



FRIENDS OF THE MIDDLE **NEWSLETTER #14 — NOV. 10, 2011**

Welcome to always lively political discussion and whatever else comes up.
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The Republican Presidential Candidates

(posted by Steven W. Baker / SteveB, Nov. 10, 2011)

I hope all of you watched the Republican debate last night on CNBC. How entertaining! Perry completely imploded, proving he is the dumbest presidential candidate in the history of the world—in any country! The main cnn.com webpage has the clip. You have to watch, if you missed it last night. We've been saying for a long time here that this guy is truly an idiot and now, finally, everyone in America knows it.

And poor, out-of-his-league Herman Cain is not stupid, but he knows nothing and hasn't even bothered to prepare for the job. Read the business plan, Herman! Why does anyone think being a businessman qualifies one to run for President?

The government is not a business. It's obviously nothing like a business. The President is not a CEO, even though both lead. A priest or minister also leads, and no one is saying that qualifies them for the presidency. I find this businessman idea ridiculous, though I suppose a businessman might be better than a beach bum, but maybe not.

See how inept Obama has been dealing with Congress, etc., with experience in the Congress and personally knowing just about all the players. A businessman from the outside? LOL. What a perfect plan to get nothing done and have a President who can be easily manipulated, a la Bush.

For a Fellow Purdue Alum, by Steven W. Baker

Uh-Oh!

Now Herman is toast—boo.
His story didn't ring true.

or

Herman is toast,
Too bad for the Kochs.

That leaves only Mitt.
And a Tea Party split?

Maybe Ron Paul too?
Great, Barack against two! :-)

The election could end-up with the Democrats competing against two or three small "Republican" parties, unless Republicans show brains instead of slapstick...time will tell. I love these kinds of "Electric Kool-Aid Acid Tests".

If it's Mitt against Barack, and Mitt by-passes anybody stupid (Sarah, for instance) for the VP spot, and no third or fourth party gets formed around other Republicans, then that would be an indicator of intelligence. We shall see.

Oh, and I forgot to mention on Tuesday, when I was talking about Bolivia, that the government here has already largely shifted the cost of education onto the Church and parents. The government saves money. They even balance the budget, less what is under the table. This cost of schools is a hidden tax most people with children have to pay here. Some of the most expensive private schools are markedly better than the rest, but most people can't afford them. Many of the not-cheap private schools only exist for the money and offer a good education only in the memorization of facts.

Instead of accepting the American way of education as having a proven track-record (because it has always worked well for us and, I believe, still is), the Republicans want to experiment with more "business" involved in education. Just like they experimented with less banking regulation and oil drilling regulation in the Gulf, without even demanding royalties for the American people from the God-companies. Privatization of prisons and schools is growing in America, and the result might be institutions not much different from each other.

I will tell you this. Beyond the shadow of a doubt, at this moment, in 2011, in America, students in most schools are receiving a far better education—especially in reading, writing, and independent thinking—than at even the most expensive Bolivian schools. I know because my step-son graduated just last year from Hamilton (MT) High School. His father's family owns one of the private schools here in town.

Yet some folks want to throw out our schools, pay teachers even less, fire many of the lazy bums, and give us schools that want to make money—all in the name of paying "less taxes". Gee, great plan. Could you please experiment on some other country first, before deciding to turn American schools into Bolivia's.

Less taxes paid to the government does not mean less cost to society for the things that society deems essential. Some people (and businesses) just want to be able to make a profit on those costs.

Just as, by the way, with health care in America. The fact is that business suffers almost as greatly as the legions of the uninsured, because the costs are so great that it cripples exports. We pay an enormous, inefficient part of our GNP for health care. These costs are growing so quickly that they can introduce a real element of uncertainty into the business climate. These costs are one of the "hidden" taxes we pay when we don't pay real taxes for, say, an efficient national health care plan.

Oh, I get it. Education must get more efficient, not health care. Take a look at how much money each industry has spent buying which candidates in the last and coming elections, please. Believe me, doctors spend far more than teachers to get their point across. Does that mean they're right?

And, by the way, we also enjoy the highly vaunted Flat Tax here in Bolivia. Hey, it works great for our rich people...oh, "not so well for the country as a whole," you say? Well, ya, but I can get my house and yard work done really, really cheaply. Believe me, this is no classless society.

As much as I love it here, it's for completely different reasons. I do not ever want to see America become more like a Third World country than it already has. The reason it has sunk, of course, is corruption of such a magnitude that it makes the Third World look like pillars of integrity and modernity. Bribing a cop or an official (which I in no way condone) is nothing compared to buying a politician by paying to get him or her elected. This intrinsically distorts the entire democratic process. Everyone in the world understands that, except our Supreme Court and those who seek power in America, especially those who seek power through money.

The question for us all really is very simple: What kind of America do we want? I believe we can make it almost anything that we can imagine. We did it before, then we lost it a little bit. We know how we lost our way, or at least when, so it should be possible to, essentially, re-establish the old order of the 1950's through the 1970's. It is

possible to go back to the way things were in that golden age of the American dream and a growing middle class. It is possible, actually, to go ahead to the way things were.

The world and America would be far different in a 21st Century prosperous America than it was in the '50's and '60's, but simply having the same taxes, rules, and regulations as then would probably be enough to be a big boost, though many problems, such as health care, would still remain to be solved, and it will take time to restore our manufacturing base and jobs.

Let us not even attempt to descend to the level of a Third World country in the false hope of saving money—it isn't worth it! It's just cheap! Cheap! Cheap!

Let us eliminate corruption so that we may elect honest, well-intentioned men to deliberate our problems in a truly democratic fashion, in the best long-term interest of all, with all the facts and options on the table. I believe that is what all of us seek.

Oh, and doesn't the below sound much like Edwards, Gingrich, McCain, Clinton, Nixon, etc., just before the sh*t hit the fan? I think so.

"Cain to Address New Claim of Sexual Misconduct" by the CNN Wire Staff

Nov. 8, 2011, (http://www.cnn.com/2011/11/08/politics/cain-allegations/index.html?hpt=hp_t1)

Cain has denied all accusations of sexual harassment, and his campaign put out a fresh denial after Bialek's accusations Monday.

"All allegations of harassment against Mr. Cain are completely false," a campaign statement said. "Mr. Cain has never harassed anyone."

[Read more at CNN...](#)

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20111109-01	08:52	MarthaH	From the Right: "Faces of the Tea Party (Revisited): 'Occupy' Protesters Are 'Mad at the Wrong People'"
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Here's a peek at some of our friends and neighbors out here, and I see some big gaps between reality and truth.

"Faces of the Tea Party (Revisited): 'Occupy' Protesters Are 'Mad at the Wrong People'" by Kari Huus (photos by James Cheng), MSNBC

(<http://photoblog.msnbc.msn.com/news/2011/11/09/8641031-faces-of-the-tea-party-revisited-occupy-protesters-are-mad-at-the-wrong-people>)

In 2010, msnbc.com profiled nearly two dozen Tea Party activists in Indiana to learn about their concerns and motivations. At the time, many were getting involved in politics for the first time — organizing groups, attending

rallies, working phone banks and canvassing neighborhoods. We recently checked in with them to hear their thoughts on the GOP candidates for president and the newest protest movement in the neighborhood, Occupy Wall Street.



(October 2010. The Cosgray family pose for family portrait at their farm outside Monticello, Ind. From left, Nicole, 16, Rachel, 20, mother, Laura, 47, father Sam, 48, Tyler, 25 and his baby, Bella, 4 months old, Amanda, 24 and her husband, Alex, 26.)

In between jobs, church and family responsibilities, the Cosgray family of Monticello, Ind. is deeply involved in their local White County Tea Party Patriots. Father Sam works at Caterpillar. His wife, Laura, works part-time at a local school.

What they're doing now:

"We are still plugging away," says Laura Cosgray of her family. "We are just talking to people, educating people."

The White County Tea Party Patriots, which meets once a month, now has close to 350 members, she says.

In a general sense, she thinks the Tea Party has gained stature over the last year.

"(White County Patriots) had a float in a local parade. People were actually standing up, thumbs up, clapping," she says. "People in this country feel — they know — something is not right. I think they are feeling respect and appreciation" for the Tea Party.

The family's commitment was recently recognized by their congressman, Rep. Todd Rokita, who treated the entire clan to a four-day trip to Washington, D.C., flying them to the capital in his private plane.

"Rokita has the conservative values and views and aligns himself with Tea Party philosophy," says Laura Cosgray. "He told (our group) he wanted to take one Tea Party family from White County to show his gratitude."

Looking ahead to 2012 presidential election:

"If I had to pick (a Republican candidate), I would be voting for Herman Cain. He's not a politician; he's a businessman who knows how to create jobs. I think he's a straight shooter. He speaks for me. He seems like a genuine guy.

"I was really happy to see Cain was coming up in the polls. ... I just didn't know if he would gain any momentum. Thank goodness he has because we really think he is the best choice.

"I hope he stays the way he is... He's much more conservative than the other ones. And he's not a politician. We are really sick of politicians. They are not going to get by with this rhetoric."

On the 'Occupy Wall Street' movement:

The "Occupy" protesters "are mad at the wrong people," says Cosgray. "We're not mad at the bankers... The Tea Party is mad at our politicians, our government. They are the ones that changed our country. I'm not saying there's not crony capitalism —there is. ... The real problem here is coming right from the White House and our Congress."

Occupy protesters are "bizarre, very strange," to Cosgray.

"I think (the Occupy movement) makes the Tea Party look a lot better. We're not playing drums, masturbating on the street, or defecating on cars. I don't think there's anybody (out on the street) who is for American the way it was founded. They are like from another planet or something.

"The next time (Americans) see Tea Party groups holding a rally I think they'll be, like, 'Phew! Finally some people with common sense.'"



(Emery McClendon speaking at a rally in Indianapolis, Ind., October 2010.)

Emery McClendon, 59, works as a FedEx courier. He is disabled veteran, a founder of The Liberty Coalition in Fort Wayne, Ind. and a frequently requested Tea Party speaker.

What he's doing now:

Since 2010, McClendon's Liberty Coalition has joined forces with another local Tea Party group under the name Fort Wayne 9-12. "We had the same purpose, same goals," he says. "... I'm seeing that more and more around the country — people saying, let's do events together, share resources, share the costs."

McClendon recently addressed Indiana's Tea Party "convention" — Hoosiers for Conservative Senate — which threw support behind Richard Mourdock, in an effort to unseat Sen. Richard Lugar, a six-term Republican.

"Since Obama, (Lugar) has taken the opposite stance of everything he said he stood for," McClendon says. "We want to get someone in there and take conservative values to Washington D.C."

McClendon also is an avid writer, penning commentaries for distribution through conservative channels like Project 21 and through Facebook and Twitter.

On how the Tea Party has changed:

McClendon says the Tea Party in his area is active, growing and increasingly cohesive, but it has moved away from protests and public events.

"We are focusing on training and getting people educated, to explain what we stand for," he said, speaking from a leadership training conference in Washington, D.C. "We're teaching people to speak informatively about what we believe in and how to get the message out."

McClendon says some of the people who came to Tea Party rallies have drifted away, but others have joined the movement.

"A lot of people got into the movement because they thought it was going to be rally after rally. It's fun, I agree ... but that's not what the movement is all about. We decided we need to train people, make people more aware of what is going on, how to approach your Senator, congressman.... A lot of people dropped out because it's a lot of work.

"There are a lot more Tea Party people attending hearings and committee meetings in Washington and statehouses. There's more analysis of bills, letting people know (what's in them). That's all part of education."

According to McClendon, the "birthers" who dispute President Obama's citizenship, have been sidelined.

"I think they are a fringe group out there beating an issue. ... You can talk all day about what's on someone's birth certificate, but is that going to create jobs, help our elderly or our soldiers?... Let's concentrate on how to set America back on track."

On the Occupy Wall Street movement:

"The only thing we have in common is that they are rallying. We rally for a purpose. ... They don't know what's really going down, because if they did they would be out picketing in front of the White House, and statehouses.

"If you read their signs they want everything. ... If you take from the rich and, quote-unquote, give it to the poor, you take money from the people who have the means to create jobs and you shut this country down.

"... What Occupy Wall Street has done for the Tea Party is it has made us really focus in on our issues... and get our message out on how we differ and why it is important that we differ."

On the 2012 election:

McClendon says he is friends with Herman Cain, a conservative who made a fortune running Godfather's Pizza.

"But," he adds. "I'm open to whoever wins the primary and we are going to stand behind that candidate 100 percent."



(Anna Kroyman and Jack Van Valkenburg at a diner in Monticello, Ind., October 2010.)

Anna and Jack are founding members of the White County Tea Party Patriots. Anna Kroyman, 62, is founder of the White County Tea Party Patriots. She runs a distribution company from her home in Monticello, Ind., which she shares with boyfriend Jack Van Valkenburg, 66, a retired Chicago police officer.

What she's doing now:

Kroyman gets as many local, state and national candidates as she can to speak at local Tea Party meetings, even when the candidate has little hope of winning them over.

"We've had the Democrats, the Libertarians and the Republicans," she says. "I invited every presidential candidate to come to speak to our group in White County."

None of the GOP presidential candidates made a showing at their rural Indiana Tea Party meetings, but they heard back from the Romney campaign and Newt Gingrich provided DVD answers to questions submitted by members of the White County Tea Party Patriots.

The group also hosted Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind., who has largely lost favor among this conservative contingent. But she was determined to keep it civilized.

"One (Tea Party member) got up with three pages that he was going to read to Lugar," says Kroyman. "I said, 'No. You get two minutes, one question.'... We told Lugar that he couldn't filibuster either. ... You gotta be brief."

This group distanced itself from a statewide Tea Party effort to rally to unseat Lugar, and replace him with Indiana state Treasurer Richard Mourdock. Kroyman says she didn't think the state group should call the shots for all the Tea Party members. She also did not like their tone.

"There was no dignity to anything they were doing. This is a sitting senator," she says. "Tea Parties should be about education, not manipulation and persuasion."

On the Tea Party today:

The White County group's membership has changed in the past year, Kroyman says.

"The people who have drifted off are much more radical and think that we should be doing more — more fighting, more getting out there, and more ranting and raving. I've told them they needed to start their own group."

She is also frustrated with members who focus primarily on social issues.

"Like abortion, gay marriage. I say, are you kidding me? Are these the most important issues in America? That's the small stuff. Look what's happening in this country. We need to elect a leader. The most important issue is restoring exceptionalism — someone who doesn't apologize for this country, and is strong on defense."

Though its makeup is shifting, she notes that the group is still growing.

"That's why I hate it when people say the Tea Party is fizzling out. No it's not! It's reorganizing."

On the 2012 election:

Kroyman says that she initially found none of the GOP candidates especially appealing, and was disappointed that Sarah Palin is not among them.

But now she supports businessman and lobbyist Herman Cain, for three reasons, she says: his "business common sense," his positions that align with the Tea Party, and because "he is not a politician."

"Has my position changed since these four sexual harassment cases have surfaced?" she asks, anticipating the question. "No, it has not."

"None of this has been proved to be fact, including the most recent graphic accusations. ... This new attack is 15 years old and prepared by Gloria Allred ... a known liberal activist who did damage to Meg Whitman in the last election and likely believes she can manipulate this election as well.

In any case, she says, Cain is the best candidate, "because he is a conservative candidate with solutions that can actually work. He is the most viable candidate and could certainly beat Obama, which is exactly why he's under attack."

On the 'Occupy Wall Street' movement:

"When they first got out there in September I saw lots of folks that were much like us. Older folks, family folks, working people making the time to be heard. They were drawn by the same feelings of frustration that Tea Party people were drawn by more than two years ago. Something is drastically wrong with our country and it needs fixing."

"Occupy Wall Street raised people from their couches that the Tea Party could not raise...," Kroyman concedes, though she thinks government, not Wall Street, is the proper target for their frustration. But she says the movement has changed recently.

"About a month into (the Occupy movement), the folks with common sense had already gone home. What remains are the anarchists and general ne'er-do-wells. They have no message, no knowledge, no purpose and no sense of right or wrong. It's already escalated into severe violence in Oakland with 10 police officers injured, 500 arrested.

"I'm not sure why (cities) are permitting these fierce activities to continue. ... I think it's cruel on their part to let this go on until someone gets killed, and surely that's where it is headed.

"The good that surfaced ... is that the folks that went home are now paying very close attention."



(Emily Daniels canvassing for a local Republican in South Bend, Ind., October 2010.)

Emily Daniels, 19, is a sophomore at Bethel College in South Bend, Ind. As a Republican she has attended some Tea Party events, and was generally aligned with their conservative views.

What she's doing now:

In addition to carrying a full college course load, Daniels is president of the Republican Club at Bethel, "educating students about what is going on in the world around them, how these things will affect them, how they can get involved and ... make a difference. We also try to make politics interesting and fun for your average student."

Daniels' club has held voter registration at Bethel, a private Christian school, helped out a local campaigns and organized campus appearances by local and statewide candidates.

Coming up, they are planning a pro-life political action night and a campus-wide initiative to write letters to American soldiers serving overseas.

"In the long term, I want to see my generation knowledgeable about what is going on in their communities and world so that we can stand for what we believe in and become leaders as we head out from college into the real world."

Daniels says her views of the Tea Party haven't changed since a year ago, when she described Tea Party members as "people who actually care and want to be involved in the Republican Party ... and want to make sure they keep promises and really represent the people.

Today, she says: "People are still upset at the failed policies of Democrats, and at Republicans who don't stand up for conservative common values."

She remains undecided on which GOP candidate she favors.

On the Occupy Wall Street movement:

"The protests are about many things and I really haven't had (a chance) to look into them beyond the media spin." ... "Their principles," she says, referring to documents published by the movement, are "antithetical to the values of the Tea Party.

"Students in my club aren't buying the things (Occupy protesters) say — including one you might think they agree with: lessening of student loan debt.

We believe that we are responsible for our own debt and paying for our own college education, not the government (or other taxpayers) and we don't see why we should pay the student loans of others who were perhaps irresponsible in taking student loans."



(Pastor Donald Nunemaker poses for a portrait at his home in Plymouth, Ind., October 2010.)

Don Nunemaker, 62, Plymouth, Ind., retired Air Force officer and part-time pastor, is co-founder of 'We the People,' a Tea Party-affiliated group in Marshall and Fulton Counties.

What he's doing today:

"We the People" still meets monthly, and Nunemaker says membership has more than doubled to about 300 since we last spoke to him in fall of 2010. But the group's approach has changed.

"Charging out to D.C. to take part in a protest is not high on our priority list," he says. "Now we are harassing our elected officials as much as possible. We will email or call (House Speaker John) Boehner, R-Ohio, at the drop of a hat if we see something we don't like." For instance, he says, "We did not want to see that debt ceiling raise. ... All it does is encourage more spending and less thrift."

How the Tea Party has changed:

In 2008, Indiana Tea Partiers got burned when they fielded two candidates against establishment Republican Rep. Dan Coats. Coats won with 40 percent of the vote because his opponents split the protest vote.

"That was a good lesson to learn," says Nunemaker. "If you don't come at this unified, somebody else is going to jump in there who you don't want."

This time, most are united behind conservative Richard Mourdock to unseat long-time Republican Sen. Richard Lugar, now considered a RINO (Republican In Name Only) by many residents in the movement.

On the 'Occupy Wall Street' movement:

Nunemaker says the new movement has "nothing" in common with the Tea Party movement.

"They may be protesting the bailouts, but from a socialist approach," says Nunemaker. "We protest them because it's a waste of taxpayers' money."

Mainly, Nunemaker says, he says he feels "amused" by the protesters he has seen on TV. "They gave me the impression they had no idea why they were there."

Even so, he keeps an eye on it: "We watch it in case there's something emerging that we might want to pay attention to."

Looking ahead to the 2012 elections:

Nunemaker favors pizza tycoon Herman Cain as GOP candidate because he sees Cain as a Washington outsider (despite his history as a lobbyist for the restaurant industry.) He also likes Cain's business background, and his flat-tax proposal.

Until the election comes a bit closer, Nunemaker says he and many fellow Tea Party activists are focused on their jobs and families. He and his wife, Susan, recently adopted a 5-year-old girl, Liga, from an orphanage in Latvia.

Nonetheless, "The Tea Party is not in a state of dormancy," he says. "But we're not all hyped up yet like we were in the last election. ... We're staying active and staying informed. If something needs our attention we will jump on it."

Read Faces of the Tea Party (revisited): Part One: (<http://photoblog.msnbc.msn.com/news/2011/11/08/8640876-faces-of-the-tea-party-revisited-views-on-the-election-and-the-occupy-movement>)

See the original Faces of the Tea Party slideshow (http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/39770816/ns/politics-picture_stories/) or Tea Party Photoblog (<http://photoblog.msnbc.msn.com/news/2010/10/13/5284571-faces-of-the-tea-party>)

20111109-02

09:13

SteveB

Re: From the Right: "Faces of the Tea Party (Revisited)..." (reply to MarthaH, above)

Thank you for your contribution! Could you be more explicit about "big gaps in reality and truth"? I'd love to hear what you have in mind.

20111109-03	09:26	MathaH	Re: From the Right: "Faces of the Tea Party (Revisited)..." (reply to SteveB, above)
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First, let's see what readers think they see...I know Indiana but I am sure the same gaps exist everywhere.

One is that Lugar is a Rhodes Scholar and was quite the innovator and my hero in reorganizing Indianapolis and Marion County into Unigov when I was a PS major in college. Oh, to have cleaned up the crumbs in his office! Years later in the Senate, he has pushed conservative issues loyally and has clout as seniority goes there, but they vilify him and are working to oust him. His knowledge and work on nukes is something the Senate and the US sorely need. He is not perfect, and I write my "share" of comments to him on issues, but all he needs to do is step up to the caucus and do what he knows is right and quit following the "leaders."

I see no mention of some characteristics I know exist in local Tea Party flag wavers. Do they not admit them in themselves??? I told one I like roads without chuckholes, hospitals, police, fire men, trash pick-up, libraries, schools—and she agreed. And then I said, "And I think we need to raise taxes a little to support all of them" and she nearly fainted...They want those things—but not pay for them? That is why we are "here." I would LOVE to show up at the local meeting with my Government 12 final exam and see how they do. Maybe not...

I am sure that if we made a general list of characteristics we know in Tea Party folks we know personally, they will be reflected in the profiles in the article.

20111109-04	09:35	SteveB	Re: From the Right: "Faces of the Tea Party (Revisited)..." (reply to MarthaH, above)
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I have always liked Lugar too. He seems like a man of integrity. I also applaud your stand on raising taxes a little. That seems to go against the Tea Party, but I think you are entirely right. We need better streets, hospitals, police & fire departments, libraries (probably not gonna happen, unfortunately), and, perhaps most of all, schools. The people do not need or deserve worse or less of any of these essentials.

20111109-05	09:49	Pam	Re: "Bill Clinton Raps GOP, Obama: End 'Dysfunctional' Politics" (reply to SteveG, FotM Newsletter #13)
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I just watched Jon Stewart interview Bill Clinton about his book on the "Daily Show". (We tape it the night before and watch it the morning.) Clinton is so smart. He's even smarter than Jon Stewart. I wish he were President. I don't care what he did with Monica; he was good for this country. If he says, don't raise taxes, I listen to him. He also says, don't cut spending, and I listen to that too. I believe that's called compromise. It seems that everyone brings so much emotion into politics. Beliefs count more than ideas. That is our downfall. That and pure greed.

20111109-07	10:51	SteveG	Re: "Bill Clinton Raps GOP, Obama: End 'Dysfunctional' Politics" (reply to Pam, above)
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Poll I read last night indicated that Bill had an approval rating of 67% and among Republicans his approval rating was 40%. It seems that he keeps getting better with age, or is it in comparison with what we have to choose from? Getting better.

20111109-09	11:26	SteveB	Re: "Bill Clinton Raps GOP, Obama: End 'Dysfunctional' Politics" (reply to Pam & SteveG, above)
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I have often wondered the same thing about Wild Bill. How does he do it? Going up, skyward even, despite everything. You might recall...I even went to heckle him when he spoke in Montana when Hillary was running. The sex stuff and lies were a little over the top for me. A President lying to me doesn't sit well. It didn't with Nixon or Bush either. When he was President, I thought he was too much of a compromiser, and he did give in on the banking deregulation.

But there's something about him that is so likeable. What would you rather do, go hunting with GW Bush, or go fishing with Clinton? Come on! I'll buy the hamburgers, beer, and bait. He's gonna have to pay for his own hookers.

And, you're right. Compared to these corrupt bought-and-sold jokers we have now? Ghuinghystf...uuu, excuse me, the puke was leaking out my mouth and nose onto the keyboard...

I was thinking the other day about the incompetence of all the Republicans, their terrible, stupid debating, public lies and flip-flops, mistakes...thinking back to all the politicians I can remember back to Ike. It seems to me that I'm not misremembering...but their public performances of all types seem so much more competent than this current pack of stupid.

And though Obama has heard his share of complaints from me, stupid he is not. Even the evil one, Nixon, was far from stupid or incompetent. How Reagan did it, I'll never know...

20111109-13	12:27	Pam	Re: "Bill Clinton Raps GOP, Obama: End 'Dysfunctional' Politics" (reply to Pam & SteveB, above)
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I know Clinton caved on deregulation, but I bet he got something in exchange for it. [Hilarious, Pam...oh, but maybe you mean something political? -SteveB]

20111109-15	14:10	SteveG	Re: "Bill Clinton Raps GOP, Obama: End 'Dysfunctional' Politics" (reply to all, above)
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I like that Bill has disagreements with both sides as most of us do. Compromise used to be a good thing and now it isn't.

Remember the first debates with JFK and Nixon. If you saw the debates you thought JFK won, but if you listened to the debates you thought Nixon won. Amazing what perceptions we have based on differences in sensory input. Politics has gone downhill since then.

20111109-23	17:18	Art	Re: "Bill Clinton Raps GOP, Obama: End 'Dysfunctional' Politics" (reply to all, above)
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Although I admit I railed against Clinton when I thought he lied (and I still do not forgive that), the difference with Monica I'm pretty sure is that was Monica the aggressor.

On the other hand I think we have to begin to address the deficit and that means cutting spending and raising taxes.

20111109-26	19:52	SteveG	Re: "Bill Clinton Raps GOP, Obama: End 'Dysfunctional' Politics" (reply to all, above)
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Cutting spending, raising taxes, and plugging loopholes has got to be the ways we attack the problems.

Like most people, I really did not like Bill wagging his finger at us and lying.

20111109-28 21:44 Pam

Re: "Bill Clinton Raps GOP, Obama: End 'Dysfunctional' Politics" (reply to all, above)

I don't like lying either, but I can see how a person might be tempted to brazen it out. Still, you'd think they'd learn from Nixon's experience that it's not so much the crime as the cover-up.

20111109-06

10:49

SteveG

"Health Law Probably Safe as (Another) Conservative Jurist Affirms"

"Health Law Probably Safe as (Another) Conservative Jurist Affirms" by Matt Taylor, *The National Memo*

Nov. 8, 2011, (<http://www.nationalmemo.com/health-law-safe-conservative-reagan-appointee-constitutionality/>)

A 2-1 ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Washington, D.C. circuit upholding the constitutionality of the Affordable Care Act, Barack Obama's overhaul of the American healthcare system that extends coverage to nearly all Americans, gave a hint of the rationale that the Supreme Court — and even conservative Chief Justice John Roberts — could use to avoid striking down the administration's signature law in the middle of an election season.

The majority opinion, written by a conservative Ronald Reagan appointee, Judge Laurence Silberman, concurred with the government's claim that it has the power under the Commerce Clause of the Constitution to regulate economic activity that includes a requirement to purchase health insurance, and is the latest in a series of rulings responding to suits by Republicans angry at what they see as government overreach.

"The right to be free from federal regulation is not absolute, and yields to the imperative that Congress be free to forge national solutions to national problems, no matter how local — or seemingly passive — their individual origins," Silberman wrote.

While repealing "Obamacare" has become an article of faith among Republicans, it was unclear whether or not the increasingly right-leaning judiciary was willing to take a sharply narrow view of the Congress' regulatory power and actively strike down any laws that expanded the welfare state. In some ways, the fact that a conservative legend issued the ruling was more important than the opinion's substance.

"I think Silberman's vote was very significant," said Ian Millhiser, a legal policy analyst with the Center for American Progress. "This is a man with 30 years of history as a very strong conservative activist. He reversed [Iran-Contra Reagan official] Oliver North's felony conviction. He wrote the lower court opinion invalidating the D.C. handgun opinion. He received the presidential medal of freedom from George W. Bush. This is someone who, throughout his career, when there was doubt in a constitutional question, he resolved the doubt in favor of conservatives. And what he's saying is there isn't any doubt here; the law is unambiguous that this is constitutional."

The Supreme Court is likely to announce within the coming weeks that it will hear a challenge to the Affordable Care Act, a process that was sped up by the Obama Administration's request for a writ of certiorari, or formal acceptance of a case for review by the high court. A ruling would probably be issued sometime next spring or summer, in the thick of the presidential campaign — an epic showdown that looks like it could be anti-climactic if Tuesday's decisions are any indication.

Noah Feldman, a Harvard law professor and legal historian, pointed out that while the dissenting judge in the Appeals case, Brett Kavanaugh, is a conservative George W. Bush appointee, he didn't strike down the Affordable Care Act. Instead, he argued the Court had no jurisdiction because the tax (or penalty) for not purchasing insurance had not yet kicked in, appealing to the Anti-injunction Act, which says citizens can only challenge taxes after they have paid them. He effectively outlined a way for even the most rock-ribbed conservative justice to delay the decision on the bill until after the presidential election.

"What Judge Kavanaugh is doing is sending a message to Kennedy saying, 'You don't have to decide the case. You can defer this thing.'" Feldman said. "The Obama administration [by pushing for a Supreme Court review early] was

clever," because Republicans have to choose between getting rid of a law they despise as soon as possible, and keeping it on the books long enough to star in attack ads.

This dynamic — where the president publicly spars with the judiciary on major policy matters — hasn't really been witnessed since The New Deal. "This is the first time since the 1930s that you've had an extended clash between a progressive president and a narrow conservative majority on the Supreme Court," said Jeff Shesol, an historian who wrote about FDR's "court-packing" plan in his 2010 book *Supreme Power*.

"What the ruling today says, and what other rulings upholding the Affordable Care Act have suggested, is that it is within the power of Congress to deal in this way with this national problem. The national government has the ability to deal with an obviously national problem. Which is the fundamental question that gripped in the country in the 1930s."

On the other hand, the comparison between Obama — who has disappointed much of the left with the relatively cautious nature of his agenda and a kid-gloves approach to negotiating with congressional Republicans — and FDR doesn't quite work.

Whereas FDR had enormous personal popularity behind him, which helped turn public sentiment sharply against the high court as it began to strike down New Deal legislation, Obama's poor approval numbers — and the even more tepid feelings of voters toward the healthcare law — mean the justices (and moderate "swing vote" Anthony Kennedy in particular) need not fear a populist uprising; they can make as deeply ideological a decision as they like.

"After *Bush v. Gore*, the most overtly political decision in Court's history, the Court suffered zero dip in the public's mind," said Feldman. "If Kennedy wants to strike down the healthcare law, he's not going to worry the Supreme Court's legitimacy is in question."

Then again, a fight on purely intellectual grounds could help supporters of Obama's (nearly) universal healthcare scheme.

"Judge Silberman is someone who is intellectually very respected in conservative circles," said Millhiser. "In order for this law to be struck down, opponents have to run the table with the 5 conservatives on the Supreme Court. His thinking is very predictive. He's a leading conservative thinker. He's interacted professionally and socially with the conservative justices; they think alike."

Though the Supreme Court sometimes throws out appellate rulings, Tuesday's may be critical for "providing the conservative justices of the Supreme Court with an intellectual pathway to upholding the Act, should they choose to take it," added Shesol.

Similarly, Feldman argued the Appeals Court ruling would function as a message to the justices on the high court — and in particular to Justice Anthony Kennedy, the wild card in a court that is otherwise split between reliable liberal and consistent conservative votes on most issues.

"Silberman is a signal to Kennedy. He's telling Kennedy what he thinks the opinion should be. He gives Kennedy some cover. Kennedy, if he's going to uphold it, would like to cite Silberman, a conservative," as is fitting with his centrist reputation.

This ruling is not the first time a conservative legal stalwart has upheld Barack Obama's healthcare law. Back in June, George W. Bush appointee Jeffrey Sutton — who clerked for Antonin Scalia and serves on the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati — also said the Affordable Care Act was patently constitutional.

20111109-11	11:37	SteveB	Re: "Health Law Probably Safe..." (reply to SteveG, above)
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Well! This should remove a vast amount of uncertainty from the business climate! Now companies can bring their greenbacks back to the States and start hiring again. This would be good news indeed!

[20111109-29](#) 22:35 SteveG Re: "Health Law Probably Safe..." (reply to SteveB, above)

There was/is a backlash toward so called Obamacare because of the mandate that everyone purchase medical insurance and some people saying it was unconstitutional. If that is true, that Obamacare is unconstitutional, are not Medicaid and Medicare unconstitutional as it is mandated that all of us pay for them. We may not use them, but we pay for them.

I don't know about the rest of you, but I really like Medicare = saves me a hell of a lot of money.

[20111109-30](#) 23:05 SteveB Re: "Health Law Probably Safe..." (reply to SteveG, above)

From SteveB (11:05 pm) – reply to SteveG, above, ref: Healthcare and Constitution

Dear SteveG,

I've worried about that myself. I'd say Social Security is in the same boat. I'm sure all three are constitutional, but with our current Supreme Court, who knows for sure what's safe?

[20111109-08](#) 10:58 SteveG "Republicans Rejections: Voters Toss Out Mississippi Attack on Women's Rights, Ohio Union-Slashing, and Arizona Immigration Rabble-Rouser"

Synopsis of election day issues. Interesting in Ohio the backlash on union busting moves. Also interesting toward the bottom of the article that Costco "bought" the right to sell liquor in Washington State.

"Republicans Rejections: Voters Toss Out Mississippi Attack on Women's Rights, Ohio Union-Slashing, and Arizona Immigration Rabble-Rouser" by Matt Taylor, *The National Memo*

Nov. 9, 2011, (<http://nationalmemo.com/article/republicans-rejections-voters-toss-out-mississippi-attack-womens-rights-ohio-union-slashing>)



For all the frustration surrounding the economy, voters refused to throw incumbent parties out of governors' and most big-city mayors' offices, and they turned back an Ohio law that aimed to ease grinding budget problems by restricting the union rights of public employees.

In the heart of the Bible Belt, a Mississippi initiative that would have defined life as beginning at fertilization also went down to defeat, ending a plan to use it to challenge *Roe v. Wade*, the 1973 Supreme Court decision that established the right to abortion.

Across the nation, voters' last major judgments of 2011 were sure to be closely analyzed for any clues about the public's political mood just two months ahead of the first presidential primary and nearly four years into the worst economic slowdown since the Depression.

Kentucky's Democratic governor easily won another term, and Mississippi voters kept their governor's office in GOP hands — decisions that suggested many Americans were not ready to abandon the parties in power.

In Ohio, a hotly debated new law that severely limited the bargaining rights of more than 350,000 teachers, firefighters, police officers and other public employees was repealed with more than 60 percent of the vote. The defeat was a stinging blow to Gov. John Kasich and cast doubt on other Republican governors who have sought union-limiting measures as a means to curb spending.

"Ohio sent a message to every politician out there: Go in and make war on your employees rather than make jobs with your employees, and you do so at your own peril," AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka said.

Kasich congratulated his opponents and pledged to consider his next steps carefully.

"I've heard their voices. I understand their decision, and frankly, I respect what people have to say in an effort like this," he said, adding that the vote requires him "to take a deep breath" and "spend some time reflecting on what happened here."

The disputed law permitted workers to negotiate wages but not pensions or health care benefits, and it banned public-worker strikes, scrapped binding arbitration and eliminated annual raises for teachers.

The outcome will no doubt be studied by presidential candidates as a gauge of the Ohio electorate, which is seen as a bellwether. No Republican has won the White House without Ohio, and only two Democrats have done so in more than a century.

Elsewhere on the ballot, Ohio voters approved a proposal to prohibit people from being required to buy health insurance as part of the national health care overhaul. The vote was mostly symbolic, but Republicans hoped to use it in a legal challenge.

The governors' races were of keen interest to both parties. Ten states will elect governors next year, and governors can marshal get-out-the-vote efforts crucial to any White House candidate. The first presidential primary is Jan. 10 in New Hampshire.

In Kentucky, Gov. Steve Beshear was easily re-elected despite high unemployment, budget shortfalls and an onslaught of third-party attack ads. He became the second Democrat to win a governor's race this year, after West Virginia's Earl Ray Tomblin.

In Mississippi, voters picked Republican Lt. Gov. Phil Bryant to succeed Haley Barbour, who could not run again because of term limits. Bryant beat Hattiesburg Mayor Johnny Dupree, the first black major-party nominee for governor in Mississippi.

The Mississippi measure to define life as beginning at fertilization would have been the first victory in the country for the so-called personhood movement, which aims to make abortion all but illegal. Similar attempts have failed in Colorado and are under way elsewhere.

The proposal divided the medical and religious communities and caused some of the most ardent abortion opponents, including Barbour, to waver in their support.

Opponents said the measure would have made some forms of birth control, such as the morning-after pill or the intrauterine device, illegal. And they worried that it could have deterred physicians from performing in vitro fertilization for fear of criminal charges if an embryo did not survive.

Other votes of note:

- In Arizona, state Sen. Russell Pearce, architect of the tough immigration law that put the state at the forefront of the national debate, was ousted after a recall attempt led by a fellow Republican.
- Hundreds of cities held mayoral races, including some of the nation's largest. In San Francisco, interim Mayor Ed Lee had a strong lead in early returns and would become the city's first elected Asian-American mayor if he wins. But it could be days before final results are known because of a complicated system in which voters rank their top three candidates.
- In Philadelphia, Democratic Mayor Michael Nutter trounced a little-known Republican challenger.
- Phoenix elected Democrat Greg Stanton, a former city council member, as its new mayor after a campaign focused on pulling the nation's sixth-largest city out its economic and foreclosure slump.
- Incumbent mayors also prevailed in Baltimore and Indianapolis.
- Comic-turned-politician Robert Farmer lost his bid to become Kentucky's agriculture commissioner. Farmer told hillbilly jokes that upset some people, and he had no farming experience. In Ohio, another comedian, Drew Hastings, a fixture on "Comedy Central," became mayor of tiny Hillsboro.
- In Maine, voters repealed a new state law that required voters to register at least two days before an election. The decision restored Election Day voter registration, which had been available for nearly four decades. A proposal to allow casinos in certain communities was rejected.
- Washington state voters approved a plan to end the state-run liquor system and allow large stores to sell alcohol. The proposal was bankrolled by giant retailer Costco, which spent more than \$22 million, making it the costliest initiative in Washington history.
- Atlanta overwhelmingly approved Sunday alcohol sales, clearing the way for shoppers to buy liquor in stores as soon as New Year's Day.
- Oregon held a special primary to replace Democratic Rep. David Wu, who resigned in August after being accused of an unwanted sexual encounter with an 18-year-old woman. Wu was the fourth member of Congress to quit this year in a sex scandal.

20111109-10	11:31	SteveB	Re: "Republicans Rejections: Voters Toss Out Mississippi Attack on Women's Rights, Ohio Union-Slashing, and Arizona Immigration Rabble-Rouser" (reply to SteveG, above)
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I loved it! This is from the current CNN webpage:

U.S. ELECTION ROUNDUP

- Miss. rejects 'personhood' measure: http://www.cnn.com/2011/11/09/politics/election-results/index.html?hpt=hp_t2.

- Ohio repeals anti-union law: http://politicalticker.blogs.cnn.com/2011/11/08/ohio-voters-overturn-law-limiting-collective-bargaining-rights/?hpt=hp_t2.
- Loss for Ariz. immigration law backer: http://www.cnn.com/2011/11/09/politics/arizona-recall-vote/index.html?hpt=hp_t2.
- Ga. voters OK Sunday alcohol sales: http://www.cnn.com/video/?hpt=hp_t2#/video/us/2011/11/09/georgia-liquor-law-vote.wsb.

All of these very good news for liberals. (Though I'm sorry to see one of my immigration heroes go bye-bye.)

And the Tea Party thinks they have a mandate? I'm afraid they're going to learn what a mandate really is, come the End of their World in 2012.

20111109-16	14:11	SteveG	Re: "Republicans Rejections: Voters Toss Out Mississippi Attack on Women's Rights, Ohio Union-Slashing, and Arizona Immigration Rabble-Rouser" (reply to SteveB, above)
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It will be interesting to see what happens over the next couple of years in congressional elections.

20111109-14	12:33	Pam	Re: Republicans Work (Only) Against Obama Re-Election (reply to Art, FotM Newsletter #13)
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I'm feeling a breeze of hopefulness from all this. I will not rest easy until after the election, but it seems incomprehensible to me that the Republican platform will win the day. That's not to say it couldn't happen. The dark forces have triumphed before in history, especially when lots of money was involved. But, despite the Oakland police, I believe Americans are averse to violence as a means to settle their differences. OWS is making every effort to remain peaceful—so much better than the 'sixties. The only way the fat cats can hold on is by arresting tons of people and shooting some. I really don't think that's going to happen. But, as I say, I won't rest easy...

20111109-12	12:01	SteveB	Re: Republicans Work (Only) Against Obama Re-Election (reply to Art, FotM Newsletter #13)
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I really enjoyed the piece on the 2012 Election in today's FotM Newsletter. It deserves further analysis.

I, myself, am gaga at a party that thinks it can go against a large majority of Americans and win an election (or, for that matter, to try to control a country despite not winning an election or by winning only part of one election, to give them the benefit of the doubt. Maybe that's too convoluted...WHAT ARE THEY THINKING???)

All the polling data juxtaposed against the Republican "platform" seems to many of us seasoned veterans to indicate doom. Yet they carry on like lemmings...

To mess with Social Security? Death! Medicare? Death! To bailout banks yet fight job creation and mortgage relief? Death! To thumb their noses at the poor and middle class by fighting tooth and nail, to the detriment of the country, to protect the richest and most powerful people in the country? Death! To do everything in their power to destroy unions and defund education? Death! For cryin' out loud—to even be against abortion and birth control!

And they have chosen this path. I believe the tide is even turning on taxes...

In tomorrow's Newsletter will appear profiles of Tea Party members from Indiana. Normal, good, smart Hoosiers with normal problems, problems that they do not understand have been created by and would be made worse by a

particular political philosophy. Dennis has pointed this out in the past. It's a big irony that the largest group of people who identify with the Tea Party are people who would be hurt most by their success.

They think they want a flat tax, of my???

Go figure. Here's a little Hoosier thing for you: I believe "THE HENS WILL COME HOME TO ROOST!"

20111109-17	14:14	SteveG	Re: Republicans Work (Only) Against Obama Re-Election (reply to SteveB, above)
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That "The hens will come home to roost." is similar to the other Hoosier saying: "We'll see whose hog eats the cabbage."

20111109-18	14:15	SteveG	Re: Republicans Work (Only) Against Obama Re-Election (reply to SteveB, above)
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Art did a good job, really liked the piece.

20111109-24	17:56	Art	Re: Republicans Work (Only) Against Obama Re-Election (reply to all, above)
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My apologies to all!!!!!! As much as I would like to claim this, I got from a far better thinker and author with the *Washington Post* or maybe online. I will send you the name if I can find it.

20111109-25	18:05	SteveB	Re: Republicans Work (Only) Against Obama Re-Election (reply to Art, above)
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It was my fault. I didn't find a reference...and I even considered the style...but I should simply have asked before I jumped. Sorry and thanks. There really are some time constraints on this journalism stuff, aren't there?

20111109-19	14:18	SteveG	Fw: Care2 Petition: Tell Congress to Stop Scapegoating Clean Air Standards!
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from Care2:

I don't know where Congress got the idea rolling back clean air standards would magically create jobs. The idea would be funny if blocking clean air regulations wasn't the actual political strategy pursued by House Majority Leader Eric Cantor.

Cantor has mapped out a week-by-week attack on eight critical clean air laws that keep carcinogens and toxins out of our lungs and hold polluters accountable. Others in Congress have picked up the mantra that dirty air = jobs.

We don't have to choose between clean air and a growing economy. In fact, the Clean Air Act actually boost our economy. Every \$1 we've spent on enforcing the Clean Air Act has generated \$30 in broader benefits for the American economy, like fewer sick days, and costly emergency room visits.

And, oh yeah, clean air rules have prevented thousands of early deaths. That alone should make clean air worth it to our politicians.

Tell Congress to stop scapegoating clean air rules and actually do something to grow our economy:

<http://www.care2.com/go/z/e/Agx.D/zLNv/BZREP>.

Thanks for taking action! Emily V., Care2 and ThePetitionSite Team

20111109-20	15:13	Jim	Rich and Poor
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Over the years, my wife and I have hosted seventeen foreign exchange students for a year while they went to Mishawaka High School. We also served as an area representatives for over one hundred other students who came here through Youth For Understanding.

It has always been interesting to see ourselves from an outside perspective, even a young person's. But we also get glimpses into other cultures. The warning glimpse I want to share today is from a young man from the Philippines about twenty years ago. He was so happy that he could get on a bike and ride around town by himself or with his host brothers and he could walk to school.

He could not do that at home because the family lived in a walled compound and he was taken to and from school in an armored car with bodyguards because his father was afraid he would be kidnapped for ransom. Extremes of wealth disparity do not always let the rich sleep peacefully.

20111109-21	16:02	SteveG	"Economics: Presidential Candidates Slip on Econ 101"
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"Economics: Presidential Candidates Slip on Econ 101" by Charles Riley, CNN Money

Nov. 9, 2011, (http://money.cnn.com/2011/11/09/news/economy/presidential_candidates_economics/index.htm)

Every 2012 contender attended college. They all graduated. They went to schools like the University of Pennsylvania, Columbia, Texas A&M, Morehouse, Penn State and Emory.

But decades have passed since these Presidential candidates first stepped onto campus as freshmen. Is it time for an Econ 101 refresher course?

America's Econ 101 professors say yes. In their view, the candidates continue to offer ideas and policies that wouldn't pass muster in their classes — populated by 18 year-old college students.

"There are so many economic 'misstatements' being made," said Jonathan Lanning, a professor at Bryn Mawr who is teaching two introductory economics classes this semester. "And it isn't confined to any one candidate."

Michele Bachmann promised to bring back \$2 gas. Tim Pawlenty suggested sustained 5% GDP growth was a realistic target. Rick Perry would balance the budget with lower tax revenues.

No dice, say the professors.

Stephen Golub, who is teaching Econ 101 at Swarthmore College this semester, said some of the ideas floated by Presidential candidates would earn a failing grade in his class.

"I think it's grossly irresponsible what they are saying," Golub said. "It's not about economics. It's about getting elected. They are promising things that are impossible to deliver or make little sense."

The rhetoric sounds good on the campaign trail. Not in the classroom.

The simple laws of supply and demand render Bachmann's \$2 gas promise void, said Erik Nelson, an Econ 101 professor at Bowdoin College.

Rick Perry labeling Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke as treasonous? "Really over the top," said Golub.

Another professor who teaches at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Michael Salemi, was able to identify statements from six candidates that "would earn failing grades in my Econ 101 class."

Salemi called Ron Paul's rationale for returning to the gold standard "one of the most dangerous ideas put forward by a politician in recent years."

And the idea of waging a trade war with China that was bandied about by Rick Santorum and Mitt Romney at a recent debate?

"If we learned anything from the Great Depression it was that starting a trade war by passing new tariffs leads to reprisals," Salemi said. "In the end there are no winners, only losers."

Nelson said the tax plans floated by Cain and Perry are prime examples of policy proposals that are designed to appeal to primary voters.

"If either of these men are the Republican nominee for president, I suspect their flat tax proposals will go the way of all other short-lived flat tax proposals," Nelson said.

Bernard Salanie, an economics professor at Columbia University, said Perry's simplified tax form just won't cut it.

"It is a bit depressing to again hear the argument that we will be well on the road to recovery once our tax returns fit on a postcard," Salanie said.

And it's not just Republicans — the Democratic candidate is slipping too.

Neither "side" has a "truly comprehensive understanding of even basic economics," Lanning said.

Nelson pointed to President Obama's green jobs initiative, which he said is an attempt to wed job creation and energy production in a way that is unlikely to produce real results.

"They should either concentrate on a policy that aids job creation or a policy that creates more green energy; attempts to do both with one policy means they do well on neither goal," Nelson said.

Lanning couldn't be sure any of the candidates would fail his Econ 101 class, but he did say they wouldn't survive moving up to 200-level classes next semester.

"I can say that none of the rationales for various policies that I have heard display a basic 200-level understanding of key economic concepts," he said.

20111109-22	16:23	Pam	Re: "Economics: Presidential Candidates Slip on Econ 101" (reply to SteveG, above)
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I guess there's a reason they call economics "the dismal science." I never took any econ. courses, so everything I know is what I've managed to pick up. (Despite being an English major, I never took a Shakespeare course either. It's amazing what you can absorb on your own though. I could veer off here onto a separate topic. Focus, Pam, focus.) I know that econ. has become more mathematical, with all sorts of models and suchlike. Even so, nearly everyone admits that it's very hard to predict what will happen in the future, which throws us back upon our own common sense. I don't think many people have all that much. The gold standard? \$2.00 gas? Clean energy from coal? Austerity as the way to full employment?

Some of the people I talk to "from the other side" favor a flat tax—like the one in Estonia! A flat tax has never made sense to me. Take away 20% from a million dollars, and you still end up with a lot more money than the poor schmuck making 20 k. after he pays his 20%. Nuclear energy makes me nervous; I wish Obama would ease up on his support for that. After jobs, I believe energy will be our most crucial issue in the coming decades. Health care will be a close second. We need our best and brightest working on those issues rather than credit default

swaps. I think Obama has learned a lot in four years. Hopefully in a second term he will be able to bring some of his ideas to fruition.

20111109-27 19:55 SteveG Fw: Today's 3 Hottest Progressive Videos Graphics

from MoveOn.org:

Hello! Here are the three hottest progressive videos and graphics that we found on the web today, November 09, 2011.

"The Most Effective Political Ad We've Seen This Year" <http://www.moveon.org/r?r=267432&id=32749-18997482-ryJqfwx&t=132707>.

"Teddy Roosevelt: 'We Are Not Attacking the Corporations, But Endeavoring to Do Away With Any Evil in Them'" <http://www.moveon.org/r?r=267433&id=32749-18997482-ryJqfwx&t=132709>.

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—Friends of the Middle,
Steven W. Baker (SteveB), Editor/Moderator

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