

OPINION

A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT VIEW

By Bill Holland

My twenty five minutes with Congressman Randy Neugebauer. This week I had an opportunity to speak with our congressman Randy Neugebauer. I had prepared a list of about nine questions on a wide range of subjects. We did not get to them all but had a good conversation none the less.

I first asked the Congressman his feelings about the inaugural speech given by President Obama. He described his experience at the inauguration as very special. One of the unique things about our country is the ceremonial passing of power to those who are elected without having to have a war over it. It is an important moment in our country. He said it seemed like a million people showed up to witness this moment and hear the President's speech. He also expressed disappointment over the President's speech, saying that he would have liked a speech that was not so divisive.

The next topic was the debt ceiling and fiscal situation in the U.S. The Congressman described our current situation as a family that brings home 24K a year, spends 39K a year, and is already 196K in debt. He described the situation as unsustainable. I cannot imagine trying to run my household finances like that, as I am sure most of you cannot as well.

There are other hurdles to overcome this year which include the two month delay in sequestration that must be dealt with March 1, the debt ceiling March 31, a new budget by April 15, and the 2013-2014 budget that will

be due October 1. Given how much hasn't been done over the last four years this seems like a very difficult task for a congress that is so divided. He placed the blame for past failures on the unwillingness of the Senate to be more flexible and spoke of a movement in Washington to pass legislation that would stop cease pay for the Senators if they cannot get their job done.

We next spoke about the Farm Bill. There are specifics for 2013 so that farmers know what to expect this year, but producing legislation that is longer term will be dependent on many of the fiscal issues described above and as a result clarity on issues going forward are very difficult to predict. He expressed deep concern over the closure of the Cargill Plant in Plainview and discussed how devastating the closure will be to the community. He pointed out that Government intervention and regulations related to "Country of Origin" have consequences and that this has affected the numbers of cattle processed at the plant from Mexico.

We spoke briefly about Immigration Reform. The Congressman pointed out that we are a country of immigrants and that immigration is what has built America and made it great. He went on to say that he feels the current lottery system penalizes those who would immigrate legally and rewards those who cut corners. He would like to see a system that would expedite those who want to immigrate legally and that have certain skill sets and occupations

that will make positive contributions to our country.

Our conversation meandered a bit. We spoke of the importance of the country's citizens trusting their elected officials. That those who are elected be held accountable, and he expressed how encouraged he was at the newer members of congress who he described as being from "real world" backgrounds in business, with high integrity, and being "quality people."

The Congressman described the country as having too many people riding the wagon and not helping pull the wagon. He spoke of multi-generational families that live on subsidized housing, food stamps, and other government subsidies and the need to make it harder to obtain these government hand-outs and to make it easier and more desirable to get and retain a job.

This was the first time I have had an opportunity to speak one-on-one with a member of congress. I found him to be a man of genuine character who shares the same values and belief systems that I do. I was also impressed with the size, scope, and complexity of the issues our country faces and diverse set of opinions on how to solve these problems. Let us all pray that those we elect to office are provided the wisdom to help us all through these difficult times.

Movie quote quiz of the Week: "It's always difficult to keep personal prejudice out of a thing like this. And wherever you run into it, prejudice always obscures the truth. I don't really know what the truth is. I don't sup-

pose anybody will ever really know. Nine of us now seem to feel that the defendant is innocent, but we're just gambling on probabilities - we may be wrong. We may be trying to let a guilty man go free, I don't know. Nobody really can. But we have a reasonable doubt, and that's something that's very valuable in our system. No jury can declare a man guilty unless it's sure."

First one to email the correct answer to thecastrocoun-tynews@yahoo.com wins a three month subscription to The Castro County News.

Answer to last week's movie trivia question, "*Aye, fight and you may die. Rum, and you'll live... at least a while. And dying in your beds, many years from now, would you be willin' to trade ALL the days, from this day to that, for one chance, just one chance, to come back here and tell our enemies that they may take our lives, but they'll never take... OUR FREEDOM!*"

The answer is the 1995 movie Braveheart starring Mel Gibson, Sophie Marceau, and Patrick McGoohan. A classic by any measure and the winner of five Academy Awards that include Best Picture, Best Director, Best Cinematography, Best Makeup, and Best Effects-Sound Editing and is also nominated in five other categories. This movie probably represents Mel Gibson's best work not only as an actor but as a director. I was inspired by this quote, as a reminder of how precious our freedom is and how bitterly our country and others have fought to preserve it.