



FRIENDS OF THE MIDDLE NEWSLETTER #58 — JAN. 24, 2012

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

INDEX: Click here.

In the Land of Hatred Where the Shadows Lie

(posted by Steven W. Baker / SteveB, Jan. 24, 2012)

The quotation in the headline (bent slightly) is, of course, from *The Lord of the Rings*, referring to the dark lands of Mordor and to the Dark Lord, Sauron, represented in 2012 by Newt Gingrich. (See article in the Members Section, below, "Newt Gingrich: The Republican Dark Lord".)

Before Rick Perry dropped out of the race in South Carolina, when he was just beginning to campaign there, a voter approached him, shook his hand, and said, "It's a pleasure to meet a hypocrite and racist as big as you!" Perry was understandably rather taken aback and couldn't think of anything to say. He moved on to the next hand with a puzzled expression on his face. (I saw the video, but couldn't find it again just now to add the link here.) At the time, I thought the voter's question was criticism. Now I'm not so sure it wasn't genuine praise.

The events that transpired in the last week of the South Carolina Primary show the level of anger that resides in the American Right. This is an anger that makes the puny anger of the Occupy Wall Street protesters look like something from a Southern Baptist Sunday School picnic. It almost matches what we saw in Egypt and Libya, but with more vehemence.

It's funny, I don't see much anger from the Left. Am I missing something? I don't even remember much anger when Bush was President. Now, as then, I see a lot of fear. The Left is afraid. The Left is shaking in its boots, and rightfully so. Dark forces are loose in the land.

Here is my very serious question. I think several of us on the Left have been trying to verbalize this question. Certainly, John King didn't get very far. But South Carolina pushed me over the edge, so here it is, in its rawest, most elemental form:

Why the anger? Why is the Right so mad? What drives that anger? What drives it if not hatred?

Obama has turned out to be a very moderate President, as much of a Republican as a Democrat, who probably steered us past disaster. I could understand being opposed to his particular strategies, etc., but why the anger? In many cases, like we saw in South Carolina, why the hatred underlying the anger?

If people are simply out of work...but these don't seem to be the unemployed who are angry, though certainly this group of Teabaggers or whatever is worse off than they were in 2000. If it's the economy, there is no easy connection to blame Obama and not the Bush wars. Certainly, there's not enough of a concrete connection for anger and hatred, is there?

None of the case against Obama is very certain. No more certain than that he's a Muslim not born in America, it turns out.

Why the anger?

We've seen this anger here in this forum. The Right-wingers in this forum always end-up taking their marbles and going home mad. Why is that? All we do here is present facts in a polite manner, trying to get at the truth. Funny how so many of the "truths" from the Right turn-out to be lies (we've documented many of them in this group). The Right seems to hate that, even when they totally fail to prove their own case. Yet it should be valuable to both sides when lies and errors are uncovered. Why ignore the real truth? What happened to polite discourse?

Where does that anger of the Right come from? What drives it? Hatred? Hatred of what? Mild-mannered Obama? You have to be kidding me! Please tell me there's no racism involved, though I have to admit that the anger and hatred seem even more broad-based than loathing for dark skin.

HEY, ANGRY REPUBLICANS, COULD YOU PLEASE TRY TO VERBALIZE YOUR EXACT PROBLEM? Be as honest as you can possibly be. That's what we try to do here.

Why the anger? Why the hatred and name-calling and attempted bullying? In case you don't know, it's scary to the rest of us!

FotM NEWSLETTER #58 (Jan. 24, 2012)—HYPERTEXT INDEX

DATE-ID	TIME	FROM	SUBJECT/TITLE
20120124-00		SteveB	In the Land of Hatred Where the Shadows Lie by Steven W. Baker / SteveB ("Newt Gingrich: The Republican Dark Lord"—below)
20120123-01	10:16	SteveG	President Obama's Good Laugh
20120123-06	13:14	Pam	Re: President Obama's Good Laugh (reply to SteveG, above)
20120123-08	15:17	Ben	Re: President Obama's Good Laugh (reply to SteveG, above)
20120123-11	16:03	SteveB	Re: President Obama's Good Laugh (reply to Ben, above)
20120123-12	16:06	Ben	Re: President Obama's Good Laugh (reply to SteveB, above)
20120123-03	12:56	Art	Much Ado About Charleston
20120123-04	13:07	SteveB	Re: Much Ado About Charleston (reply to Art, above)
20120123-02	12:53	SteveG	Fw: MoveOn Petition: Investigate the Big Banks!
20120123-07	13:15	Pam	Re: MoveOn Petition: Investigate the Big Banks! (reply to SteveG, above)
20120123-05	13:10	Ben	"Newt Gingrich: The Republican Dark Lord"
20120123-09	15:19	SteveB	Fw: MoveOn Action: Run for Mayor of Your Town or City!
20120123-10	15:23	Mary	R Re: SteveB's fwd. of Art's "Thanks, Mr. President" Presentation (reply to SteveB) & Fw: New Fashion Rage in Police Mug Shots
20120123-13	16:17	SteveB	Re: SteveB's fwd. of Art's "Thanks, Mr. President" Presentation (reply to Mary, above)
20120123-14	16:40	SteveBA	Fw: "Rally Not Built on Complacency"
20120123-15	18:20	SteveG	"Rand Paul Blocked at Airport After Refusing TSA Pat-Down"
20120123-16	21:43	Pam	Re: "Rand Paul Blocked at Airport After Refusing TSA Pat-Down" (reply to SteveG, above)
20120123-17	21:55	SteveG	Re: "Rand Paul Blocked at Airport After Refusing TSA Pat-Down" (reply to Pam, above)
20120123-18	22:20	Bill	Re: "Rand Paul Blocked at Airport After Refusing TSA Pat-Down" (reply to SteveG, above)
20120123-19	22:49	Jim	Pseudo-Quote: Freud on Depression & Low Self-Esteem
20120123-20	23:59	SteveB	Photo: Bolivia

Gingrich Wins S.C. Primary



INTRAPARTY FIGHTS KEY LATE SURGE BY FORMER SPEAKER

By Peter Cozzie, Staff Writer and David E. Sanger, Staff Writer

The U.S. government is facing a budget deficit that is expected to reach \$1.6 trillion by the end of the fiscal year, according to a report released by the Congressional Budget Office on Monday.

Since the Treasury's plans were unveiled in late 2011, the deficit has grown by \$1.2 trillion, or 1.1 percent of the U.S. economy, the report says. The deficit is projected to grow even faster in 2012.

The Treasury Department's plan to raise revenue by \$1.2 trillion represents a significant increase over the \$500 billion that President Obama's budget plan called for in 2011.

The report says that the deficit is projected to grow by \$1.6 trillion by the end of the fiscal year, or 1.6 percent of the U.S. economy.

The report also says that the deficit is projected to grow by \$1.6 trillion by the end of the fiscal year, or 1.6 percent of the U.S. economy.

The report also says that the deficit is projected to grow by \$1.6 trillion by the end of the fiscal year, or 1.6 percent of the U.S. economy.

Treasury Invokes Patriotism In Pitch to Bank Executives

By Peter Cozzie, Staff Writer and David E. Sanger, Staff Writer

The federal government is appealing to patriotism as it asks bank executives to help fund a new program to support small businesses.

The Treasury Department's plan to raise revenue by \$1.2 trillion represents a significant increase over the \$500 billion that President Obama's budget plan called for in 2011.

The report says that the deficit is projected to grow by \$1.6 trillion by the end of the fiscal year, or 1.6 percent of the U.S. economy.

The report also says that the deficit is projected to grow by \$1.6 trillion by the end of the fiscal year, or 1.6 percent of the U.S. economy.

Family Values

Using daughters from your first wife to convince everyone that your second wife is lying about your third wife.



[20120123-06](#) 13:14 Pam Re: President Obama's Good Laugh (reply to SteveG, above)

Perhaps not the photo I would have chosen to run alongside that headline.

[20120123-08](#) 15:17 Ben Re: President Obama's Good Laugh (reply to SteveG, above)

It IS ludicrous, isn't it? Or it would be, if it wasn't possible that one of those idiots might actually win. I don't think any of them would be an improvement, even on Bush.

[20120123-11](#) 16:03 SteveB Re: President Obama's Good Laugh (reply to Ben, above)

I read that Rick Perry returned to Texas much reduced in stature. I would certainly hope so. They did a poll that showed Obama beating him in Texas, had he been the nominee.

Surely Gingrich will self-destruct at some point. I guess he's 10 points ahead in Florida with no organization there. He might be an easier opponent than Mitt, but both seem pretty easy to beat. The other day Mitt was trying to use McCain's lack of experience argument against Obama. No business experience. No experience destroying jobs. No experience as a greedy capitalist. If it didn't work then, how's it going to fly now that he'll have four years as POTUS and got bin Laden and Gaddafi?

At the same time they're trying to paint a picture of an extremely dangerous, extremely effective socialist pulling the strings of government.

You can't have it both ways. And if the slow recovery continues, which I think it will, the GOP may be in deep sh*t. The lies seem to be losing traction even with the conservative electorate. Note that Newt is using some other, very creative stuff to latch on to the teabaggers who are really natural Democrats, except they've been brainwashed by right-wing radio. You don't hear that free enterprise stuff from Newt.

[20120123-12](#) 16:06 Ben Re: President Obama's Good Laugh (reply to SteveB, above)

from SteveB:

You can't have it both ways.

Sure they can. Most of the Republican electorate is so screwed up and tied to dogma, that it will make perfect sense to them.

20120123-03 12:56 Art Much Ado About Charleston

Great newsletter again Steve. Loved the last part about getaways and Charleston, South Carolina. That is also the location of The Citadel, which is a pretty unique college by any standards. The Citadel has one academic claim to fame in Pat Conroy. I knew him as a cadet, he was behind me by a few years, and remember reading his very first book, 'The Boo' about a odd ball Commandant of Cadets who served at the school throughout the 60's and beyond. I recall thinking, this is really well written but who will ever read it besides we few who went to school during that period.

Well Conroy went on to do pretty well and one of his books, 'The Lords of Discipline' was based around the Citadel Cadet Corps and Charleston society. It was of course a novel but it did do a pretty good job of capturing a somewhat incestuous very closed inner group that constitutes Charleston inner society. They are still there and probably love Newt, in fact I know they do. Many Republicans use the school to launch their latest grandiose campaign speech on how they will save America.

Just as an aside, the Cadet Corps is oddly mixed. Many are from out of State, like me for one, and are there because of the military reputation of the school. There is always a bit of an ongoing conflict between them and the South Carolinians.

20120123-04 13:07 SteveB Re: Much Ado About Charleston (reply to Art, above)

[I thought South Carolina should have its good side shown too! –SteveB]

Thank you, Art. Charleston has got to be one of my favorite cities in the world, and, I think, of everyone I know who's ever been there. Easy to love, for some reason, well, for many reasons. And the Citadel, justifiably proud. Those closed Southern aristocracies are interesting, aren't they? Faulkner wrote about them in Mississippi and I've seen them up close in Tennessee and Arkansas (and we have something very similar here in Bolivia). I think the "tradition" is much the same across the South. It's an elitist, often racist thing, maybe in decline, maybe not anymore, and something we might miss if it were completely gone...

I think I'm going to turn the Newsletter into a comedy rag, Newt is providing so much material. And every time I see any of that stuff, I can't help visualizing Newt with smoke pouring out his ears, like a cartoon figure about to explode. I get a big kick out of that. :-) Can't wait to see it happen. Hopefully before he's the POTUS.

Townies!

20120123-02 12:53 SteveG Fw: MoveOn Petition: Investigate the Big Banks!

from MoveOn:

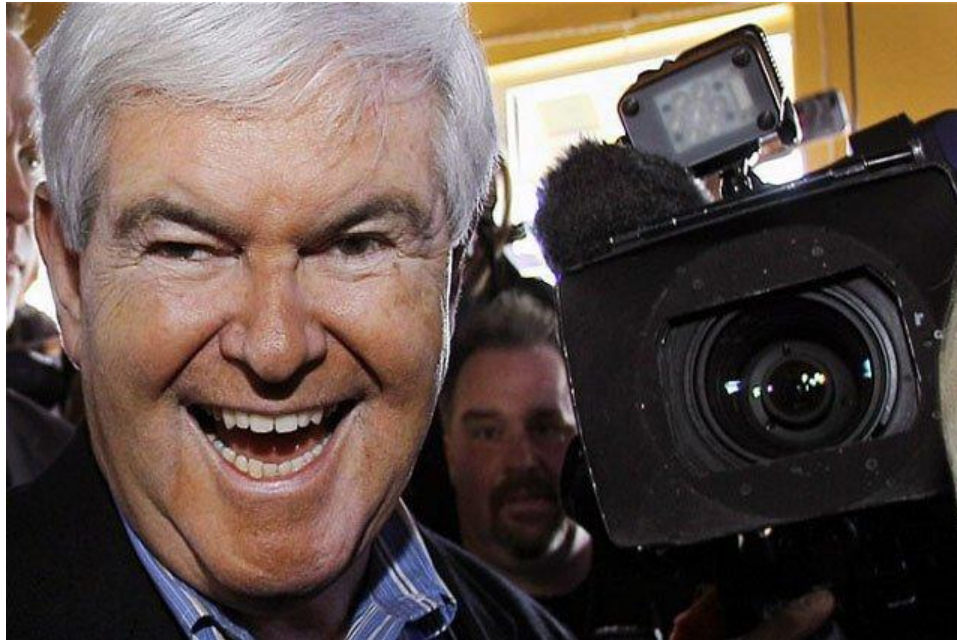
<http://front.moveon.org/shocking-how-one-bank-gets-big-time-profits-from-food-stamps/?rc=daily.share&id=35004-18997482-%3DmmwYx>

20120123-07 13:15 Pam Re: MoveOn Petition: Investigate the Big Banks! (reply to SteveG, above)

I certainly do hope Obama goes ahead with the investigation of the banks.

20120123-05 13:10 Ben "Newt Gingrich: The Republican Dark Lord"

I LOVE this headline!



"Newt Gingrich: The Republican Dark Lord" by Peter Bella, *Washington Times*

Jan. 23, 2012, (<http://communities.washingtontimes.com/neighborhood/middle-class-guy/2012/jan/23/newt-gingrich-republican-dark-lord/>)

CHICAGO, January 23, 2012— Newt Gingrich is the Dark Lord of politics. He is purposely campaigning in a provocative, irreverent, spiteful, and offensive manner.

He is pushing the envelope of decency in his "evil" campaign against his GOP competitors and President Obama.

Listening to him speak one has to wonder if he is insane, entertaining, or performing political stand-up comedy. One thing is for sure. Newt Gingrich is dangerous. Newt Gingrich's life's purpose is the quest for absolute power. In the present tense, he seeks the restoration of the power he lost.

Whenever he waddles on stage anger envelopes him like a black aura. Newt Gingrich has the singular ability to replace optimism with the ugly shadow of cold cruel hatred and pessimism.

He is the personification of the Dark Lord, Sauron.

One Newt to rule them all, One Newt to find them,
One Newt to bring them all and in the darkness bind them
In the Land of Hatred where the Shadows lie.

Only the simple minded could cheer for such an odious character.

Newt Gingrich has a grandiose delusion that he will be the next President of the United States. Which is why the Democratic Party is treating him like a lightweight. The real threat to President Obama is Mitt Romney.

DNC Chairman Debbie Wasserman Schultz is working night and day to derail Mitt Romney. She would sell her soul to help Newt Gingrich get the GOP nomination.

There is one thing Democrats do really well, better than Republicans. They can count votes, all votes, not just their own. This time out, the president does not only have to win, he needs a landslide. That is the only way he, and his party, can claim an ironclad mandate for their policies.

If the GOP loses and the margin is slim, President Obama loses too.

The president needs to win, at the very least, in the high 50% range. No landslide and he is a lame sitting duck. The White House will be relegated to pomp and ceremony. The Democrats will be seeking their next presidential candidate. The two party war of attrition will continue in the legislature.

Gridlock will be business as usual. The people, as the only losers, will suffer.

Newt Gingrich thinks he is the smartest guy in the room. He is so smart he let his own party oust him from his Speaker's position and force his retirement, even though he was warned about it ahead of time.

Newt Gingrich has been toiling in the reek and filth of the miasmatic backwater political swamp for years, waiting for his chance at revival and redemption. He grew in ego, wealth, and narcissism.

There had to be a lot of exploding heads in high GOP circles when Newt Gingrich threw his over sized hat in the ring.

Gingrich keeps invoking Ronald Reagan as his personal mantra. Ronald Reagan, the happy warrior, would be appalled at the detestable creature Gingrich has evolved into. Reagan would disavow him.

Over the past few years, political rhetoric has become terroristic in nature. Newt Gingrich kicked it up a notch. He turned political rhetoric into a grotesque art form.

One of the cardinal rules of politics is never turn the opposition into a martyr. It guarantees you will lose. Newt's ugly references to Mitt Romney and the president will backfire miserably. Newt is appealing to the lowest common denominator.

Anyone with a scintilla of intelligence and common sense can see he is just an angry guy who is in search of absolute power. Newt would not govern. He would rule.

There are plenty of legitimate reasons for Democrats and Republicans to be angry at, disappointed in, or disaffected with President Obama. Making him a martyr will backfire. Making the insults personal, even in an oblique manner, is indecent, vicious, and despicable.

There is no reason to show such disdain and hostility. President Obama has not engendered national hatred, except from some well-funded marginal fringe groups. He is not Jimmy Carter, whose own party turned against him.

Newt Gingrich has to convince Republican voters, nationally, in a compelling manner, that he can win against President Obama. He cannot make that case. All the insults and hubris in the world will not make that happen.

Barack Obama convinced Republicans, and even Evangelical Christians, in a compelling manner, that he was better than John McCain. Which is why so many voted for him.

Newt is out of touch with reality. The reality is political arithmetic. Newt Gingrich will drive many Republican voters to the Obama camp again or they will just stay home.

He cannot convert conservative or moderate Democrats to vote for him. Even most of the independents and swing voters are not that stupid.

Elections are about addition. Newt only knows how to subtract.

There is one last thing to consider, Newt Gingrich's blatant hypocrisy. Newt Gingrich spent decades as a legislator and lobbyist. His considerable wealth is a direct result of his membership in the Washington elite.

Newt Gingrich is part and parcel of the Washington elitism he rails against. He is railing against himself. Newt Gingrich is the ultimate beltway insider.

Newt Gingrich is running the mother of schlock and awful campaigns. Newt will be shocked and awed when he loses the GOP race.

The Republican Party will breath a sigh of relief.

20120123-09	15:19	SteveB	Fw: MoveOn Action: Run for Mayor of Your Town or City!
-------------	-------	--------	--

from MoveOn:

If you were mayor of _____, what would be the first thing you'd do? Make sure city employees don't lose their pensions? Support green business startups? Or maybe fight back against cuts to crucial local services?

This isn't just a hypothetical scenario—it's exactly what more than 4,000 MoveOn members just like you have been thinking about since taking the first step to run for elective office. And they're not just running for mayor. They're exploring running for offices including school board, town council, and state legislature in cities and towns across the country.

If you've ever thought, "I've got some ideas for doing things differently in _____," or seen a local politician and thought, "If that were me, things would be different," then it's time to join thousands of other progressives across the country and run for office.

And if you decide to run, you won't be alone. You'll be part of a nationwide progressive strategy to take back local offices in 2012 and beyond. To help give you the resources you need to run a competitive campaign, we've partnered with the New Organizing Institute to provide you with online training and strategic advice. Trust me—running for office is easier than you think. So what do you say?

Yes, I'd consider running for office: <http://candidateproject.org/recruitment/campaigns/moveon/?pledge=true>

Back in 2010, tea party candidates, backed by national tea party groups, were elected to hundreds of local offices. That's exactly what we're going to do in 2012—but with a wave of candidates who will stand up for the 99% in communities across the country.

If you decide to run, you'll gain access to the New Organizing Institute's great online training programs. And to help progressive candidates in 2012, they've created a comprehensive set of candidate guides. Here are some examples of what you'll have access to:

- Expert online courses on how to run your own campaign and how to get started.
- Help finding the elected position that's right for you.
- An online community so that you can ask questions and share advice with other progressive candidates around the nation.
- A database of time-tested strategic campaign tips, and more.

So if you've ever wanted to change things in _____, or imagined yourself running for office in _____, now's the time. What do you think? Are you in?

Thanks for all you do. –Kat, Elena, Tate, Garlin, and the rest of the team

20120123-10

15:23

Mary

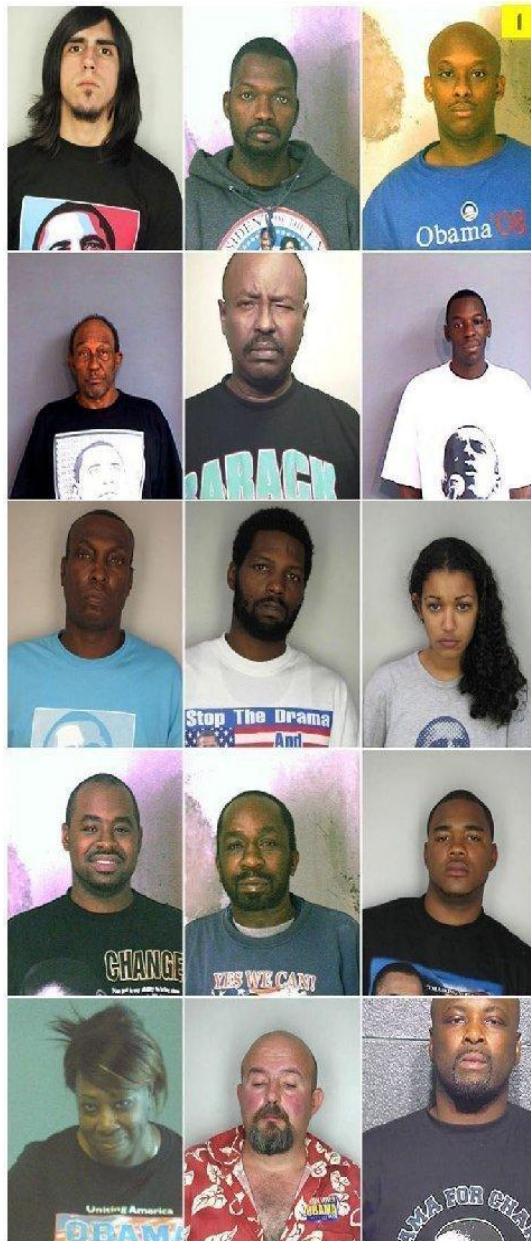
Re: SteveB's fwd. of Art's "Thanks, Mr. President" Presentation (reply to SteveB) & Fw: New Fashion Rage in Police Mug Shots

Awwww, how sweet. But I missed the violins. Ever heard the expression "figures lie, and liars figure?" Job creation? Really? So, if so and so wasn't laid off, that goes in the "job creation" category? I noticed no mention of the debt this new Messiah has incurred for our country. Oh, I forgot, that's Bush's fault.

I'm going to forward you an anti-Obama email I got which is equally as stupid, unfair, and unfounded as the one you just sent. Altho I loathe Mr O for so many reasons, I put no more stock in that than I do in your "Thanks" one. Could you try being fair yourself?

This is the anti-Obama email I rec'd, which, like the one you just sent out, is out of context, unfair, and unfounded...and you know I loathe the man, but I believe in being fair. Wish you did.

"Let's see here. I need to shower, shave, eat some oatmeal, put on my new Obama T-shirt, grab my 9 mm, and hold up a convenience store..." These are actual Police Photos:



[20120123-13](#) 16:17 SteveB Re: SteveB's fwd. of Art's "Thanks, Mr. President" Presentation (reply to Mary, above)

This is very funny. Thank you. But, jeez, Mary. Where are the WHITE guys? Ah, there's one...but he looks Serbian or something...I like a little humor! Though the Obama one brought tears to my eyes. He's just such a great guy!

What's to hate? The country seems to be moving in a positive direction. Even SteveBA seems to be betting on it. Despite Europe. This is very bad news for Newt Slimeball or Mitt Plastico.

Keep sending me stuff and ideas. You know I try to be fair. I wish we had much more criticism from the Right in the group. They just never seem to have the courage of their convictions to stick around. I'm editing the Archives now (1500 packed pages going back to 2007), and they're full of these people. And always, the Left treats them more courteously than the Left is treated in return. If the Right is correct about things and can prove it, where are they? Where is SteveM? Bob? Robert? GaryC? Dale? Richard? Mike? Pat? They couldn't take the heat of the truth, in my humble opinion.

I hope you guys are having a great year of the dragon. Thanks again for your contributions and, especially, opinions.

[20120123-14](#) 16:40 SteveBA Fw: "Rally Not Built on Complacency"

from Monday Morning Outlook:

"Rally Not Built on Complacency" by Brian S. Wesbury and Robert Stein, First Trust

Jan. 23, 2012, (<http://www.ftportfolios.com/Commentary/EconomicResearch/2012/1/23/rally-not-built-on-complacency>)

There are three types of people involved in the prognostication business these days. The "end of the world" types, the "it's a slower, post-apocalypse world" types, and the "everything is going to be OK" types.

For a long time now, we have been saying that the "end of the world" types are over-doing it. This is actually a dangerous stance for us to take because the "end of the world" types can be very nasty to people who disagree with them. The "it's a slower world" types are more cerebral and less nasty, but equally adamant. We, obviously, fall in the third camp.

No matter how we make our argument, and no matter how consistently the economy grows, the doubt and fear and disbelief just won't go away. We noticed this recently, when conventional wisdom started to say that investors were being "complacent" these days.

In other words, when the equity markets go down, investors are "living in reality" and "accepting" that the economy and financial markets just aren't in great shape. But when the equity markets go up, they are being schizophrenic, overly optimistic, and now some are saying "complacent."

We couldn't disagree more. Private sector payrolls have grown 160,000 per month in the past year. The unemployment rate is down almost a full percentage point from a year ago, while the size of the labor force is up (just like it was up in 2010, too). Over the past four weeks, unemployment claims have averaged 10% lower than the same period a year ago.

Retail sales are up 6.5% from a year ago; orders for long-lasting durable goods are up 12.1%, and auto sales are up 8.4%.

Perhaps most importantly, the long-awaited recovery in the housing sector has finally started. Housing starts in the fourth quarter hit the highest level since late 2008 and were up at a 32% annual rate compared to Q2. This was not all apartment buildings; single-family housing was up at a 13% annual rate in the second half of 2011.

Meanwhile, even after a recent rally, US equities remain incredibly cheap. Based on trailing after-tax earnings, the price-to-earnings ratio on stocks in the S&P 500 is roughly 13.5. On future earnings it's even cheaper.

Flipping this over, so earnings are on top and price is on bottom, the "earnings yield" on stocks is 7.4%, compared to a 10-year Treasury yield of only 2%. This suggests that stocks are cheap relative to bonds.

In other words, rather than being the result of complacency, craziness or stupidity, the recent rally has a much more straightforward explanation. The economy is growing, it's very likely to continue to grow, and if that is the case then stocks are grossly undervalued relative to bonds.

And the good news continues. With about 15% of the S&P 500 companies having reported earnings for the fourth quarter of 2011, 60+% have beaten street estimates.

Notice how none of this has anything to do with a third round of quantitative easing by the Federal Reserve. The last round of quantitative easing was essentially useless, with banks boosting their excess reserves from \$1 trillion to \$1.6 trillion.

Nonetheless, bank lending is picking up and accelerated after QE2 ended. This has helped boost the M2 measure of money (Milton Friedman's favorite gauge), which has also been growing faster since the end of QE2 than during it.

So far in 2012, the S&P 500 has had eleven up days versus only two down days. That ratio probably won't continue for the full year, but the idea that it is unwarranted, crazy or complacent is a point of view that is supported by a decidedly bearish set of assumptions.

Rather, it appears that the stock market is finally (or once again) beginning to realize that the world is not ending and that the recovery is not so fragile that it cannot last. We remain optimistic. We continue to believe that things are getting better and we don't feel complacent at all.

[Thanks, SteveBA. I agree with this completely. Now if Europe will just half-way fix itself...we could be in good shape for a while...I love it! -SteveB]

20120123-15	18:20	SteveG	"Rand Paul Blocked at Airport After Refusing TSA Pat-Down"
-----------------------------	-------	--------	--

"Rand Paul Blocked at Airport After Refusing TSA Pat-Down" by Laura Rosen, The Ticket

Jan. 23, 2012, (<http://news.yahoo.com/blogs/ticket/senator-rand-paul-detained-refusing-tsa-pat-down-161010280.html>)

20120123-16	21:43	Pam	Re: "Rand Paul Blocked at Airport After Refusing TSA Pat-Down" (reply to SteveG, above)
-----------------------------	-------	-----	---

What do you all think? I'm sort of on the side of Rand Paul on this one. I believe in good airport security, but I know I don't want to be patted down or have a body scan. The thought of having to go through that makes me not want to fly. I have this feeling that we're putting too much energy in the wrong place when it comes to security. Why do we assume airplanes are always going to be the target? I suppose it's very hard to get it right; either we go overboard or we don't do enough.

I read in the New Yorker today that the NYC police has contacted the FBI or the CIA or someone about using drones to patrol the streets. It may not be in the works yet, but somebody somewhere is thinking about it.

Creepy. Or will it deter crime? I also read somewhere that having police do foot patrols is a good crime deterrent, especially when the cops get to know the people in the neighborhoods they patrol. Now, that makes sense to me.

There's also an interesting article on Callista Gingrich in the New Yorker. What interested me was not so much her as what the article said about Newt. He seems to me to be a very flawed individual, emotionally erratic and narcissistic. Definitely not Presidential material. He makes Obama look like the Rock of Gibraltar. Both had problematic childhoods in some ways, but Obama seems to have become a grown up, while Newt "has issues." At least that's how it looks to me.

20120123-17	21:55	SteveG	Re: "Rand Paul Blocked at Airport After Refusing TSA Pat-Down" (reply to Pam, above)
-----------------------------	-------	--------	--

As long as there are rules about scans and pat downs all of us have to comply. I have to go through a body scan if I fly or a pat down if I go to the court house - metal knee & pacemaker. A change in the rules would be great, but neither Rand or his Dad are above the rules.

There are cameras on most corners, outside/inside stores, Google maps & videos of property - drones can't be that far behind. My understanding is that European countries have more cameras and more security at airports.

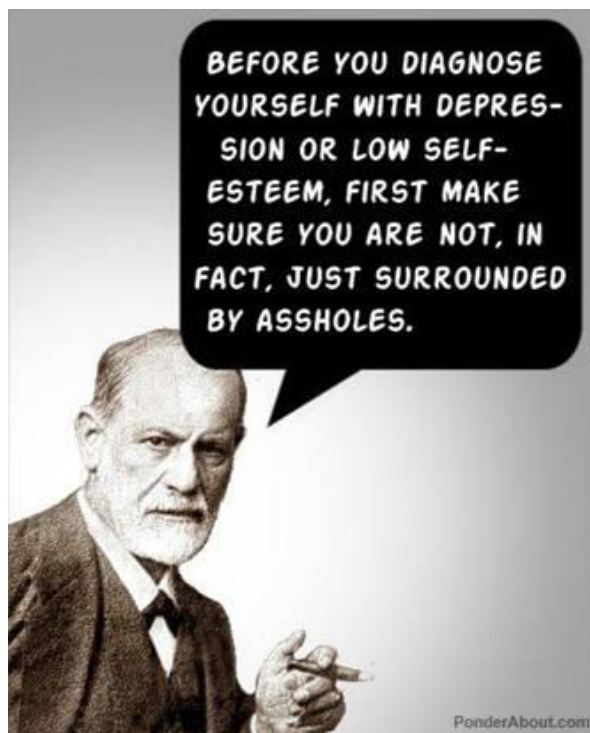
Newt and the residents of hooting/hollering/whistling residents of South Carolina are scary.

It is kind of interesting that we do not get the debates out here on network television - the three hour delay from East to West coasts.

20120123-18	22:20	Bill	Re: "Rand Paul Blocked at Airport After Refusing TSA Pat-Down" (reply to SteveG, above)
-----------------------------	-------	------	---

For fifteen years I had to travel by air quite frequently, and that period began before the security curtain fell hard on those who fly, bringing both inconvenience (you had to go to the airport very early), invasion of one's privacy, and additional cost. I hated the new security regimen and still do, although passing through the security apparatus is now a quicker process. I haven't—one reason being dislike of the security process—flown since August and am happy about it. However, air travel is crucial to the economy and necessary for other reasons, so my thought is that undergoing the small insults of the security process is a reasonable trade-off that allows a crucial service to continue in the face of hostile forces. I have some heartburn in saying that, but I don't know any superior remedy.

I doubt that Rand Paul had a shoe or underwear bomb, but he needs to subordinate himself to what is a reasonable inconvenience. It occurs to me also that the security process also deters-and catches-those who would bring guns, knives, and various other weapons on flights. Rand Paul could also avail himself of the FAA's process-for those who apply and pass-that allows expedited passage through security.



<http://www.latinflyerblog.com/2011/08/expertflyer-eric-bobeks-seven-weeks-in.html>

Noel Kempff Mercado National Park, Santa Cruz, Bolivia



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

You can subscribe to this free, no-obligation, daily Newsletter filled with lively, intelligent discussion centered on politics and government, but ranging to anything members feel is important, interesting, or entertaining. To subscribe, use the form on our website or blog, or simply reply to this email with "Yes" or "Start" in the Subject line, then add our email address (below) to your Contacts or Safe list. To opt-out, reply with "No" or "Stop" in the subject line.

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

original material ©2012 Steven W. Baker, all rights reserved