

Battle of the Budget

Yard suffers as philosophical differences on how to end the deficit threaten the domestic agenda

By RODGER LING and ANNIE LING

“I am committed to bringing my spending under control within my lifetime.”

—RODGER LING

GRIDLOCK CONTINUES AT the Ling Family Compound as Annie and Rodger debate how quickly the household deficit can be safely eliminated. Rodger contends that Annie is cutting existing programs—including routine funding for the acquisition of hot tubs, swimming pools, and airplanes—too far, too fast.

“We’ve all got to make sacrifices,” Rodger says, “but I’m convinced those sacrifices will be easier to bear while relaxing in a hot tub.”

During the year, Annie received a big promotion to Systems Analyst at Erlanger Hospital. This is good, because somebody has to support Rodger, who remains the Manager of the Help Desk at UTC, where he has amused himself from time to time by moonlighting as part-time faculty, waging war on the Personnel office, and campaigning for web pages.

The two parties demonstrated a measure of unity as recently as July following the tragic loss of Mr. Deckbar, a longtime feline family member who succumbed to cancer after a brave fight. A few days later, Rodger was at a McDonalds and picked up an Egg McMuffin, hash browns, orange juice, and a kitten named CECA. Other family members, including Skittish (cat) and Nancy (dog) seem relatively unaffected by the budget brouhaha. CECA and Nancy are best friends and often play together. Skittish remains, as expected, somewhat skittish.

Local members of the family politburo are evenly divided on the budget issue. Cliff, who continues to reside with his son Gabriel in the nearby town of Tiftonia, has lobbied hard for additional defense appropriations, particularly household guns. Four year old Gabe has stated on numerous occasions that he wants more computer games.

Despite the lack of a budget agreement, experts agree there is little chance of a shutdown of the household, although work in some sectors of the yard has been seriously delayed.

For now, with the close of the fall planting season drawing dangerously near, Rodger and Annie remain backed into their respective corners, waiting to see who will blink first. ■



Annie: Claims she knew nothing of husband's reckless spending



Cliff: NRA lobbyist can't stomach own right wing tendencies

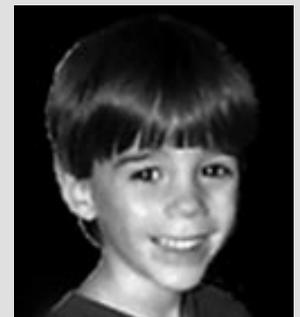


Rodger: Calmly defends purchases of hot tubs, computers, and aircraft

Where's the Pork?

Despite the budget rhetoric, several of what critics termed pork-barrel projects received quick bipartisan support during the year. “These are not pork,” both Rodger and Annie protest. “Tofu maybe, but definitely not pork.”

-  A semi-state-of-the-art computer system (Dell Pentium 100 and HP Laserjet 5MP) which gives the Ling Ranch more raw computing power than possessed by some third world countries.
-  ALK surgery on Annie's eyes so that she no longer needs contacts or glasses.
-  An October visit to Disney World with Gabe and other family members.
-  Cavern diving certification for Rodger and Annie in August.
-  A pre-hurricane trip to Cozumel for world-class diving on the island reefs and inside the amazing caverns of the Yucatan.
-  A 9,000 foot, 60 second free-fall plummet from a DC-3, followed by a 4,500 foot parachute ride to the ground, which then smacked Rodger in the face.
-  Various projects in the yard ruled exempt from the budget crisis, including the cutting down and planting of several dead trees.



Gabe: reputed master-mind of family junket to Disney World

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