By Nancy Whitaker

FIXING IT?

Economic times are hard right now. Some forecasters say the economy is looking up, but we are still seeing high unemployment rates, many hungry people and full homeless shelters and soup kitchens.

The US has had its share of difficult times. We have survived depression, dust storms, tornados, tsunamis and we have always managed to lift ourselves up through God and some good leaders and remain a powerful nation.

Naturally, I have always thought a woman should be elected president of the United States, but that has not happened yet. That idea, as good as it sounds, may not even be the solution to our debt, unemployment and economic crises.

One of the wealthiest men in America, Warren Buffet, was interviewed on CNBC and had some words of advice about our country's deficit and debt ceiling. Buffet said, "I could end the deficit in 5 minutes. You just pass a law that says that anytime there is a deficit of more than 3% of GDP, all sitting members of Congress would be ineligible for re-election."

But, how could anyone get this law passed and would anyone vote for it? Here is what Buffet went on to say, "Does anyone realize that the 26th amendment (granting the right for 18-year-olds to vote took only 3 months and 8 days to be ratified.) Why? The people demanded

it. That was in 1971 before computers, e-mail, and cell phones."

Did you know that of the 27 amendments to the Constitution, seven of them took one year or less to become the law of the land, all because of public pressure.

Here are some more of Buffet's ideas, but few if either political party would vote them in.

The first idea is that our members of Congress should get no tenure and no pension.

Congress (past, present & future) should participate in Social Security. All funds in the Congressional retirement fund could move to the Social Security system immediately.

All future funds flow into the Social Security system, and Congress participates with the American people and it may not be used for any other purpose.

To put in my penny's worth I will add, "The Social Security Administration needs protection and additional income to survive another 10 years."

In other words, Congress can purchase their own retirement plan just like everyone else. I say, "Why not?"

I like this next idea myself. It is that Congress could no longer vote themselves in a pay raise. Congressional pay will rise by the lower of CPI or 3%.

Then, Congress should lose their current health care system and participate in the same health care system as the American people. I know we are paying over $400 per month for coverage.

Congress must equally abide by all laws they impose on the American people. All contracts with past and present Congressmen or women would be void.

"The American people did not make the current contract with Congressional members, they made all of these contracts themselves," said Buffet.

He went on to note, "Serving in Congress is an honor, not a career. Our elected Congressmen should serve their terms and then go home and back to work."

I am not saying these ideas would work, but what is good for the goose, is good for the gander.

What do you think of our current economic situation and what steps would you take to help build our nation's economy back up? Let me know and I'll give you a Penny for Your Thoughts.