



JOHN KELSO

Thanks to pitiful economy, you're stuck with me

It was Franklin Roosevelt who said that “the only thing we have to fear is fear itself.” It was John Kelso who said, “Return to your homes — if you’ve still got one.” Or, “You’re hosed. So keep drinkin’.”

The story is that the U.S. House of Representatives voted down the bailout package that was designed to keep the country from slipping back into a 1930s-style depression. So, of course, the stock market immediately dropped nearly 800 points.

My headline on this story: “House Takes Homes.” I hope you people like standing in lines. I just hope there’s actually some free bread at the end of them.

But why should I be surprised? When it comes to this country, my timing has always been bad. In the ’60s, I joined the Army Reserve to keep from getting drafted. About the time I got out of the Army, they got rid of the draft.

Now that I’m almost old enough to retire, the House votes down the Wall Street bailout package. So the economy is going into the tank, and my 401(k) is becoming a 201(k). You know what this means? It means I’ll never be able to afford to quit working.

So, if you don’t like my columns: Guess what? You’re screwed. Hey, if you can’t stomach this stuff, don’t blame me. Blame the Republicans. Thanks to the economy, if I have anything to say about it, I’m going to keep writing until I start babbling about the junk on my desk, like Andy Rooney.

OK, so this newspaper is for sale, and you still have a shot at me getting run off by a new owner. So, thanks to the bad economy, I could end up working at Wal-Mart as a greeter.

I can imagine how that would work. “Listen, you old buzzard. Why don’t you go shop at Lowe’s?”

Have you been wondering which Lehman brother they’ll shoot first when the revolution starts?

Oh, I suppose it could be worse. On second thought, nah.

The big philosophical question that Americans are asking: “Where’s the bottom?” That’s easy to answer. You’re standin’ on it.

Boy, do I feel like a great big sucker. Our economy has been destroyed by sleazeball bankers and an astonishingly large number of would-be home buyers who were too stupid to realize that they couldn’t afford their adjustable rate mortgages. Or they just didn’t care if they could afford them. And for nearly 30 years, every month, without ever once being late, I sent in my mortgage payment. What a stooge.

You’re saying, “Kelso, if you don’t like it, why don’t you just move to Canada?” Several reasons: I’m not sure I can afford the gas money. I don’t know if the Canadians will let me in. And our economy is going to drag down their economy anyway.

So I’ll just stay here and crab.

John Kelso’s column appears on Sundays, Tuesdays and Fridays. Contact him at 445-3606 or jkelso@statesman.com.

CENTRAL TEXAS ■ CHILD PROTECTION

Advocates for missing children open Austin site

Office to help educate officials about Internet-related crimes

By Emily Glazer
AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children opened a regional office in Austin on Monday.

The office, the first in Texas and the fourth in the nation, will provide training for law enforcement officials and prosecutors that will emphasize Internet-related crimes against children.

The other regional offices of the center, a private nonprofit child advocacy group, are in New York, Florida and California. The center is based in Alexandria, Va.

The Austin office will work with governmental and nongovernmental organizations on prevention and education programs about child safety.

“Every child deserves to be safe,” said Diane Allbaugh, an Austin businesswoman and the wife of Joe Allbaugh, a former director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and a close associate of President Bush.

Diane Allbaugh spearheaded the \$2 million

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AUSTIN ■ LABOR NEGOTIATIONS

Firefighter contract expiring

Officials say services will not be interrupted as city, union try to agree on issues such as pay

By Tony Plohetski
AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

A three-year labor contract between Austin firefighters and the city will expire today, a day after both sides tried to reach a new agreement during sometimes tense negotiations.

On Monday, city and union representatives debated the effects of the current contract’s expiration and said they would keep trying to reach an agreement later this week.

“We will remain in our position of trying to get a contract,” Assistant City Manager Michael McDonald said.

McDonald said that the Fire Department would continue operating as usual and that residents should not see an interruption in emergency response services.

Matters such as pay, hiring and promotion procedures, and how random drug tests would

be conducted are among those that have delayed an agreement, which must be approved by union members and the City Council.

Stephen Truesdell, president of the Austin Association of Professional Firefighters, said, “We are continuing to work together, and we are closer on more issues than we were in the beginning.”

Union negotiator Louis Hebert told the city that he thinks provisions in a current contract should remain in place while negotiations con-

See EXPIRE, B3

AUSTIN



Ricardo B. Brazziell AMERICAN-STATESMAN

Man rescued from bridge

The southbound Interstate 35 frontage road near Riverside Drive was shut down Monday after a man climbed over the side of the bridge spanning Lady Bird Lake and onto a landing, officials said. Emergency personnel, including firefighter Matt McElearney, bottom, rescued the man. **More, B2.**

@ statesman.com/multimedia See photos from the rescue with this story online.

TRAVIS COUNTY

Police: Shooting followed row over kitchen mess

Suspect, an architect, is called calm, professional

By Claire Osborn and Joshunda Sanders
AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

Austin police say a weekend incident in which a father is accused of shooting and critically injuring his 31-year-old son began as a family argument over a mess

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Watch a video of a news conference about the shooting case with this story online.

in the kitchen.

Detective James Mason said the shooting, which happened about 10 p.m. Saturday at 3903 Laguna Vista Cove, on the

western shore of Lake Austin near Tom Miller Dam, happened after an argument broke out when Christopher Wolters “made a mess” while cutting up fruit. Christopher Wolters was arguing with his brother and mother, Mason said, and “became very angry.”

The argument escalated, Mason said, and Wolters’ father and brother tried to

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David Wolters is accused of shooting son.

AUSTIN ■ ENERGY

LED holiday lights might give city more flash for less cash

By Katie Humphrey
AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

Downtown Austin might be a bit more festive during the holidays this year.

The City Council is scheduled to vote Thursday on whether to have Austin Energy contribute \$145,000 to the Downtown Austin Alliance for new LED lights for the annual holiday display on Congress Avenue.

The new lights, capable of fading, blinking and glowing in many colors, would replace the white incandescent lights that have been strung across Congress Avenue in recent years. Those lights are 8 years old, said Lacy LaBorde, a spokeswoman for the downtown alliance.

On the environmental front, the new lights would use 80 to 85 percent less energy than

See LIGHTS, B3

AUSTIN ■ EDUCATION



Larry Kolvoord AMERICAN-STATESMAN

For your lunchtime entertainment

Comedian and actress Lily Tomlin made an impromptu visit to the Ann Richards School for Young Women Leaders in South Austin on Monday. She spoke to students in the cafeteria before touring the school and visiting classrooms. Tomlin was a friend of former Texas Gov. Ann Richards.