



FRIENDS OF THE MIDDLE NEWSLETTER #69 — FEB. 8, 2012

Welcome to always lively political discussion and whatever else comes up.
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GOP Race Now in 'No Man's Land'

(posted by Steven W. Baker / SteveB, Feb. 8, 2012)

Gee, where was it before? I already thought the Republican Primaries were off the map. Now Rick Santorum, Mr. Glitter Bomb in Your Bedroom, has made it official, both by winning all three contests yesterday and with his "No Man's Land" quote. Maybe Google will have so much Santorum activity that he and his family won't have to be embarrassed quite so much. Maybe the bad stuff will move all the way down to, say, page two. LOL

Don't ask me what's going on in the Republican Party except that it's clear they don't want their own candidate, Mitt Romney, Mr. Zero. I wonder how they think they are going to jam this jerk down our throats in the election if they don't even want to nominate him? I don't see how any amount of super-PAC money could do that. The guy is a loser. Head-to-head against President Obama, he's a born loser! All the GOP has up front are losers and it has been like that, seemingly, for a very long time. No offence intended

"Santorum: GOP Race Now in 'No Man's Land'" by Deirdre Walsh, CNN

Feb. 8, 2012, (<http://us.cnn.com/2012/02/08/politics/santorum-whats-next/index.html>)

(ST. CHARLES, Mo) As he was handily winning three Republican contests and stalling frontrunner Mitt Romney's clear path to the Republican presidential nomination, Rick Santorum proclaimed to CNN that the 2012 GOP race was now "in a little bit of no man's land."

The former Pennsylvania senator's campaign got a massive dose of momentum after stunning frontrunner Mitt Romney with a clean sweep on Tuesday night, beating him by double digits in Minnesota, a state Romney won in 2008; stunning him in Colorado, another state in Romney's column in 2008; and trouncing him in Missouri, one of the country's biggest battleground states.

"I don't stand here to claim to be the conservative alternative to Mitt Romney," Santorum told supporters in a convention hall just west of St. Louis. "I stand here to be the conservative alternative to Barack Obama."

The crowd erupted in cheers, chanting "We pick Rick! We pick Rick!"

Never mind that Tuesday night's win in Missouri won't actually rack up any delegates for Santorum.

The state's 52 delegates will be awarded when GOP caucuses are held in mid-March. But he touted the win as proof that his message is gaining traction even without the campaign checkbook or ground operation that Romney has.

"Tonight we had an opportunity to see what a campaign looks like when one candidate isn't outspent 5- or 10-to-1 by negative ads, impugning their integrity and distorting the record," Santorum said, standing with his wife. "This is a more accurate representation frankly of what the fall race would look like."

Even before the results started coming in Tuesday evening, Santorum's advisers were setting expectations high on the first multi-state polling day of the year.

Santorum advisers told CNN that his website's traffic was up over the past few days, saying it was "going through the roof."

Although they didn't have any of their own polling showing they were gaining support in Minnesota, Missouri and Colorado, the campaign pointed out that crowds were getting bigger at their stops and the anecdotal evidence gave them a good feeling going into Tuesday's vote.

The Romney campaign emphasized Missouri's primary wasn't a true test because delegates weren't officially awarded.

"Part of the process. No delegates," Romney spokeswoman Andrea Saul told CNN after Missouri was called for Santorum.

But Santorum aides call that argument "laughable" and pointed to Romney's major focus on the Iowa caucuses, another state where delegates won't be awarded until months after the vote.

One Santorum adviser told CNN that the strong showing this month will be a springboard for Santorum heading into Super Tuesday to solidify him -- not Gingrich -- as the alternative to Romney, who has not been able to bring the conservative base into his camp.

"February is about perception and momentum leading into Super Tuesday," the adviser said.

The Santorum campaign believes that Tuesday's strong showing will be a huge boost to its fund-raising efforts, even scheduling its next stop in Texas.

"That's where the money is," the adviser said.

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This is a sample of the UNCLASSIFIED, non-covert US Military Bases! How do you think a "crazed & fanatic religious ruled country" would feel! They are set to bring the Apocalypse, are we spurring them on?

Each of the 45 black dots is a U.S. military base.



But Iran is the one threatening the U.S.?

Kind of gives you a little bit different view, huh? Thanks, Tom!

I'm going to forward this right to the member who sent the Israel cartoon yesterday. ^_^

Well, I've been to most of those bases and they are there for the most part to prosecute the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Still, you make an interesting point, Tom.

Yesterday's FotM Newsletter contained an error in attribution (Art instead of SteveB on one submission).

Once an edition has been emailed, it cannot be corrected. Instead, I try to keep the FotM Newsletters on the website corrected. For instance, yesterday's corrected FotM Newsletter is at:

<http://www.friendsofthemiddle.org/2012-newsletters/20120206-0067.pdf>.

All of the FotM Newsletters in PDF format can be read in multiple-sized type with full search capabilities using Acrobat or your regular browser. See:

<http://www.friendsofthemiddle.org>.

In the future, the indexed monthly compilations will become the definitive editions. These will continue to be corrected in lieu of the daily editions, which will become obsolete once they are compiled into a monthly.

20120207-04	11:02	SteveB	Re: Thinking About Davos / Business Income Taxes (to Bill)
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I had been thinking about Davos and woke up in the middle of the night still extremely puzzled by your opposition to my statement that American companies and corporations don't pay income taxes, their customers and clients do. Remember, we have always been talking only about income taxes—federal and state.

You maintained that this was not always the case. What are those cases and, if they exist, aren't they so rare as to be incredibly of no impact to the veracity of my original statement?

Let's look at the case of every single business in America. They have to pay taxes on Apr. 15 (without an extension) and/or quarterly (ditto). All of these tax payments are all made after the quarter in question has ended, not before or during. Businesses know or make pretty good guesses, nowadays, the amounts of those tax payments that are due AFTER THE FACT. They are very simple and must be one of two cases:

1. The business did not make a profit that quarter. No one will owe any income taxes at any time (pending possible future adjustments which do not dilute my argument).
2. The business made a profit (because of sales and/or services sold, nothing else will turn a profit, not even selling the factory), in which case a tax must be paid, but it comes directly out of the profit that was made that quarter. **The customers/clients money will be used to pay it, because that is the only source of profit.**

Capital gains are something else but, again, have no impact on my argument, just as vehicle licensing taxes don't.

My more important argument is, since they don't exist anyway, let's just get rid of all business income taxes and let everything be like proprietorships and S corps. Why not?

20120207-12	16:11	Bill	Re: Thinking About Davos / Business Income Taxes (reply to SteveB, above)
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Hate to make your sleep uneasy. Let me try again to explain why I couldn't accept your statement. First I'll show the case related to accelerated depreciation—admittedly a bit esoteric but still wholly relevant—and then I'll make the more general, risk-related argument as to why what you asserted isn't accurate.

Let's say a business entity opts to use accelerated depreciation. Almost all do, because it amounts to free money. In fact, the competitive pressures typically require that they do, otherwise, competitors will have an edge. Congress allows accelerated depreciation in its many forms as measures that will augment business fortunes, allowing the business entity to retain capital and to re-invest it. What should be known also is that many industries, particularly those that are capital-intensive, lobby for accelerated depreciation preferences or their renewal to feather their own nests or keep their stock prices higher.)

Now, as to the mechanism of accelerated depreciation and its effects on earnings—the part that is of greatest concern to you: The business entity is allowed to depreciate a disproportionate amount of its capital investment early in the life of that investment. Depreciation expense, then, is raised, and earnings, *ceteris paribus*, are reduced in the period when that disproportionate expense, i. e. accelerated depreciation, is taken. (Do bear in mind—and I think this is important to your concerns—that capital investments are typically depreciated over several years, so depreciation for accelerated depreciation of a given capital investment is high early in the investment's life and low later in its life.)

In consequence of the accelerated depreciation, then, greater depreciation expense is not available in later years. The result, again *ceteris paribus*, is that taxable earnings rise. Now, juxtapose that mechanism with a deteriorating economy in a time when many businesses cannot or choose not to make additional capital investment to continually avail themselves of accelerated depreciation.

Their revenue may be decreasing because of a weakening economy, but their taxable earnings, because of artificially low depreciation, won't be diminishing at the same rate. The crucial question is whether the resulting (state, federal, and other) taxes can be priced into the market. The answer for many entities was or is that they can't do it when the economy is on a downer.

More generally with respect to businesses that can't price taxes into charges for their goods and services (this happens again and again and again), such businesses first suffer reduced return and then consume their own capital.

These are the scenarios that caused me to demur when you asserted that "Businesses don't pay any taxes. Ever." It just ain't so. I suppose you could argue that those businesses that enter bankruptcy, whether Chapter 7 or 11, don't pay their taxes, but I would counter-argue that the great majority of them will have suffered loss of return and all or part of their capital. Risk is at the center of my disagreement with your assertion. You go into business, and you can lose your shirt—and wind up, as either owner or shareholder, effectively paying taxes that your business or investee owes—until your capital is consumed. If you're as big as GM, maybe you can get the taxpayers to make your solvent, but the old shareholders of GM were left with their capital having flown over the horizon.

20120207-21	22:30	SteveB	Re: Thinking About Davos / Business Income Taxes (reply to Bill, above)
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It can get complicated.

And your point argues well for why businesses should not have their incomes taxed.

It benefits a business to depreciate assets quickly, in most cases (all cases?). In the early years this decreases profit and, therefore, taxes. These gains cannot be ignored in analyzing the last years of the depreciation cycle when the opportunity to decrease profit and taxes is reduced.

Ah...what you're saying is that in the early years of depreciation, part of the "apparent" profit comes from capital because the depreciation is in essence too rapid at that point? So these taxes come from capital? I think this is irrelevant.

Still, any profit which appears at the end of a quarter arises out of all you discuss, among other things. Depreciation doesn't hurt you here. During the whole cycle, either you made a profit in a quarter or not. If you did, the money needed to pay taxes came from sales. Regardless of what accounting (if consistent) is used to calculate profit. Regardless of the results of depreciation for that quarter. If a profit is made in a quarter, that money came from sales. Therefore, any income taxes paid came from sales.

Income taxes on profit are not what will eat the capital of a business and should never do so. They are not intended to do so, otherwise business income taxes would be on gross income.

You say: "Their revenue may be decreasing because of a weakening economy, but their taxable earnings, because of artificially low depreciation, won't be diminishing at the same rate. The crucial question is whether the resulting (state, federal, and other) taxes can be priced into the market. The answer for many entities was or is that they can't do it when the economy is on a downer."

The business you discuss is suffering some at that time, but it isn't paying taxes out of anything but sales. If the profit looks artificially high at this time, it only compensates for when it looked high before. But I don't think pricing has anything to do with it. And it doesn't matter if, at the end of the depreciation cycle, the business doesn't benefit as much as it did at the beginning. If the company pays income taxes, it is because it made a quarterly profit. If it made a profit it had taxable earnings. Those earnings came from sales. If taxes are due, they came from sales.

Maybe if you could clearly explain to me a quarter that a business could experience where it would pay income taxes out of anything but income. I'm still unable to picture the situation. Accounting tricks can be used to cut the pie in many different ways, but when there is no pie, it doesn't matter because no taxes are paid. Where quarterly accounting tricks are used, things will even out eventually.

Please let me know the error of my ways, but I'm pretty damned sure I'm on to something really important.

20120207-05	11:08	SteveG	"Obama Pulls Combat Pay For Deployed U.S. Troops"
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ANY TRUTH TO THIS??

from "Obama Pulls Combat Pay For Deployed U.S. Troops" by Pat Dollard, The War Starts Here!

Feb. 4, 2012, (<http://patdollard.com/2012/02/obama-pulls-combat-pay-for-u-s-troops/>)

President Obama's latest policy outrage makes no attempt to hide his contempt for our military, as he is ordering that our troops serving overseas in war zones overseas are not to receive combat pay unless they are being shot at. A Marine who lives in Florida has just posted a note on Facebook which stated that he received a letter from his PayPal account that he would only be receiving his Hazard pay (Imminent Danger Pay) if he is actually in a hostile area and at risk of being shot at.

Continues...

20120207-06	11:18	Art	Re: "Obama Pulls Combat Pay For Deployed U.S. Troops" (reply to SteveG, above)
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Far as I know it has always been that way. You only draw combat pay if you are in a combat zone. This is not new unless I missed something in the last few years.

Some of it is pretty goofy actually. Saudi Arabia was considered a combat zone for tax purposes at least throughout the 90's. The USAF folks, active duty, would plan their TDYs to go on the last day of a month and stay through the 1st day of the next month, thereby getting two months of pay tax free. I found that pretty ugly even if it was legal.

SNOPEs backs me up.

20120207-07	11:43	Pam	Re: "Obama Pulls Combat Pay For Deployed U.S. Troops" (reply to SteveG, above)
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If this is true, it's terrible. EVERYONE in Afghanistan and Iraq should get combat pay. When I lived in Afghanistan in the early 60s, it was considered a "hardship post" and everyone got combat pay for just being there.

[20120207-09](#) 11:53 SteveB Re: "Obama Pulls Combat Pay For Deployed U.S. Troops" (reply to SteveG, above)

Art is right.

The article is misleading and untruthful. Looks to me like everyone in Afghanistan would continue to get combat pay as usual because they would be: "On duty in a foreign area in which he was subject to the threat of physical harm or imminent danger on the basis of civil insurrection, civil war, terrorism, or wartime conditions."

The one exception is that, starting Feb. 1, 2012, what Congress did was change the prorating of the monthly combat pay to daily, saving a little taxpayer money and make things a little fairer. This is what the Right wants, right? Funny it gets so distorted and blamed on Obama, huh? See:

<http://www.snopes.com/politics/military/combattpay.asp>, where it's all explained pretty well.

[20120207-10](#) 11:59 SteveG Re: "Obama Pulls Combat Pay For Deployed U.S. Troops" (reply to all, above)

If someone is stationed in Afghanistan, getting combat pay, and then goes on a 2 week leave, do they get combat pay for those 2 weeks?

During Vietnam my brother was on a B52 crew stationed for 6 months in Guam and later in Thailand. Daily 12 hour missions of bombing Vietnam but no combat pay as he was stationed in a non-combat area.

[20120207-11](#) 12:27 Art Re: "Obama Pulls Combat Pay For Deployed U.S. Troops" (reply to SteveG, above)

Well the way they used to do it is designate by areas. Vietnam was a combat zone but Thailand and Guam were not. We didn't get much in those days - maybe \$125 a month. Of course, flight crews got flight pay which we ground pounders did not. Steve, are you sure your brother did not get some special pay if he was on bombing missions over Vietnam???

During Desert Storm I think Northern Saudi was combat pay but not sure about the rest. You have to be careful here because there are many different subsidies according to the organization you belong to and so forth. Pam was talking about when she was Afghanistan. As a hardship post the State and USAID folks got a differential, maybe 25% of their pay, but the active duty military, probably all attaches, did not. Military folks on the other hand get a housing allowance, if they live off post in the USA, State Dept. folks do not. And so on. As Steve B say the article is misleading. The guy is stationed in Florida, probably Tampa, for gosh sakes. He shouldn't get combat pay.

[20120207-13](#) 17:59 SteveG "Komen's Ambiguous Apology"

This is interesting and gives a good perspectives on their unconscionable decision to not help fund Planned Parenthood, but make sure you read the last paragraph----talk about "pro life".

"Komen's Ambiguous Apology" by Katha Pollitt, *The Nation*

Feb. 3, 2012, (<http://www.thenation.com/blog/166076/komens-ambiguous-apology>)

The Susan G. Komen for the Cure Foundation must have been totally unprepared for the firestorm provoked by its announcement that it was severing its long relationship with Planned Parenthood, which for at least five years had been receiving grants to provide low-income women with breast exams and mammogram referrals. Komen showed

itself to be both dishonest and ridiculous: there was its initial long silence over the decision, followed by a flurry of flimsy and inconsistent explanations—first it was that Planned Parenthood was being investigated by Representative Cliff Stearns; then it was a change in criteria for funding. And what PR genius advised it to childishly delete negative comments on its Facebook page? Result: Planned Parenthood was deluged with donations to keep its breast care services going, including a \$250,000 matching grant from New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg; twenty-two senators signed a critical statement; there were resignations among staffers and open rebellion among volunteers. Andrea Mitchell's interview with Nancy Brinker on MSNBC was as close to open distaste as that very polite journalist ever gets. Mitchell is herself a breast cancer survivor, and the expression on her face as she questioned Brinker was as if she were steeling herself to pick up a dead mouse.

The massive show of prochoice strength worked. Friday morning Komen released a statement apologizing for its decision and acknowledging the unfairness of cutting off PP because of the Stearns investigation: "We will amend the criteria to make clear that disqualifying investigations must be criminal and conclusive in nature and not political. That is what is right and fair." (Forget for the moment that Brinker denied the investigation had anything to do with the ban on PP). This is excellent news: Komen has in essence admitted that the Stearns probe is politically motivated, which must sting recently hired senior VP for public policy Karen Handel, who publicly favored defunding PP when she ran as a Palin-endorsed candidate in the 2010 Republican gubernatorial primary.

But the rest of the statement is less clear. It continues:

We will continue to fund existing grants, including those of Planned Parenthood, and preserve their eligibility to apply for future grants, while maintaining the ability of our affiliates to make funding decisions that meet the needs of their communities.

This has widely been taken to mean Komen has backed down completely, i.e., will return to making grants to PP. But look more closely: that is not what it says. Komen says only that it will fund "existing grants"—that means, it will fund grants it has already formally agreed to make. Well, it is legally required to do that, isn't it? It can't rescind a grant on the basis of a rule made after the grant was offered. The original banning always referred to the future, and as to that, Komen says only that PP can apply for funding, not that Komen will continue to make grants to it as it has for many years. Nothing prevents Komen from altering its criteria in ways designed to exclude PP—for example, as Brinker suggested to Mitchell, deciding against funding breast care outside of mammogram centers.

And what about the bit about allowing affiliates "to make funding decisions that meet the needs of their communities?" Does that mean affiliates will be free to refuse to support PP, setting the stage for state and local anti-choice takeover efforts? It's all rather unclear, and much too soon to declare victory and go home. It could mean a lesson well learned—but it could be just spin. After all, Handel, whoever hired her and whoever approved the original ban on PP are still there.

Nonetheless, this is a real win for pro-choicers. We hear so much anti-choice propaganda, we may not always remember that, actually, Planned Parenthood is not sketchy and controversial out there in mainstream America. It is beloved. Beloved. Note the relief- and gratitude-saturated testimonies like the ones collected practically overnight by the social media activist Deanna Zandt at the Tumblr site [Planned Parenthood Saved Me](#). And it is beloved most of all by women who care a lot about women's health—among whom Komen volunteers figure prominently. Breast cancer activism began as a feminist cause, after all: the initial impetus, back when Komen was founded in 1982, was the silence and shame surrounding the disease, the lack of research funding and the general sexism pervading treatment. Those are all feminist issues, and were structured as such in public discourse at the time. It was like *Our Bodies, Ourselves* in action.

Komen miscalculated by thinking its base cares only about breast cancer: in fact, those women in pink t-shirts and sneakers, raising their thousands upon thousands of dollars a year for breast cancer research, understand quite well that women's health means more than tumor-free breasts. If Komen understood that but thought—and maybe still thinks—it can deceive those activists, or gradually shed them and acquire a whole other, equally dedicated, base of anti-choicers, it will dwindle and die. Anti-choicers are not interested in breast cancer activism; they're interested in stopping abortion. They proved that by their eagerness to deprive of breast care women for whom PP was the only available option.

How things now stand: by Friday afternoon, PP was reporting that it has raised \$3,000,000 since the Komen story broke. Meanwhile, just in time for February, Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Komen is partnering with Discount Gun Sales, a Seattle distributor, to market a pink handgun. Because nothing says "pro-life" like a Walther P-22 Hope Edition.

[20120207-15](#) 18:07 Pam Re: "Komen's Ambiguous Apology" (reply to SteveG, above)

Wow. A pink gun. How quaint.

There's an article on Romney in the latest *New Yorker* that's worth a read.

[20120207-17](#) 19:56 Art Re: "Komen's Ambiguous Apology" (reply to SteveG, above)

You have got to be kidding!

On another note our progressive State Legislature and senate has, in the interest of dealing with critical issues that affect us all, voted to overturn a law that limited purchases of hand guns to one a month in the Old Dominion. Now you can buy many as many handguns as you want every day. Can anyone give me one reason anything good could come from this?

[20120207-18](#) 20:54 Pam Guns in an Insane Asylum

On the local news tonight, there was a segment on the state legislature's (or the county's, not sure which) debate over whether to allow guns in public parks. There's been talk also of allowing guns on college campuses. We all live in an insane asylum.

[20120207-19](#) 21:19 Art Re: Guns in an Insane Asylum (reply to Pam, above)

Remember the pictures/news shots of tea baggers wearing/carrying guns to political events a couple of years ago? There are 3 parks outside of Yakima where shooting is allowed – one is unsupervised and reportedly there have been automatic weapons used to shoot everything from discarded couches, appliances, & propane tanks.

[20120207-20](#) 21:27 Dennis Re: Guns in an Insane Asylum (reply to Pam, above)

An article in the *New York Times* today about diminishing interest around the world for using the U.S. Constitution as a model for other national constitutions revealed two interesting points, at least to me.

One was that Thomas Jefferson thought that a new constitution would be needed every 19 years so that it could meet the needs of succeeding generations. I guess the Jefferson-loving original constructionists do their best to ignore this.

The second was that only three constitutions in the whole world say that citizens have the right to own guns. Those three are Mexico, Guatemala, and the US of A. Must be why Mexico is such a great market for Americans selling guns across the border to drug-dealing gangsters.

[20120207-14](#) 18:00 SteveG "Anniversaries from Unhistory"

"Anniversaries from Unhistory" by Noam Chomsky, Nation of Change

Feb. 7, 2012, (<http://www.nationofchange.org/anniversaries-unhistory-1328625093>)

20120207-16

19:34

SteveG

Fw: MoveOn Petition: Tell President Obama to Veto Extending Bush Tax Cuts to the 1%!

from MoveOn.org:

<http://pol.moveon.org/vetobushtaxcuts/?id=35508-18997482-6FHqLax&t=2>

[This is a good one! –SteveB]

20120207-22

23:05

SteveG

Yakima, WA City Council Meeting

Below is a local email in regards to Occupy Yakima efforts against big banks. There was one city manager for about 30 years – he retired several months ago. His replacement was from Florida, lasted 4 months and quit to return to Florida because of a close relative's illness. The current city manager is acting until a permanent replacement is found. I think it will be interesting to find out why the national banks were chosen and if the council makes a change.

I went to the Yakima City Council Meeting for round 2 of my discussion with them why they were banking with Bank of America. Last meeting they told me they would research why B of A was their chosen bank. This meeting they informed me they bank with US Bank, Key Bank and Bank of America. The acting City Manager Morales said the banks were chosen because they met the cities needs (wonder why no one else did?). With that grand explanation, I discussed with them why they were banking with an bank that was found guilty of criminal activity with many national cases pending? I asked them why they werenot using a pre-qualification bidding process to screen OUT bidders that have been found guilty of crimes and have legal actions pending against them? Went from there to discuss researching the bidders to see if they have provided services to similiar agencies, and have those agencies been satisfied with their bidder's services. Then I closed to remind them of B of A's criminal activities and thanked them, then left.

Last time I got a lot of blank stares, and some irritated looks. This time they were quiet, attentive, and actually looked at me. I felt good about it, because they paid attention this time. No telling whether this will make a difference in their way of thought, but at least the thought was presented to them.

I am leaving town for a couple of days for the coast, but definitely will be back for fun at B of A on Saturday for demonstration.

<http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/national-parks/yellowstone-national-park/>

Grand Prismatic Spring, Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming/Montana (David Mencia)



—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.

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