



FRIENDS OF THE MIDDLE **NEWSLETTER #21 — NOV. 21, 2011**

Welcome to always lively political discussion and whatever else comes up.
<http://www.FriendsOfTheMiddle.org> FriendsOfTheMiddle@hotmail.com

[INDEX: Click here.](#)

Education in a 'Brave New World'

(posted by Steven W. Baker / SteveB, Nov. 21, 2011)

U.S. schools are going to look a lot more like the Main Street workplace, to hear the Republicans tell about it. That book learnin' stuff turns out not to be that important after all. Learnin' how to work! Now, that's what matters! That's why kids aren't making it out of poverty! They don't know how to work! And no one is teaching them.

But if we'd just start them off at nine-years-old, as Newt suggests, (What? Third grade?) and give them jobs at school, say, cleaning the bathroom urinals, then they'll learn to work and quit being the lazy bums that some semblance of a normal childhood has made them into.

In order to pay them, we'll fire all the grown-up school janitors, who have families and children, but tend to be in those pesky unions. The school children probably won't form unions for a long time.

It is a wonderful idea Newt has to put our kids to work to help schools, the economy, and their own educations. I had not ever before understood the idea that people slip into and remain embedded in poverty because they are lazy. I don't know why I never thought of that before. All we have to do is put them to work at a young and tender age to teach them not to be lazy and, like Herman Cain, they will rise up the ranks. Brilliant! Why didn't I think of that!

But I have an even better idea! There are a lot of other over-paid employees in the schools who could be replaced by much lower-paid students. Newt would start with the janitors, but how safe are the jobs of the cafeteria workers? Then there is often a useless school engineer, a fix-it guy, who keeps everything running smoothly. Things like the laboratory hoods and the boiler that heats the whole building. What does he know? The students can do it cheaper. Every class has one of those kids who shows the teacher how to do this or that on her computer, who helps with presentations, video, the technical stuff. These kids might as well make some extra spending money, keeping the boiler going, and learning how to lead a productive, non-lazy, Republican life all at the same time.

The more I think about it, the more I realize that the biggest expense of education (And I was amazed at this, it's not the books!) is (Are you sitting down?)...the teachers! (Lump the principals, guidance counselors—whatever they do—school nurses, and bus drivers in the same group.) The school children can do all these jobs for a lot less money than grown-ups. Granted, some of the jobs, like driving school buses, will require older high-school students. But third-graders could easily do what the guidance counselors do (whatever that is), and a monkey could do the job of most principals.

It's intuitively obvious that there has been too much socialistic regulation and governmental meddling in education. We could save a fortune by going in there, cutting out staff, and building a prosperous future for our young folks,

all at the same time, just as Newt so wisely suggests. Why do home schooling at home, when your kids can do it for themselves at school, where they're out of your hair?

Child labor laws do nothing but "entrap" poor children into poverty." The fact these children are told they can't work ("You don't look like a worker to me! You look like a kid! Go home, grow up, and come back in about ten years. Har-har.") hurts their feelings, forces them into even deeper layers of laziness, and drives up the cost of everything in America.

Let's make good old-fashioned work part of every American's education!

Next problem, please?

"Newt: Fire the Janitors, Hire Kids to Clean Schools" by Maggie Haberman, Politico

Nov. 18, 2011, (<http://www.politico.com/2012-election/>)

Via Politico's Reid Epstein, Newt Gingrich tonight said at an address at Harvard that child work laws "entrap" poor children into poverty - and suggested that a better way to handle failing schools is to fire the janitors, hire the local students and let them get paid for upkeep.

The comment came in response to an undergrad's question about income equality during his talk at Harvard's Kennedy School.

"This is something that no liberal wants to deal with," Gingrich said. "Core policies of protecting unionization and bureaucratization against children in the poorest neighborhoods, crippling them by putting them in schools that fail has done more to create income inequality in the United States than any other single policy. It is tragic what we do in the poorest neighborhoods, entrapping children in, first of all, child laws, which are truly stupid.

"You say to somebody, you shouldn't go to work before you're what, 14, 16 years of age, fine. You're totally poor. You're in a school that is failing with a teacher that is failing. I've tried for years to have a very simple model," he said. "Most of these schools ought to get rid of the unionized janitors, have one master janitor and pay local students to take care of the school. The kids would actually do work, they would have cash, they would have pride in the schools, they'd begin the process of rising."

He added, "You go out and talk to people, as I do, you go out and talk to people who are really successful in one generation. They all started their first job between nine and 14 years of age. They all were either selling newspapers, going door to door, they were doing something, they were washing cars."

"They all learned how to make money at a very early age," he said. "What do we say to poor kids in poor neighborhoods? Don't do it. Remember all that stuff about don't get a hamburger flipping job? The worst possible advice you could give to poor children. Get any job that teaches you to show up on Monday. Get any job that teaches you to stay all day even if you are in a fight with your girlfriend. The whole process of making work worthwhile is central."

The former House Speaker acknowledged that it was an unconventional pitch, saying, "You're going to see from me extraordinarily radical proposals to fundamentally change the culture of poverty in America and give people a chance to rise very rapidly."

FotM NEWSLETTER #21 (Nov. 21, 2011)—HYPERTEXT INDEX

<u>DATE-ID</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>FROM</u>	<u>SUBJECT/TITLE</u>
<u>20111121-00</u>		SteveB	Education in a 'Brave New World' by Steven W. Baker / SteveB ("Newt: Fire the Janitors, Hire Kids to Clean Schools")
<u>20111118-01</u>	08:36	SteveB	Re: A Dose of Reality (reply to Dale, FotM Newsletter #16)
<u>20111118-04</u>	09:33	Dale	Re: A Dose of Reality (reply to SteveB, above)
<u>20111118-05</u>	10:00	SteveB	Re: A Dose of Reality (reply to Dale, above)
<u>20111118-10</u>	11:06	Dale	Re: A Dose of Reality (reply to SteveB, above)
<u>20111118-12</u>	11:17	SteveG	Re: A Dose of Reality (reply to Dale, above)
<u>20111118-15</u>	11:27	SteveB	Re: A Dose of Reality (reply to Dale & SteveG, above)
<u>20111118-17</u>	11:38	Pam	Re: A Dose of Reality (reply to Dale, above)
<u>20111118-18</u>	11:39	Pam	Re: A Dose of Reality (reply to Dale, above)
<u>20111118-02</u>	09:16	SteveB	Low Interest Rates & Economics
<u>20111118-03</u>	09:19	Dale	"Biased Justice to Decide Fate of Obamacare!"
<u>20111118-06</u>	10:20	Pam	Re: "Biased Justice to Decide Fate of Obamacare!" (reply to Dale, above)
<u>20111118-08</u>	10:56	SteveB	Re: "Biased Justice to Decide Fate of Obamacare!" (reply to Pam & Dale, above)
<u>20111118-11</u>	11:09	Pam	Re: "Biased Justice to Decide Fate of Obamacare!" (reply to Dale & SteveB, above)
<u>20111118-07</u>	10:21	Pam	"Penn State's Patriarchal Pastimes"
<u>20111118-09</u>	11:05	SteveB	Re: "Penn State's Patriarchal Pastimes" (reply to Pam, above)
<u>20111118-13</u>	11:23	SteveB	Re: "Penn State's Patriarchal Pastimes" (reply to Pam, above)
<u>20111118-16</u>	11:37	Pam	Re: "Penn State's Patriarchal Pastimes" (reply to SteveB, above)
<u>20111118-14</u>	11:24	SteveG	Offshore Corporate \$Trillions
<u>20111118-19</u>	12:44	SteveM	Fw: Remember Jan. 3, 2007
<u>20111118-20</u>	12:45	SteveB	Re: Remember Jan. 3, 2007 (reply to SteveM, above)
<u>20111118-21</u>	15:16	Art	Re: My Jobs Plan (reply to Pam, FotM Newsletter #20)
<u>20111118-22</u>	19:11	SteveG	"Bill Clinton Tells DePauw Students World Too Unequal"
<u>20111119-01</u>	00:41	SteveG	Fw: Sherrod Brown Petition: Tell Democrats to Stand-Up for Progressive Principles!
<u>20111119-02</u>	12:19	Pam	"Rick Perry Doubles Down on 'Lazy' Ad; Slams Obama as a 'Socialist'"
<u>20111119-03</u>	12:20	SteveG	"Lobbying Firm's Memo Spells Out Plan to Undermine Occupy Wall Street"
<u>20111119-04</u>	13:19	Pam	Re: "Lobbying Firm's Memo Spells Out Plan to Undermine OWS" (reply to SteveG, above)
<u>20111119-05</u>	13:47	SteveG	Re: "Lobbying Firm's Memo Spells Out Plan to Undermine OWS" (reply to Pam, above)
<u>20111119-06</u>	15:04	Pam	Re: "Lobbying Firm's Memo Spells Out Plan to Undermine OWS" (reply to SteveG, above)
<u>20111119-07</u>	20:53	SteveG	Video: "Why Occupy Wall Street Needs Michael Bloomberg"
<u>20111120-02</u>	14:31	Pam	Re: "Why Occupy Wall Street Needs Michael Bloomberg" (reply to SteveG, above)
<u>20111120-03</u>	16:55	SteveG	Re: "Why Occupy Wall Street Needs Michael Bloomberg" (reply to Pam, above) & "The Top 0.1% of the Nation Earn Half of All Capital Gains"
<u>20111120-05</u>	17:58	Pam	Re: "The Top 0.1% of the Nation Earn Half of All Capital Gains" (reply to SteveG, above)
<u>20111120-06</u>	18:51	SteveB	Re: "The Top 0.1% of the Nation Earn Half of All Capital Gains" (reply to Pam, above)
<u>20111120-01</u>	13:48	SteveB	Fw: MoveOn Action: Share the OWS 230 Mile Walk from NYC to Washington, DC!
<u>20111120-04</u>	17:41	SteveG	"Woes for Johnson & Johnson"
<u>20111120-07</u>	18:59	SteveB	Where Are You? (to Dennis)
<u>20111120-08</u>	19:02	Dennis	Re: Where Are You? (reply to SteveB, above)
<u>20111120-09</u>	19:35	SteveB	Re: Where Are You? (reply to Dennis, above)

DATE-ID	TIME	FROM	SUBJECT/TITLE
20111120-10	19:44	Dennis	Re: Where Are You? (reply to SteveB, above)
20111120-11	20:15	Ann	Photo: Two Guys You Know

20111118-01	08:36	SteveB	Re: A Dose of Reality (reply to Dale, FotM Newsletter #16)
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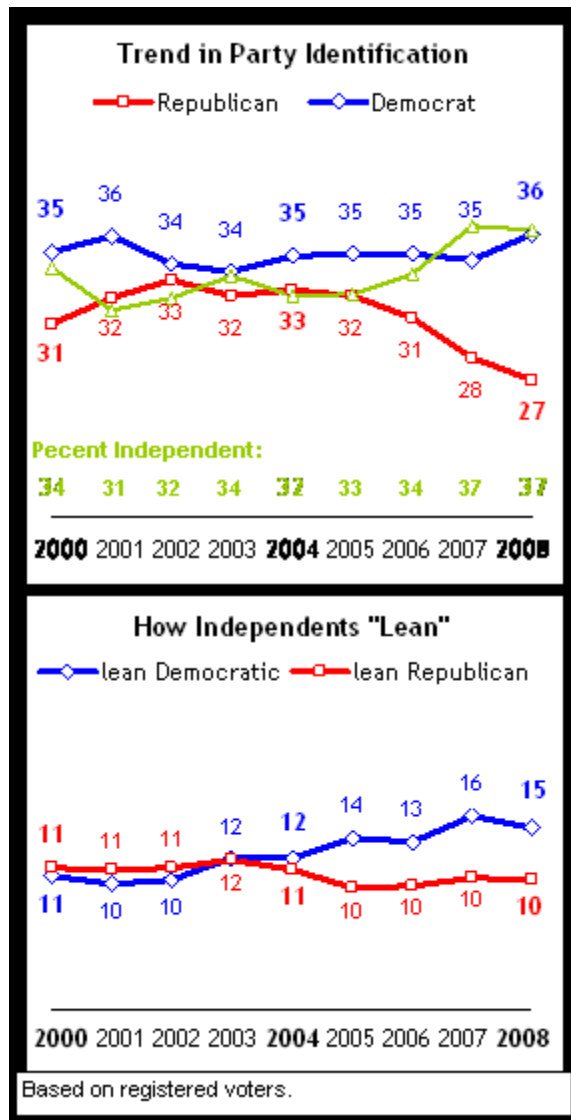
You presented a nice graph the other day showing poor liberals up to their necks in alligators swimming around them in the form of an overwhelming number of conservatives. Poor liberals. Maybe better not to have those bleeding hearts in that situation. :-)

Anyway, while I don't doubt your statistics, as you say, numbers can be twisted. I got to thinking about one thing I had always heard...that there are more registered Democrats than Republicans. I couldn't find anything more recent than the graph below from March, 2008, the year of the "landslide teabagger conservative mandate." But it's hard to believe things have changed much since then.

These graphs tell an entirely different, more uplifting story.

You can see why Republicans aren't bothering to run any Presidential candidates from the first string. And perhaps why the Republican politicians, candidates, and pundits feel compelled to tell so many orchestrated lies and create so many Orwellian distortions of reality. I don't think I'm putting that too strongly. Am I?

<http://pewresearch.org/pubs/773/fewer-voters-identify-as-republicans>



20111118-04 09:33 Dale Re: A Dose of Reality (reply to SteveB, above)

You put up old news. Let's look at the most recent Rasmussen Poll stats below.

Yes there is hope...."...the gap is the lowest in nine years..." Those self identifying as Republicans grows.

"Partisan Trends" by Rasmussen Reports

Nov. 1, 2011, (http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/politics/mood_of_america/partisan_trends)

The number of Republicans increased by half a percentage point in October, while the number of Democrats decreased by a similar amount.

During the month of October, 34.3% of Americans considered themselves to be Republicans, up from 33.9% in September. The number of Democrats fell to 33.1% from 33.7% the month before. September marked the smallest gap between the parties in nearly nine years of monthly tracking.

Related Articles: 18% Say U.S. Heading In Right Direction:

http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/politics/mood_of_america/right_direction_or_wrong_track

[20111118-05](#) 10:00 SteveB Re: A Dose of Reality (reply to Dale, above)

Good to know. At least the alligators aren't quite up to our necks. We're almost neck `n neck with God's party.

But, ah, those crucial Independents! Now there's a prize! But the Republican Presidential candidates have that under control.

And the threats to Social Security, Medicare, unions, education, and even the basic functioning of government are sure to impress those Independents, especially those in that voter population bulge made up of elderly folks.

Yet I find your numbers troubling. Are the Democrats not copulating enough? Not having enough children? Too much birth control? Not enough wild Republican orgies? Are too many of them emigrating? What?

[20111118-10](#) 11:06 Dale Re: A Dose of Reality (reply to SteveB, above)

Plenty of copulating at OWS rallies, I hear.

[20111118-12](#) 11:17 SteveG Re: A Dose of Reality (reply to Dale, above)

No copulating at any of the OWS meetings/rallies I have been to, need to check your source.

[20111118-15](#) 11:27 SteveB Re: A Dose of Reality (reply to Dale & SteveG, above)

If anybody's interested, I have tickets to a bunch of OWS meetings/rallies I'd love to sell. I didn't know it's not like the 60's.

[20111118-17](#) 11:38 Pam Re: A Dose of Reality (reply to Dale, above)

They've gotta keep warm somehow.

[20111118-18](#) 11:39 Pam Re: A Dose of Reality (reply to Dale, above)

Just joking before. ;-)

[20111118-02](#) 09:16 SteveB Low Interest Rates & Economics

Another perfectly good economic theory down the drain: "**Low interest rates stimulate business and jobs growth.**"

We've been trying it here in the US and in Japan for quite some time, to no avail. Sure, there are plenty of other factors, but this has been one of the mainstays of the economists and governments for a long time...at times in the past it has seemed to be effective...

And I would think those same economists and government officials are shocked at how powerless a tool they hold in their once so mighty hands.

The main problem with economics, it seems to me, is that it is exactly like a geographer trekking across an unexplored jungle. He doesn't know exactly where he is or where he's going because he's never been there before and he has no map.

"Wake up! It's 2011. We've never been here before." That's the problem with economics. Its domain is all part of the continuing flow of the new, unfolding reality. The rest is history.

20111118-03 09:19 Dale "Biased Justice to Decide Fate of Obamacare!"
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This is for the Clarence Thomas bashers.

"Biased Justice to Decide Fate of Obamacare!" by Grassroots Action Alert

Nov. 17, 2011, (<http://www.grassrootsactionalert.com/archive.asp?ref=7-GrassrootsActionAlert-111117>)

Yet another Obama-led travesty of justice is about to unfold — this time at the Supreme Court.

Justice Elena Kagan — who as Obama's Solicitor General openly supported ObamaCare's passage and then defended the law when it faced court challenge — has given no indication that she will recuse herself from the case.

Kagan openly supported ObamaCare, yet she refuses to recuse herself from the case.

The Judicial Crisis Network (JCN) has carefully documented Kagan's work on behalf of ObamaCare while she served as Obama's Solicitor General.

According to JCN, Kagan engaged her department in the strategy to defend ObamaCare in court "before [ObamaCare] had even been signed into law." So Kagan was an advocate for ObamaCare even before the final votes were cast.

JCN also tracks how Kagan was involved in the "deliberative process" for her office's legal defense of ObamaCare. By definition, this means Kagan has knowledge of information (i.e. the Administration's deliberative process), which is protected and therefore the other justices may not be allowed to hear!

And now we have the "smoking gun."

Just hours before the final ObamaCare vote, Kagan responded to an email from a colleague that had the subject line, "fingers and toes crossed today." The email was clearly about the imminent ObamaCare vote.

What did Kagan say to colleague Lawrence Tribe?

"I hear they have the votes, Larry!! Simply amazing."

To which Tribe replied,

"So healthcare is basically done! Remarkable."

It is clear that Elena Kagan was an open advocate of ObamaCare and that, in her position as Solicitor General, she was involved in defending the legislation.

By any judicial ethical standards, she should recuse herself.

But this goes beyond her personal sense of ethics...

THIS IS THE LAW OF THE LAND!

Federal law (28 U.S.C. 455) clearly stipulates the grounds for judges to disqualify themselves in cases, including if the judge's "impartiality might reasonably be questioned" or if the judge served in federal office as "counsel" or "adviser" or "expressed an opinion" on a matter.

Kagan has crossed all these lines and by law she must recuse herself for the ObamaCare case — something she has already done dozens of times on other cases. But for ObamaCare, Obama's hand-picked advocate refuses to step aside.

To make matters worse, much of the facts of Kagan's open advocacy on behalf of ObamaCare was not disclosed during her confirmation hearings and has only come to light in the last few weeks after repeated Freedom of Information Act inquiries.

The Obama team hid the facts of Kagan's ObamaCare advocacy!

[But the article is wrong! Kagan is no judge or justice, she's essentially a Prosecutor. Your recusal rules don't apply. —SteveB]

[20111118-06](#) 10:20 Pam Re: "Biased Justice to Decide Fate of Obamacare!" (reply to Dale, above)

Has Clarence Thomas recused himself? I don't recall hearing that he has, and he should. If they both stepped aside, I'd be more-or-less satisfied.

[20111118-08](#) 10:56 SteveB Re: "Biased Justice to Decide Fate of Obamacare!" (reply to Pam & Dale, above)

Exactly, there's a giant issue with his wife. And there is always a giant issue with Clarence. Was he really born in the U.S.?

They both have to go for the sake of fairness. I guess Herman Cain or Sarah Palin would say to bring in the alternate judges, you know, the ones they always have waiting in the wings, like beauty contests have. Sure! That's the way government should work! Just like TV!

[20111118-11](#) 11:09 Pam Re: "Biased Justice to Decide Fate of Obamacare!" (reply to Dale & SteveB, above)

Yeah, if Kagan goes and Thomas doesn't, I will be well and truly pi*sed.

I read something recently that said people were in absolute terror in around the 14th c. There were religious wars, the Black Death, and people believed the end of the world was near. Everything was a mess, and Europe was caught up in a whirlwind they couldn't see a way out of. I think we're in a similar turbulent time. It's probably worse than we realize (climate change alone will alter everything), and no one seems to have a vision of the way forward. If we look at history, though, terrible times generally stimulate creativity in all sorts of areas. Any optimism I have is based on a belief/hope that the young will find a way. Somewhere out there is the next Isaac Newton, Charles Dickens, or Steve Jobs. I don't believe any of us will be around to see that brave new world, but wouldn't it be nice to be remembered for having tried.

[20111118-07](#) 10:21 Pam "Penn State's Patriarchal Pastimes"

Here's another issue with serious ramifications. I'd like to see what you guys have to say about this.

Could you post it, SteveB? I want to make sure it goes through.

"Penn State's Patriarchal Pastimes" by Katha Pollitt, *The Nation*

November 16, 2011, This article appeared in the December 5, 2011 edition of *The Nation*.

(<http://www.thenation.com/article/164655/penn-states-patriarchal-pastimes?rel=emailNation>)

Cancel the season. Fire everybody involved in the child abuse scandal. That is the only way Penn State can make it clear that raping children and looking the other way or even covering it up matters more than having a winning football team. It is beyond understanding that Mike McQueary, who witnessed with his own eyes the anal rape of a 10-year-old by former assistant coach Jerry Sandusky, thought the matter was closed when he told his superiors (and, he now says, campus police) about it, and that head coach Joe Paterno—the sainted JoePa—took virtually no action, and life just went on for years while more kids were abused. What is this, the Catholic Church? Or maybe it isn't beyond understanding. Maybe most people would do their best to rationalize evil behavior, to pass the buck and forget about it, if making a stink about it would harm their career. History isn't too encouraging on that score. Still. Cancel the season. Fire everybody. Start again.

Or maybe don't start again. Maybe cancel college football too. In no other country's university system, after all, does sports play anything like the central role it does in American academic life. Men do not go to Oxford to play cricket; the Sorbonne does not field a nationally celebrated soccer team. Even in the most sports-mad countries, sports is sports and education is education. That's a better system.

College sports distorts academic life in many ways, beginning with admissions. Recruited athletes' scholarships soak up almost a fifth of places at most elite colleges, and athletic scholarships raise costs for everyone else. People defend these programs as offering hope to black and low-income students, especially boys, who otherwise couldn't go to college at all. But what about their high school classmates who do better in school and can't afford higher education either? Where are our priorities? Right now, we are telling the kids at the bottom that the way out is not to study and take college preparatory classes but to work on their jump shot and their blocking. If there was no scholarship incentive for those skills, the kids might not blow off their classes in favor of endless hours in the gym. Instead of the false hope of winning fame and wealth by turning pro after college—a brass ring grasped by only 1.5 percent of seniors who play NCAA football and basketball—they might focus their ambition on careers that could lift them out of poverty for life.

Moreover, sports scholarships don't just go to poor kids. They also go to wealthy suburban kids who play golf, squash, lacrosse, tennis and other games favored by the elite. Those kids not only get a break on tuition; they get indulgence for mediocre grades and low SAT scores. Basically, colleges are saying to kids lucky enough to go to excellent resource-rich high schools, Don't worry about that missed chemistry lab, those 200 pages still to go in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, those French irregular verbs—bring us your backhand and your butterfly stroke.

Should college students play sports? Sure, for fun. Not to make money for their schools, massage the egos of donors and alumni, raise up false idols like Joe Paterno—and deprive themselves of a real education in the process. According to the NCAA, to be a top college football player takes at least forty-three hours a week. There is just no way that even a well-prepared, devoted student can handle a full load of courses around the edges of such a brutal and exhausting schedule. Instead, they're hauled through dumbed-down courses in gut majors like "interdisciplinary studies" and "social science" by an army of tutors and professors who know the drill: we need this kid, so he's got to pass. One of my heroines, Jan Kemp, lost her job teaching English at the University of Georgia when she went public with the pressures that were put on her to pass the athletes in her classes. Even with all that help, the graduation rate of Division I athletes, 65 percent, is nothing to cheer about.

Back to Penn State. Next to the molesting and the inaction, was anything more disturbing than the student riot in defense of it? If those thousands of kids had been Occupiers, don't tell me they could have overturned a news van and knocked down lampposts with relative impunity. But sports is different. Impunity is its middle name—for players, coaches and apparently fans as well. Sports is embedded in the rich, loamy craziness of American popular morality, right down in there with God, the flag, the military and the family. Well, not all sports—not tennis or hockey or gymnastics or even basketball (too ghetto). Football.

And that brings us to the patriarchal aspect of the Penn State scandal. I know it's predictable and boring, but come on, people! There really is a message here about masculine privilege: the deification of a powerful old man who can do no wrong, an all-male hierarchy protecting itself (hello, pedophile priests), a culture of entitlement and a truly astonishing lack of concern about sexual violence. This last is old news, unfortunately: sexual assaults by athletes are regularly covered up or lightly punished by administrations, even in high school, and society really doesn't care all that much. A federal appeals court declared that a Texas cheerleader could be kicked off the squad (and made to contribute to the school's legal costs) for refusing to cheer her rapist when he took the field—and he'd pleaded guilty to misdemeanor assault too, so why was he even still playing? According to USA Today, an athlete accused of a sex crime has a very good chance of getting away with it. If Sandusky had abused little girls, let alone teenage or adult women, would he be in trouble today? Or would we say, like the neighbors of an 11-year-old gang-raped in Cleveland, Texas, that she was asking for it?

Cancel the season. Fire everybody. Get real about rape. Grow up.

[20111118-09](#) 11:05 SteveB Re: "Penn State's Patriarchal Pastimes" (reply to Pam, above)

We (of the Big 10) hate Penn State!

[20111118-13](#) 11:23 SteveB Re: "Penn State's Patriarchal Pastimes" (reply to Pam, above)

If you were one of the guys, I'd talk about how great college sports are and how they must be preserved as sacred. Yeh-rah! (Just kidding!)

But since you're a girl, I'll tell you that all professional (and college is professional) sports sicken me (except cock fighting, which I have just around the corner). Not that I mind the violence. It's just that...doesn't it all get so boringly familiar? Yet still so incredibly inconsequential? (Not kidding!)

To me, almost every single game is like the worst of "Groundhog Day" possibilities. "Oh no, they're going to do it again. They're going to attempt to carry the ball over the goal and they will probably not succeed...again! Oh, he made it over (scored a goal, made a basket, etc.), how great."

And, get this! There are rules! There are rules that make it so nothing else can ever happen! A player can't, say, surprise everybody, and try to score a goal on a motorcycle, just to keep it interesting. Nope. Can't be done. No ad libs allowed. You can even get in trouble after scoring if you get too creative celebrating.

Oxford and Cambridge are the way it should be. The professional NCAA sports should go, but they won't, and we know why—\$\$\$\$.

The feelings the universities try to evoke in students, alums, the country, remind me so much of the patriotic feelings that politicians sometimes find in their interest to stir up. The fervor of "From these dead hands!" and stuff like that there. Stuff totalitarian politicians love. Control those masses!

Not that I'm not patriotic, because I am. I just think too much fervor for one's religion or one's country can get many more than one into very big trouble.

[20111118-16](#) 11:37 Pam Re: "Penn State's Patriarchal Pastimes" (reply to SteveB, above)

I hate big-time college sports and the NCAA (of which my dad was once a vice president).

[20111118-14](#) 11:24 SteveG Offshore Corporate \$Trillions

Read an article yesterday explaining why corporations aren't doing anything while they are sitting on a couple trillion dollars in cash – their debt has escalated at the same time. My guess would be from increased salaries and bonuses, but that is just a guess.

Accounting and economics - you can play with and make up just about anything and someone is going to believe it.

[20111118-19](#) 12:44 SteveM Fw: Remember Jan. 3, 2007

[Source of original email unknown. –SteveB]

Remember Jan. 3, 2007

It's been down hill since January 3rd 2007. This is the day the Democrats took over the House of Representatives and the Senate, at the very start of the 110th Congress.

The Democratic Party controlled a majority in both chambers for the first time since the end of the 103rd Congress in 1995.

For those who are listening to the liberals propagating the fallacy that everything is "Republicans/Bush's Fault", think about this:

January 3rd, 2007, the day the Democrats took over the Senate and the Congress:

- The DOW Jones closed at 12,621.77.
- The GDP for the previous quarter was 3.5%.
- The Unemployment rate was 4.6%.
- George Bush's Economic policies SET A RECORD of 52 STRAIGHT MONTHS of JOB CREATION!

Remember that day...

January 3rd, 2007 was the day that Barney Frank took over the House Financial Services Committee and Chris Dodd took over the Senate Banking Committee.

The economic meltdown that happened 15 months later was in what part of the economy?

BANKING AND FINANCIAL SERVICES!

THANK YOU DEMOCRATS (especially Barney) for taking us from 13,000 DOW, 3.5 GDP and 4.6% Unemployment...to this CRISIS by (among MANY other things) dumping 5-6 TRILLION Dollars of toxic loans on the economy from YOUR Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac FIASCOES!

(BTW: Bush asked Congress 17 TIMES to stop Fannie & Freddie -starting in 2001 because it was financially risky for the US economy). Barney blocked it and called it a "Chicken Little Philosophy" (and the sky did fall!)

And who took the THIRD highest pay-off from Fannie Mae AND Freddie Mac? OBAMA

And who fought against reform of Fannie and Freddie? OBAMA and the Democrat Congress, especially BARNEY!!!!

So when someone tries to blame Bush...

REMEMBER JANUARY 3rd, 2007.... THE DAY THE DEMOCRATS TOOK OVER!"

Bush may have been in the car but the Democrats were in charge of the gas pedal and steering wheel they were driving the economy into the ditch.

Budgets do not come from the White House. They come from Congress and the party that controlled Congress since January 2007 is the Democratic Party.

Furthermore, the Democrats controlled the budget process for 2008 & 2009 as well as 2010 & 2011.

In that first year, they had to contend with George Bush, which caused them to compromise on spending, when Bush somewhat belatedly got tough on spending increases.

For 2009 though, Nancy Pelosi & Harry Reid bypassed George Bush entirely, passing continuing resolutions to keep government running until Barack Obama could take office. At that time, they passed a massive omnibus spending bill to complete the 2009 budget.

And where was Barack Obama during this time? He was a member of that very Congress that passed all of these massive spending bills, and he signed the omnibus bill as President to complete 2009. Let's remember what the deficits looked like during that period:

If the Democrats inherited any deficit, it was the 2007 deficit, the last of the Republican budgets. That deficit was the lowest in five years, and the fourth straight decline in deficit spending. After that, Democrats in Congress took control of spending, and that includes Barack Obama, who voted for the budgets.

If Obama inherited anything, he inherited it from himself.

In a nutshell, what Obama is saying is "I inherited a deficit that I voted for, and then I voted to expand that deficit four-fold since January 20th."

There is no way this will be widely publicized, unless each of us sends it on!

[20111118-20](#) 12:45 SteveB Re: Remember Jan. 3, 2007 (reply to SteveM, above)

Yep, it has been nothing but downhill. Hey, what's that on your back? Damn! Look at that! It's George W. Bush! No wonder you're careening down the slope, out of control.

[20111118-21](#) 15:16 Art Re: My Jobs Plan (reply to Pam, FotM Newsletter #20)

Pam: What's wrong with the people in D.C.?

Mostly it's greed.

[20111118-22](#) 19:11 SteveG "Bill Clinton Tells DePauw Students World Too Unequal"

"Bill Clinton Tells DePauw Students World Too Unequal" by Shari Held, *Indianapolis Star*

Nov. 18, 2011, (<http://www.indystar.com/article/20111118/NEWS05/111180379/Bill-Clinton-tells-DePauw-students-world-too-unequal?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|IndyStar.com>)

[20111119-01](#) 00:41 SteveG Fw: Sherrod Brown Petition: Tell Democrats to Stand-Up for Progressive Principles!

from Sherrod Brown:

<http://www.sherrodbrown.com/petition/super-committee/?subsource=CKFNABLF007>

Idiot. Complete, total, absolute idiot. I try to avoid name-calling, but when the shoe fits...How can ANYONE not see through this? But you know there are thousands who don't, who think Perry's great because he's as stupid and selfish as they are. Aaaarghh!

"Rick Perry Doubles Down on 'Lazy' Ad; Slams Obama as a 'Socialist'" by Arlette Saenz, Yahoo! News/ABC

Fri, Nov 18, 2011 8:38 PM EST, ABC News Blogs

<http://gma.yahoo.com/blogs/abc-blogs/rick-perry-doubles-down-lazy-ad-slams-obama-013831206.html>

Two days after releasing a television ad chastising President Obama for calling Americans "lazy," Texas Gov. Rick Perry stuck to the claim in his TV spot despite having taken Obama's comments out of context.

"Yeah it's a fair ad absolutely," Perry said on "The O'Reilly Factor" Friday evening. "This president's traveled around the country making excuses for America, apologizing for America, saying that America is not an exemplary country, and then he gets on TV and talks about that Americans are lazy, that they've lost their ambition, that they've lost their imagination."

Even after Bill O'Reilly played President Obama's entire comments, which show the president was referencing the government and business sector not Americans, Perry still clung to his belief.

"He said we've been a little lazy," Perry said. "I think he's talking about Americans."

"Do you really?" O'Reilly asked. "Is that what you took away from that?"

"Absolutely," Perry said. "I think that's exactly what he's talking about. I think this is a man who really, if he believed that Americans were hardworking, that they were ready to ignite this economy, then we wouldn't have the tax policy, wouldn't have the regulatory policies in place that are killing jobs in this country."

Perry did not hide his contempt for the president and his policies and directly labeled Obama a "socialist."

"Absolutely," Perry said. "I think Barack Obama is a socialist."

"I think he cares for his country, don't get me wrong about that, but I think he truly misunderstands what this country was based upon, the values that America was based upon, which was free enterprise and having the ability to risk your capital and having a chance to have a return on your investment," Perry said. "When you talk about printing money and spending government money, and trying to spend it out, that conversation he had with Joe the Plumber, kind of redistribute the wealth – the best I can tell that's socialism."

In the opening week of his campaign, Perry suggested Obama might not bear passion for this country.

"I think you want a president who is passionate about America – that's in love with America," Perry said during a visit to the Iowa State Fair in August.

Later that evening, at a GOP event in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, a reporter asked Perry if he was suggesting the president does not love America, but Perry would not give a direct answer.

"You need to ask him," Perry responded. "I'm saying: You're a good reporter, go ask him."

[If Bill O'Reilly is amazed, I'm really amazed! This is how the Republican lie machine works! "Socialist" indeed! – SteveB]

20111119-03

12:20

SteveG

"Lobbying Firm's Memo Spells Out Plan to Undermine Occupy Wall Street"

This is to be expected. They just don't like us. Too bad.

"Lobbying Firm's Memo Spells Out Plan to Undermine Occupy Wall Street" by Jonathan Larsen and Ken Olshansky, MSNBC

Nov. 19, 2011, (http://openchannel.msnbc.msn.com/_news/2011/11/19/8884405-lobbying-firms-memo-spells-out-plan-to-undermine-occupy-wall-street)

A well-known Washington lobbying firm with links to the financial industry has proposed an \$850,000 plan to take on Occupy Wall Street and politicians who might express sympathy for the protests, according to a memo obtained by the MSNBC program "Up w/ Chris Hayes."

The proposal was written on the letterhead of the lobbying firm Clark Lytle Geduldig & Cranford and addressed to one of CLGC's clients, the American Bankers Association.

CLGC's memo proposes that the ABA pay CLGC \$850,000 to conduct "opposition research" on Occupy Wall Street in order to construct "negative narratives" about the protests and allied politicians. The memo also asserts that Democratic victories in 2012 would be detrimental for Wall Street and targets specific races in which it says Wall Street would benefit by electing Republicans instead.

According to the memo, if Democrats embrace OWS, "This would mean more than just short-term political discomfort for Wall Street. ... It has the potential to have very long-lasting political, policy and financial impacts on the companies in the center of the bullseye."

The memo also suggests that Democratic victories in 2012 should not be the ABA's biggest concern. "... (T)he bigger concern," the memo says, "should be that Republicans will no longer defend Wall Street companies."

Two of the memo's authors, partners Sam Geduldig and Jay Cranford, previously worked for House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio. Geduldig joined CLGC before Boehner became speaker; Cranford joined CLGC this year after serving as the speaker's assistant for policy. A third partner, Steve Clark, is reportedly "tight" with Boehner, according to a story by Roll Call that CLGC features on its website.

Jeff Sigmund, an ABA spokesperson, confirmed that the association got the memo. "Our Government Relations staff did receive the proposal – it was unsolicited and we chose not to act on it in any way," he said in a statement to "Up."

CLGC did not return calls seeking comment.

Boehner spokesman Michael Steel declined to comment on the memo. But he responded to its characterization of Republicans as defenders of Wall Street by saying, "My understanding is that President Obama is the single largest recipient of donations from Wall Street."

On "Up" Saturday, Obama campaign adviser Anita Dunn responded by saying that the majority of the president's re-election campaign is fueled by small donors. She rejected the suggestion that the president himself is too close to Wall Street, saying "If that's the case, why were tough financial reforms passed over party line Republican opposition?"

The CLGC memo raises another issue that it says should be of concern to the financial industry — that OWS might find common cause with the Tea Party. "Well-known Wall Street companies stand at the nexus of where OWS protestors and the Tea Party overlap on angered populism," the memo says. "...This combination has the potential

to be explosive later in the year when media reports cover the next round of bonuses and contrast it with stories of millions of Americans making do with less this holiday season."

The memo outlines a 60-day plan to conduct surveys and research on OWS and its supporters so that Wall Street companies will be prepared to conduct a media campaign in response to OWS. Wall Street companies "likely will not be the best spokespeople for their own cause," according to the memo. "A big challenge is to demonstrate that these companies still have political strength and that making them a political target will carry a severe political cost."

Part of the plan CLGC proposes is to do "statewide surveys in at least eight states that are shaping up to be the most important of the 2012 cycle."

Specific races listed in the memo are U.S. Senate races in Florida, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Wisconsin, Ohio, New Mexico and Nevada as well as the gubernatorial race in North Carolina.

The memo indicates that CLGC would research who has contributed financial backing to OWS, noting that, "Media reports have speculated about associations with George Soros and others."

"It will be vital," the memo says, "to understand who is funding it and what their backgrounds and motives are. If we can show that they have the same cynical motivation as a political opponent it will undermine their credibility in a profound way."

20111119-04	13:19	Pam	Re: "Lobbying Firm's Memo Spells Out Plan to Undermine OWS" (reply to SteveG, above)
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What scares and disgusts me is the underhandedness of the Republican Party. The argument that the Democrats do it too cuts no ice with me. If the Dems. do engage in dirty tricks, it is to a far lesser degree than the Repubs., who will stop at nothing to protect their money machine. They come right out and say it in this memo.

Perry says he wants an America where people are free to invest their capital, take risks, and get rich. (Almost a direct quote.) Investment is good. Capitalism depends on it. But let the rich risk their own money. The way it is now we are all involved in risk we didn't sign up for. Pension funds, retirement accounts, even bank savings are attached to risky markets. I believe in saving and living within your means. You can have some control over that. But when we're all players who follow the stock market's every flicker, we are just pawns of the Perry's of this world.

20111119-05	13:47	SteveG	Re: "Lobbying Firm's Memo Spells Out Plan to Undermine OWS" (reply to Pam, above)
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Go to MSNBC and watch Rachel Maddow's Nov. 18. show. [Ref: Newt Gingrich. -SteveB]

20111119-06	15:04	Pam	Re: "Lobbying Firm's Memo Spells Out Plan to Undermine OWS" (reply to SteveG, above)
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OK. I watched Rachel Maddow. [Ref: Newt Gingrich. -SteveB] Incredible. Amazing. Astonishing. Jerk. Creep. Liar. Hypocrite. Ruthless bastard. Should I go on?

Years ago, I used to frequent a coffee shop owned by Newt's daughter. Her husband was then the tennis coach at UNCG. She seemed like a nice enough person, and I can't help wondering what she thinks about her father. Obviously, the wives of the candidates support their husbands (for whatever reasons), but I wonder what it's like to be the child of someone like Newt. Somehow the other candidates don't SEEM as duplicitous; they just seem ignorant and out of their depth (Cain, Perry, Bachman) or no worse than any politician (Romney and Huntsman). But Newt deserves a category all his own. All I can say is, Who does he think he is?!!

[20111119-07](#) 20:53 SteveG Video: "Why Occupy Wall Street Needs Michael Bloomberg"

"Keith's Special Comment: Why Occupy Wall Street needs Michael Bloomberg" by Keith Olbermann, Current

Nov. 15, 2011, (<http://current.com/shows/countdown/videos/keiths-special-comment-why-occupy-wall-street-needs-michael-bloomberg>)

[20111120-02](#) 14:31 Pam Re: "Why Occupy Wall Street Needs Michael Bloomberg" (reply to SteveG, above)

I haven't been in the habit of watching Keith Olberman, but I thoroughly enjoyed this diatribe. He says it the way I'd like to. In a way, our situation is pretty simple, as was the Civil Rights Movement. White American had all the power and most of the money. African-Americans wanted their fair share of America's bounty. They were morally in the right. Today the very wealthy have all the power and most of the money. The poor and middle-class want their fair share. Unless there is blood in the streets, they will get it.

[20111120-03](#) 16:55 SteveG Re: "Why Occupy Wall Street Needs Michael Bloomberg" (reply to Pam, above) & "The Top 0.1% of the Nation Earn Half of All Capital Gains"

Keith goes on good rants every once in a while – to me he is worth a listen.

Take a read of the following:

"The Top 0.1% of the Nation Earn Half of All Capital Gains" by Robert Lenzner, *Forbes*

Nov 21, 2011, (<http://news.yahoo.com/top-0-1-nation-earn-half-capital-gains-172647859.html>)

[20111120-05](#) 17:58 Pam Re: "The Top 0.1% of the Nation Earn Half of All Capital Gains" (reply to SteveG, above)

This just confirms what I've thought all along. It's hard to admit that America might have fallen prey to a small cadre of thieves, but history is replete with societies that have been hijacked. Hitler talked about "the big lie," as did Plato long ago. Keep telling the lie(s) often enough, and eventually people will believe them. It occurred to me that all this carry-on about how America is #1, how exceptional we are, how we're the best that is or ever was, sounds a lot like the Nazi's promotion of a super-race. Germany was a civilized country with a bruised ego. Hitler appealed to the very types who make up our Tea Party by blaming others for their troubles, whipping up fervent patriotism, and making ordinary people feel extraordinary. There are so many parallels between Germany in the '30s and America in the 21st. c. that I feel uneasy. The warnings have been there for ages: Orwell, Huxley, *Fahrenheit 411*. We are not immune to political corruption, far from it. I didn't see the latest Republican performance, but I understand there was a lot of weeping and religiosity. Crocodile tears and hypocrisy. If the Republicans win in 2012, this country will no longer be a hospitable place for the likes of us. The apparatus is already in place to monitor everybody. I enjoy TV crime shows, but if I think for a moment it's rather chilling how easily a person can be tracked these days. The fact that it happens all the time in our entertainment just gets us used to it. Everything I've worried about for the last decade or more has come to pass. Actually, I foresaw the '60s riots before they were a blip on the horizon. I don't claim special prescience, but my instincts have been right in the past. I cling to anything that sounds optimistic, but I think I'm whistling past the cemetery.

[20111120-06](#) 18:51 SteveB Re: "The Top 0.1% of the Nation Earn Half of All Capital Gains" (reply to Pam, above)

I have been lucky to come across plenty of both good and evil in my life. More than enough to be able to recognize their faces.

Evil is more powerful than good. Evil thinks to lie. Evil thinks to plot, cheat, and deceive. Good does not. Good sits there and tries to understand why evil want to happen. Why evil wants to do its harm. It will never understand.

Good also has a power that is beyond our understanding. I believe good almost always wins, but often with a tragic price paid. Poor Othello!

Many Americans are paying that price now, unsung by the Republican "half" of our nation. Swept under the rug. Their suffering unacknowledged by the right, many of whom are suffering themselves, but being told they should place the blame on Obama.

People somehow cannot remember the year 2008. Cannot remember Bush. Cannot remember what transpired. Cannot read the evidence. Cannot pick-up the trail.

It will work out. I think you are doing so much to help here with your words. I know they help me. Thank you.

20111120-01 13:48 SteveB	Fw: MoveOn Action: Share the OWS 230 Mile Walk from NYC to Washington, DC!
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from MoveOn:

Last week, a courageous group left the Occupy Wall Street camp in New York City and started marching to Washington, DC. Their goal was to bring the outrage and energy of the 99% directly to Capitol Hill. They're marching to call out the congressional Super Committee, which could cut a deal before Wednesday slashing Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid to protect tax breaks for the 1%.

The marchers' stories are powerful, and Congress needs to hear them before they slash programs that so many people rely on.

So we met up with the marchers yesterday and filmed a short video to help spread their story. **It's critical that as many people as possible see this, as the Super Committee nears its critical deadline.** Can you share it right now with your friends and family?

If enough of us share this video we can help the march get more attention, get more coverage in the media, and ultimately, put more pressure on Congress and the Super Committee.

After marching nearly 200 miles through the winter cold, they'll cross through Baltimore and prepare for their final push into Washington on Tuesday, just before the Super Committee's deadline. Dozens of supporters have joined the march along the way. But it's up to all the rest of us to help share their story and make sure that by the time they get to Washington, Congress—and the rest of the country—is expecting them.

Please click here to share the video with your friends and family:

<http://www.moveon.org/r?r=267998&id=33071-20195165-v8q%3Dmkx&t=3>.

Thanks for all you do. –Justin, Elena, Laura, Robin, and the rest of the team

20111120-04 17:41 SteveG	"Woes for Johnson & Johnson"
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From SteveG (5:41 pm) – ref: Economics, Rich and Poor, Corporations

Corporate America!

"Woes for Johnson & Johnson" by Michael L. Diamond, *Asbury Park (N.J.) Press/USA Today*

Nov. 20, 2011, (<http://www.usatoday.com/money/companies/story/2011-11-20/johnson-and-johnson/51314960/1?csp=hf>)

<u>20111120-07</u>	18:59	SteveB	Where Are You? (to Dennis)
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Hey, whatsup? Haven't heard from you in a while... Are you traveling? If so, may you have a great journey. Take care.

[20111120-08](#) 19:02 Dennis Re: Where Are You? (reply to SteveB, above)

Canoodling with Queen on my birthday last week aboard the Invercargill ferry to Stewart Island in New Zealand.



[20111120-09](#) 19:35 SteveB Re: Where Are You? (reply to Dennis, above)

Yer lookin' good, young man!

I once had a Portuguese girlfriend who spoke five languages fluently, spent years travelling in India and five more sailing around the world, visiting places. Plus she's still always off to Brazil for a few months, or Alaska, or Tibet.

But she always told me, with a far-away look in her eye, that her favorite place in the world, bar none, is New Zealand. I'd love to see it someday.

Have a great trip, buddy!

20111120-10 19:44 Dennis Re: Where Are You? (reply to SteveB, above)

If heaven is a country that doesn't have airport security checks for domestic flights, then New Zealand is it. Except for a shortage of good red wines, it's a terrific country. Ya gotta go there!

Award Winning Travel Photography: <http://www.DennisCox.com>, <http://www.ChinaStockphotos.com>

Take the World Tour: Over 100 Destinations on Seven Continents: <http://www.denniscox.com/views.htm>

20111120-11 20:15 Ann Photo: Two Guys You Know

Two guys you know.



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

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