The physicians and staff of Dallas Family Practice are very appreciative of the confidence our patients have shown in us over the years," added Dr. Campbell. "This confidence and trust has enabled us to grow from a solo

family practice office to our present Dallas Family Practice facility."

In addition to the physicians' practice to be located on the ground floor, plans also include outpatient and ancillary services such as laboratory, radiology, mammography and cardiology. Varied community services and programs such as childbirth education classes designed to augment the quality of life and to promote the importance of leading healthier life-styles will be offered in the facility's community classrooms.

Small Wonders
Nursery School, Bk. Mt.
18 Country Rd., Shavertown, PA
Open House
Thurs. Evening, Nov. 17
7 - 8:00
Interested parents are welcome to visit and meet the teachers.
Day Care also available.
696-3200

Cooks PHARMACY

- Computerized Prescription Service
- Russell Stover Candies
- Greeting Cards
- PA Lottery Ticket
- Newspapers
- Magazines

159 N. Memorial Hwy., Shavertown, PA
675-1191

COLOR PORTRAITS
1 - 8X10 \$14.95
2 - 5X7
10 - WALLETS
2 POSE MIX - OUR SELECTION

• LARGE FORMAT FILM FOR VIVID COLORS • BY APPOINTMENT ONLY • AVOID LONG WAITS • STUDIO PRIVACY • TRADITIONAL BACKGROUNDS AND BLACK OR WHITE AT NO ADDITIONAL CHARGE • PACKAGE PRICE INCLUDES SITTING FEE • ADDITIONAL SUBJECTS \$3 EACH • DEPOSIT OF \$3 PER SUBJECT AT TIME OF SITTING • HOLIDAY CARDS AVAILABLE • POSES OUR SELECTION

Lyons PHOTOGRAPHY
138 S. Pennsylvania Ave. Wilkes-Barre, PA 824-0906

YOU CAN DO IT with STENCILS

~From~
Romancing The Home

A Complete line of gifts & decorative accents for your home
~and~
The Largest Selection of designer stencils in the area.
Come in & see what stenciling in the '90's is all about...

651 Wyoming Ave., Kingston • 283-3876
Next to Tudor Book Store
7 Kennedy Drive, Archibald • 876-3334

Hours: Tues.-Sat. 10-5
Tues & Thurs til 7
Closed Sun. & Mon.

M. Abraham Importers

67th Annual Holiday Sale

Very Special Discounts!
ORIENTAL RUGS
from around
THE WORLD

During this sale you can fulfill your dream of gracing your home with a magnificent oriental rug at very substantial savings. Our buyers have just returned from an extensive trip to the rug-weaving regions of the world. Our inventory of hand-knitted, 100% wool rugs - authentic originals from Persia, China, India, and Pakistan - is now at its peak. Choose from geometrics, formal, and primitive designs.

Buy with confidence. For 67 years, at the same location in Downtown Wilkes-Barre, three generations of our family have been importers and vendors of fine oriental rugs.

Our investment-quality rugs have historically appreciated 8% to 10% per year. What other home furnishing can assure you of such long-term value, while adding beauty to your home?

The M. Abraham Guarantee:
"You will receive full trade-in value on any rug purchased from us when making a new purchase."

We Buy, Clean, Appraise, Trade and Mend your Oriental Rugs.

M. Abraham Importers

33 West Market Street, Wilkes-Barre 717-823-3405 • 1-800-750-3405 Free Parking in Rear (Park & Lock West)
Hours: Tuesday - Saturday 10 A.M. to 5 P.M.; Monday, Sunday and Evenings by Appointment