



FRIENDS OF THE MIDDLE NEWSLETTER #57 — JAN. 23, 2012

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

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What Hell and South Carolina Hath Wrought

(posted by Steven W. Baker / SteveB, Jan. 23, 2012)

Chick-fil-A® — Very conservative, always closed on the Day of Our Lord,
but a delicious chicken salad sandwich. Ooops! I just lost my appetite!





Pinpointing the problem: I don't think this article puts the case of a classically antisocial politician too strongly.

"Newt's Delusions of Grandeur" by Lee Siegel, The Daily Beast

Jan 20, 2012 (<http://news.yahoo.com/newt-delusions-grandeur-033030805.html>)

(Hypocrisy is one thing. Mental illness is another.)

Watching Newt Gingrich excoriate the media for making his personal life an issue in Thursday's presidential debate, you realized that he wasn't merely guilty of not practicing what he preaches. The real issue isn't that Gingrich has done things that he castigates others for doing. The real, disturbing issue is what seems to be his deeply embedded pattern of finding his own sordid nature in other people, and then mercilessly persecuting them.

"Projection" is a psychological commonplace. The person suffering from depression will find depression everywhere. The person in the grip of lust will see randiness in everyone he meets. And on and on. We all see, in one degree or another, the world in terms of our own condition. Our sanity depends upon the degree.

Borderline personality, clinical narcissist, megalomaniac, sociopath—however you want to characterize Newt Gingrich, he clearly has difficulty distinguishing his own reality from that of other people. The man who cheated on his first wife as she lay in a hospital bed with cancer proclaimed in 1992, just as the Democratic National Convention was taking place, "Woody Allen having non-incest with a non-daughter to whom he was a non-father because they were a non-family fits the Democratic platform perfectly." The man who then went on to cheat on his second wife compared Democrats, two years later, to Susan Smith: "I think that the mother killing the two children in South Carolina vividly reminds every American how sick the society is getting and how much we need to change things. The only way you get change is to vote Republican."

The man who brought down Democratic House Speaker Jim Wright on ethics charges in 1988 for an improper book deal himself used political funds to promote the sale of his own book. As House Speaker, Gingrich had 84 ethics charges filed against him. And this compulsive philanderer and morally challenged legislator routinely accuses American teenagers of immorality and poor blacks of lax moral natures.

If all this were only hypocrisy, Gingrich might legitimately expect voters to shrug off his lapses of decency and humanity. As he thundered to the debate audience sitting inside the Charleston arena Thursday night (a pathetic tin parody of Joe Welch's "Have you no sense of decency?"), "Every person in here knows personal pain." Because of the law of projection, we often stumble privately and then try to restore our sense of moral dignity by harping on precisely the same deficiencies in other people. As petty and sometimes mean-spirited as that may be, it is a run-of-the-mill hypocrisy. It is simply a psychological convenience for getting through life.

But hypocrisy becomes mental illness when we seek to punish people for our own tendency to hurt other people. When Gingrich treats his wives worse than chattel and then turns around and attempts to demonize others for what he declares are their hurtful moral missteps; when his projections have the potential to cause harmful concrete consequences—that is a diseased relationship with the world that puts him on a par with every tyrant who ever wreaked his damaged personality on the society he governed.

Perhaps Gingrich's sickness—what Santorum nicely called that "worrisome moment" in Gingrich—is what led him to commit political suicide in 1996. That was when he blamed his obduracy during the government shutdown over the budget on being snubbed by Clinton on a flight to Israel. People who cannot separate themselves from the reality around them go berserk when that reality turns and bites.

But, then, lacking a solid core, projectors like Gingrich secretly lust after the identities of the people they persecute. Gingrich lashed out at Clinton for the latter's moral trespasses during the Lewinsky scandal, but he had long fancied himself Clinton's legislative soulmate, as the two worked on making Social Security and Medicare solvent. His fury at Clinton seemed to be fueled by a desperate desire to inhabit Clinton's charm, his intellect, his "vision thing," his grandness. The echo of Clinton's "I feel your pain" was unmistakable in Gingrich's "Every person in here knows pain."

Clinton was, however, at his worst, a wily rogue. Gingrich is the projector/persecutor so proud of his "grandiosity" who has replaced human relations with abstract ideas, and whose sagging posture and enervated demeanor seem propped up by spitefulness and revenge. This Gingrich is no slick rogue. He is, to bluntly state the ugly fact of the matter, a very sick man.

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20120120-01	14:08	SteveB	"Tax Fairness"
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This way of thinking about taxes seems to be becoming the norm in conservative Republican circles, except, perhaps, among the elite...

"Tax Fairness" by M.S., The Economist

July 28, 2011, (<http://www.economist.com/blogs/democracyinamerica/2011/07/tax-fairness>)

(Little income, little to tax.)

One argument often deployed against tax hikes for the rich is that the burden of taxation is already unfairly skewed, since roughly half of Americans pay no federal income tax at all. Sometimes, the line is incorrectly adumbrated to a claim that half of Americans pay no taxes, which isn't true; all Americans pay some mix of payroll taxes, state taxes, capital-gains taxes, sales taxes and so forth. The overall burden of taxation is pretty even across income groups: the total effective tax rate ranges from 16% for the bottom quintile to 31% for the top quintile, and in fact it stays at 31% right up through the top 1% of earners. But the point that about half of American tax units pay no *federal income tax* is correct. Why not? Aaron Carroll and Donald Marron point us to a new report by the Tax Policy Center (a joint project of the Urban Institute and the Brookings Institution), which explains that there are two basic reasons why people don't pay federal income tax: either they're very poor, or they're covered by tax expenditures, mainly the ones that benefit the elderly and children. Mr. Marron:

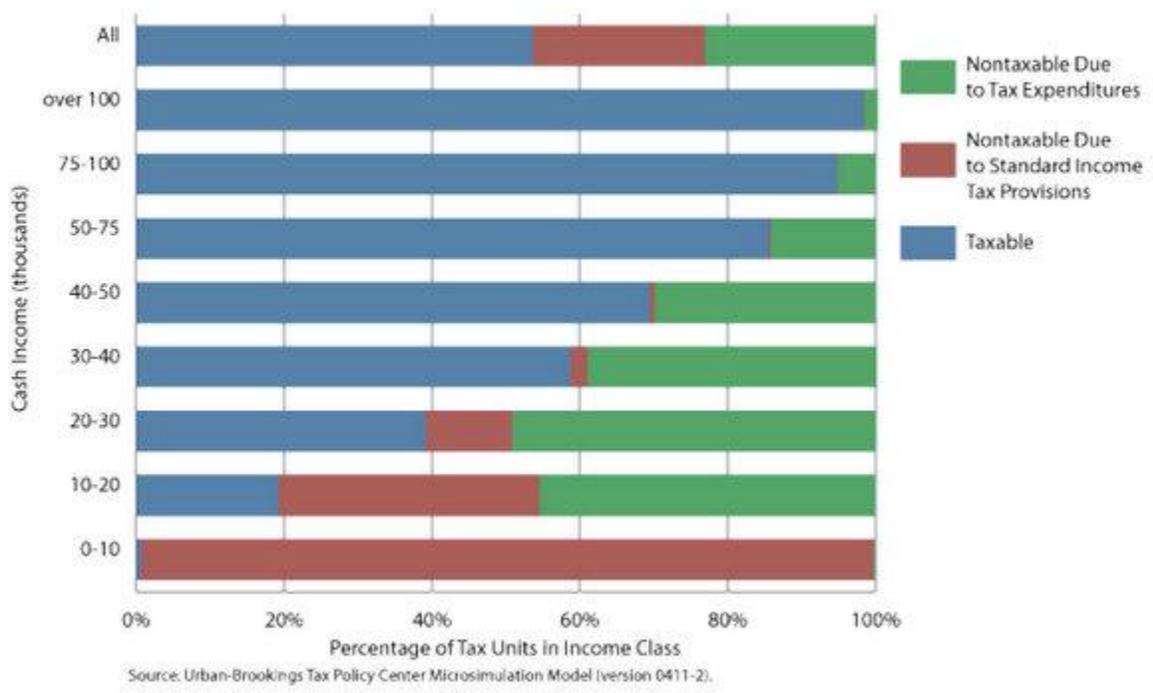
Low incomes (or, if you prefer, the standard deduction and personal exemptions) account for fully half of the people who pay no federal income tax.

The second reason is that for many senior citizens, Social Security benefits are exempt from federal income taxes. That accounts for about 22% of the people who pay no federal income tax.

The third reason is that America uses the tax code to provide benefits to low-income families, particularly those with children. Taken together, the earned income tax credit, the child credit, and the childcare credit account for about 15% of the people who pay no federal income tax.

Okay, "low incomes". But how low exactly? How poor would you be if you were too poor to pay federal income tax, strictly on the basis of your income and the standard deductions? Basically, you'd be making less than \$20,000 a year, though you've still got a small chance of qualifying if you make under \$40,000 and have some kids.

Chart 1: Taxable and Nontaxable Tax Units by Income, 2011



The brown bars are the "tax units" who are nontaxable because they're straight-up too poor, even using the standard deduction alone. And too poor means pretty darn poor. \$20,000 a year is not a lot of money to support a hungry tax unit, especially if it includes some little tax units running around in their pajamas with the floppy feet. Of course, up to \$75,000 a year, you've still got a substantial number of people in the green bars: those who owe no federal income tax because they're benefiting from tax expenditures. But which tax expenditures? Mostly, it's the tax expenditures you get because you're over 65, or because you've got the pajamas with the floppy feet: the child tax credit, the child and dependent care tax credit, and the earned-income tax credit. Less frequently, people qualify on the basis of "costs of earning income", meaning they may be freelancers or small business owners. And so forth.

American society is becoming more unequal. Incomes at the bottom level are stagnant or declining, while incomes at the top are rising. This is why a large number of people at the bottom levels of the income tier don't make enough money to pay any federal income tax. At the same time, we're not collecting enough overall revenue to pay for our government spending. We could try to raise the money we need by repealing tax breaks for poor children and the elderly, if we were sort of mean and determined to hurt people who don't have the political strength to resist, but I think it makes more sense to raise the taxes we need by increasing rates on relatively well-off people whose incomes have risen dramatically over the past couple of decades and can thus afford to pay them.

20120120-02 15:06 Pam Re: "Tax Fairness" (reply to SteveB, above)

This seems pretty straightforward to me. A progressive income tax is necessary for adequate revenue and it's fair, because it puts the burden on those who can best afford it. I am opposed to a flat tax, whether it's 17% or 9-9-9. A flat tax would be fair if everyone earned the same amount of money, but obviously that's not the case. 31% of a rich man's income hurts him less than any amount of tax on a poor man. I know the conservative line: land of opportunity, work hard and get ahead, don't punish the successful. But this assumes things that many people don't have, such as good health, good luck, good connections, all of which are necessary to really get ahead. Stephen Hawking excepted. Under feudalism, the peasants were taxed to death, while the nobility got off Scott free. That was patently unfair, and history tells us what happened as a result. We've also seen the harm a forced equalization

can do in the USSR and eastern Europe. Since its beginnings, I believe America has tried to be fair to all its citizens, except when it hasn't. The Founding Fathers, peace be upon them, had as a primary aim the limitation of natural human behavior. They wanted to create better institutions because they knew they could not fundamentally change human nature. Conservatives have dressed up "greed" in the language of "success, risk-taking, job-creating, and hard work," language that obfuscates the true motivation of ambitious men. If they didn't care so much about money, why would they go to such extremes to hold onto it, even when they have more than enough? They try to present getting rich as public service. The photo of Mitt Romney with his Bain cronies speaks volumes. Rich young men with money literally coming out of their ears. The idea that Romney ever worried about losing a job is ludicrous. Man is not the measure of all things; money is. I'm not opposed to people having money and living comfortably, far from it. But the idea that a rich man and a poor man deserve to be taxed equally is just plain wrong.

20120121-05	17:32	SteveB	Fw: MoveOn Petition: Investigate Wall St. Bank Fraud
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from MoveOn:

Breaking: There are reports that in the next 48 hours President Obama could make a decision on whether to hold Wall Street accountable by opening a full investigation into the banks' role in the housing crisis, or give them a sweetheart deal that lets them off the hook¹ This is it!

On Thursday, at events across the country, MoveOn members delivered more than 360,000 signatures to the president asking him to investigate² But the big banks are lobbying non-stop for a deal giving them broad immunity—so we need to collect as many signatures on our petition this weekend as possible.

We need the president to hear, loud and clear, that we're counting on him to stand up to Wall Street as negotiators get close to a final deal. We'll deliver the additional petitions directly to the White House throughout the weekend. Will you step up right now and sign?

Click here to sign the petition and join in the call for Wall Street accountability:

<http://pol.moveon.org/bankfraud/?id=34957-9148195-%3D0IIOJx&t=2>.

If the banks get broad immunity now, without a full investigation, we'll never know the extent of the fraud that cost so many people their homes, savings, and jobs. That's why this decision by President Obama to investigate is so incredibly important.

The White House is paying close attention to what progressives across the country think on this issue. A massive group of new petition signatures this weekend will let them know that we're watching them closely—and that we need a full federal investigation, not a sweetheart settlement.

Sign the petition for a real investigation before President Obama makes his final decision. Thanks for all you do.

—Elena, Joan, Sarah, Carrie, and the rest of the team

Sources:

¹"Shaking Their Windows and Rattling Their Walls," Huffington Post, January 20, 2012, <http://www.moveon.org/r?r=269677&id=34957-9148195-%3D0IIOJx&t=5>.

²"MoveOn, Color Of Change Demand Obama To Investigate Wall Street Banks, Housing Crisis," Huffington Post, January 19, 2012, <http://www.moveon.org/r?r=269678&id=34957-9148195-%3D0IIOJx&t=6>.

20120120-06	21:06	Larry	Friends of the Middle
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Your Newsletter is really getting "classy" and everybody seems to be having a good time. I know I am, especially with your Shakespearian comparisons.

Have a nice winter. ;-)

20120120-03	15:58	SteveB	Video: "Amend 2012" & "Kucinich Announces Constitutional Amendment to Publicly Finance Federal Elections"
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SOMETHING HAS TO BE DONE!

Robert Reich Video—"Amend 2012": <http://www.nationofchange.org/amend-2012-1327080249>.

"Kucinich Announces Constitutional Amendment to Publicly Finance Federal Elections" NationofChange

Jan. 20, 2012, (<http://www.nationofchange.org/kucinich-announces-game-changing-constitutional-amendment-publicly-finance-federal-elections-1327069>)

On the eve of the second anniversary of the Supreme Court ruling known as *Citizens United*, which opened the floodgate of unlimited, shadowy corporate spending in public elections, Congressman Dennis Kucinich (D-OH) has introduced H. J. Res. 100, a constitutional amendment to rescue American democracy from corporate money's corrupting influence. Kucinich:

Because of the decision by the Supreme Court majority in the *Citizens United* case, more money was spent on campaigns in the 2010 election than has ever been spent in a mid-term election. Because of the *Citizens United* case, more money will be spent in the 2012 elections than has ever been spent in an election in the history of our country, and American democracy has been put up on the auction block.

We must rescue American democracy from unlimited corporate money. This is the most fundamental issue facing the future of our nation. With corporate, private financing we have officials working for the interest of corporations. With public financing we have officials working for the public. And public financing will actually save taxpayers' money, by eliminating any incentive of public officials to reward campaign contributors with taxpayer subsidies.

We must eliminate the influence of money on our elections and on our policy-making. We must eliminate the influence of special interests on our elections and on our legislation. We must eliminate the influence of multi-national corporations and foreign corporations on the government of our country. We cannot wait. We must fight for government of the people, by the people, for the people.

H.J. Res.100 would require that all federal campaigns –all campaigns for President, Vice-President, Senator and Representative – be financed exclusively with public funds and prohibit any expenditures from any other source, including the candidate. H. J. Res. 100 would also prohibit any expenditures in support of, or in opposition to, any federal candidate, so that interest groups will not be able to influence elections. It will maintain the First Amendment "freedom of the press" and preserve the traditional role that the media have played in our electoral process.

20120120-04	18:17	Pam	Re: Video: "Amend 2012" & "Kucinich Announces Constitutional Amendment..." & Republican Primaries (reply to SteveB, above)
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These are great initiatives, and I have sent in my support of them. I used to think Kucinich was a strange little monkey (no disrespect intended), but he does tend to be on the right side of things. Why is it that activists on the left are always portrayed as disaffected hotheads, while those on the right are all puffed up with self-righteousness? Robert Reich is a pointy-headed intellectual, but Newt is a redeemed Christian? I didn't see the debate, but I

gather that Newt came our swinging when asked about his infidelities. What a complete and total hypocrite! It is appalling that he thinks that by bluster and outrage and attacking his questioners he will come off as the injured party. He is so two-faced it's amazing he knows where to shave in the morning. If character matters, then Obama is the one without a stain. I suppose Santorum is squeaky clean, but who gives a s---? His claim to have only ever sat on a couch with his wife is evidence of a prehistoric mindset. I'm sorry that his baby died, but the way he flaunts his religion and purity makes me sick. I imagine we all think it's likely that Romney will be the chosen one. He's the least insane, unless you count his Mormonism, which to me is pretty crazy. Mormons believe in making money, and he sure has. There's something kind of screwy about his pretense to be part of the regular middle class. Ted Kennedy never tried to pass himself off as anything other than a very privileged man, with a sense of responsibility. I was brought up on lots of quotations, some of which I ignored to be sure. "Propinquity is the great matchmaker." "You don't fly in the face of convention." "Noblesse oblige." Romney would be more honest just to come out and admit he's made a fortune, has been lucky, and wants to give something back. That would be lots better than Newt's claiming to have committed adultery and worked too hard (poor baby) because he loves the country so much. BS. And to say the country is worth the pain the campaign is costing him and Calista is like making a martyr out Daddy Warbucks. I'll say one thing: the Republicans have been putting on a good show.

20120120-05 19:04 SteveG Re: Republican Primaries (reply to Pam, above, 18:17)

When there was talk of Dennis [Kucinich] losing his seat in the house due to gerrymandering there was a movement by several states wanting him to move to their newly gerrymandered districts – Washington was one of those. Dennis is unique and I would love to have him representing me in Congress.

As much as I do not like Mitt and the way he made his money, it is 100% better than the manner in which Newt and Santorum made their lobbying millions.

20120121-01 11:31 Pam Re: Republican Primaries (reply to SteveG, above)

I agree that Romney is the least of all evils. I still can't get over Newt's re-re-reincarnation. I'm disgusted by the crowd that booed John King (I believe it was he) when he asked Newt about his "open marriage" proposal. Have they forgotten how Newt went after Clinton for his dalliance with Monica? People believe what they want to believe, and if the facts show them something different, they believe it anyway. Mitt may be ruthless, but so far he seems to be honest, which is more than can be said for the rest.

20120121-02 15:07 Dennis Re: Republican Primaries (reply to Pam, above)

That crowd also booed the Golden Rule. No wonder they still fly the Confederate Flag. Lincoln should have let them secede!

Has anything good ever come out of South Carolina (well, except Stephen Colbert and Mary-Louise Parker)? Here's some background:

"Why South Carolina's Values Are Not America's Values" by David Atkins, Hullabaloo/AlterNet

Jan. 21, 2012, (<http://www.alternet.org/module/printversion/newsandviews/765350>)

Since CNN has assured us that the South is "where values matter" in advance of today's South Carolina primary, it's worth considering just what South Carolina values are, courtesy Thomas Schaller in *Whistling Past Dixie* (pp.274-275):

Consider South Carolina, which has opposed or defied almost every beneficent social and political change in American history. To appease South Carolinian slaveholders, Thomas Jefferson removed language condemning slavery from the Declaration of Independence. Four years later, backcountry loyalists in South

Carolina helped the British Army recapture the state in 1780 from the patriots. By 1828, Palmetto State native and vice president John C. Calhoun was agitating for state "nullification" of federal powers, generating secessionist calls a full generation before the outbreak of the Civil War.

On December 20, 1860, South Carolina became the first state to secede; four months later Confederate forces in Charleston fired the opening shots of the Civil War on the Union garrison at Fort Sumter, and South Carolina even threatened to secede *from* the Confederacy because the other southern states would not agree to reopening the slave trade. Soon after the state's chapter of the Ku Klux Klan formed, "red shirt" Democratic rifle clubs used physical intimidation and ballot manipulation to alter results of the 1876 election. In the 1890s, Governor Ben "Pitchfork" Tillman--who earned his nickname by threatening to stab President Grover Cleveland in the ribs with said implement--served two terms as governor before embarking on a twenty-three-year Senate career during which he defended segregation as vigilantly as his fellow Edgefield County native, Strom Thurmond, later did for most of his career.

Well into the twentieth century, South Carolina's black citizens observed the Fourth of July mostly alone because the vast majority of whites refused to, preferring instead to celebrate Confederate Memorial Day, May 10. State politicians repeatedly averted their eyes as textile industry executives employed children and quashed attempts by mill workers to organize for fair wages. In 1920, the South Carolina legislature rejected the proposed women's suffrage amendment and took almost a half century finally to ratify it, in 1969. In 1948, the same year the South Carolina legislature declared President Harry Truman's new civil rights commission "un-American," Thurmond's full-throated advocacy of racial segregation as the States' Rights Democratic Party presidential nominee helped him carry four Deep South states. Six years later, the Clarendon County school district--where per-pupil spending on whites was quadruple that for blacks--was pooled with three other districts in a failed defense of the "separate but equal" standard in the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* case. And when Congress passed the 1965 Voting Rights Act, the law that finally banned the creative and vicious methods used to disfranchise blacks, South Carolina became the first state to challenge its constitutionality. By 1968 Harry Dent, the most legendary of Thurmond's political protégés and a key architect of the "southern strategy," was helping Richard Nixon translate racial antagonisms into crucial Republican votes, a victory in South Carolina, and a ticket to the White House.

If all of this seems like so much ancient history, consider that South Carolinians are still debating the merits of public displays of the Confederate battle flag. Indeed, more than a few pundits believe Republican David Beasley won the 1994 governor's race in part because of his pledge to support displaying the Confederate flag over the state capitol--then promptly lost his 1998 reelection bid later after a "religious epiphany" caused him to reverse position. After two decades of adverse judicial rulings, in 2000 Bob Jones University, the state's largest private liberal arts college, founded by its anti-Catholic namesake, finally ended its policy of prohibiting interracial dating. Last year, South Carolina was sued for issuing "choose life" vanity plates while refusing the same option to pro-choice citizens, justifying its decision by claiming that the anti-abortion message constitutes protected government speech. Today, more than eight decades after women first won the right to vote, the South Carolina state legislature is the only one in America where women do not hold at least 10 percent of all seats.

Other Deep South states may stake their own claims, but South Carolina is America's most conservative state. From a strictly constitutional-historical standpoint, its legacy of firsts and lasts reads like a rap sheet: first to overturn a provincial government during the revolutionary period; last to abandon the Atlantic slave trade; first to call for nullifying the Constitution's federal authority; first to secede from the Union; last to abolish the white primary; first to litigate against the integration of public schools and challenge the Voting Rights Act. **Whenever America finds itself at some social or political crossroad and in need of direction, perhaps the best things to do is ask, "What would South Carolina do?" And then do the opposite.**

I'm sure there are many wonderful people in South Carolina fighting the good fight, trying to turn their home state around and move away from the shameful legacy of South Carolina values. But in democracy, majority rules. And the majority of South Carolinians have made it clear exactly what those values are.

They are not American values, and CNN should be ashamed to imply that they are.

20120121-03 17:04 SteveG Re: Republican Primaries (reply to Dennis, above)

Why do we not let them secede and go on about our business?

20120121-04 17:16 Art Re: Republican Primaries (reply to Pam & Dennis, above)

My personal belief is that most of the tea baggers, evangelists, etc are really at the bottom just racists and haters. Therefore they want someone to represent them who can hate and make it stick. One supposed retired Marine in a recent Town Hall in SC asked Newt " how can we give Obama a bloody nose" ? Why should this guy want to "give Obama a bloody nose"? No words about a policy he objected to, nor a reason, just hate. Never once do any of the haters I see who comment in the AOL response column to news items, ever state a policy or reason they oppose the President. Just that "Obama" is out to destroy America and must be stopped. Plus it is revealing that most of the Republican candidates refuse to refer to him as President Obama. They do that to try to demean the President and it sticks with many of their racist followers. It is why Newt did so well with his bombastic attack on John King. The hypocrites in the audience who claim such pious devotion to family principles and god really just want to support someone who can focus and channel their hate. Newt is very good at that.

Adolf Hitler would have loved this crowd and, if he were running even today knowing what we know, I suspect would easily win the Republican nomination.

20120121-13 20:39 Pam Re: Republican Primaries (reply to Art, above)

You are so right. Hitler would whip up that South Carolina crowd like nobody's business. Frightening. I love democracy, but it does have one downside: idiots get quoted as if they mattered.

20120121-06 17:54 SteveB "New South Carolina Polls: Newt Gingrich Has Big Lead In Primary"

How can somebody zoom like this? Romney and Obama are truly hated!

Though I'm much more confident Obama could beat Gingrich than I am about Romney. For now.

"New South Carolina Polls: Newt Gingrich Has Big Lead In Primary" by Mark Blumenthal, Huffington Post

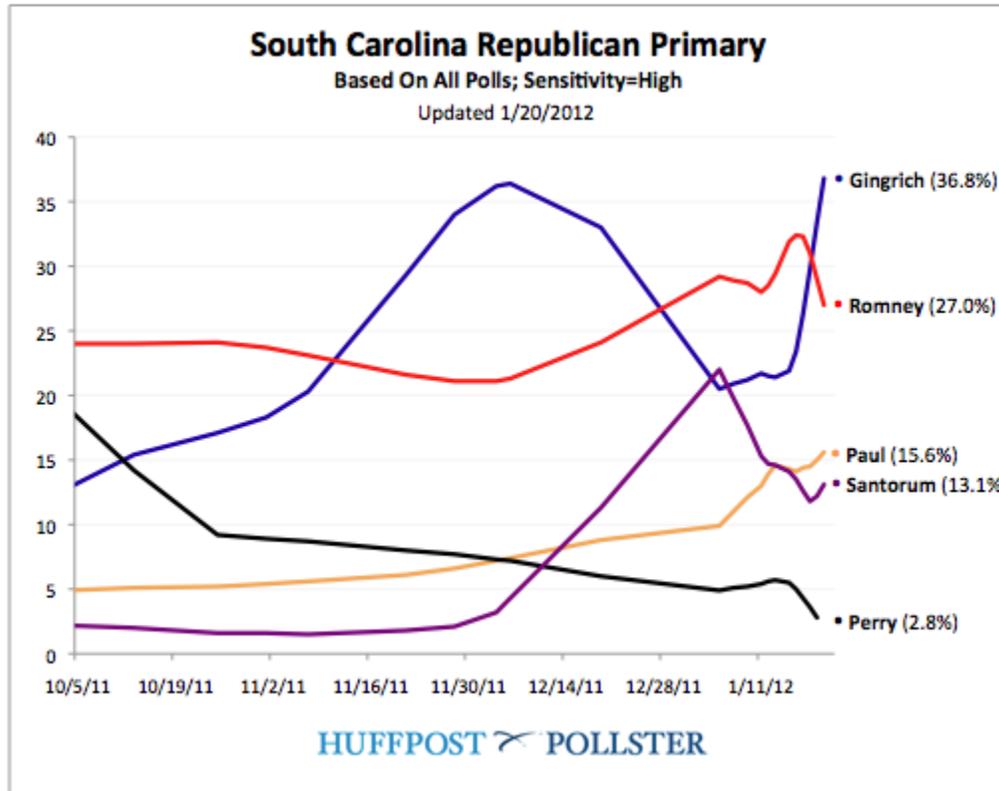
Jan. 21, 2012, (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/01/21/south-carolina-polls-newt-gingrich-lead_n_1220731.html)

WASHINGTON -- Two new telephone polls concluded on the eve of the South Carolina primary not only confirm continuing momentum toward Newt Gingrich; they suggest that the former House speaker may be headed for a surprisingly comfortable, double-digit win.

A live-interviewer survey conducted by the American Research Group on Thursday and Friday nights finds Gingrich now leading Mitt Romney 40 to 26 percent, followed by Ron Paul (18 percent) and Rick Santorum (13 percent). An ARG poll fielded earlier in the week had Gingrich and Romney in a virtual tie (with 32 and 31 percent, respectively).

That finding complements final results from the automated survey conducted over three nights by the Democratic Party firm Public Policy Polling, which shows Gingrich leading Romney 37 to 28 percent, followed by Santorum (16 percent) and Paul (14 percent). PPP noted that in the interviews it conducted on Friday evening, Gingrich led by a 40 to 26 percent margin -- exactly the same margin found by the ARG poll.

The HuffPost Pollster chart -- based on all available public polls of South Carolina voters, including the latest from ARG and PPP -- now shows Gingrich leading Romney by a 10-point margin (36.8 to 27.0 percent), followed by Paul and Santorum running far back in third and fourth place (with 15.6 and 13.1 percent, respectively). Support for Gingrich now stands at roughly the same level that polls found when his numbers first surged in late November 2011.



[20120121-07](#) 18:06 Art Re: "New South Carolina Polls: Newt Gingrich Has Big Lead In Primary" (reply to SteveB, above)

It's all about hate.

You know, there is something to be learned here, but I am not quite sure what. This is absolutely amazing.

[20120121-08](#) 18:26 SteveG Re: "New South Carolina Polls: Newt Gingrich Has Big Lead In Primary" (reply to SteveB, above)

Newt is the true bully and plays it well to the crowd.

[20120121-14](#) 20:43 Pam Re: "New South Carolina Polls: Newt Gingrich Has Big Lead In Primary" (reply to SteveG, above)

He IS a bully. And his wife has helmet hair.

[20120122-01](#) 17:20 SteveB Re: "New South Carolina Polls: Newt Gingrich Has Big Lead In Primary" (reply to Pam, above)

She reminds me so much of McCain's wife. Both speed-freak bug-eyed blondes. Hey, at least she's for free love and open marriage.

[Nope! I just looked at some pictures of Cindy, who makes Callista look like a Stepford Wife. –SteveB]

20120121-09	18:27	SteveB	Re: "New South Carolina Polls: Newt Gingrich Has Big Lead In Primary" (reply to Art & SteveG, above)
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I don't remember ever seeing anything like this year's Republican battle in my life! Bizarre!

How could John King so play into his hands? How could he not have know what Newt's response would be? It was so predictable. It's an important issue especially in light of the hypocrisy of Newt when you consider he led the fight to impeach Clinton for crap he was actually doing at the time and before and maybe for time immemorial. A*s-hole!

You stand strong with a question like that. You fight for an answer like a pit bull or you'd better not ask the question to begin with. Another reason to have multiple moderators who can pile on when somebody gets as unruly as Newt and the crowd.

20120121-15	20:47	Pam	Re: "New South Carolina Polls: Newt Gingrich Has Big Lead In Primary" (reply to SteveB, above)
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Good point. And you know that crowd was partisan to begin with. He was preaching to the choir. No defense like a good offense, eh? John King did look like a deer in the headlights. I wish he'd had a bit more moxey. Bill Maher (sp?) would have handled it better.

20120122-04	06:05	SteveB	Re: "New South Carolina Polls: Newt Gingrich Has Big Lead In Primary" (reply to Pam, above)
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The crowd was another CNN "mistake". They let a bunch of Teabaggers in on purpose. Maybe impossible to keep them out?

This man is dangerous:

"The American people feel that they have elites who have been trying for a half century to force us to quit being American," Gingrich said.

"The elites in Washington and New York have no understanding, no care, no concern, no reliability, and in fact, do not represent them [the American people] at all," he said.

But I get the idea the "elites" he means are not the 1%, they're anyone who might actually be educated!!! The actual elite wielding the power, the 1%, remains nameless with Newt. ^_^

20120122-12	13:17	Pam	Re: "New South Carolina Polls: Newt Gingrich Has Big Lead In Primary" (reply to SteveB, above)
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A half century?! If this isn't incitement to class warfare, I don't know what is. Here's how I see the right-wing strategy: declare over and over that the thing you want to protect is the very thing you actually want to limit, ie., freedom. If we go all the way back to Puritan New England, we can trace a strain of fascist social control that wants to dictate morals and behavior. It's always been there, maybe it's always been part of human nature. Puritanism is anti-Enlightenment. The Enlightenment is European (French and English mainly), and the reason Romney et. al. keep bashing Europe is because they know Europe has a much better record of working to unfetter the people and ensure social justice than we do. The French may be snobs, but they have great health care. The

English may be reserved, but they gave us Magna Carta, habeas corpus, and trial by jury. The Germans may be rigid, but they know how to run an economy. Gross generalizations, I realize, but generalizations are recognizable because they contain at least a grain of truth. We are so insecure in our Americanness that we refuse to learn from anyone else. Let the world learn from us, we crow. Other countries, like Japan and China, have not been so reluctant to learn from others (often us, granted), and look at the success they've made of that knowledge. Sorry, guys, but we're like a man who won't ask for directions because he's convinced of his own directional invincibility.

20120122-13	13:26	SteveG	Re: "New South Carolina Polls: Newt Gingrich Has Big Lead In Primary" (reply to SteveB, above)
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Move over, you may be getting some new neighbors.

20120122-06	08:58	SteveB	Re: "New South Carolina Polls: Newt Gingrich Has Big Lead In Primary" (reply to SteveG, above)
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Hey, in Bolivia we've got a guy in charge who thinks he's a communist, but is really just another fascist coca-chewer. There's even a new Constitution.

But, you know what? There's essentially no change. Too much inertia here. All politicians finally decide it's not worth it to bash their heads against the wall of ennui and indifference and figure out it's better to just cash in. This leaves the people pretty much on their own, but taxes are low and people enjoy more freedom than in the U.S. Bolivians can legally be gayly married, masturbate, and drink in the streets, but not all at once.

But don't even think about the fat lady, she ain't gonna sing yet.

20120122-05	08:06	SteveG	Re: "New South Carolina Polls: Newt Gingrich Has Big Lead In Primary" (reply to SteveB, above)
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Do we all move to Bolivia or do we just move Newt there?

20120122-07	11:41	SteveB	Re: "New South Carolina Polls: Newt Gingrich Has Big Lead In Primary" (reply to SteveG, above)
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Seriously, Newt is going to self-destruct again, right?

20120122-08	12:53	SteveG	Re: "New South Carolina Polls: Newt Gingrich Has Big Lead In Primary" (reply to SteveB, above)
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If history is an indicator he will. But, if history is an indicator the American people self-destruct also. Either way it is going to be a ride, get your tickets now.

20120121-10	18:30	SteveG	Re: "New South Carolina Polls: Newt Gingrich Has Big Lead In Primary" (reply to all, above)
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What is to be learned:

1. A portion of the country is racist.
2. A portion of the country likes bullies and to be a bully.
3. We do not respect education or civility.
4. A portion of the country is selfish.

5. A portion of the country cannot think for themselves.

Go back and watch Rachel Maddow's Friday show on msnbc.com about John King's questioning:

http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/26315908/ns/msnbc_tv-rachel_maddow_show/.

20120122-14	13:54	Pam	Re: "New South Carolina Polls: Newt Gingrich Has Big Lead In Primary" (reply to SteveG, above)
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Can't argue with this.

I must say, this [Rachel Maddow], makes me feel better. Do you think our country will ever grow up?

20120121-11	18:37	SteveB	Re: "New South Carolina Polls: Newt Gingrich Has Big Lead In Primary" (reply to SteveG, above)
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I think your list of five points sums up a lot of what I'm seeing this week. It's why I didn't like living in Tennessee many years ago. Better there now I think...yet if you drive down certain gravel roads...well...better be armed and dangerous if you ain't from thar.

Maybe we should have let them (SC, at least) secede, like somebody said. Then they could have been a magnet for all the racists and haters of various types.

Would that have led to war or a better peace?

20120121-12	19:06	Dennis	Re: "New South Carolina Polls: Newt Gingrich Has Big Lead In Primary" (reply to SteveB, above)
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from SteveB:

I think that sums up a lot of what I'm seeing this week. It's why I didn't like living in Tennessee many years ago.

...or Indiana?

Maybe we should have let them (SC, at least) secede, like somebody said. Then they could have been a magnet for all the racists and haters of various types.

Sort of an American Serbia?

20120122-02	05:33	SteveB	Re: "New South Carolina Polls: Newt Gingrich Has Big Lead In Primary" (reply to Dennis, above)
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I always thought Gnao Bone, Indiana was a lot like Tennessee...

20120121-16	21:01	Art	Re: "New South Carolina Polls: Newt Gingrich Has Big Lead In Primary" (reply to all, above)
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One thing too I would like to point out is these people hopefully don't represent all of South Carolina. The people of South Carolina did elect Nicki Harley as governor, who by all accounts is not a right wing wacko. I went to school there for four years and remember at least one or two locals that were seemingly OK. Of course I was young and

naive then. What we have however, is the fact that the extreme political elements of a party have seized control for the moment and are having their day. Let's hope that turns off the general populace, as much as it does us.

Frankly, I think I may agree with Sarah Palin for once and hope Gingrich does win in South Carolina. It will prolong the Republican agony for several more weeks at least, encourage more hateful attacks by both groups, cause them to spend even more millions, and hopefully so expose both these bozos for the charlatans they are making the real election a landslide.

Just a thought.

20120122-09	12:55	Pam	Re: "New South Carolina Polls: Newt Gingrich Has Big Lead In Primary" (reply to Art, above)
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I hope you're right. It will all be worth it in the end if Obama is re-elected. I can't get over the Republican mantra, "Take our country back." Like it was ever taken away--except by the 1%. I think you're right, too, about hate as a fuel. Romney is so smooth and pressed down, like a grown up preppy, that he's easy to dismiss and hard to work up a sweat about. But Newt is a firebrand who knows how to manipulate a crowd. He's a demagogue, the worst kind of politician a democracy in trouble can throw up. I hope Obama nails the State of the Union Address. I loved it when he broke into song the other night. Very cool. Way cooler than when old John Ascroft used to sing about soaring eagles. That was NOT cool. Herman Cain may have thought he had the right stuff, but he didn't. And Tom deLay made a fool of himself on the dance floor. Why do they do it? They should listen to Robbie Burns: "Oh, wad some pow'r the giftie gie us/ To see ourselves as others see us." . (Imperfectly quoted, alas.)

If I sound a bit deranged this morning, it's because I can't stand the thought of Newt getting anywhere close to the center of power. It would be a joy to rant some more, but come the revolution I don't want to be fingered for calling Newt an arrogant s.o.b. with a pi*sy, smug, little grin that I find infuriating.

[I have noted your words. -Art]

20120122-03	17:38	SteveB	Re: "New South Carolina Polls: Newt Gingrich Has Big Lead In Primary" (reply to Art, above)
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This is my hope, but we're in such unknown territory. Though I know it's a drastic comparison, I wonder if anybody said the same thing about Hitler? "Hey' let's just give this guy enough rope and he'll hang himself. What?" Knock! Knock! "Hey, Fräulein, would you get the door? What do you mean it's the SS?" Bang! Bang!

20120122-10	12:59	Pam	Re: "New South Carolina Polls: Newt Gingrich Has Big Lead In Primary" (reply to SteveB, above)
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I'm sure they did. I don't think Newt is as insane as Hitler was, but his "grandiose ideas" are frightening, as are the people who follow him.

20120122-11	13:02	Art	Re: "New South Carolina Polls: Newt Gingrich Has Big Lead In Primary" (reply to all, above)
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Romney really got skewered on the tax thing and I don't think he's going to get out of it. The whole unfairness, class warfare thing is catching hold and Romney is on the wrong side of the fence. Either way he loses now. If he discloses, people will see how unfair that is and, if he doesn't, he hiding something.

Newt on the other hand has so much baggage that he will get blistered by Romney, as he is going down and that will create all kinds of fun. I think we'll continue to be entertained but let's hope people will wake up when it counts.

I am reminded that the German elite disdained Hitler but as he the NAZIs grew in power, they decided they could control him. Big mistake.

SteveB, the lead article on Newt's mental illness is a keeper!

20120122-15	14:01	SteveG	Re: "New South Carolina Polls: Newt Gingrich Has Big Lead In Primary" & Old Times (reply to Pam, above)
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We were grownups in the 40's & 50's – I think we have been regressing since then. It seems as a country our values started changing – the Kennedy-Nixon debates, the Nixon paranoia, the Reagan rhetoric, etc. I am not convinced we are going to become mature – remember George the W saying "You are either with us or against us". That still seems to be the bully mentality of the right.

20120122-16	14:08	Pam	Re: Old Times (reply to SteveG, above)
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I think you're right. Adults even looked more grown up in the 40s & 50s. Compare William Powell or Cary Grant to Brad Pitt, or Barbara Stanwyck and Lady GaGa. I blame the baby boomers. Hey, that's us!

20120122-17	15:26	SteveG	Re: Old Times (reply to Pam, above)
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Hats and suits were the norm for guys, dresses and suits for the women. No casual Friday, no casual dress when you went out, not even to a ballgame or the show. You cleaned up to go to the doctor or to fly. It was the thing to do, expected. In high school – no jeans, skirts or dresses for the ladies.

20120122-18	15:57	Pam	Re: Old Times (reply to SteveG, above)
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At DePauw we weren't allowed to wear pants to the library or class, only skirts or dresses. I remember how excited I was when I was teaching at South Putnam and we were given the go-ahead to wear pants to school. I must confess, though, I like the more casual dress of today. I loved being a university teacher because I could wear whatever I wanted. Some people dressed up, some, like me, didn't. I didn't wear jeans (well, once or twice), but I could if I wanted to. I suppose if I'd been in upper administration I'd have had to dress the part, but I always said I never wanted a job where I'd have to wear a suit. I don't even own a pair of heels anymore. I hope this doesn't give the impression that I am a slob. I love clothes. I just like to be comfortable. TMI? No doubt.

<http://epicatravel.com/discover-five-best-romantic-getaways/>



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

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