

House Dems struggle on health care

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"Sometimes I get a little frustrated because this is one of those situations where it is so obvious that the system we have isn't working well for too many people and that we could just be doing better," Obama said to close the hourlong question-and-answer session. "We got to have the courage to be willing to change things."

The president looked to ease seniors' concerns about changes to care, costs and other issues.

"The costs of doing nothing are trillions of dollars in costs over the next couple of decades — trillions, not billions — but trillions of dollars in costs without anybody getting any better care," Obama said. "Now, here's the problem, that in order for us to save money, in some cases, we've got to spend some money up front."

Among the problems facing Speaker Nancy Pelosi and the House leadership is a rebellious group of conservative and moderate Democrats demanding changes in legislation as the price for voting it out of the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

The fiscally conservative Blue Dogs were at odds with the leadership over setting rates for the payments to doctors and other health care providers under a proposed government-run health plan that would compete with private insurance. The House bill models the payments based on Medicare, but Blue Dogs want a negotiated rate similar to private insurance.

"We're not ready to support

a bill yet," said Rep. Baron Hill, D-Ind., a member of the Blue Dog group, who added: "We'll get there. We are going to pass a health care bill, whether it's now or in the fall remains to be seen."

Without the backing of the 52-member Blue Dogs, it would be difficult for Democratic leaders to pass a bill, especially since no Republican supports the legislation.

After weeks of secretive talks, three Democrats and three Republicans on the Senate Finance Committee were edging closer to a compromise that excludes a requirement many congressional Democrats seek for large businesses to offer coverage to their workers. Nor would there be a provision for a government insurance option, despite Obama's support for such a plan, officials said.

The Finance senators were considering a tax of as much as 35 percent on very high-cost insurance policies, part of an attempt to rein in rapid escalation of costs. Also likely to be included in any deal was creation of a commission charged with slowing the growth of Medicare.

Obama has outlined two broad goals for legislation he is struggling to win from Congress: expansion of health insurance coverage to millions who lack it, and controlling costs.

The president's top domestic priority has suffered numerous setbacks in recent weeks and a Senate vote has been postponed until September. Administration and

Democratic leaders hope to show significant progress before lawmakers begin their monthlong August recess.

In the Senate, officials speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss private negotiations said any legislation that emerges from the talks is expected to provide for a non-profit cooperative to sell insurance in competition with private industry, rather than giving the federal government a role in the marketplace.

Obama and numerous Democrats in Congress have called for a government option to provide competition to private companies and hold down costs, and the House bill includes one — another concern for the Blue Dogs.

Officials also said a bipartisan compromise in the Senate would not subject large companies to a penalty if they declined to offer coverage to their workers. Instead, these businesses would be required to reimburse the government for part or all of any federal subsidies designed to help lower-income employees obtain insurance on their own.

The legislation in the House includes both a penalty and a requirement for large companies to share in the cost of covering employees.

Associated Press writer Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar contributed to this report.



Sue Nesbitt Ph.D.

Special to The Chronicle-News

not too long ago so I'm fairly new to the community.

Recently, a psychology lab was dedicated to Doc Leonetti who taught at TSJC for 30 years.

As the lucky individual who spends most of her day in the lab, which is also my office, I find myself wanting to show it off. There are no rats or other living laboratory creatures but it is loaded with student projects, games, posters and other "psychological" things. I would like for members of the community, as well as students, to enjoy the lab. It would give me an opportunity to meet people from the community and, I hope, also provide something interesting for them.

I talked with a couple of colleagues about doing a series of lectures. The conversation drifted to a variety of ideas and this column is the end result. As I hear back from the community, and I hope I will, ideas for lectures or other activities may emerge. I am looking forward to getting to know the Trinidad community and hope that I can contribute something positive as well.

The lofty title of Professor has me looking over my shoulder expecting to find an elderly, pipe-smoking gentlemen who is always serious and never uses

words of less than four syllables. I definitely do not think of me. So how did it happen? How did I go from housewife and Mother to Professor? Somewhere along the line I decided to go for the college degree I had promised myself (and my Mother). Time went on. One degree led to another and one day I was Professor Dr. Sue Nesbitt teaching at a University.

It pretty much comes down to my enjoying learning and being around others who are learning.

I think one of the most exciting moments takes place when an idea takes hold and suddenly an individual can say, "I get it!" As a practicing therapist as well as a professor I have put myself in a position to both witness and experience this often. We humans are always learning. I just stumbled into or picked, I'm not quite sure which, a profession in which learning is the main goal. Teachers know that the best way to learn is to become a teacher, so if you enjoy this as much as I do, it is something to consider.

While I am on the subject of learning I will offer a bit of information that may or may not be familiar to you. In order for learning to occur one has to start without a piece of knowledge or a particular skill. Learning to type is a perfect example. Before learning to type an individual must look at the keys. Next follows a period of frustration. Not looking and trying to remember where the fingers should be placed and which keys are which is difficult and often frustrating.

Gradually the typist improves until the really accomplished typist can speed along at over a hundred words a minute without giving a

thought to it, maybe even while carrying on a conversation.

The aspect of this process that is often misunderstood is the frustration. Some students, for example, blame the teacher or the subject for their frustration. They may conclude that if the teacher were better or the subject more interesting or less complicated, they wouldn't be frustrated. Other students tend to blame themselves deciding they are not bright enough. What they need to know is that confusion and frustration, even anxiety is part of the learning process especially when dealing with complex material or skills. So whenever you are learning something new keep this in mind.

I expect this column to be informative and yet somewhat personal since at heart I am a bit of a storyteller. Some topics I have in mind for the future include: sociology and the economy, what we are learning about the brain, and some personal growth topics such as goal setting, changing habits and such. I'm open for suggestions and can be reached at Trinidad State Junior College.

Sue Nesbitt is a professor of Psychology and Sociology at TSJC. She received her bachelor's degree from Northeastern Illinois University and her master's and Ph.D. both from Jane Addams School of Social Work, University of Illinois at Chicago. Nesbitt and her husband, Earl, decided to move here from Chicago after a visit to her sister in Aguilar a few years ago. "We moved here for the view and quiet living. Every day feels like a vacation with the clear sky, mountains, and wildlife," she said.

Correction

In yesterday's The Chronicle-News the photo credit for the Trinidad Youth Association Council was incorrectly attributed. It was actually downloaded by permission from the TYAC Web site.



Photo by Tim Keller

Sunny Hill, in hat, spends her July and August weekends selling her produce and baked goods.

Sunny's Garden brings Farmers Markets to Des Moines

By TIM KELLER
The Chronicle-News

July signals the start of the local farmers markets, with Trinidad, Raton, and Des Moines enjoying the fruits of the season. Sunny Hill, of Sunny's Garden outside Folsom, New Mexico, makes weekly rounds of all three.

For the second year in a row, Hill sets up shop on Sundays in front of Studio C, along Highway 87 in downtown Des Moines. Last Sunday was her second Des Moines market day of 2009 and she was the only vendor present. If it goes like last year, she'll be joined by others on subsequent Sundays. She's open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Hill aims to please "locavores" — people who prefer to eat foods produced as close to home as possible. While some farmers market produce may be grown in California and reach this area via the Denver produce market, most of Hill's produce is grown on Rainbow Ranch, her family ranch and farm west of Folsom on Highway 72. She supplements what she can grow herself with produce she gets from her

friends at Hannigan Farms in Swink, outside La Junta, Colorado.

Sunday she was selling cantaloupe, zucchini, yellow squash, corn, green beans, and a salad mix of various lettuces and greens. She expects peaches and tomatoes to be available soon. She always has flowers and herbs available and often makes up salsas and pesto for sale. Another specialty is homemade breads.

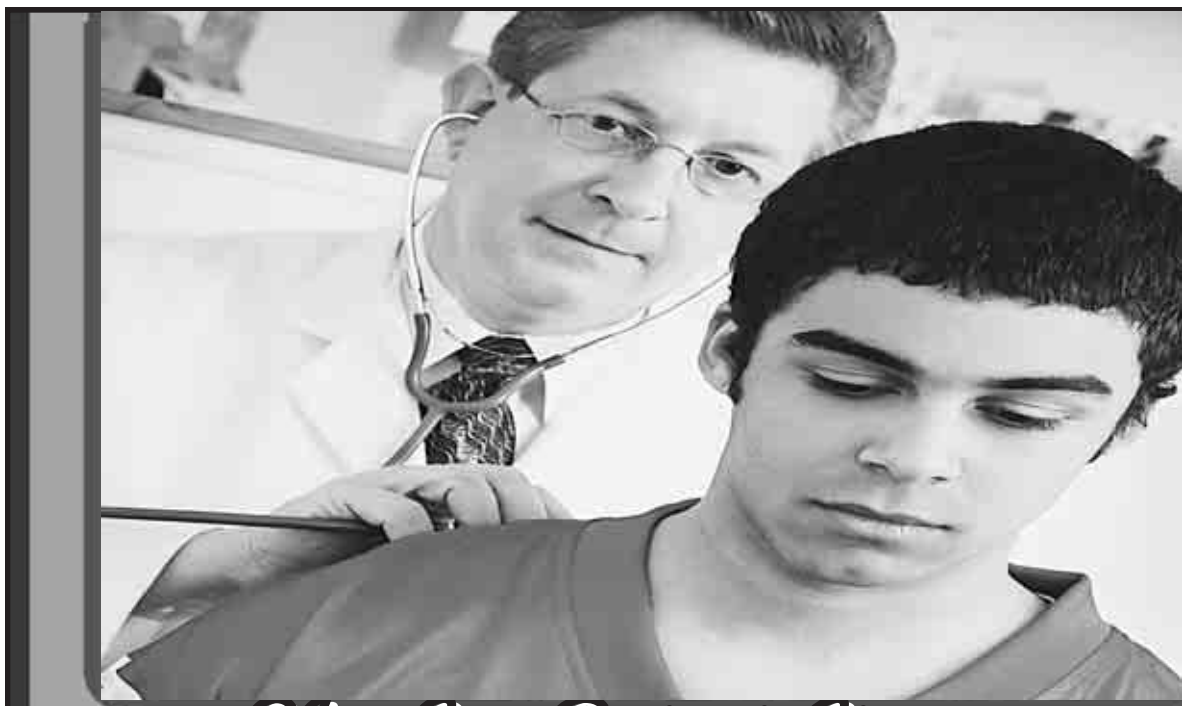
In addition to the white and whole wheat loaves available Sunday, Hill often brings other choices. "I don't like to bake the same thing twice," she says, although she admits, "some of the favorites have become pretty standard these days." Those include Dill Sourdough, Italian Herb, Rosemary & Roasted Tomato Focaccia, Pumpkin, Potato, and Cinnamon-Raisin breads, along with cinnamon rolls and sticky buns.

Hill uses organic olive oil exclusively and buys all her flours from Wheat Montana; otherwise, she tries to buy ingredients locally. She takes advance orders (575-278-2409 or rainbowranch@bacavalley.com)

and brings the orders to any of the farmers markets.

A popular item in Des Moines Sunday was the variety of small zucchini bread loaves — with strawberries, or coconut, or carrot-pineapple-walnut, all made by Hill's neighbor Abbie Reaves of Trincher Canyon. Reaves grows tomatoes, bell peppers, and green chile for Hill, while Hill provides the zucchini for Reaves' nut breads. Hill used to grow an acre of summer produce but has tapered down to a half-acre this year, citing a shortage of help as the primary reason.

Studio C is a good venue for the farmers market and "Sunny's Garden". Hill set up Sunday under a busy and noisy birds' nest of house wrens. Some patrons wandered into the gallery/store and emerged with freshly ground and brewed organic coffee; others, including some children, came out savoring bars of organic dark chocolate. The house wrens didn't like all the traffic, but they're going to see it every Sunday through August — maybe they'll get used to it by then. Or fly away.



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