Cartoons for the Classroom

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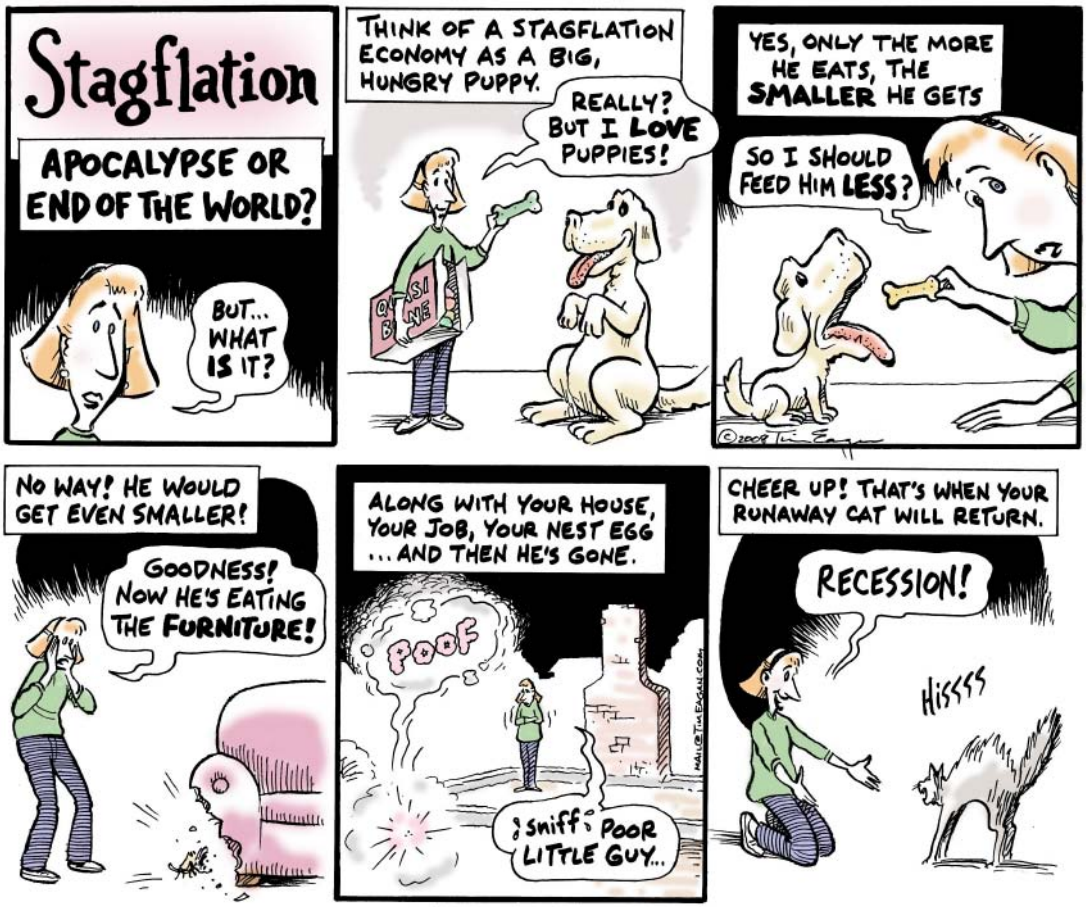

Courtesy Tim Eagan / Deep Cover

Tooning into the Economy

Ever heard of "stagflation?"

Talking points

1. Stagflation is a tough economic concept for normal humans (non-economists) to grasp. As prices rise (oil, gas, food) the economy slows (unemployment increases, factories make fewer goods). People and businesses cut back on spending and the economy slows down even more. But prices keep rising -- eating away at the value of the things you own. Does Tim Eagan's cartoon explanation make more sense now?

2. In the last panel, Tim Eagan introduces "Recession" as a nasty cat coming back. Recession as an economic concept is a continued decline of economic activity. That means fewer jobs as businesses make less money. See why that cat's so nasty?

3. Economic concepts are pretty tough for a cartoonist to convey to the general public. Usually cartoons dealing with the economy lay blame (the president, Republicans, Democrats, etc.) instead of defining the issue to help you understand what's behind a problem. Who would you blame for the problems Eagan defines? Explain your reasons.

Between the lines

The scariest, dirtiest word in economist lingo is "stagflation," and with zero growth and rising inflation, we've got it now.

--Martin T. Sosnoff
Forbes Magazine
06.19.08

Stagflation is the combination of high unemployment and economic stagnation with inflation. This happened in industrialized countries during the 1970s, when a bad economy was combined with OPEC raising oil prices.

--Investopedia

Get out your newspaper

Gather a collection of political cartoons from your newspaper dealing with the election. Using the Cartoon Evaluation Worksheet (available online at the NIE Website) analyze each cartoon and explain the issues addressed.

Additional resources

Association of American Editorial Cartoonists
http://editorialcartoonists.com/

More from Tim Eagan
http://timeagan.com/

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