



FRIENDS OF THE MIDDLE **NEWSLETTER #26 — NOV. 28, 2011**

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

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Values = Politics

(posted by Pam McRae, Nov. 28, 2011)

Heard something on NPR this morning about our early history. Didn't catch her name, but someone has written a book about said subject ["How to tell us apart — Democracy or Plutocracy?."]. She pointed out that from the very beginning there has been a divide in America between those who want rule by the elite and those who want rule by the people. A lot of nasty things were said on both sides, just as nasty as the things people say today about our would-be leaders. From all I can tell, the country is about evenly divided between those who favor business and money and those who want to see the fruits of capitalism shared more equitably. I didn't say "equally." There's a difference.

When you watch the local news and see all the crimes—from petty to heinous—that are perpetrated by "the people," the often unschooled, unwashed, conscienceless folks that drag a community down, you can understand why rule by an educated elite might seem attractive. Enlightened monarchy, if you will. But you know what they say about power. If we must choose between imposed order and people-power, I vote for the latter. I don't want to be like Singapore, despite their economic success.

I think both the Right and the Left value whatever their definition is of "individual freedom." For the Right, that means total self-reliance and the right to keep what you make. For the Left, it means autonomy in one's private life, with no state interference in religion or sexual practices for consenting adults. For the Right, it means the right to stick with your own kind and reject alternative value systems. For the Left, it means recognizing and accepting difference in religion and sexual preference. I'm sure there are other points of divergence, but these seem to me to be the two big ones.

We are not descended from the Puritans for nothing. Remember, they came to the New World not to find freedom of/from religion, but to fulfill a desire to have things their own way. You may not have liked it if you had to read it in school, but **The Scarlet Letter** is an excellent reminder of how we got to be the kind of people we are. There may be many Catholics, Muslims, and Jews in America today, but the Protestant ethic still rules. Wealth is a sign of God's favor, and there is only one way to salvation: being chosen for it.

Core beliefs (boy, is that a tired phrase!) are very probably permanent and not subject to argument. That is why I don't worry about "converting" anyone to my way of thinking. What I do object to is people who place their values above mine and want theirs to prevail. Fanatics believe the truth is on their side, but sincerity is no argument. Let believers believe, but let's make sure those beliefs don't impinge on others' actions or life choices. The Right wants "freedom from government." I want government to protect me from them.

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I think you're on to something here. So both sides essentially have this irreconcilable difference as to what individual freedoms they desire, I guess, or seek, or value? The right seems to value security and comfort the most. They don't want to worry about these things. I say more power to them!

The left, on the other hand, seems to value something slightly different.

But there is so much overlap and so much in common really. We all want security in our nations, in our homes, and on our streets. We won't kick comfort out the door. And I have still not heard anyone from the right explicitly reject the values of the left.

The left does not want to worry that America's children are not receiving a good education. The left does not want to worry about homeless people begging in the streets, bothering everyone with their suffering. The left does not want to worry about what unhappy, jobless people might do if left unattended. The left does not want to worry about what could happen if other world governments hate us. The left not only wants security, it wants freedom from war, and freedom from military domination of politics, while recognizing the rare necessity for war. The left

wants freedom from persecution by the right. As long as they don't hurt anyone else, the left wants to be left in peace to live their lives. The left wants enough government to help with security, but not so much government that it becomes oppressive. But let's be honest, a little government interference in private enterprise can be a very good thing indeed. Think government regulations pertaining to blood transfusions, for instance. I believe I want interference, despite a run-up in cost.

And, honestly, is there anyone from the right except kooks who do not value and want these same things? If they say they do not want these things, do not share these values, I believe they lie.

WE ALL HAVE AN EQUAL RIGHT TO THESE FREEDOMS. THAT'S REALLY ALL THEY ARE. We have the right to pursue these different values, not impose them on each other. Can't we try to find a way to do that? I defend the right's right to pursue its values for itself, but not to impose them on all of us.

If we share a whole set of values, which we so obviously do, why doesn't the right just admit that and decide to move in a direction beneficial to all? The left would like that very much indeed.

20111125-01 09:16 Marty Friends of the Middle, Immigration, Republicans (to SteveB)

First, I'd like to thank you for your FotM Newsletter.

I can't believe I'm saying this, but we both agree with virtually all of your U.S. political opinions.

I do have a softer position on immigration, but I'm sure my feelings are colored by the romantic picture of oppressed peoples coming here to succeed.

I also have no real experience with living where immigration has a profound local effect, as with my friends in San Diego (RichardB - did you know any of his older brothers/sisters?) and our friends outside Detroit.

It is a good bit of work to go through emails and put together a newsletter. I'm glad and proud that you are so motivated, and I am grateful.

I am personally so damned tired of hearing Republicans talk about the wealth "trickling down" from the rich as a reason to not increase their taxes, without even a shred of actual evidence that this has ever happened. What I really don't understand is why the press doesn't demand this evidence from the right. Argh.

20111125-02 10:43 SteveB FotM Newsletter to Congress

Congress is proving a tough nut to crack. They don't want long emails. They want tweets! They only want to hear from their constituents. But I have managed to concoct somewhat less than half of their emails so far, and I will have a spreadsheet of all the emails, web contact forms, and phone numbers to send out next week.

Now, do they ever pay attention???

20111125-03 10:44 Art Re: FotM Newsletter to Congress (reply to SteveB, above)

Does this now mean I can no longer call the Speaker Bonehead?

20111125-04 11:29 SteveB Re: FotM Newsletter to Congress (reply to Art, above)

No. I want us to keep doing the same thing! I'll probably edit it to "b*nehead" though. Haha

20111125-05 11:36 Pam Re: FotM Newsletter to Congress

Hmmm. Does anyone else feel uneasy about sending the FotM Newsletter out to all those politicians? I have mixed feelings here. I like the idea of Congress knowing what people are thinking, but the thing I like about this group is that I feel comfortable saying whatever I want—even if it means calling Newt Gingrich an idiot. I don't want to stop doing that. I like feeling that we are a little community (for lack of a better word). I want to know how others feel. If everyone wants to do this, I'll try to tone down my rhetoric or write to a subset of you.

20111125-06 12:00 SteveB Re: FotM Newsletter to Congress (reply to Pam, above)

I can see that. And it's only an experiment, and what I'm finding is that a full issue, like today's, at 2 Mb as an .rtf, unless I can get them smaller, will go to very few Congressmen's staff inboxes. So maybe it's not even worth the effort, and that has been considerable.

I will provide the contact info, which is kind of available online, but not comprehensive.

One thing I always consider is Kevin Bacon's six degrees of separation. I assume the Newsletter will be forwarded and, so far, it seems to be getting forwarded. Then, if it is forwarded five more times, it could get to anyone or everyone in the world with email. And anyone will be able to read the current issue on the website, or read the blog (probably). Right now, I'm thinking that to read the archive (and maybe back issues) a visitor would have to be a subscriber and be signed-in.

So it is a cozy little group, yes, but if we want to accomplish something, we need to get this out there. Maybe reel-in some more right-wing suckers, since we seem to have a dearth of them... But I don't want anyone feeling uncomfortable.

It's interesting how a writer thinks of his audience, no? And that relationship? Some of us function best, I think, one-on-one. Some of us picture this anonymous crowd or a lonely woman reading alone at night in the glow of her lamp. She's wearing...no, just kidding! But, you know what I mean.

I'll happily do whatever. My only goals are to have fun and try to grow. I don't know why I'm so ambitious, but it's only a small-sized ambition...

20111125-09 19:01 Art Re: FotM Newsletter to Congress & Everyone (reply to all, above)

Well, you know my motto. I think we need to do something, and the more that hear us the better. Don't worry Pam, they'll come after me first, and that may a mistake.

20111125-07 12:35 SteveG Re: FotM Newsletter to Congress & Everyone (reply to SteveB, above)

Can I invite other people to join the group??

20111125-08 12:38 SteveB Re: FotM Newsletter to Congress & Everyone (reply to SteveG, above)

Sure! Just follow the instructions at the top of the FotM Newsletter...or send me their addresses. Or forward the FotM Newsletter to everyone you know. That's what the more anonymous FotM Newsletter sets us free to do that the email alone didn't, because it was just too much email. Plus none of the people "out there" knows who anyone is except they know my name, which is OK. It lends us a little air of credibility, I think. We can't all be anonymous, but everyone but me can be, if they wish.

Sorry if I didn't make all that clear.

20111125-10 19:31 Art Super Committee

Read a good one today in a *WP* letter to the editor. What if we try a new Super Committee but let the Republican leaders pick the Democrats, or at least some portion of them, and the same in reverse? Same idea as: you cut the cake in half, and I get to pick my piece first. If they were really trying to solve something, that would be the way to go.

20111126-01 05:43 SteveB Re: Super Committee (reply to Art, above)

You know, that's an excellent idea (from the WP letter)! I sure wish they had done that to begin with. That way, people who would compromise would tend to be picked instead of the dogmatic ones such as, especially, the Republicans who were picked by the Republicans. Somehow, even the stubborn, one would think, Democrats on the super committee were, apparently, ready to compromise Medicare, Social Security, Education, the whole enchilada, selling out the poor and middle classes to the rich for the sake of the country.

The Republicans, for the sake of the country, were...let's see...willing to go use the restrooms during the super committee meeting rather than going in the corner of the conference room or on the table? Gee, thanks, guys, for all you do for us.

They sure are good lackeys for their masters though, aren't they? Better than our side, but then our side has the disadvantage of actually being able to think.

Let's see...have I stated this strongly enough?

20111126-02 07:27 Art Re: Super Committee (reply to SteveB, above)

You know, if this is so obvious to a couple of low-lives like us, why can't others see it? I have this other group and they range from just vicious Obama haters to religious fanatics and a few sort of middle roaders. The first two types are impossible but I am frustrated with the third group. When you hammer home some specific they say, "Oh yeah, maybe your right." but then go right back to saying "they're all the same". HmMMM.

20111126-03 09:33 Dick Fw: Slam on Obama & Obama's Report Card (to SteveB)

Please give us your opinion on this for the record. Thanks.

[Source of original email unknown. -SteveB]

Slam on Obama

(There is a lot of truth stretching here, but a lot of these are reasons contempt is building for the hope and change guy. -Tom)

The day the Democrats took over was not January 22nd 2009....[See FotM Newsletter #21 for the rest. -SteveB].

"The problems we face today exist because the people who work for a living are outnumbered by those who vote for a living."

I feel that come next year, we need to carefully examine our future in this country and how we want to live and what we want to save for our children and grandchildren. DON'T vote blindly, look around and see what has taken place in the last four years....the changes that have taken place to the detriment and ruination of the USA and

Christianity. This report card is unreal. Thank God someone had the background, intelligence, and determination to put this together. This took an enormous amount of work. I have to forward this to everyone I know. Please remember that we hold a great deal of power...we can vote. —Victor

Barack Obama's 32 Month Report Card [allegedly by 'Rich Carroll']

[Source of original email unknown. Largely debunked by TruthOrFiction.com, see reply below. —SteveB]

Copy this article. You will need researched material to mail your liberal friends and/or relatives.

Mr. Hope and Change wants to create a nation humbled; humiliated, casting-aside capitalism and individual freedoms for one where we the people are government controlled. This would be a system that genuflects mediocrity, steals personal aspiration and opportunity, and punishes those who strive to succeed.

A gallon of regular gasoline the day Obama was inaugurated was \$1.79 on average in the U.S. Today that price is \$3.59, a 100.6% increase. The number of food stamp recipients has risen since Obama took office from 31,983,716 to 43,200,878, a 35.1% jump. Long term unemployment soared 146.2% during the same 32 month period from 2,600,000 to 6,400,000. Staggering hope and change isn't it?

American citizens living in poverty have risen 9.5% from 39,800,000 to 43,600,000, and the number of unemployed has jumped almost 25% from 11,616,000 to 14,485,000 as of August 31, 2011. The number of unemployed blacks has risen from 12.6% at the end of George Bush's term to 15.8% today, a 25.4% increase, and finally, our national debt is up 34.4% from \$10.627 trillion to \$14,278 trillion.*

Keep these figures in mind as we recount the number of firsts for this presidency:

- First President to refuse to show a valid birth certificate.
- First President to apply for college aid as a foreign student, then deny he was a foreigner.
- First President to have a social security number from a state he has never lived in.
- First President to preside over a cut to the credit rating of the United States.
- First President to violate the War Powers Act.
- First President to be held in contempt of court for illegally obstructing oil drilling in the Gulf of Mexico.
- First President to defy a Federal Judges court order to cease implementing the Health Care Reform Law.
- First President to require all Americans to purchase a product from a third party.
- First President to spend a trillion dollars on shovel-ready jobs and later admit there was no such thing as shovel-ready jobs.
- First President to abrogate bankruptcy law to turn over control of companies to his union supporters.
- First President to by-pass Congress and implement the Dream Act through executive fiat.
- First President to order a secret amnesty program that stopped the deportation of illegal immigrants across the U.S., including those with criminal convictions.
- First President to demand a company hand-over \$20 billion to one of his political appointees.
- First President to terminate Americas ability to put a man in space.
- First President to encourage racial discrimination and intimidation at polling places.
- First President to have a law signed by an auto-pen without being present.
- First President to arbitrarily declare an existing law unconstitutional and refuse to enforce it.
- First President to threaten insurance companies if they publicly speak-out on the reasons for their rate increases.
- First President to tell a major manufacturing company in which state they are allowed to locate a factory.
- First President to file lawsuits against the states he swore an oath to protect (AZ, WI, OH, IN)
- First President to withdraw an existing coal permit that had been properly issued years ago.
- First President to fire an inspector general of Ameri-corps for catching one of his friends in a corruption case.
- First President to appoint 45 Czars to replace elected officials in his office.
- First President to golf 73 separate times in his • First two and a half years in office.
- First President to hide his medical, educational and travel records.
- First President to win a Nobel Peace Prize for doing NOTHING to earn it.

- First President to coddle American enemies while alienating Americas allies.
- First President to publicly bow to Americas enemies while refusing to salute the U.S. Flag.
- First President to go on multiple global apology tours.
- First President to go on 17 lavish vacations, including date nights and Wednesday evening White House parties for his friends, paid for by the taxpayer.
- First President to refuse to wear the U.S. Flag lapel pin.
- First President to have 22 personal servants (taxpayer funded) for his wife.
- First President to keep a dog trainer on retainer for \$102,000.00 a year at taxpayer expense.
- First President to repeat the Holy Qur'an tells us, and openly admit the early morning call of the Azan (Islamic call to worship) is the most beautiful sound on earth.

Remember that 32 months of Obama White House we the people have accumulated national debt at a rate more than 27 times as fast as during the rest of our nation's entire history, as the Obama's plan their next extravagant vacation to the Indonesian Island nation of Bali.

Hope and change anyone??????????

*Sources: U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Wall Street Journal*, Bureau of Labor Statistics, US Dept of Labor, Standard & Poors/Case-Shiller, Federal Reserve, U.S. Treasury, Heritage Foundation.

20111126-04 10:16 SteveB Re: Slam on Obama & Obama's Report Card (reply to Dick, above)

Good to hear from you, Dick. The first part of this email (Slam on Obama) was in our FotM Newsletter #21. It's a little newer than most, so it isn't in Snopes.com yet. I believe I gave a sarcastic answer at the time. You're receiving the FotM Newsletter, right?

I haven't looked it up, but my memory is much different. Bush vetoed everything he could. If the Democrats kept the government functioning with continuing resolutions, then they were just like the Republican Congress before them, and, as we know now, it's a good thing they did or utter disaster would have resulted. Can you imagine the 2008 crash simultaneously with Congress saying they won't pay their debts? That would have been wonderful.

No, it's pretty obvious Obama and the Democrats saved us from a worse disaster, all caused by both parties starting with Reagan, bu especially the Bush Republicans, who had a chance to avert disaster but failed because of corruption.

Funny that the right vilifies Reid, Pelosi, Frank, etc. These politicians seem totally ineffective to me, not powerful boogiemens worthy of demonization.

As to the second section of your forward (Obama's "Report Card"), this is what I found at (<http://www.truthorfiction.com/rumors/o/obama-report-card.htm>). It looks to be almost 100% "fiction" with the rest being things any good President should have done.

Obama's 32 Month Report Card — Truth! & Fiction!

Summary of the eRumor: A forwarded email with what the author calls the many "firsts" of President Barack Obama.

The Truth: This eRumor appeared all over the Internet in November, 2011 and on various political web sites, but it was not found on any major news sites. The email says only that it was authored by someone named Rick Carrol.

Let us look some of the topics in the article one at a time:

First President to refuse to show a valid birth certificate. — Fiction!

Although there are those who dispute its validity, candidate Obama released of his birth certificate in 2008 and it was displayed on his Fight the Smears web site

(<http://www.fightthesmears.com/articles/5/birthcertificate>) when questions about his citizenship were raised. Critics alleged that the document was a fake, or insufficient as proof for the office of the President. This stirred a frenzy of rumors including emails that contained faked documents including one made up to look like birth certificates from Kenya. In 2010 President Obama released what he said was his original long form birth certificate, from the state of Hawaii. We have a page on the questionable citizenship of Barack Obama complete with photos of documents. Our findings: <http://www.truthorfiction.com/rumors//lawyersues.htm>.

First President to apply for college aid as a foreign student, then deny he was a foreigner. — Fiction!

This rumor originated from an April Fools Joke in 2009 featuring an alleged Associated Press story that said that Barack Obama received a grant from the "Fulbright Foundation" when he attended Occidental College in California. There is no "Fulbright Foundation" but there is a Fulbright program that is sponsored by the US Department of State and does award scholarship grants to students working towards higher degrees who already have a Bachelor of Arts degree. Our Findings: <http://www.truthorfiction.com/rumors/o/AP-Obama-Case.htm>.

First President to have a social security number from a state he has never lived in. — Fiction!

Rumors about Obama's Social Security Number began circulating in 2010 alleging that the number belonged to a deceased man who immigrated to the U.S. from France and resided in Hawaii. That proved to be fiction. This sparked additional inquiries as to why the President's Social Security Number began with 042, the three digit classification for Connecticut. According to the Social Security Administration, "The Area Number is assigned by the geographical region. Prior to 1972, cards were issued in local Social Security offices around the country and the Area Number represented the State in which the card was issued. This did not necessarily have to be the State where the applicant lived, since a person could apply for their card in any Social Security office." Social Security site: <http://www.ssa.gov/history/ssn/geocard.html>.

First President to preside over a cut to the credit rating of the United States. — Truth! [But JEEZ! He sure wasn't the 1st President to cause a cut, the Republicans in Congress were. —SteveB]

On August 5, 2011, for the first time in the history of this nation, Standard and Poor's downgraded the US Credit Rating to one notch below AAA. According to a *Washington Post* article dated that same day (http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/sandp-considering-first-downgrade-of-us-credit-rating/2011/08/05/gIQAgKeIxI_story.html), "the credit rating company said 'political brinkmanship' in the debate over the debt had made the U.S. government's ability to manage its finances 'less stable, less effective and less predictable.' It said the bipartisan agreement reached this week to find at least \$2.1 trillion in budget savings 'fell short' of what was necessary to tame the nation's debt over time and predicted that leaders would not be likely to achieve more savings in the future."

First President to violate the War Powers Act. — Fiction!

The War Powers Resolution of 1973 became federal law to prevent a president from committing the United States to an armed conflict without the approval from Congress. This law requires the President to notify Congress within 48 hours of committing U.S. armed forces to military action. It also limits U.S. involvement to no more than 60 days. In 2011 President Obama bypassed congressional approval for going into Libya, but he was not the first U.S. President to do so. The War Powers Resolution was first disregarded by President Clinton in 1999, during the bombing campaign in Kosovo.

First President to be held in contempt of court for illegally obstructing oil drilling in the Gulf of Mexico. — Truth! [And more power to him! —SteveB]

The President did order a moratorium on offshore drilling in waters deeper than 500 feet after the Deepwater Horizon Spill in the Gulf of Mexico in May 2010. The moratorium was struck down by New Orleans Judge Martin Feldman and according to a February 3, 2011 article in Bloomberg (<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-02-03/u-s-administration-in-contempt-over-gulf-drill-ban-judge>

[rules.html](#)), the Obama Administration was acting in contempt by continuing the policy. Felman's comments on the ruling were reported in the article. He said, "Each step the government took following the court's imposition of a preliminary injunction showcases its defiance." Feldman added, "Such dismissive conduct, viewed in tandem with the re-imposition of a second blanket and substantively identical moratorium, and in light of the national importance of this case, provide this court with clear and convincing evidence of the government's contempt."

First President to defy a Federal Judges court order to cease implementing the Health Care Reform Law. — Fiction!

The constitutionality of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act has been questioned by several courts in various states in the US since it was passed into law in March 21, 2010. According to a August 12, 2011 article in Reuters a U.S. Appeals Court for the 11th Circuit, based in Atlanta ruled that it was unconstitutional to require all Americans to buy insurance or face a penalty but it unanimously reversed a lower court decision that threw out the entire law.

First President to require all Americans to purchase a product from a third party. — Too Vague to investigate.

We are not sure of what policy this is related to. [They're talking about Obamacare insurance of course. Big deal! You're already required to buy or pay for all kinds of products from third parties if you wish to own and drive a car. The Supreme Court will decide this super-important issue next year. –SteveB]

First President to spend a trillion dollars on shovel-ready jobs and later admit there was no such thing as shovel-ready jobs.- Inaccurate!

According to a Sept. 26, 2011 article in Politico (<http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0911/64454.html#ixzz1cP0I9zCV>), President Obama did use the term "Shovel Ready Jobs" in a plan to fund \$50 billion in improvements to highways, transit systems, railways and aviation. The idea was to put Americans back to work by construction upgrades to 150,000 miles of road, 4,000 miles of train tracks, 150 miles of airport runways and the nation's air traffic control system. Political reported that experts did not see the jobs being as shovel ready as one would think as "A tremendous amount of money and time is needed to get a project through a detailed design process, permitting, environmental hurdles, public hearings and land acquisition."

First President to abrogate bankruptcy law to turn over control of companies to his union supporters. — Under Investigation.

First President to by-pass Congress and implement the Dream Act through executive fiat. — Fiction!

There was no such Executive Order. Our findings: <http://www.truthorfiction.com/rumors/o/Obama-Dream-Act-Executive-Order.htm>.

First President to order a secret amnesty program that stopped the deportation of illegal immigrants across the U.S., including those with criminal convictions. — Fiction!

This was not done in secret and according to an August 18, 2011 ABC News report (http://abclocal.go.com/kgq/story?section=news/national_world&id=8314997), "The Obama administration announced a major change in policy for thousands of illegal immigrants going through deportation proceedings. They now may be able to stay in the country. There are currently 300,000 deportation cases making their way through the federal immigration courts, but under the new policy immigrants classified as low-priority cases could be granted a stay and a chance to apply for a work permit."

First President to demand a company hand-over \$20 billion to one of his political appointees. - Too Vague to investigate.

We are not sure of what policy this is related to.

First President to terminate Americas ability to put a man in space. Fiction!

According to the *St. Petersburg Times* PolitiFact Check site, "Richard Nixon, perhaps in conjunction with Gerald Ford, would be the one to qualify for the unwanted title of "first president to terminate America's ability to put a man in space" — not Obama." The Apollo program ended in 1975 and had a five year gap in space launches until the Space Shuttle program was in full operation.

First President to encourage racial discrimination and intimidation at polling places. - Unproven!

On Nov. 4, 2008, Black Panthers were spotted outside a polling place in Philadelphia, PA. One of the Black Panthers was holding a night stick. A YouTube Video taken by a local journalism student of an account with them went viral on the Internet and news outlets. A short time later, police arrived on the scene and they were removed from the scene. Charges of voter intimidation were charged but they were dropped by the Justice Department under the leadership of Eric Holder, according to an August 20, 2009 article in the Wall Street Journal. No explanation was given by Holder or anyone at the Department of Justice. The accusation that the President encouraged this incident remains unproven.

First President to have a law signed by an auto-pen without being present. — Truth! [This is a good thing! –SteveB]

According to a May 22, 2011 article in the *New York Times* (<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/28/us/politics/28sign.html>) this was a historical first when the President extended the Patriot Act by autopen during a weeklong trip in Europe.

First President to arbitrarily declare an existing law unconstitutional and refuse to enforce it. — Too Vague to investigate.

We are not sure of what policy this is related to.

First President to threaten insurance companies if they publicly speak-out on the reasons for their rate increases. — Under Investigation

First President to tell a major manufacturing company in which state they are allowed to locate a factory. — Truth! [Not exactly. "Asking a judge" is to make a request, not "tell" as in command. — SteveB]

On Apr. 20, 2011 the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) filed a complaint against the Boeing claiming that the aircraft manufacturer opened up a second 787 Dreamliner production line in South Carolina in retaliation against the union. South Carolina is a "right to work state." On September 23, 2011 Politico.com reported that , "An Obama appointee is now **asking** a judge to order Boeing to relocate all 787 Dreamliner production to Washington state — a move that's feeding the GOP narrative that Obama's Big Government is meddling with job creation, just as the first plane nears its first commercial flight."

First President to file lawsuits against the states he swore an oath to protect (Az, WI, OH, IN) — Fiction!

The oath of the President of the United States does not have any conditions to protect U.S. States. The oath of office is in the U.S. Constitution and it says, "I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

First President to withdraw an existing coal permit that had been properly issued years ago. — Under Investigation

First President to fire an inspector general of Ameri-corps for catching one of his friends in a corruption case. — Under Investigation

First President to appoint 45 Czars to replace elected officials in his office. — Under Investigation

First President to golf 73 separate times in his first two and a half years in office. — Inaccurate!

According to a June 26, 2011 White House Dossier article, written by veteran White House reporter Keith Koffler, President Obama played his 75 golf game since being sworn into office. No doubt at the time of this writing the number is greater. According to an Oct. 24, 2009 article in Politico (http://www.politico.com/click/stories/0910/obama_ties_bush_on_golf.html), Obama was in office about 10 months when he played his 24th golf game, tying his predecessor, G. W. Bush, for the number of golf games. It took Bush almost 3 years to play that number of games.

First President to hide his medical, educational and travel records. — Fiction!

There are no U.S. laws stating that a U.S. President or presidential candidate disclose his medical or educational background. In his books, Barack Obama wrote about his life in Indonesia. Questions about Obama's travels could have been sparked by a rumor that was spread on YouTube by Reverend James Manning of the ATLAH church in Harlem. Manning alleged that Obama, while attending Columbia University (Class of 1983), was recruited by the Central Intelligence Agency to be the operative in an arms deal with the Taliban. Manning said that Obama was selected because he was fluent in Farsu and Middle Eastern customs. President only speaks English fluently, has never learned Farsi and the Taliban did not exist until 1989.

First President to win a Nobel Peace Prize for doing NOTHING to earn it. — Disputed!

The Nobel Peace Prize (http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2009/press.html) was awarded to Barack Obama on Oct. 9, 2009 after he had been in office approximately 9 months. According to the Nobel Peace Prize website Obama was awarded this, "for his extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples". On Jan. 20, 2010 Britain's The Guardian released a timeline (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/jan/19/barack-obama-key-events>) showing the major events during the President's first year in office. On Apr. 2009, Obama flew to England for the G-20 conference where he not only met with Queen Elizabeth II and Prime Minister Gordon Brown but also met with Russian president Dmitry Medvedev to discuss U.S. and Russian relations.

First President to coddle American enemies while alienating Americas allies. — Too Vague to investigate.

We are not sure of what policy this is related to.

First President to publicly bow to Americas enemies while refusing to salute the U.S. flag. — Fiction!

President Obama has been photographed bowing to foreign leaders during formal introductions. One of these leaders was Saudi Arabian King Abdullah. The U.S. is at war with a radical terrorist organization based in the Middle East called Al-Qaeda, and neither Saudi Arabia or King Abdullah are considered an enemy of the U.S. Obama does not always follow the protocol of placing his hand over his heart when the National Anthem is played. Our findings on the bow: <http://www.truthorfiction.com/rumors/l/kathleen-lyday.htm>. Click for findings on the salute: <http://www.truthorfiction.com/rumors/o/obama-salute.htm>.

First President to go on multiple global apology tours. — Disputed!

Obama did travel overseas and during his speeches make apologies for past American policies and arrogance. Former George W. Bush campaign manager, Karl Rove wrote an opinion on April 23, 2009 in the *Wall Street Journal* (<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124044156269345357.html>) calling the President's trip an "Apology Tour". In a June 17, 2009 *Human Events* article, attributed to Niles Gardiner, director of the

Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom at the Heritage Foundation, the conservative newspaper listed ten apologies by President Obama:

1. Apology to Europe: Speech in Strasbourg, France, April 3. "In America, there's a failure to appreciate Europe's leading role in the world. Instead of celebrating your dynamic union and seeking to partner with you to meet common challenges, there have been times where America has shown arrogance and been dismissive, even derisive."

2. Apology to the Muslim world: Interview with Al Arabiya, Jan. 27. "My job to the Muslim world is to communicate that the Americans are not your enemy. We sometimes make mistakes. We have not been perfect."

3. Apology to the Summit of the Americas: Address to the Summit of the Americas, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, Apr. 17. "While the United States has done much to promote peace and prosperity in the hemisphere, we have at times been disengaged, and at times we sought to dictate our terms."

4. Apology at the G-20 Summit of World Leaders: News conference in London, Apr. 2. "I just think in a world that is as complex as it is, that it is very important for us to be able to forge partnerships as opposed to simply dictating solutions."

5. Apology for the War on Terror: Speech in Washington, D.C., May 21. "Unfortunately, faced with an uncertain threat, our government made a series of hasty decisions. I believe that many of these decisions were motivated by a sincere desire to protect the American people. But I also believe that all too often our government made decisions based on fear rather than foresight, that all too often our government trimmed facts and evidence to fit ideological predispositions."

6. Apology for Guantanamo in France: Speech in Strasbourg, France, Apr. 3. "In dealing with terrorism, we can't lose sight of our values and who we are. That's why I closed Guantanamo. That's why I made very clear that we will not engage in certain interrogation practices. I don't believe that there is a contradiction between our security and our values. And when you start sacrificing your values, when you lose yourself, then over the long term that will make you less secure."

7. Apology for America before the Turkish Parliament: Speech to the Turkish Parliament, Ankara, Turkey, Apr. 6. "The United States is still working through some of our own darker periods in our history. Facing the Washington Monument that I spoke of is a memorial of Abraham Lincoln, the man who freed those who were enslaved even after Washington led our Revolution. Our country still struggles with the legacies of slavery and segregation, the past treatment of Native Americans."

8. Apology for U.S. Policy toward the Americas: Editorial "Choosing a Better Future in the Americas," Apr. 16. "Too often, the United States has not pursued and sustained engagement with our neighbors. We have been too easily distracted by other priorities, and have failed to see that our own progress is tied directly to progress throughout the Americas."

9. Apology for the Mistakes of the CIA: Remarks to CIA employees at Langley, Va., Apr. 29. "Don't be discouraged that we have to acknowledge potentially we've made some mistakes."

10. Apology for Guantanamo: Speech in Washington, D.C., May 21. "There is also no question that Guantanamo set back the moral authority that is America's strongest currency in the world."

On the other hand, The FactChecker at the *Washington Post* said on Feb. 22, 2011, that they "concluded that 'the claim that Obama repeatedly has apologized for the United States is not borne out by the fact, especially if his full quotes are viewed in context.'" They claim that the apology tour never happened. *Washington Post*: http://voices.washingtonpost.com/fact-checker/2011/02/obamas_apology_tour.html.

First President to go on 17 lavish vacations, including date nights and Wednesday evening White House parties for his friends, paid for by the taxpayer. — Under Investigation

First President to refuse to wear the U.S. Flag lapel pin. — Fiction!

While campaigning for the Oval Office, Barack Obama did sport a different lapel pin from the customary US Flag pin that many patriotic Americans wear but after his election to the Oval Office the President has been seen with the traditional lapel pin. Our findings: <http://www.truthorfiction.com/rumors/o/obama-pin.htm>.

First President to have 22 personal servants (taxpayer funded) for his wife. — Fiction!

The allegations that former first ladies from previous administrations had smaller staffs is Fiction! - at least in the cases of Laura Bush and Hillary Clinton. Our findings: <http://www.truthorfiction.com/rumors/m/michelle-obama-staff.htm>.

First President to keep a dog trainer on retainer for \$102,000.00 a year at taxpayer expense. — Under Investigation

First President to repeat "the Holy Qur'an tells us," and openly admit "the early morning call of the Azaan (Islamic call to worship) is the most beautiful sound on earth." -Truth! and Fiction! [This is not a reason to knock the guy, is it? -SteveB]

In June 4, 2009, the President delivered a speech in Cairo, Egypt. In this speech he used the term "Holy Koran" a total of 5 times. He also said, "Now part of this conviction is rooted in my own experience. I'm a Christian, but my father came from a Kenyan family that includes generations of Muslims. As a boy, I spent several years in Indonesia and heard the call of the *azaan* at the break of dawn and at the fall of dusk. As a young man, I worked in Chicago communities where many found dignity and peace in their Muslim faith." There was no mention in this speech that the *azaan* was the most beautiful sound to Obama's ears.

20111126-06	22:52	Dick	Re: Slam on Obama & Obama's Report Card (reply to SteveB, above)
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Thanks, I am receiving the FotM Newsletter and am finding this very informative from all different perspectives. I as a taxpaying American find myself getting angrier about the beltway politics and greed. It seems to me that whoever we elect to congress gets eaten up in the first yr because they compromise their values and dance with the special interests. Washington is broken and our lawmakers are for sale to the highest bidder. It's the Fox watching the henhouse and it is so sad to see this happen to our great country. The "Media" is the government because of their ability to inform and misinform the people 24/7. With the age of information, they have the delivery vehicle to dispatch all their lies to the public and twisting stories on an ongoing basis in order to influence public opinion and sway elections. I don't have the answer. I like what Italy is doing with their new government. They threw out Berlusconi and appointed the finance minister as President. They only want business people running the government and not politicians. That's a good start but how long before that gets corrupted. Sorry for being so cynical!!!!!!!. Throw the bums out, term limits and limited government pensions. The biggest thing that can happen is campaign reform so it opens the doors to Joe & Suzie Citizen to serve their country. We have too many lawyers in DC and not enough of the everyday citizen who would like to run but doesn't have the financing. Steve, do you remember that great film with Jimmy Stuart starring, *Mr. Smith goes to Washington*? That's the type of representation we need!

"Democracy or Plutocracy? A Chart" by: Dave Johnson, Campaign for America's Future

Nov. 14, 2011, (<http://www.ourfuture.org/blog-entry/2011010428/democracy-plutocracy-chart>)

DEMOCRACY	PLUTOCRACY
We, the People	Wealthy Few
One Person One Vote	One Dollar One Vote
Government	Limited Government
Majority	Supermajority
Information	Propaganda
Taxes on the Wealthy	Tax Cuts for the Wealthy
Budgets	Budget Cuts
Jobs programs	Bank Bailouts
Welfare	Warfare
Express Lanes for 2 or More People	Express Lanes for 2 or More Dollars
Security Lines at Airports	Special First-Class Security Lanes at Airports
Public Schools	Private Schools
Public Investment	Private Investment
Public Transportation	Private Jets
Accountability	Impunity
Rule Of Law	Above The Law
Transparency	Secrecy
Sustainable growth	Polluter Growth
Medicare-For-All	Healthcare For Profit
Clean Elections	Rigged Elections
Savings Accounts	Offshore Accounts
Credit Card Debt	Credit Default Swaps
Union members	Serfs
Layoffs	Payoffs
Homies	Cronies
Grassroots	Astroturf
Pensions	401Ks
Honest Brokers	Self-Interest
Free Will	At Will
Citizen	Consumer
Citizen	Employee
Participant	Observer
Actor	Acted On
Doer	Done To
Majorities	Markets
Majorities	Markets
Healthy Communities	Gated Communities
Bedford Falls	Pottersville
George Baily	Henry F. Potter
Savings	Debt
America the Beautiful	America the Profitable
Justice	Just Us
Education	Training
Studying the arts, literature, history, philosophy, etc.	Mocking people for studying the arts, literature, history, philosophy, etc.
The Many	The Rich
People	Cogs
Humanity	Efficiency

20111127-01 14:16 SteveG Thanksgiving

From SteveG (2:16 pm) – ref: Thanksgiving, Founding Fathers, Politics, Compromise

The first Thanksgiving was celebrated by undocumented workers.

If our founding fathers were as divided as we are now, we would all be subjects of the Queen. The entire concept of us as a country was built off compromise and we have lost that ability/desire to compromise and so we are losing our country.

Sad.

20111127-04 19:22 Art Photo: Man's Best friend(s) X5

Think this was easy?



20111127-05 19:23 SteveB Re: Photo: Man's Best friend(s) X5 (reply to Art, above)

Golden dogs! One of my best friends ever was a golden retriever named Dusty...actually Dustin Moondog Biter Baker. These guys are all yours? Beautiful! But maybe a little like having five kids. ☺

20111127-03 18:43 Art Where Is the Republican Logic?

Interesting stats today in the *Post* about who votes Republican and who votes Democratic etc. etc. What struck me about the white vote is that educated people largely vote Democratic, while uneducated (read no college degree) whites tend to vote Republican. Hmmmm??? Explains maybe why Pam gave up trying to convert a long time ago. I'm having the same problem. What I can't seem to get is any logical response to questions. Quite the contrary just hate mail or silence.

"Fanatics believe the truth is on their side, but sincerity is no argument." Great statement.

20111127-06 20:13 SteveB Re: Where Is the Republican Logic? (reply to Art, above)

Good points. But, you know, I haven't given-up the evangelical quest.

I decided a long time ago that I was never going to quit being a critical thinker. Over the years, I have had many positions that have changed fundamentally, though my "core values" have not changed and probably, as Pam implies, couldn't change if I wanted to.

I agree, the outlook for very many people to substitute critical thinking for dogma is probably not sunny. There are a lot of lies out there. A lot of hidden agendas. And all the reason in the world for those things to exist. EVERYTHING IS AT STAKE! EVERYTHING! Always. We know how serious people are about money and power.

I've never traveled in any high political circles, or hardly any low political circles for that matter, though I do count the former prime minister of St. Vincent among my friends. But, for years, I worked very closely with the CEO and owner of a \$150 million/year manufacturing business, though now it's much larger. He was my mentor and a man I greatly admired, for he is gone now. He was like King Arthur, and I was his Merlin. I was the technical guy who could bring his visions to fruition. He knew if he could beat the competition at productivity, he'd beat them period. From my proximity, I was always amazed at some of the big decisions and big deals that went on. It was pretty mind-boggling, really, for me anyway. If I expressed or showed any amazement, he'd sometimes say, "Welcome to the real world." At times, we'd arrive very late in a town with one of his factories. No matter, at 6:00 the next morning, he wanted to be seeing things and talking to workers. They were always happy to see him and he always acted like he loved listening to them, which he actually did.

Everything is at stake, always, in the real world—yet many Americans don't seem to believe it's worth thinking about.

20111127-07 20:16 Pam Re: Where Is the Republican Logic? (reply to Art, above)

Yeah. I'd like to hear a response from the other side. The irony is that rich Republicans have somehow convinced less-educated, financially struggling people to vote with them. It's the Democrats who have historically been on the side of the worker, the common man. I wish that cohort could see that they are being used by the Right, who appeal to them through religion and homophobia.

20111127-08 21:36 SteveG Re: Where Is the Republican Logic? (reply to all, above)

The sides have basically been this way since the 60's. The main difference is that there use to be moderates to buffer both sides and force legislation/decisions - now there are no moderates and no buffer and no decisions. There used to be back room decisions on local/state/federal levels and a script of how the deals would work out & then everyone would play the script out so that "face" could be saved - not that way anymore.

Just watched part of a documentary made in 1969 - unjust/unpopular war; low wages; unemployment; poor; social unrest; racial problems - racial profiling.; unfair treatment by police - use of tear gas & clubs by police; demonstrations. All sounds familiar

20111127-09 22:26 Dale Fw: The Three Who Brought Down Wall Street

Meet the friends of our soon to be retiring POTUS.

[Note: This email is old, full of lies, offensive, has been completely debunked by Snopes.com, and appears in our Friends of the Middle Archive, *Political Inbox: 2007-2011*. I will re-print these lies one more time in the interest of fairness. Please see: <http://www.snopes.com/politics/obama/fanniemae.asp> for the TRUTH. —SteveB]

The three who brought down Wall Street.

Here's a quick look into the three former Fannie Mae executives who brought down Wall Street.

Franklin Raines was a Chairman and Chief Executive Officer at Fannie Mae. Raines was forced to retire from his position with Fannie Mae when auditing discovered severe irregularities in Fannie Mae's accounting activities. Raines left with a "golden parachute valued at \$240 Million in benefits. The Government filed suit against Raines when the depth of the accounting scandal became clear.

Tim Howard - was the Chief Financial Officer of Fannie Mae. Howard "was a strong internal proponent of using accounting strategies that would ensure a "stable pattern of earnings" at Fannie. Investigations by federal regulators and the company's board of directors since concluded that management did manipulate 1998 earnings to trigger bonuses. Raines and Howard resigned under pressure in late 2004. Howard's Golden Parachute was estimated at \$20 Million!

Jim Johnson - A former executive at Lehman Brothers and who was later forced from his position as Fannie Mae CEO. Investigators found that Fannie Mae had hidden a substantial amount of Johnson's 1998 compensation from the public, reporting that it was between \$6 million and \$7 million when in fact it was \$21 million." Johnson is currently under investigation for taking illegal loans from Countrywide while serving as CEO of Fannie Mae. Johnson's Golden Parachute was estimated at \$28 Million.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

FRANKLIN RAINES? Raines works for the Obama Campaign as his Chief Economic Advisor.

TIM HOWARD? Howard is a Chief Economic Advisor to Obama under Franklin Raines.

JIM JOHNSON? Johnson was hired as a Senior Obama Finance Advisor and was selected to run Obama's Vice Presidential Search Committee

[20111127-10](#) 22:45 SteveB Re: The Three Who Brought Down Wall Street (reply to Dale, above)

I know you can do better than this! See my comments above. Read this issue carefully. Take a look at the quality and factualness of material from the right and that from the left. Most of us are incredibly impressed by the vast difference. Do you see it?

[20111127-11](#) 23:04 SteveG Re: The Three Who Brought Down Wall Street (reply to Dale, above)

And Newt got paid \$1.6 million to advise them.

[20111127-12](#) 23:25 Dale Re: The Three Who Brought Down Wall Street (reply to SteveG, above)

Hmmm, I guess that makes the Obama arrangement OK? Slime is slime. You go to bed with it and get it on ya.

[20111127-13](#) 23:40 SteveG Re: The Three Who Brought Down Wall Street (reply to Dale, above)

Never said it was OK, just adding facts to what you wrote. Don't be so judgmental. Wrong is wrong and we all know that.

[20111127-14](#) 23:52 Dale Re: The Three Who Brought Down Wall Street (reply to SteveG, above)

I'll take your suggestion to heart about not rushing to judgement; however, it did make me smile. Have you been applying that principle to your and other's writing in this blog? I haven't really observed that before. I'll have to watch for that feature from now on.

20111127-15	23:57	SteveG	Re: The Three Who Brought Down Wall Street (reply to Dale, above)
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I AM MAKING Strong ATTEMPTS TO NOT JUDGE but TO FIND WAYS OF MODERATION TO MAKE CHANGE a FORWARD MOVEMENT rather than a gridlock' Going to bed for now.

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

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Welcome to all our new members who may be here for the first time. We want to hear from YOU! To submit your comment, you can use the form on our website or blog, or reply to this email with your two cents worth. Be sure to sign with your desired user name.

Your email address will always be kept strictly confidential.

Feel free to forward this Newsletter to anyone you know on the Right or the Left, though your motives might be different in each case. Regardless, PASS IT ON! Help keep your friends and acquaintances informed and thinking.

<http://www.FriendsOfTheMiddle.org>
FriendsOfTheMiddle@hotmail.com

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