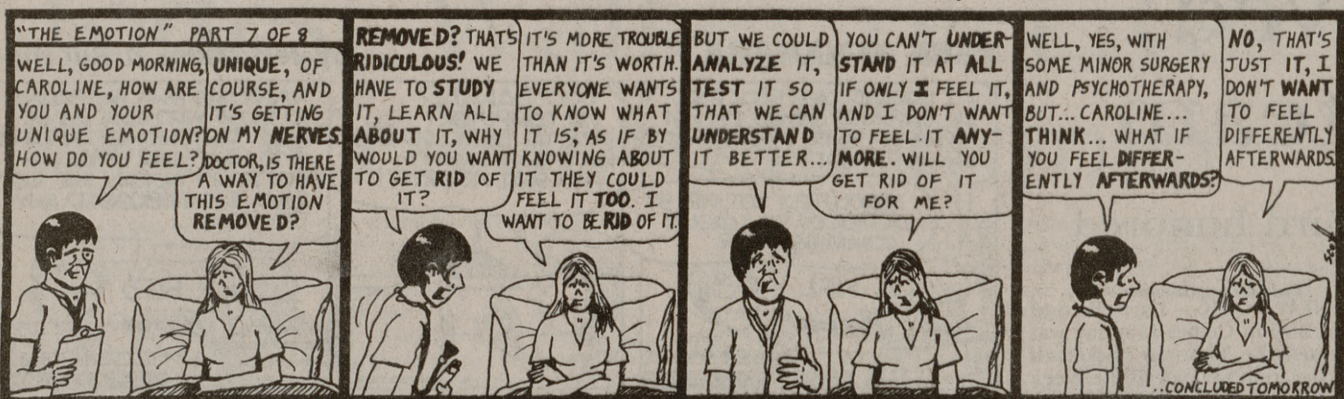


Warped

by Scott McCullar

Filibustering slows proposed gas tax



Steelworkers struggling

Christmas survival tough

United Press International
WEIRTON, W.Va. — "He'll get something for Christmas," said John Burdette, fondly touting the hair of his 5-year-old son, "but it won't be like it used to be."
Burdette, 29, earned \$26,000 in the last full year he was a steelworker. Jobless for the past 14 months, he has made up his mind to re-enlist if the U.S. Army will accept him.
"It'll be a steady paycheck coming in," said Burdette, whose eligibility for unemployment compensation expired months ago. His wife supports the family with a minimum-wage job as a diner cook.
Burdette sat on the steps of the front porch of the modest house he began buying for \$24,800 three years ago and tried to explain the economics of

survival.
"We haven't missed a mortgage payment yet," he said.
On top of the \$283 monthly house payment, the Burdettes somehow also have managed to meet car payments of \$116 a month and utility bills that average \$150 monthly.
"The wife's a worrier," Burdette said. "She used to worry even when I was working."
Now Mrs. Burdette worries because she has been told she earns too much at her job to qualify for government help in paying the fuel bills. The Burdettes have been told they are not eligible for food stamps because the family car is worth too much.
"We can't get on welfare because the wife's got the job and we still have the house," Burdette said.

The couple gave up their medical insurance because they could not afford the monthly premium of \$190.
If anyone gets the Burdettes' house, it probably will be the bank that holds their mortgage.
"I'd rather sell it than give it to the bank," Burdette said, "but who could buy it in this town?"
Only about half of the 13,500 people employed two years ago at Weirton Steel Co., a division of National Steel Corp., are working. To make matters worse, National announced last March that most of the factory would be closed within five years unless the workers would like to buy the facility and run it themselves.
Since the plant is the life's blood of this town of 25,000, the offer was taken seriously.

If Weirton's Independent Steelworkers Union votes to buy the plant, the price could be as much as \$200 million and workers would be forced to accept big cuts in pay and benefits.
Some workers with the most seniority are wary of jeopardizing their pensions, but the town and the majority of the steelworkers evidently favors the takeover.
They also fear it may short-change rural areas. The trucking industry is also against the measure because it would greatly increase taxes on their vehicles.
Sen. Robert Dole, R-Kan., chairman of the Senate Finance

United Press International
WASHINGTON — President Reagan's proposed nickle-a-gallon gasoline tax hike breezed through the House, but it has been stalled in the Senate by three filibustering senators.
A vote was scheduled Monday to end their filibuster, but even if supporters of the bill win, as they did on Friday, another filibuster is likely during the actual debate of the measure.
The bill would raise an estimated \$5.5 billion a year to repair roads, bridges and mass transit systems and would create an estimated 320,000 jobs.
Sens. Gordon Humphrey, R-N.H., Jesse Helms, R-N.C., and Don Nickles, R-Okla., however, oppose provisions of the bill that would extend the influence of labor unions over all federal contracts.

Committee, said Sunday the gas tax measure will, "pass in the Senate. It may not be until New Year's Eve. But it will pass."
The lame duck-Congress began Nov. 29 and was to end Friday.
But congressional leaders, citing the filibuster and Reagan's struggle with the MX missile, now say the session may last through Christmas.
Democrats largely supported the gas tax increase. They also have proposed their own jobs bills, raising the prospect of a veto confrontation with the White House.
Senate Democrats proposed a \$9.7 billion plan to create 600,000 jobs, including \$6 billion for public works such as highways, bridges, and sewer

and water distribution.
It would be funded by increasing the 1983 tax cut for earning more than \$30,000, eliminating it for those earning \$65,000.
The House Democrats attached a \$5.4 billion program to the crucial government funding resolution that was passed by Friday to keep cities operating.
Its major items are for community development block grants for areas of unemployment, and \$1 billion for emergency jobs targeted to persons who have been unemployed for a period of time. But there is serious doubt whether the plan can get through Congress competing legislative pro-

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