



FRIENDS OF THE MIDDLE NEWSLETTER #123 — APR. 24, 2012

Welcome to always lively political discussion and whatever else comes up.
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The War on Women Continues

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

They're at it again with the ACORN strategy, but Planned Parenthood is much too important to lose. I hope women begin to understand the direct threat to their well-being and freedom and vote accordingly. Actually, I believe they will. If there's one thing I've learned in life, it's that women are smarter, as the Robert Palmer song says, "...The women today / Are smarter than the men in every way."

"Planned Parenthood Worried It's the Target of New Undercover Sting" by Laura Bassett, Huffington Post

Apr. 23, 2012, (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/04/23/planned-parenthood-live-action_n_1446527.html?ref=mostpopular)

A string of suspicious incidents at Planned Parenthood clinics across the country has given the organization reason to believe that anti-abortion activists are targeting it in a new organized sting operation.

According to Planned Parenthood spokesperson Chloe Cooney, clinics in at least 11 states have reported two dozen or more "hoax visits" over the past several weeks, in which a woman walks into a clinic, claims to be pregnant and asks a particular pattern of provocative questions about sex-selective abortions, such as how soon she can find out the gender of the fetus, by what means and whether she can schedule an abortion if she's having a girl.

While patient privacy laws prohibit Planned Parenthood from offering specific details about the visits and where they occurred, Cooney told The Huffington Post that the incidents are so unusual and so similar to each other that they have raised concerns among the organization's executives that the visits are being recorded as part of a concerted anti-Planned Parenthood campaign.

"For years opponents of reproductive health and Planned Parenthood have engaged in secret videotaping tactics with fictitious patient scenarios and selective editing in an attempt to promote misinformation about Planned Parenthood and our services," Cooney said. "As with the prior instances, we anticipate that once again this group, likely in coordination with a broad range of anti-abortion leaders, will soon launch a propaganda campaign with the goal of discrediting Planned Parenthood, and, ultimately, restricting women's health."

The most likely group behind the campaign, Planned Parenthood suspects, is anti-abortion activist group Live Action, which has a history of paying actors to walk into Planned Parenthood clinics and act out various controversial scenarios in an attempt to catch the family planning provider's staffers doing something illegal or immoral on tape. A recent operation involved actors posing as pimps and prostitutes engaged in human trafficking

and seeking birth control, STD testing and other family planning services. HuffPost's Ryan Grim reported in February 2011 that Live Action heavily edited the videos they gathered to alter the meaning of conversations and falsely imply that Planned Parenthood is complicit in sex trafficking, but conservative lawmakers and media outlets cited the group's videos in numerous subsequent political attacks against the family planning provider.

While Planned Parenthood has no proof that Live Action is behind the current series of encounters, Cooney said the group is the most coordinated in their operations and that the recent string of incidents "follows their pattern exactly."

Kate Bryan, a spokesperson for Live Action, would not confirm whether the group was behind the newest Planned Parenthood sting. "As you can understand, Live Action does not comment on any investigations until after public release," she said.

Spotlighting the issue of sex-selective abortions is an increasingly common tactic that the anti-abortion community has been using lately to turn the "war on women" around on Planned Parenthood, to galvanize social conservatives and to push legislation that would restrict abortion access. "In 2010, more than 9 out of 10 PPFA's services going specifically to pregnant women were abortion," National Right to Life president Carol Tobias wrote in a recent opinion column. "Roughly half of those abortions are performed on unborn girls. That's the real war on women."

Lawmakers on both a state and federal level have also latched onto the issue by introducing legislation that criminalizes doctors who perform abortions based on the race or gender of the fetus, although opponents of those laws say they force doctors into the inappropriate position of investigating a woman's personal motivations for seeking an abortion.

While Planned Parenthood condemns seeking abortions on the basis of the gender of the fetus, Cooney said the provider is also "committed to providing high-quality, confidential, nonjudgmental care to all who come into our health centers." While Planned Parenthood staffers are extensively trained to answer unusual and difficult questions and to refer women to necessary counseling, none of its clinics will deny a woman an abortion based on her reasons for wanting one, except in those states that explicitly prohibit sex-selection abortion (Arizona, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania and Illinois).

"Decisions about whether to choose adoption, end the pregnancy or to raise a child have to be left up to a woman, her family and her faith, with the counsel of her doctor," Cooney said.

While the problem of sex selection has been widely documented in Southeast Asia, it's unclear how often such gender-motivated abortions happen in the U.S. But Planned Parenthood executives and other experts on the issue acknowledge that they sometimes do.

"The short answer is yes, it does happen here, but not to the same extent as in other countries," said Miriam Yeung, executive director of the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum.

The solution to sex selection, however, is not likely to be found in a Planned Parenthood investigation, Yeung said.

"If you've studied the issues and studied the problem of sex selection in a global context, you know that in order to tackle sex selection, you have to address the social and economic root causes of gender preference," she said. "Abortion restrictions are a non-solution, and Planned Parenthood and others who have been providing necessary women's health care for gazillions of years are not the perpetuators of the war on women."

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"Is the Tea Party Still Relevant?" by Chris Cillizza, *The Washington Post*

Apr. 22, 2012, (http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/is-the-tea-party-still-relevant/2012/04/22/gIQAXP8uZT_story.html)

Is the tea party breaking up?

After playing a dominant role in a number of elections in 2010 — Christine O'Donnell, anyone? — there is growing evidence that the power (and visibility) of the movement has faded somewhat of late.

To wit:

- Former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney, the establishment candidate, secured the Republican presidential nomination after the tea party — and conservatives more generally — failed to unite around an alternative candidate.
- Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) very nearly escaped a primary challenge Saturday, almost two years that home-state colleague Bob Bennett was ousted at the state party convention thanks to tea party-fueled unrest directed at him. Hatch begins the primary race against a conservative former state senator as a favorite.
- Aside from Indiana Sen. Dick Lugar, who faces a serious primary fight from his ideological right next month, there are few signs tea party-led uprisings will threaten GOP incumbents this cycle in the same way they did in 2010. (Even Indiana is something short of a pure establishment vs. tea party race; Lugar's challenger, Richard Mourdock, currently serves as the state treasurer — not exactly the credentials of a pure outsider.)
- In a Washington Post-ABC News poll conducted this month, more than six in 10 people said they were not interested in learning more about the movement, and a majority said the more they learned, the less they liked. Both of those numbers have increased significantly over the past two years.

Conversations with a number of Republican strategists — both those of the tea party and those who count themselves as casual observers of the movement — suggest that the tea party isn't dying, it's just transforming into a new role.

"The tea party clearly is not as successful in 2012 as in 2010, but it still plays a huge role in GOP primaries," said Republican pollster Glen Bolger.

The same Post-ABC poll that showed interest in the tea party flagging also showed that roughly four in 10 people described themselves as supporters of the movement, numbers virtually unchanged over the last year.

Sal Russo, a co-founder of the Tea Party Express, insisted that "the tea party is more vibrant now than in 2010." The difference between now and two years ago, Russo argued, is that the movement is now centered less on pure protest and more on political action.

"Instead of the pleading about what to do, the tea party people now know what to do," Russo said. "Campaign headquarters are bubbling over with people, very different than 2008 and 2006 when they were nearly dead."

Of course, attributing Republican energy and intensity solely to the tea party is a bit of an oversimplification. While the tea party clearly served as an organizing force for unhappiness bubbling in conservative circles toward President Obama in the early days of his presidency, the desire to oust him from office now permeates virtually every corner of the GOP — a fact made apparent by the rapid coalescing of Republicans behind Romney in the past few weeks.

(A Gallup tracking poll released last week showed Romney with the support of 90 percent of self-identified Republicans.)

Viewed broadly, it appears that the tea party may well be a victim of its own success. In 2010, it proved its powers — beating establishment-backed candidates in Senate races in Delaware, Colorado, Florida, Utah and Alaska to name a few. The result? Candidates are far more wary of crossing the tea party this time around, moving to embrace it rather than stare it down.

“The reason for the appearance of less tea party success is that the establishment candidates have moved markedly to the right this cycle,” said Jon Lerner, a Republican consultant. “As the establishment candidates have moved to the right, there is less of a gap for tea party candidates to exploit.”

Hatch is a perfect example of that phenomenon. The six-term senator spent much of the past two years relentlessly courting the tea party wing of the Utah GOP and moving his voting record to the ideological right. (In 2008, Hatch was ranked as the 29th most conservative senator in *National Journal's* vote ratings. By 2011, he was up to 15th.)

Romney, too, moved to the right on fiscal issues in hopes of keeping any tea party revolt at bay. And if you needed an example of the influence the tea party's no-compromise approach to fiscal austerity has had on the GOP, look no further than an August presidential debate in which all eight candidates said they would not accept a budget deal that included \$10 in spending cuts to every \$1 in revenue increases.

“The core of the movement was a shock therapy to Washington to make the national debt and the danger of the growth of government central to the debate,” said Brad Todd, a Republican strategist. “It's clear Republicans got that message and Obama never will.”

The question then is what the tea party does for an encore. Having moved the GOP — and the broader debate on fiscal issues — further to the ideological right, does it re-incorporate itself into the Republican Party? Disappear entirely? Or find another cause such as fiscal austerity around which to rally?

“Orrin Hatch Pushed into Primary in Utah Senate Race” by Chris Cillizza, *The Washington Post*

Apr. 21, 2012, (http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-fix/post/orrin-hatch-pushed-into-primary-in-utah-senate-race/2010/12/16/gIQAX5GCT_blog.html)

Utah Sen. Orrin Hatch will face off against conservative former state Sen. Dan Liljenquist in a June primary after the six-term incumbent failed to win 60 percent of the vote at the state Republican convention on Saturday.

Hatch took 57 percent on the first ballot and then 59 percent on a second ballot, one on one fight against Liljenquist. Hatch needed to win 60 percent of the vote to avoid a June 26 primary.

Hatch forces had hoped to win the nomination outright on Saturday. He came up short on that goal. But, Hatch did avoid the fate of Sen. Bob Bennett (R), who two years ago lost his bid for reelection when he finished third at the state party convention amid deep discontent directed at him from conservatives.

Bennett's defeat served as a wake-up call for Hatch who spent the intervening two years relentlessly courting Utah conservatives in hopes of avoiding his one-time colleague's fate. (Here's a good summary of how Hatch re-made himself.)

Hatch also benefited from some measure of good luck when Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R), who was considered a sure thing to take on Hatch, decided against a bid in August 2011.

Hatch will likely enter the June primary as the favorite since the electorate will be considerably larger than the 4,000 or so delegates who participated at Saturday's convention.

20120423-02 08:59 SteveB Re: "Is the Tea Party Still Relevant?" (reply to MarthaH)

Thanks for these! I hear Lugar is getting a little backing now from people afraid of the alternatives...

20120423-03 09:35 Pam Re: Sad Conclusion (A Conversation) (reply to SteveBA, Apr. 22, 2012)

IMHO America is an adolescent culture, and like adolescents we tend to see things in black and white. The college freshmen I taught were far more judgmental than anyone I know who is my age. Maturity means seeing the gray areas, the ambiguities, the exceptions, the complete picture. We do not have a choice between two economic systems; that is far too simplistic. What we do have is a choice of directions. We cannot go back; we can only go forward. Adherence to ideology is ruinous; it limits choices and narrows vision. "The People" are like the masses everywhere, easily manipulated into acting against their own best interests. The push to overturn Obamacare is a prime example. Here's what opponents want to get rid of: allowing young adults to remain on their parents' insurance, no refusal of coverage because of pre-existing conditions, Medicare coverage for preventive care (mammograms, etc.). I challenge anyone to examine the proposed changes (Google is easy) and find any that are offensive. I would love to go through the list of provisions with an opponent item by item and hash this out, but life is short. Government haters act as if robots were running the show, when it's people, just like you and me.

20120423-04 09:46 MarthaH Re: Sad Conclusion (reply to Pam, above)

Amen, Pam. Each person is entitled to his own opinion, but it needs to be based on fact from study and often from bitter experience. That makes us mature, and the black and white jells into gray. The middle is where true governance comes from--and we have lost that. I taught that concept to high school seniors--not sure if they are past the immature stage of "my way or the highway yet" but I learned and so can they; ONLY in compromise is governance possible. The opposite is gridlock--and what do WE have...Our great grandson was here Saturday, and I couldn't help but think what our self-centered generation probably has wrought for his lifetime. Then Sunday night I watched the polar story unfold on TV...depressing again! Yours for study and common sense.

20120423-06 10:37 SteveB Re: Sad Conclusion (reply to Pam, above)

I think we have to go forward to what works. The only thing we know that works is what has worked.

It anyone or any party has a platform to increase taxes on the rich, improve and expand public education and make it freer and less expensive, make peace, balance the budget when possible, regulate big business and finance to keep them from crushing us, expand the middle class, provide good jobs by making sure investment is made in America, not China (otherwise, that's where all the jobs will be), and not be afraid to dream... well... where did these ideas come from?

These are things we did in the past that worked and that we must return to in the future.

Good ideas, ideas that work, are not trendy crap to be thrown away just because one party made the mistake to do so. (That would be the GOP, by the way.)

The past is the future...I HOPE!

Now, as to health care, we don't have such a good history to go back to and it is one of our most pressing problems, so Pam is right to keep trying to find solutions. Maybe here, though, we still have plenty of history to draw from if we will just not be so arrogant as to think that many, many countries in the world have not solved this problem. In engineering we call this the "Not Invented Here Syndrome" or NIHS.

And Pam has the most radical solution of all—now, I know this sounds crazy, especially to right-wingers, and it sounds like an oxymoron, a paradox, and a conundrum all rolled into one enormous déjà vu, but, believe it or not!—her idea is to FOLLOW Canada!

America following Canada? You have to be kidding!

IDIOT! WAKE UP! CANADA'S COOL!! (and history has shown that a little socialism, especially when it comes to taxes and health care, can be a very good thing indeed!)

Don't believe me? Study. If you're a businessman, about all you have to do is look into what per cent of GDP different countries spend on total health care costs, and look at infant mortality rates to see if quality is suffering because of cost savings. If you look at just these sensationally representative numbers even casually, you might be amazed.

Then we could talk about what it took for these countries to get there.

Is anyone saying America isn't good enough to do it? That we aren't as good as, say, our unfortunately frozen brethren to the north? I SAY WE ARE!

[20120423-05](#) 09:47 Art Re: Sad Conclusion (reply to SteveBA, Apr. 22, 2012)

from SteveBA:

Identify one government enterprise that has worked.

World War II
The Space Program
The Interstate Highway System
The TVA

I could go on but you get the idea.

[20120423-12](#) 11:37 Art Re: Sad Conclusion (reply to SteveBA, Apr. 22, 2012)

I thought about forwarding an exchange I am having with another old friend that is just frustrating beyond belief but decided to spare you all. I try carefully not to dwell on any assumptions about a candidate's personality or political leanings and just stick with facts in these discussions but it seems to go right over their heads. One of the problems, at least, is that much of the tea party right has stopped questioning anything that flies over the Internet that seems to support their general belief and they simply accept anything no matter how improbable or outrageous. This is sort of the contrary to Pam's dream of having an open discussion point by point over the Health Care Act. It seems they simply won't do that because they know the logic won't hold up.

No offense, SteveBA, but I think your opening sentence in one of these e-mails sort of captures the issue.

"This thread seems to be dominated by the socialist and some belief that the government can make all things well by punishing the successful and giving their wealth to the rest of us."

There is no logic to this statement or at the very least it does not reflect in any way what I or most of the others on this e-mail think. I am not a socialist. I do not want to punish the successful. On the other hand, John Dillinger was pretty successful and at one point had a lot of money. It did not, however, make him necessarily a good guy. It is also not a black and white choice of two economic systems. Assuming everyone reading this has some sense of history, the USA went through a wrenching period about 100 years ago over the excess of businesses going wild. The giant monopolies of Standard Oil, the railroads, mining interests etc. We went through a very violent period of labor unrest, violent riots and brutal repression before we finally enacted the laws that leveled the playing field and established the grounds for the economic development of one of the greatest societies in history. Had we not

resolved those issues to the general benefit of all, we would probably have gone the way of the Russian Revolution or contrarily a repressive Fascist type government.

So we are back to my and Pam's big frustration. How to have an intelligent dialogue on these issues? So far I have not solved the puzzle, but I think this polarization at both the personal level and the national level is not healthy and will not serve anyone well.

Just a thought.

[20120423-07](#) 10:59 SteveB Re: Sad Conclusion (reply to SteveBA, Apr. 22, 2012)

Maybe we should start a little side project...something like snopes.com...where we compile more government programs that have worked well (even in America). We have a good start already. I don't see how anyone can argue with any of the programs presented. Maybe Republicans can get away with believing there was no holocaust, but even they would have to admit that we didn't lose WWII. Jeez, or did we? Their revisionist crap is starting to make me dizzy.

I'll keep track of all I think of and any you send me.

I am tired of this kind of nonsense and we need to get it behind us.

Republicans say they love America and our Constitution and Christianity...yet they maintain that for the history of America, we have been so stupid and incompetent that we were never able to create one good, working government project. Not even the blessed Republicans, is my take. To say that is to say that Americans are a bunch of fricking idiot monkeys and I resent that!

Americans are just a little better than you seem to believe, my friend, SteveBA. We are at least at the level of bonobos.

Let me give you a controversial one—Medicaid! The people love it, despite its flaws. And weren't the great Cold War and stealth planes both government programs? Oh, we lost and the B-2 is a Democratic myth, right? Oh, (and too bad, maybe we succeeded) the A-Bomb and H-bomb and Berlin Airlift. Hey, this is kinda fun...

AND, INSTEAD OF SAYING WE CAN'T DO IT, WHY DON'T WE SAY WE CAN DO IT, LIKE OUR PARENTS' GENERATION DID? If we can't, could someone please tell me why we can't? Maybe because of the dreaded socialism? Obama? LOL!

[20120423-09](#) 11:16 SteveB Re: Sad Conclusion (reply to SteveBA, Apr. 22, 2012)

I'm I to assume, then, SteveBA, that your position is one of advocating total anarchy, total lack of government? If no government program can be good...what follows? That governments only do harm and take people's money?

This is a radical idea, indeed.

You know, I thought the fire department, police department, streets and sanitation department, water company, and schools worked pretty darned well in Greencastle while we were growing up. I bet they still work amazingly well. These are all government projects. We should be proud of these people who have succeeded so well, not denigrate them falsely with failure.

[20120423-11](#) 11:36 Clark Re: Sad Conclusion (reply to SteveB, above)

Somalia, I guess, equals paradise.

20120423-13 11:39 Art Re: Sad Conclusion (reply to Clark, above)

Good choice and as someone who has spent far, far to much time in Somalia, a perfect example. No government, no laws, some very successful strongest, and a lot of "others". Wonderful place.

20120423-08 11:06 SteveB Re: Sad Conclusion (reply to MarthaH, above)

Martha, I really like your reminder that the answers to our problems usually come from middle-seeking compromise. The lack of any of this is killing us right now.

You remind me of my pride that our little group is called "Friends of the Middle". Those are two very important, big words in that name!

I intend to seek and develop both of them as much as I possibly can in the life I have been given that remains.

20120423-10 11:27 MarthaH Re: Sad Conclusion (reply to SteveB, above)

Do you suppose gray hair and blending life experiences into gray/governance is a little lesson...Idealism is Fine and sets us on the path. Compromise is something difficult to learn. Our culture seems hellbent on My Way or Else...and Else will take us down while others succeed. I heard nothing but good stuff on Canadian healthcare from Canadians and nothing but badmouthing from American Doctors...hmmmm....accountability?????

I grew up a YR, but in advocating as the devil for kids I concluded I wasn't anything but a family clone in registration. My tighter-than-bark-on-a-tree uncle died and in shuffling through their "stuff" I came across where FDR drove him out of the "D" column. REALLY???????????????????????????????? I could have passed out, :-)))))))))))))))))))). My pastor calls me his liberal...and I told him I was once a "R"...and he looked shocked. I'd say 'way liberal but with the knowledge that we have to meet in the middle! Or not at all for nothing at all.

Cool, crisp spring day up there. Frost this morning for the MORONS who set out tomatoes before 1 May. Heck, I am a conservative there and would hedge the other way, :-)...Nothing gray about frozen tomato plants...more profit for Wmart???? I think NOT on my watch. :-)

I do chuckle as the rants I read on the website are so like Art and I used to do, ha. We have debated since 1960...and I don't want it to stop! I read Obama's books and knew he was on MY page...and also recognized I could have had him in class...Clinton was the first "younger" president and quite a phenomena. Add 46 years now to age 18 for my first seniors...They weren't that much younger than I...:-)

Happy autumn in the southern hemisphere...

20120423-34 18:15 SteveB Re: Sad Conclusion (reply to MarthaH, above)

So you and Art were both Republicans?... interesting. (And me, of course.)

Yes, your gardening philosophy sounds like my gardening or my sailing or my political philosophy, don't take more risks than you need to. Simple. Conservative. Conserve resources too. Save for a rainy day. Often, I would ask my Mom what she had to say, she'd usually say, "Save your money." How did those terms get all turned around in politics?

We're had some nice, cool days lately. We've been able to walk farther, which is very nice. We don't have to put-up with winter, really, but we never have anything equivalent to "cool, crisp spring" air. I miss it. Oh, well, next year... And to compensate, we have incredible flowering trees all year, uncountable birds, and even the frogs and butterflies are cool. To me, the trees are very cool!

Take care. Hope your garden grows bountifully.

[20120423-14](#) 11:54 SteveG Re: Sad Conclusion

SteveBA was educated in public high school, state operated university for his bachelors, and another state university for his graduate degree. He has worked at Hillard Lyon, assisting people to manage their wealth. Other work, I am unaware of. From his point of reference the educational system, even though government sponsored, worked pretty well. I MHOP SteveBA's problem is with the rules and regulations surrounding investments and the management of wealth.

[20120423-16](#) 12:16 Pam Re: Sad Conclusion (reply to SteveG, above)

What about that, SteveBA? You seem to think many of us are out to soak the rich and take away their hard-earned wealth. Either this is a deliberate misunderstanding, or you really don't read our comments in this newsletter. I, for one, have nothing against people being successful, earning lots of money, and enjoying all the comforts money can provide. What does trouble me--more and more the older I get--is the great disparity between the very rich and everyone else. The Marie Antoinette syndrome, if you will. Whether in France or Russia or elsewhere, revolutions most often occur when an isolated elite ignores the suffering of their fellow citizens. A great fortune can accomplish great things: Carnegie libraries, AIDS treatment in Africa, support for science and the arts. Big-ticket items, like opera companies, art museums, science laboratories, would be impossible without at least some patronage. Look at all the art museums that are named for a wealthy patron: the Whitney Museum, the Barnes Collection, the Hirschorn Museum, the Frick Museum, the Phillips Collection and on and on. These institutions are not products of the middle class OR of the government. The rich do have an important role to play in society, and I am grateful to all the benefactors who do so much to support worthy endeavors. That said, the middle class is still provides our best security, our best opportunities, and our moral center (ideally). Those of us in the MIDDLE do not want to "punish" success; we do expect those who are fortunate enough to never have to count the cost of anything to give something back. Our survival as a healthy society demands it. Common humanity demands it.--

[20120423-19](#) 12:39 SteveB Re: Sad Conclusion (reply to Pam, above)

Pam, you are a hopeless realist.

[20120423-23](#) 14:20 Clark Re: Sad Conclusion (reply to SteveB, above)

And SteveB, you're one of those even rarer commodities, a centrist firebrand.

[20120423-30](#) 16:00 SteveB Re: Sad Conclusion (reply to Clark, above)

:~)

[20120423-15](#) 12:14 SteveB Re: Sad Conclusion (reply to SteveG, above)

I think you are right to defend SteveBA.

But, as Art pointed out, we gave laissez-faire capitalism quite a complete opportunity to show its stuff in America and it truly did. For decades! We must try NEVER to forget those years of excess and true near-anarchy. The slaughter of innocent union members. The incredibly abusive working conditions. The destruction of the middle class. America was held back economically and in the world until we solved the problem of how to rebuild the middle class. Another lesson not to forget.

This is what SteveBA would return us to?

Just asking...

[20120423-17](#) 12:26 SteveG Re: Sad Conclusion (reply to SteveB, above)

You got me wrong – I am not defending! Just stating an observation and offering an opinion of his thinking. I personally think laissez-faire capitalism is what has gotten us into the mess we are in. Unions have saved the workers, EPA has attempted to save the environment, SEC/etc. have tried to control investments – and yet corporations are people and they lobby in their own interests. Social enterprise corporations or approaches to business would go along way of making things better.

[20120423-18](#) 12:38 SteveB Re: Sad Conclusion (reply to SteveG, above)

Gotcha, SteveG...I guess I meant something a little more subtle, as you point out...maybe more like "attempting to understand where SteveBA's views come from"...the empathy. And I thought that was rightfully conceived and expressed by you. Language, especially at a distance, can get so clumsy sometimes...

I KNOW you're a damned COMMUNIST FREAK, my friend! :-)

You're right about social enterprise. Down here in Bolivia we nationalize, though I don't like that much, but for utilities, banking, health care, and education, it only makes sense.

The perfect time to experiment with this would have been Goldman Sachs, AIG, and Citicorp. The government should have nationalized them instead of bailing them out and made them part of the federal Reserve and really pi*sed Ron Paul off!

[20120423-20](#) 12:41 Pam How Do We Reach a Happier Conclusion?

What do you all think about SteveB's comment about nationalizing Goldman Sachs et. al.? It's a thought that had occurred to me as well.

[20120423-21](#) 12:44 SteveG Re: How Do We Reach a Happier Conclusion? (reply to Pam, above)

The framework within which all of live and work need to be structured to protect all people, corporations, etc. from greed/malicious behavior.

[20120423-22](#) 13:53 SteveB Re: How Do We Reach a Happier Conclusion? (reply to SteveG, above)

Yes, it's really small business—the real dynamo of our economy—that is most hurt by the monopolies, big corporations, and government control by the few. It's why you would think true conservatives/Republicans would be on our side, or at least able to compromise...

[20120423-24](#) 14:43 Pam Re: How Do We Reach a Happier Conclusion? (reply to SteveB, above)

That's why I find their position so hard to understand. I LOVE small business. I have nothing but admiration for those who are gutsy and hard-working enough to have a business. I would never have the nerve. But there's business and then there's Big Business. "Liberals" are not anti-business. What we object to--at least this liberal does--is when the rich get all the luck, all the opportunities, all the money, and so many people are left with

nothing, through no fault of their own. I think the Right exaggerates the poor's apparent disincentive to work. I don't like deadbeats either. But I know that there are lots and lots of people who work hard, play by the rules, and still come up short.

[20120423-26](#) 14:56 SteveG Re: How Do We Reach a Happier Conclusion? (reply to SteveB, above)

Just switched all bank accounts from a national bank to a local credit union.

[20120423-40](#) 20:10 SteveBA Re: How Do We Reach a Happier Conclusion? (reply to all, above)

Boy do things move fast on the conversations here. Thanks to Steve G for the bio, but like many here graduated ghs in 64, purdue in 68 with BS in industrial management . Started work for Westinghouse electric until 86. During that time got a MBA at ball state. Left Westinghouse to seek fame and fortune in the financial services business as a stockbroker, married Mary Adams have 3 sons. Still a broker at Hilliard Lyons in Indianapolis.

SteveB mentioned SSA as model of government enterprise. I can't speak to their efficiency in taking our money and giving it to others. But I will refer you to a study published in the federal reserve review march 2005 by the st louis fed that concludes private pension funds would have done better in providing retirement benefits than SSA. They compared performance of the s&p500, 6 month cd's and SSA tax program. Note the vanguard 500 index fund charges about 30bp (.003 percent) and there are no charges for a 6 month cd. So yes private enterprise would have done a better job in delivering the desired benefit. SteveB also mentioned the post office, last I looked both FedEx and ups are very profitable companies doing what the post office could have done, granted they may have cherry picked the services and I am sure delivering to every home is not the most efficient, but I would bet if they had to provide some sort of home service it would have been done more efficiently but it doesn't matter email has killed the post office they just don't know it.

More to come.

[20120423-25](#) 14:52 Dennis George Carlin Quote the Right Never Gets Right



[20120423-27](#) 14:58 SteveG Re: George Carlin Quote the Right Never Gets Right

George was way too smart.

[20120423-28](#) 15:34 SteveB "The Amnesia Candidate" (Mitt R0mney)

Why is all this so typical, yet the GOP will somehow still wake up tomorrow in existence?

Are you Republicans proud of all this blatant dishonesty? It makes me want to puke, myself.

"The Amnesia Candidate" by Paul Krugman, *New York Times*

Apr. 22, 2012, (http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/23/opinion/krugman-the-amnesia-candidate.html?_r=2)

Just how stupid does Mitt Romney think we are? If you've been following his campaign from the beginning, that's a question you have probably asked many times.

But the question was raised with particular force last week, when Mr. Romney tried to make a closed drywall factory in Ohio a symbol of the Obama administration's economic failure. It was a symbol, all right — but not in the way he intended.

First of all, many reporters quickly noted a point that Mr. Romney somehow failed to mention: **George W. Bush, not Barack Obama, was president when the factory in question was closed.** Does the Romney campaign expect Americans to blame President Obama for his predecessor's policy failure?

Yes, it does. Mr. Romney constantly talks about job losses under Mr. Obama. **Yet all of the net job loss took place in the first few months of 2009, that is, before any of the new administration's policies had time to take effect.** So the Ohio speech was a perfect illustration of the way the Romney campaign is banking on amnesia, **on the hope that voters don't remember that Mr. Obama inherited an economy that was already in free fall.**

How does the campaign deal with people who point out the awkward reality that all of the "Obama" job losses took place before any Obama policies had taken effect? The fallback argument — which was rolled out when reporters asked about the factory closure — is that even though Mr. Obama inherited a deeply troubled economy, he should have fixed it by now. That factory is still closed, said a Romney adviser, because of the failure of Obama policies "to really get this economy going again."

Actually, that factory would probably still be closed even if the economy had done better — drywall is mainly used in new houses, and while the economy may be coming back, the Bush-era housing bubble isn't.

But Mr. Romney's poor choice of a factory for his photo-op aside, **I guess accusing Mr. Obama of not doing enough to promote recovery is a better argument than blaming him for the effects of Bush policies. However, it's not much better, since Mr. Romney is essentially advocating a return to those very same Bush policies. And he's hoping that you don't remember how badly those policies worked.**

For the Bush era didn't just end in catastrophe; it started off badly, too. Yes, Mr. Obama's jobs record has been disappointing — but it has been unambiguously better than Mr. Bush's over the comparable period of his administration.

This is especially true if you focus on private-sector jobs. Overall employment in the Obama years has been held back by mass layoffs of schoolteachers and other state and local government employees. But private-sector employment has recovered almost all the ground lost in the administration's early months. That compares favorably with the Bush era: as of March 2004, private employment was still 2.4 million below its level when Mr. Bush took office.

Oh, and where have those mass layoffs of schoolteachers been taking place? Largely in states controlled by the G.O.P.: 70 percent of public job losses have been either in Texas or in states where Republicans recently took control.

Which brings me to another aspect of the amnesia campaign: **Mr. Romney wants you to attribute all of the shortfalls in economic policy since 2009 (and some that happened in 2008) to the man in the White House, and forget both the role of Republican-controlled state governments and the fact that Mr.**

Obama has faced scorched-earth political opposition since his first day in office. Basically, the G.O.P. has blocked the administration's efforts to the maximum extent possible, then turned around and blamed the administration for not doing enough.

So am I saying that Mr. Obama did everything he could, and that everything would have been fine if he hadn't faced political opposition? By no means. Even given the political constraints, the administration did less than it could and should have in 2009, especially on housing. Furthermore, Mr. Obama was an active participant in Washington's destructive "pivot" away from jobs to a focus on deficit reduction.

And the administration has suffered repeatedly from complacency — taking a few months of good news as an excuse to rest on its laurels rather than hammering home the need for more action. It did that in 2010, it did it in 2011, and to a certain extent it has been doing the same thing this year too. So there is a valid critique one can make of the administration's handling of the economy.

But that's not the critique Mr. Romney is making. **Instead, he's basically attacking Mr. Obama for not acting as if George Bush had been given a third term.** Are the American people — and perhaps more to the point, the news media — forgetful enough for that attack to work? I guess we'll find out.

[20120423-29](#) 15:59 Pam Re: "The Amnesia Candidate" (Mitt R0mney) (reply to SteveB)

Too many Republicans are like somebody who sticks his fingers in his ears and says, La, la, la, la, la, la, as loud as he can when he hears something he doesn't like. Smart Republicans, like David Brooks, don't try to twist the facts to fit their own agenda. I think Krugman's essay is right on target. I am SO frustrated.

[20120423-31](#) 16:03 SteveG Re: "The Amnesia Candidate" (Mitt R0mney) (reply to SteveB)

It is like the Swift Boat ads – if you repeat them often enough people start taking them for the truth – after all they read them in the paper, see them on the internet, and see them on TV as well on the news.

[20120423-32](#) 17:15 Pam 'A Conservative in His Soul'

I just heard a woman on the radio say she feels Marco Rubio is a "true conservative, a conservative in his soul." I want to know what that means. Steve Bar? Politics isn't a religion, the last time I checked. What do souls have to do with anything?

[20120423-35](#) 18:35 SteveG Re: 'A Conservative in His Soul'

The last I heard was that God told Rick Perry to run for president, after He told Michelle Bachman to run, and before He told Rick Santorum to run.

[20120423-37](#) 19:03 Clark Re: 'A Conservative in His Soul'

Obviously God had a sense of humor.

[20120423-38](#) 19:10 Dennis Re: 'A Conservative in His Soul'

When I worked with mental patients, they told me God is very talkative.

[20120423-39](#) 19:35 SteveG Re: 'A Conservative in His Soul'

When I worked with mental patients I too was told that God was talkative. And to Clark, hopefully God will always have a sense of humor and the jokes of the GOP candidates will continue to be jokes.

[20120423-42](#) 21:06 Clark Re: 'A Conservative in His Soul'

Forgot to mention that He also told Gingrich not to run, but he ran anyway.

[20120423-43](#) 22:02 SteveG Re: 'A Conservative in His Soul'

Let me see – Newt, Rick P., Rick S., and Michelle all had trouble raising money and getting votes – but they were all the true conservative . Newt doesn't listen to anyone, he already knows it all.

[20120423-33](#) 18:12 Art Fw: Video: Swan Lake in Chinese

This really special.

Swan Lake-----Un-be-lieve-able!!!! YOU MUST WATCH THIS!!!

YOU MUST WATCH THIS. OF ALL THE DANCES I HAVE EVER SEEN, THIS ONE PERFORMANCE OUT SHINES THEM ALL. This is pretty amazing! I don't think Tchaikovsky had this choreography in mind when he wrote " Swan Lake ." How could anyone imagine the performance you are about to see. With a population of nearly 1.5 billion, the Chinese had to locate one great dancer with strength and gymnastic skills and they did. Watch this superb performance:

<http://www.nzwide.com/swanlake.htm>.

[20120423-41](#) 21:02 SteveB Re: Swan Lake in Chinese (reply to Art, above)

Come on, Art, I thought you were a big, tough, macho Army guy?

Gay ballet, get serious?

Just kidding. Thanks for the video link.

Have you seen my tutu anywhere?

[20120423-36](#) 18:37 SteveG Fw: Share a Public Service Announcement from The 99%

from The 99% (or 98%?):

Two weeks ago, we began training 100,000 people in nonviolent direct action to take back our economy.

Last week we opened up a can of 99% whoop-a*s on Tax Day.

This week we're going to jump all over 2 of America's biggest Tax Dodgers - GE and Wells Fargo - at their shareholder meetings.

Welcome to the 99% Spring. Today we're releasing a hard-hitting video call to action with our allies - and we want YOU to watch it and tell your friends.

The video is called 'A Public Service Announcement from the 99%' - and it's just that: a call for members of the 99% to stand up and fight back together. We think it's one of the best videos we've ever helped create - and we hope you'll agree.

Can you take a minute to share our video on Facebook, tweet about it on Twitter, and maybe even forward this email to your friends?

We recently joined the 99% Power coalition, a team of economic justice advocacy groups that are continuing the story from where the 99% Spring left off: directing people to actions they can take in their own communities. We'll be targeting corporate shareholder meetings and engaging in May Day mobilizations - and we want you to join us.

Watch our new video and spread the word today:

<http://www.the99power.org/a-public-service-announcement-from-the-99/>.

Thank you for all you do to [keep?] this movement real.

Sincerely, John Sellers, The Other 98% [Not sure if the math is right here. Two different organizations? -SteveB]

20120423-44 23:44 SteveM Fw: "A Black Man, The Progressive's Perfect Trojan Horse"

"A Black Man, The Progressive's Perfect Trojan Horse" posted by Lloyd Marcus, loydmarcus.com

Mar. 25, 2010,(<http://www.loydmarcus.com/?p=1114>)

As millions of my fellow Americans, I am outraged, devastated and extremely angry by the democrat's unbelievable arrogance and disdain for We The People. Despite our screaming "no" from the rooftops, they forced Obamacare down our throats. Please forgive me for using the following crude saying, but it is very appropriate to describe what has happened. "Don't urinate on me and tell me it's raining." Democrats say their mission is to give all Americans health care. The democrats are lying. Signing Obamacare into law against our will and the Constitution is tyranny and step one of their hideous goal of having as many Americans as possible dependent on government, thus controlling our lives and fulfilling Obama's promise to fundamentally transform America.



I keep asking myself. How did our government move so far from the normal procedures of getting things done? Could a white president have so successfully pulled off shredding the Constitution to further his agenda? I think not.

Ironically, proving America is completely the opposite of the evil racist country they relentlessly accuse her of being, progressives used America's goodness, guilt and sense of fair play against her. In their quest to destroy America as we know it, progressives borrowed a brilliant scheme from Greek mythology. They offered America a modern day Trojan Horse, a beautifully crafted golden shiny new black man as a presidential candidate. Democrat Joe Biden lorded Obama as the first clean and articulate African American candidate. Democrat Harry Reid said Obama only uses a black dialect when he wants.

White America relished the opportunity to vote for a black man naively believing they would never suffer the pain of being called racist again. Black Americans viewed casting their vote for Obama as the ultimate Affirmative Action for America's sins of the past.

Then there were the entitlement loser voters who said, "I'm votin' for the black dude who promises to take from those rich SOB's and give to me".

Just as the deceived Trojans dragged the beautifully crafted Trojan Horse into Troy as a symbol of their victory, deceived Americans embraced the progressive's young, handsome, articulate and so called moderate black presidential candidate as a symbol of their liberation from accusation of being a racist nation. Also like the Trojan Horse, Obama was filled with the enemy hiding inside.

Sunday, March 21, 2010, a secret door opened in Obama, the shiny golden black man. A raging army of democrats charged out. Without mercy, they began their vicious bloody slaughter of every value, freedom and institution we Americans hold dear; launching the end of America as we know it.



Wielding swords of votes reeking with the putrid odor of back door deals, the democrats landed a severe death blow to America and individual rights by passing Obamacare.

The mainstream liberal media has been relentlessly badgering the Tea Party movement with accusations of racism. Because I am a black tea party patriot, I am bombarded with interviewers asking me the same veiled question. "Why are you siding with these white racists against America's first African American president?" I defend my fellow patriots who are white stating, "These patriots do not give a hoot about Obama's skin color. They simply love their country and oppose his radical agenda. Obama's race is not an issue".

Recently, I have come to believe that perhaps I am wrong about Obama's race not being an issue. In reality, Obama's presidency has everything to do with racism, but not from the Tea Party movement. Progressives and Obama have exploited his race from the rookie senator's virtually unchallenged presidential campaign to his unprecedented bullying of America into Obamacare. Obama's race trumped all normal media scrutiny of him as a presidential candidate and most recently even the Constitution of the United States. Obamacare forces all Americans to purchase health care which is clearly unconstitutional.

No white president could get away with boldly and arrogantly thwarting the will of the American people and ignoring laws. President Clinton tried universal health care. Bush tried social security reform. The American people said "no" to both president's proposals and it was the end of it. So how can Obama get away with giving the American people the finger? The answer. He is black.

The mainstream liberal media continues to portray all who oppose Obama in any way as racist. Despite a list of failed policies, overreaches into the private sector, violations of the Constitution and planned destructive legislation too numerous to mention in this article, many Americans are still fearful of criticizing our first black president. Incredible.

My fellow Americans, you must not continue to allow yourselves to be "played" and intimidated by Obama's race or the historical context of his presidency. If we are to save America, the greatest nation on the planet, Obama's progressive agenda must be stopped.

(Lloyd Marcus, (black) Unhyphenated American, singer/songwriter, entertainer, author, artist, and Tea Party patriot)

<http://georgiainfo.galileo.usg.edu/gastudiesimages/Black%20Children%20Picking%20Cotton.htm>

"Black Children Picking Cotton"



Ed Jackson

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

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