

Sunday's

Editorials, Columns & Letters

P.O. Drawer 1272 409 W. Hill Email: ads@brownfieldonline.com Phone: (806) 637-4535

Paper 'n Ink:

It's just money...

By Lynn Brisendine

A pretty fierce debate has been ongoing concerning our Department of Defense and the United States Congress over our nation's main battle tank orders.

In a Senate Armed Service Committee bill approved recently an order for 33 M1A1 Abrams Battle Tanks for \$91 million was approved. The Army though made it clear that they not only didn't want these new weapons, but they don't need more of these vehicles that are becoming less effective. Not only that, but many military types are telling us that the era of the battle tank has probably ended.

"The services have almost 6,000 Abrams in their inventory, but between all three, do not need more than 2,000 in their force structures. The rest will remain mothballed, as they have been since the end of the Cold War. As for the 2,000 on active service, they're in remarkably good shape." That's a quote from Chief of Staff General Martin Dempsey last May before the Senate Appropriations Committee, so it's not likely wildly inaccurate.

Other war college types are telling their audiences that the only conceived possibility for using 2,000, much less 6,000, of these armored vehicles would be in an Asian land war.

It is also well known that the modern war strategies are seeing more and more drone weaponry. Of course, these are robot armaments which are controlled from a few yards to thousands of miles away using electronics to wage war.

These drones aren't just air weapons but are also ground based platforms which can be manipulated with a joy stick controller. All of this is more than a little amazing to us non-military types. Everyday we are seeing new technologies emerge. Electronics, medicine, traffic control, automated facilities of every type and more ways to fight battles keep our military personnel as safe as possible.

But, these technological wonders aside, this item concerns the United States Congress, and its lack of real world economics. The real reason the Senate decided to go ahead with this huge order, at least in our lives \$91 million is a large amount, for unneeded and unwanted weapons is to maintain a factory and its payroll. These tanks are made by a company which also employs some hefty lobbyists.

So, it comes down to politicians protecting their access to some big bucks. As always with Congress it's follow the money. A trail of dollars usually leads back to the Legislature.

With this in mind, I tasked a search engine to find President Dwight Eisenhower's parting speech. Just a small snippet of this lengthy address is presented here:

"This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience. The total influence -- economic, political, even spiritual -- is felt in every city, every State house, every office of the Federal government. We recognize the imperative need for this development. Yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. Our toil, resources and livelihood are all involved; so is the very structure of our society.

"In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist."

To refresh memories, or inform younger readers, President Eisenhower was also Commander of the Armed Forces in the European Theater of War in World War II. He was a soldier's soldier, a rare Five Star General of the Armies and a competent warrior.

I have heard his warnings about the military-industrial complex many times. But, bringing this entire speech up on a screen was a revelation. President Eisenhower understood the coming technical advances with a forward looking insight that is remarkable.

It is well worth the time to read this farewell address from someone who had an unique understanding of his, and it turns out, our time. He made the address in 1961.

But, again, back to our Congress. Two governing bodies which debate and squabble over budgets, taxes and legislation affecting us all. The recent tank battle of words backed up with a huge expense proves that they have little regard for sensible approaches to our shared economy.

Perhaps our main problem in this second decade of the 21st century is seeing too many of these political relics making decisions using 20th century strategies.

In this country, now so dependent upon the mighty computer, we need some serious Congressional rebooting.

Letter to the Editor

P.O. Box 1272 Brownfield, Texas 79316

Sign and include your address and phone number...

You may also send your letter via the Internet.

E-mail it to

publisher@brownfieldonline.com

The News requests that letters be concise and reserves the right to edit for libelous content or inappropriate language and space. We will edit a letter to conform with the standards we use in publishing a responsible community newspaper.

Thanks for reading...

the Brownfield News

and brownfieldonline.com



Making a Difference

By Gina Kelly Ellis

We pursue lots of things in our lives. We pursue our husband or wife. We find the one we think we want and then we pursue this one with all our heart. We pursue success. We work hard to get what we think we want. We sacrifice. We try to meet the right people. We work late hours. We pursue happiness. We buy things. We go places. We try to do anything we can to make ourselves happy. We are a people in constant pursuit of something. But all these things we pursue (with the exception of our mate, of course) are just things. They are not lasting things. Success is momentary, as is happiness. But there are a couple of things we can pursue that will give a lasting contentment. A lasting satisfaction.

The Bible tells us in the Psalms to "seek peace and pursue it." When you pursue

something, you are actively looking for it. You are not just sitting on your hands waiting. You are doing something about finding it. So, if you have no peace in your life, what are you doing about finding it? As Christians, we know that true peace only comes through trusting God for what is worrying you in your life. Talk to God about your problems. Talk to God about what is troubling you. And then let Him have it all. Listen for His word about what to do. Then do it. Don't doubt Him. If He tells you where peace will be found, then go there! Actively pursue the kind of peace that only God can give.

The other thing the Bible tells us to pursue is righteousness. In Proverbs, we are told that "the man who pursues righteousness will find honor." How do you pursue

righteousness? You pursue it by simply doing what is right! If it is the right thing to do, then it is the right thing to do. It is a simple deal. If it was ever wrong, it is still wrong. It doesn't matter what society says is right or wrong. What matters is what God says is right or wrong. And I don't care who you are, you probably have a pretty good idea of what is right in the eyes of God. God made it simple. Man made it complicated. Actively plan to do what is right. Talk with your kids about right and wrong and then encourage them to actively, along with you, do what is right. And what is the reward? For one thing, the Bible says honor will be yours. But more than that, you will make God smile.

What are you pursuing? Pursue God and His peace and His righteousness. It will make a difference.

Are You a Hybrid... Paper and Digital?

Texas Journalist...by Willis Webb

Many national, state and local newspaper columnists provide me and other readers, regardless of philosophical and/or political differences, lots of material to digest, then act on if so moved.

Kathleen Parker is someone I read regularly although I often find much to disagree with in her missive.

In a recent column, she said "goodbye to the world of print," which I acknowledge has a ring of truth but being an old newspaperman, I am wont to say "slow down."

A news magazine to which I subscribe -- Newsweek -- told me I've received my last print edition and that the next one will be digital. My switch to Newsweek many years ago was one of those philosophical things. I found Time to be a bit inclined to lean one way (more liberal) and U.S. News & World Report was too far right. Newsweek was middle of the road and, I felt, more balanced thus more accurate. I feel compelled to interject here that newspapers print news

and that their opinions and interpretations are confined to pages labeled "opinion" or some synonym.

As for the community newspaper segment of the print industry, a great many produce a digital edition for a couple of reasons. First, no one wants to dismiss the younger folks market, which does almost everything with a computer or an iPhone, and in the case of the previous, hand-held is preferable. Nor do we want to lose any of the middle-aged-to-older market (including me) that probably still prefers print.

Some of us like printer's ink on our fingers from reading a newspaper, although new inks and better press/printing facilities have eliminated much of that messiness.

However, in our new home of Lake Charles, LA (five minutes from our son), I can't get a newspaper I've been reading since 1958 -- The Houston Chronicle. And, if I want to keep up with what's going on in my home state, as I have for my first

three-quarters of a century, then I have to do it digitally to receive current news and not 2-3 days late with a print product via mail (and I do).

In addition to digital gaining a hold in the newspaper and magazine segment of the print media, we are told that eBooks are the coming thing. Life Mate and I are both always reading a book, in addition to newspapers every day and weekly. And, I find holding an iPad awkward in a reclining position while getting ready for sleep to slip up on me.

Naturally, I use my Apple Macintosh desktop computer to produce this column every week and to send it to papers that subscribe to it. I do a lot of e-mail communication. I was never much of a personal letter writer and prefer to communicate with close friends and family via phone. Only in-the-flesh beats the sound of someone's voice whom you love and respect.

A greeting card with a thoughtful, handwritten personal message is good, but it doesn't beat the in-person

When Retiring Together Dose'n't Make Sense

By Jason Alderman

Back when people from my parents' generation were first planning their lives together, most married couples looked forward to working hard for a few decades, buying a house, raising a family and then retiring together while they still had enough money and energy to travel and pursue favorite hobbies.

Some couples do manage to pull this off and thrive; but for many others, any of a host of obstacles can block their ability to retire at the same time. For example:

- Thanks to periods of unemployment, home-value de-

cline or 401(k) account loss suffered during the Great Recession, many couples simply don't have enough money to retire together comfortably.

- If there's a significant age difference, one spouse may not have accumulated enough Social Security credits to qualify for a benefit by the time the other is ready to retire.

- Women often worry that the couple hasn't saved enough since they're statistically likely to survive their spouses -- often for a decade or more.

- One spouse must continue working to supply employer-provided medical coverage until both reach Medicare eligibility

age (65 in most cases).

- One spouse is just hitting his or her stride, career-wise, and isn't ready to slow down.

Among couples who have managed to save enough to retire together, when it comes time to pull the trigger many realize they haven't fully agreed on where or how to retire; or they discover that their wishes have diverged over the years. This can put tremendous strain on a marriage if you're not willing to compromise and talk things through.

Long before you actually retire, ask yourselves:

- Should we downsize to a smaller dwelling or even move

to a retirement community?

- Sell the house, buy a trailer and live like nomads for a few years?

- Move to a warmer climate or to be nearer our grandchildren?

- Move to a state with lower taxes or cost of living?

- Start a small side business to keep money rolling in?

- Are we finished supporting our children financially?

Even before asking those tough questions, you already should have begun estimating your retirement income needs. Social Security has a helpful online Retirement Estimator that can help ([timator\). After you've explored various retirement scenarios, consider hiring a financial planner to help work out an investment and savings game plan, or to at least review the one you've devised.](http://www.ssa.gov/es-</p>
</div>
<div data-bbox=)

Along with the financial impact retirement will have on your marriage, keep in mind that this may be the first time that you've been together, day in and day out. Many people are so consumed by their jobs that they haven't taken time to develop outside interests and hobbies. Well before retirement, you and your spouse should start exploring activities and networks of friends you

can enjoy, both together and independently. Consider things like volunteer work, hobbies, athletic activities or even part-time employment if you miss the workplace interaction and need the money.

And finally, if your plan is to have one spouse continue working for a while, try living on only that one salary for a few months before retiring as an experiment. This will give you an inkling of how well you'll do financially and whether you might both need to keep working to amass more savings.

Jason Alderman directs Visa's financial education programs. To Follow Jason Alderman on Twitter: www.twitter.com/PracticalMoney.