



FRIENDS OF THE MIDDLE NEWSLETTER #177 — JULY 9, 2012

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

[INDEX: Click here.](#)

Bolivian Baking Biz

(posted by Steven W. Baker / SteveB, July 9, 2012)

Starting any business is exciting and demanding. Starting a legal business in the Third World can also be a bit exasperating at times. (Maybe you can say the same about an illegal business, but I wouldn't know.)

I have written in the FotM Newsletter before about the little cookie business we've been trying to launch here in Santa Cruz, a city of about 2 million people. The place we thought was right, on a great corner, turned out to be just too small. I lost my \$100 deposit, but no biggie. Then Marci's father died unexpectedly. After a while, we decided to travel some, maybe Buenos Aires, but before we left, we found the perfect cookie store/bakery for only \$350/month and two great new partners, Marci's sister Patti and Patti's daughter, Alejandra. The latter two are my sales team. Marci is in charge of cookie production.

And to answer the obvious question: No, none of us have ever run or worked in a cookie business or a bakery business, even though my name is Baker. (Though I once designed factory automation for Nabisco.) But the cookies Marci and I bake are truly fit for the gods, and I have Third World business start-up experience with my little bar/restaurant in Cul de Sac Village, St. Lucia. Business start-up conditions in St. Lucia resemble Bolivia in many respects.

In later issues, I'll detail my business plan as it develops and keep you updated on anything interesting or unusual that comes up. After the pictures (below), you'll find a couple of examples of the trials and tribulations of a Third World start-up. It's the challenges that make it interesting, right?

Snicker-Doodle
Gourmet Cookies

Steven W. Baker, Pres.
C. La Riva #124
Santa Cruz, Bolivia
7-558-9914
Snicker-Doodle124@hotmail.com

Anyway, what we call "The Store" is just down the street from us, four short, old central city blocks. We already love the walk to "work" from our condo. Don't need or own a car here, since a taxi anywhere is \$1-2, but walking is better. Here are some pictures. This time it's for real. (It had better be, since I'm sinking \$15,000 into it!)



The nearest corner: C. Independencia & C. La Riva. We have a statue.



A wider angle view showing more of our neighborhood. (Note paving stones.)



The blank front of "The Store" (center). Clean. A "before" picture. (Note tile roof.)



The arched doorway we needed duplicated in the same foot-thick wall.



Oscar's Doorway (see story below)

Let me say off the bat that our problems may not be (I hope!) typical of most small business start-ups, even in the Third World, but, anywhere in the world, problems are typical, so if you don't get one kind, you'll get another. Hopefully, none of them will be "killers". Here are the chronicles of a couple of our most recent "bumps".

Bolivian Catch-22 ("You Can't Get There from Here")

Taxes in Bolivia work very differently than in the U.S., but, for a business owner, there is an annual income tax of 25% on net income that is much like we are used to at home. I won't bore you (now) with the complexities of the rest of the system, but suffice it to say that, as a foreigner, I go out of my way to obey the laws here because I know I will be subjected to additional scrutiny. In order to pay taxes and receive tax credits, all businesses must, by law, have a special government tax I.D. number and collect a 13% tax on sales, retail or wholesale. This magical government-issued number is called a NIT.

Bolivia has a huge, thriving underground non-NIT, non-taxed economy, but we don't want to be part of that.

We need a NIT before we can buy equipment or even make the first payment to the landlord, a very patient rich lady. Otherwise, we would pay a 13% tax on thousands of dollars and not be able to claim that money as a deduction on our annual income taxes. We also need the NIT before we can obtain our city permits, and we need it so we can collect taxes and pay them from the start.

This week, we went to the NIT office with all the proper papers and waited in line for two days before they would accept our application to become lawful taxpayers. Later, some petty official came to inspect our business, to make sure it was legitimate or something, and found "The Store" empty. We weren't there at the time.

When we returned to get our NIT, we were told we couldn't have one because we didn't have a business. There was nothing going on at the location we had given them, let alone any baking. What she wanted us to do—an

official in the government tax office—was to operate illegally before she would permit us to operate legally. We were amazed. Marci told the woman that we just wanted to pay our taxes, but we got nowhere with the idiot. She kept insisting she had a new directive on the subject. The government was refusing to let us (and thousands of others?) be taxpayers!!!

Fortunately, a more reasonable mind overheard the increasingly loud conversation and, seemingly, solved the problem for us. We shall learn for sure on Monday or Tuesday, but are certain we will ultimately prevail. Joseph Heller, where are you now?

Oscar and the Wall

To survive and thrive in the Third World you need people, especially if you are a Gringo. One of the most important people to know is a skilled contractor/construction guy. And we have one. His name is don Joaquín, and he's very short but very good. He built Marci's house. We're important enough to each other that we attend weddings and funerals in each other's families. The perfect man for the renovations and redecorating at "The Store". Nope. Too busy.

We needed the work fast, with no one to do it. One of the major tasks was to punch a large arched doorway through a 12" thick solid brick wall. (Why anyone ever built such a wall, I don't know, but it's obviously very old, so maybe it was built at one time to defend the city. Just kidding.) Anyway, we decided to separate out that task and find someone who could begin like yesterday. We started looking for referrals from brothers and sisters, then aunts, then friends, and finally cousins. Now, no offense to cousins, especially my own, but perhaps we went one level too far... :-)

One of Marci's cousin's came up with Oscar, who came to the store confident and happy to find work. Certainly, he would make short work of the wall, he said, in one day for about \$50, half in advance. We essentially met his price and he came the next day with another worker, only a half hour late, good by Bolivian standards. They started in with chisels and hammers. We returned a couple of times and the work seemed to be going, but slowly. We were hopeful. Oscar had instructions to call if anything came up. We were away from the work from about lunch time until 5:00. When we returned, both Oscar and his helper were gone, with the small hole left in the wall you see above—hardly a doorway. They even left all their trash on the floor. Oscar never called and, that night and the next morning, was unreachable on his cell phone. We guessed they worked until they figured they'd earned the down payment, then just left. The wall had defeated them, and so did their shame.

Now we have new guys starting Monday morning and we are hopeful. No cousins were involved! I found these guys myself, and am knocking on wood and tossing salt as I write this...

FotM NEWSLETTER #177 (July 9, 2012)—HYPERTEXT INDEX

<u>DATE-ID</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>FROM</u>	<u>SUBJECT/TITLE</u>
20120709-00		SteveB	Bolivian Baking Biz by Steven W. Baker / SteveB
20120706-01	07:51	MarthaH	"The Ten Companies Making the Biggest Political Donations"
20120706-02	09:41	SteveB	Fw: MoveOn Action: Start Your Own Petition!
20120706-03	14:12	SteveB	Fw: MoveOn Petition: Tell the Navy to Stop Deafening & Killing Whales & Dolphins
20120707-01	12:38	SteveB	"No Future We Want Without the Ocean We Need"
20120708-02	22:28	SteveG	Quote: O.W. Holmes on Taxes
20120708-01	22:24	SteveG	Quote: Adam Smith on Taxes
20120708-03	13:20	SteveG	"Why Adam Smith Is Important"
20120708-04	14:00	MarthaH	"Obama Health Care Law Divides Supreme Court Conservatives"
20120708-05	14:59	Art	Re: "Obama Health Care Law Divides Supreme Court Conservatives" (reply to MarthaH, above)
20120708-06	16:59	Marci	Fw: 1960's Hits Renamed for Older Baby Boomers
20120708-07	22:53	SteveG	Video: "The American People Are Angry"
20120708-08	23:59	SteveB	Photo: "Hark, now hear the sailors cry, / Smell the sea, and feel the sky / Let your soul & spirit fly, into the mystic..." — Van Morrison

20120706-01	07:51	MarthaH	"The Ten Companies Making the Biggest Political Donations"
-----------------------------	-------	---------	--

"The Ten Companies Making the Biggest Political Donations" by Douglas A. McIntyre and Alexander E. M. Hess, 24/7 Wall St./Yahoo! News

July 5, 2012, (<http://finance.yahoo.com/news/the-ten-companies-making-the-biggest-political-donations.html>)

With the U.S. presidential election heating up, 24/7 Wall St. decided to examine public companies' political contributions in the current election cycle. The donations include monies given to political parties, candidates, and political action committees. The figures are staggering and have prompted many to ask whether money can buy a seat in the House, Senate, or even the presidency itself.

The Republican presidential candidate, Mitt Romney, the Romney Victory Fund, and the Republican National Committee raised more than \$76.8 million in May alone. This one month does not include what Romney and his supporters raised for the primaries, or the growing amount he will need as the presidential election shifts into high gear. While President Obama has raised more overall, his campaign and the Democratic party only raised \$60 million for his re-election effort in May.

Political contributions, which used to go directly to candidates, now often flow to Super PACs, independent organizations that can raise money to either help or defeat a political candidate. Historically, traditional political action committees have been prohibited from accepting donations from unions and companies. However, following rulings by the U.S. Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals, Super PACs are now allowed to accept unlimited donations from unions and companies, provided the money does not go directly to the campaign.

The rise of the Super PAC has opened the door to a new generation of fundraising, changing how money is used to elect candidates and increasing the amount candidates need to raise to be competitive as they seek office.

Already, there is evidence of the influence large corporations and their senior managements can have. At one point in January, Las Vegas Sands' CEO, billionaire Sheldon Adelson, gave then GOP's presidential hopeful Newt Gingrich \$5 million. Gingrich could not have remained a candidate for the Republican nomination without the money. Adelson went so far in February as to say he might pass an additional \$100 million to Gingrich and the PACs that supported him. Adelson, with his activist posture, won't likely go away this political season as Gingrich did. His total contributions this election cycle already total nearly \$12 million. Some of his contributions have been given through a tiny methadone clinic owned by him and his wife Miriam. It is perhaps not surprising then to find Las Vegas

Sands, which is run by Adelson, at the top of the list of the 10 public companies with the largest political contributions.

The 10 companies on our list operate in different industries. While one might think financial firms, tethered to the federal government by the financial crisis bailout, and defense companies, which count on billions of dollars in government contracts, would dominate the list, they do not entirely. Microsoft is on the list, as is AT&T, cable company Comcast, and film studio Dreamworks. In addition to the sums each company donated and to which political party, we also added how much these companies have spent on lobbying, which is counted separately from political donations. As tempting as it is, we did not speculate on the reasons behind the companies' contributions.

Based on data collected and published by the Center for Responsive Politics on its website, opensecrets.org, 24/7 Wall St. has identified the 10 publicly traded companies contributing the most to candidates, political parties, and PACs. The Center for Responsive Politics calculates total political contributions made by either companies' PACs or employees within a given election cycle (beginning in January 1, 2011 for the 2012 cycle) that are over \$200. 24/7 Wall St. also examined lobbying expenditure data, also published by the Center for Responsive Politics. Finally, we relied on the 2012 Washington Technology Top 100 for revenue earned by the top government contractors.

These are the companies making the biggest political donations:

[Interesting that the oil companies are missing, yet they seem to get anything they want... Good article, Martha! — SteveB]

1. Las Vegas Sands Corp. (LVS)

- Total contributions (2012-ongoing): \$11,738,600
- Donations to Democratic Party: 0%
- Donations to Republican Party: 100%
- Spending on lobbying (2012-ongoing): \$30,000
- Industry: Resorts and Casinos

So far in this election cycle, political contributions from casino and resort operator Las Vegas Sands have exceeded donations from any publicly traded company, including those in the defense, financial, and telecom industries, which usually make up the nation's largest corporate political contributors. The majority of company's contributions, \$10 million, came from Sands' CEO Sheldon Adelson. In addition, Adelson and his wife Miriam made individual contributions totaling \$15 million through the Adelson Drug Clinic, a methadone clinic managed by Miriam Adelson. Most of this money has gone to outsider groups, rather than directly to candidates or parties, with the Gingrich-backing Winning Our Future PAC receiving donations of \$5 million and \$2.5 million.

2. The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. (GS)

- Total contributions (2012-ongoing): \$4,769,994
- Donations to Democratic Party: 29%
- Donations to Republican Party: 71%
- Spending on lobbying (2012-ongoing): \$1,380,000
- Industry: Diversified Investments

Over the past decade many of the largest corporate donors have been financial firms. And no financial company has contributed as much money or as consistently as Goldman Sachs, which has given \$39 million since 1989. Since 2000, Goldman has been one of the 10 largest political donors among publicly traded companies in every election cycle, a distinction unique to the company. Twice, in 2004 and 2008, the company contributed more to political campaigns than any other business in the U.S. In the 2008 election cycle, Goldman spent slightly more than \$7 million, the most it has ever contributed.

3. Comcast Corporation (CMCSA)

- Total contributions (2012-ongoing): \$2,774,151

- Donations to Democratic Party: 64%
- Donations to Republican Party: 36%
- Spending on lobbying (2012-ongoing): \$4,600,000
- Industry: Cable TV

Three times in the past twelve years cable company Comcast has been one of the largest corporate political donors in the U.S. Since 2008, election cycle contributions by the company and its employees have totaled more than \$9 million. In the present cycle, contributions from Comcast have come in almost equal measure from private individuals within the company and from the organization's own PAC, called the Comcast Corporation Political Action Committee. Of particular note, Executive Vice President David Cohen was the largest direct donor at the company, contributing \$194,650.

4. AT&T, Inc. (T)

- Total contributions (2012-ongoing): \$2,504,219
- Donations to Democratic Party: 35%
- Donations to Republican Party: 65%
- Spending on lobbying (2012-ongoing): \$7,050,000
- Industry: Telecom Services

Since SBC Communications bought AT&T Corp. in 2005, the newly formed AT&T, Inc. has been one of the largest political donors in the country, with more than \$18 million in contributions since the acquisition. The telecom was the largest political contributor among all public companies in 2006 and in 2010. For 2012, the board of directors approved a maximum amount of \$6.5 million in total contributions to political candidates, parties, PACs and other groups. AT&T also lobbies extensively, having spent more than \$7 million on lobbying so far in 2012 — more than any publicly traded company.

5. Dreamworks Animation SKG Inc. (DWA)

- Total contributions (2012-ongoing): \$2,370,150
- Donations to Democratic Party: 99%
- Donations to Republican Party: 1%
- Spending on lobbying (2012-ongoing): N/A
- Industry: Movie Production

Though Dreamworks Animation is a relatively small business, with just about 2,100 full-time employees and a \$1.6 billion market capitalization, the company is an extremely large contributor to the Democratic Party and related organizations. Most of the movie production company's contributions — \$2,125,000, or 90% of donations — support outside spending groups, including PACs, instead of individual campaigns. And almost all of this support is from CEO Jeffrey Katzenberg. He became one of the largest donors in the country after giving \$2 million to Priorities USA Action, an organization committed to the reelection of President Obama.

6. Microsoft Corporation (MSFT)

- Total contributions (2012-ongoing): \$2,253,565
- Donations to Democratic Party: 68%
- Donations to Republican Party: 32%
- Spending on lobbying (2012-ongoing): \$1,790,000
- Industry: Software

Microsoft has a long history of political contributions, donating a total of \$24 million since 1988. Only once over the last seven election cycles has the software company not been one of the 10 largest political donors among public companies. Though the company's chairman, Bill Gates, is one of the world's wealthiest individuals, he has exclusively contributed smaller, incremental donations directly to party groups and candidates, rather than providing PACs with large contributions. In addition to Gates, CEO Steve Ballmer has made more than 20 political

contributions ranging from \$1,000 to \$15,000. Donations from these and other employees accounted for 67% of the money raised in the present election cycle.

7. Huntsman Corporation (HUN)

- Total contributions (2012-ongoing): \$2,250,389
- Donations to Democratic Party: 0%
- Donations to Republican Party: 100%
- Spending on lobbying (2012-ongoing): \$100,000
- Industry: Specialty Chemicals

Chemical company Huntsman Corporation donated \$2.25 million to political campaigns in the present election cycle. Almost all of this came from the company's founder and chairman, Jon Huntsman Sr., whose donations made him one of the nation's largest individual contributors. In the span of four months, from October 2011 through January 2012, Huntsman donated \$2.2 million over 10 payments to Our Destiny PAC, a group that supported the presidential candidacy of his son, Jon Huntsman Jr. Roughly 99% of the donations was to Our Destiny, according to the Center for Responsive Politics, while direct contributions to candidates and parties accounted for the remaining 1%, or just \$28,350.

8. Honeywell International Inc. (HON)

- Total contributions (2012-ongoing): \$2,222,605
- Donations to Democratic Party: 37%
- Donations to Republican Party: 63%
- Spending on lobbying (2012-ongoing): \$1,750,000
- Industry: Aerospace/Defense Products and Services

In this election cycle, Honeywell has donated nearly \$2 million in contributions directly to political candidates and parties, most of which was given through the Honeywell International Political Action Committee (HIPAC), which allows employees to donate to candidates vetted by the company. In the current election cycle, no contribution to HIPAC has exceeded \$5,000 and just seven contributions were for \$2,500 or more. According to the diversified manufacturing company's corporate governance guidelines, PAC donations are intended to be the primary way in which the company is politically active. The company, however, is also very active in lobbying, having spent upwards of \$6 million annually from 2009 to 2011. Honeywell received \$725 million worth of government-contracts in fiscal year 2011.

9. Bank of America Corporation (BAC)

- Total contributions (2012-ongoing): \$2,125,513
- Donations to Democratic Party: 26%
- Donations to Republican Party: 74%
- Spending on lobbying (2012-ongoing): \$870,000
- Industry: International, Money Center Bank

Since 2004, Bank of America's political contributions have exceeded \$2 million in each election cycle. Following the bank's acquisition of financial institutions, including FleetBoston, MBNA, Countrywide Financial, and Merrill Lynch, the number of full-time employees rose to some 279,000. Donations from company's employees now make up over two-thirds of the bank's total contributions. In 2008 and 2009, the U.S. Department of the Treasury gave Bank of America \$45 billion in TARP bailout funds. In March 2012, the company agreed to pay \$11.8 billion in fines for abuses in home foreclosure proceedings.

10. Lockheed Martin Corporation (LMT)

- Total contributions (2012-ongoing): \$1,927,900
- Donations to Democratic Party: 38%
- Donations to Republican Party: 62%

- Spending on lobbying (2012-ongoing): \$3,979,250
- Industry: Aerospace/Defense Products and Services

Lockheed Martin has been one of the largest political contributors of the past 20 years, and it has donated more than \$1 million in each election cycle dating back to 1996. In this current cycle, 83% of funds contributed by the company have come from the Lockheed Martin Employees Political Action Committee (LMEPAC), which has contributed \$570,000 to Democratic Party candidates and \$881,000 to Republican Party candidates. In fiscal 2011, the defense company received contracts worth over \$17 billion, more than any other company in the U.S. This was more than the government contracts received by the next two companies, Boeing and Northrop Grumman, combined.

[20120706-02](#) 09:41 SteveB Fw: MoveOn Action: Start Your Own Petition!

from MoveOn:

Ever heard Margaret Mead's famous saying? "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

That's the story of MoveOn. In 1998, when a Republican Congress was focusing all its efforts on impeaching President Clinton, two people with no political experience started a simple online petition: "Censure President Clinton and Move On to Pressing Issues Facing the Nation."

They shared their petition with their friends, and within days they had hundreds of thousands of signatures. Today, MoveOn has over 7 million members—mostly folks who got involved by signing an online petition, and have stayed active in helping to fight for a progressive America.

That's why we've just launched a new website where you can start your own online petition and invite your friends to sign it. We'll send the most popular petitions to other MoveOn members to help build support for your cause. It's easy to get started—just click here:

<http://www.moveon.org/r?r=263094&id=45512-20195165-hjX41dx&t=1>.

Thanks! –Steven, Stefanie, Christine, Bobby, and the rest of the team

[20120706-03](#) 14:12 SteveB Fw: MoveOn Petition: Tell the Navy to Stop Deafening & Killing Whales & Dolphins

According to the U.S. Navy's own estimates, the use of high-frequency underwater sound for testing will deafen 15,900 whales and dolphins and kill 1,800 more over the next five years.

Whales and dolphins depend on sound to navigate and live. The Navy is required to include comments from the public on their Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), so your signature and comment on my SignOn.org petition could help stop this naval program and save the lives of these ocean creatures.

My petition says:

Stop the killing of 1,800 whales and dolphins and the deafening of 15,900 more by ceasing the operation of the Navy's underwater sound system in the Hawaiian Islands, the California and Atlantic Coasts, and the Gulf of Mexico.

Will you sign the petition? Click here to add your name, and then pass it along to your friends:

<http://www.moveon.org/r?r=276609&id=45549-20195165-e4q5ABx&t=1>.

Thanks for your help. –Lyndia Storey

PS: The comments must be in by July 10, 2012, so please sign today.

20120707-01 12:38 SteveB “No Future We Want Without the Ocean We Need”

“No Future We Want Without the Ocean We Need” by Thalif Deen, NationofChange

July 6, 2012, (<http://www.nationofchange.org/no-future-we-want-without-ocean-we-need-1341636162>)



When South Korea, one of Asia’s rising economic powerhouses, decided to host the international exhibition Expo 2012 in the coastal town of Yeosu, it picked a theme high on the agenda of the just-concluded Rio+20 summit on sustainable development: the living ocean.

The entire focus of Expo 2012, which completes its three month run Aug. 21, is on the protection of the world’s maritime resources, including overfishing, chemical pollution and warming oceans.

And by accident or by design, the protection of the world’s oceans was one of the few key success stories to come out of the Rio+20 summit in its final plan of action titled “The Future We Want” adopted by world leaders last month.

Nathalie Rey, political advisor on oceans at Greenpeace International, told IPS one of the few concrete things on the table at Rio that went beyond business-as-usual was an agreement to launch an “Oceans Rescue Plan” to protect the high seas.

“Despite the alarm bells ringing by scientists on the need to protect the oceans, Rio pressed the snooze button on agreeing to initiate a new agreement under the United Nations that would protect high seas marine life,” she said.

However, the overwhelming support from the majority of countries – including Brazil (the host country), South Africa, Argentina, the Pacific Islands and members of the European Union (EU) – to give the green light for action was not enough to throw off the opposition from a handful of countries, she added.

With the United States leading the charge, and closely backed by Canada, Russia, Japan and Venezuela, these countries successfully blocked progress, Rey told IPS.

Instead of launching the agreement in Rio, governments postponed a decision for another two and a half years, booting the issue back to the U.N. General Assembly.

"Every day that we delay an oceans rescue plan, we bring our oceans ever closer to tipping points, jeopardising the health of the oceans and the future of the millions of people that depend on them for food and jobs," Rey said.

Those countries that stood in the way of progress at Rio must stop defending short-term economic interests and join the rest of the world in supporting high seas protection to benefit future generations, Rey added.

At the Expo 2012 U.N. Pavilion in Yeosu, about 20 U.N. agencies and international organisations are showcasing their collective work in helping to protect the world's oceans and maritime resources.

Under the theme "Oceans and Coasts: Connecting Our Lives, Ensuring Our Future", the United Nations is highlighting the various contributions made by marine life to humans, including biodiversity, food security and renewable energy.

"What we know is that oceans are fragile and that there are many signs that marine ecosystems are experiencing unprecedented environmental change driven by human activities and climate change," warns the United Nations.

A visit to the U.N. Pavilion ends up at a virtual "Pledge Wall" where visitors make a commitment to protect the world's oceans and coasts.

Meanwhile, in a statement issued at the end of the three-day summit in Rio Jun. 22, members of the High Seas Alliance (HSA) said the ocean received "an unprecedented level of attention during the Rio+20 Conference becoming one of the most high visibility issues and the last piece of text to be resolved".

In contrast to the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio, attention on the ocean was significant and led to protracted and heated debate within the negotiations.

"Some of the ocean outcomes were positive, while others fell a long way short of what marine scientists and campaigners had hoped and worked for, it was, nonetheless, a breakthrough year for the cause of conservation of 70 percent of our planet," HSA said.

Although much of the text is a re-affirmation of existing promises and commitments, Susanna Fuller, coordinator of the HSA said, "If Rio+20 achieves nothing else, it should mark the end of empty promises and the beginning of strong ocean action."

If it catalyses actual change, along with implementation of and compliance with the measures already promised, she said, then it will have achieved something.

The HSA identified six clear areas for international and national action:

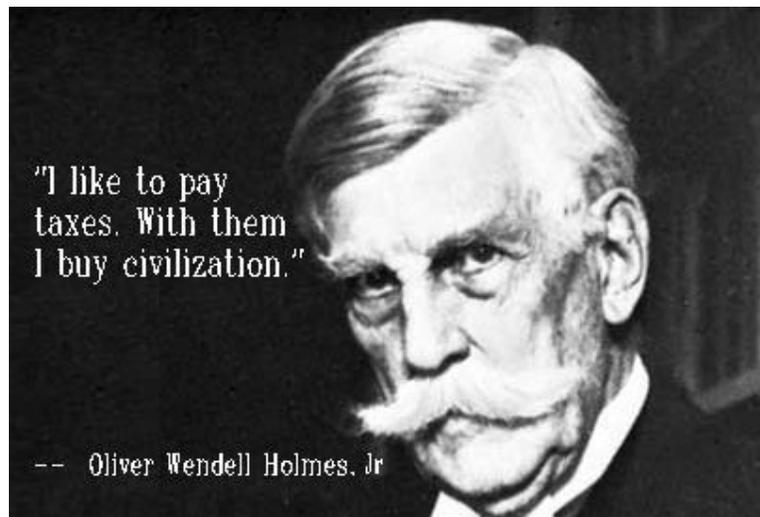
Fulfillment of the U.N. resolution to end deep sea bottom fishing; an end to overfishing, including the suspension of fishing in some cases until stocks have recovered; requirement that regional fisheries management bodies be accountable to the United Nations; national action to eliminate harmful fisheries subsidies; closure of ports to illegally obtained fish; and the establishment of national and high seas marine protected areas, including reserves.

Professor Alex Rogers of the marine science body, International Programme on the State of the Ocean (IPSO), said: "There will never be the future we want without the ocean we need."

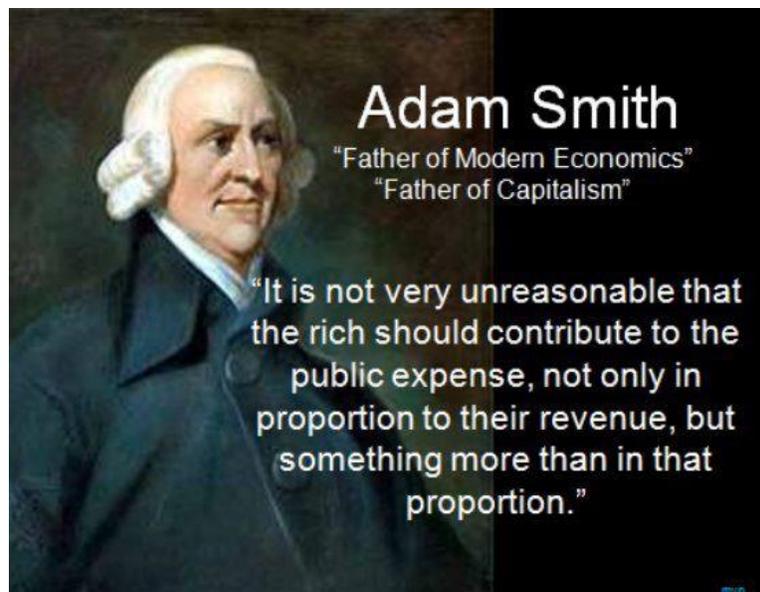
"We have to use Rio+20 to draw a line under the talking and start the doing. These decisions are all urgent, important and game changing measures which should be immediately implemented by governments as a direct response to the oceans text," he added.



[20120708-02](#) 22:28 SteveG Quote: O.W. Holmes on Taxes



[20120708-01](#) 22:24 SteveG Quote: Adam Smith on Taxes



"Why Adam Smith Is Important" by the Adam Smith Institute

undated, (<http://www.adamsmith.org/adam-smith>)

Adam Smith (1723-1790) was a Scottish philosopher and economist who is best known as the author of *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth Of Nations* (1776), one of the most influential books ever written.

In Smith's day, people saw national wealth in terms of a country's stock of gold and silver. Importing goods from abroad was seen as damaging because it meant that this wealth must be given up to pay for them; exporting goods was seen as good because these precious metals came back.

So countries maintained a vast network of controls to prevent this metal wealth draining out – taxes on imports, subsidies to exporters, and protection for domestic industries. The same protectionism ruled at home too. Cities prevented artisans from other towns moving in to ply their trade; manufacturers and merchants petitioned the king for protective monopolies; labour-saving devices were banned as a threat to existing producers.

Smith showed that this vast 'mercantilist' edifice was folly. He argued that in a free exchange, both sides became better off. Quite simply, nobody would trade if they expected to lose from it. The buyer profits, just as the seller does. Imports are just as valuable to us as our exports are to others.

Because trade benefits both sides, said Smith, it increases our prosperity just as surely as do agriculture or manufacture. A nation's wealth is not the quantity of gold and silver in its vaults, but the total of its production and commerce – what today we would call gross national product.

The Wealth of Nations deeply influenced the politicians of the time and provided the intellectual foundation of the great nineteenth-century era of free trade and economic expansion. Even today the common sense of free trade is accepted worldwide, whatever the practical difficulties of achieving it.

Smith had a radical, fresh understanding of how human societies actually work. He realised that social harmony would emerge naturally as human beings struggled to find ways to live and work with each other. Freedom and self-interest need not produce chaos, but – as if guided by an 'invisible hand' – order and concord. And as people struck bargains with each other, the nation's resources would be drawn automatically to the ends and purposes that people valued most highly.

So a prospering social order did not need to be controlled by kings and ministers. It would grow, organically, as a product of human nature. It would grow best in an open, competitive marketplace, with free exchange and without coercion.

The Wealth of Nations was therefore not just a study of economics but a survey of human social psychology: about life, welfare, political institutions, the law, and morality.

It was not *The Wealth Of Nations* which first made Smith's reputation, but a book on ethics, *The Theory Of Moral Sentiments*. Once again, Smith looks to social psychology to discover the foundation of human morality. Human beings have a natural 'sympathy' for others. That enables them to understand how to moderate their behaviour and preserve harmony. And this is the basis of our moral ideas and moral actions.

Some people wonder how the self-interest that drives Smith's economic system can be squared with the 'sympathy' that drive his ethics. Here is his answer:

How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it.

In other words, human nature is complex. We are self-interested, but we also like to help others too. Smith's books are complementary: they show how self-interested human beings can live together peacefully (in the moral sphere) and productively (in the economic).

The Wealth Of Nations is no endorsement of economic greed, as sometimes caricatured. Self-interest may drive the economy, but that is a force for good – provided there is genuinely open competition and no coercion. And it is the poor that economic and social freedom benefits most.

20120708-04	14:00	MarthaH	"Obama Health Care Law Divides Supreme Court Conservatives"
-------------	-------	---------	---

Dang!

"Obama Health Care Law Divides Supreme Court Conservatives" by Haylee Korn/David Jackson, *USA Today*

July 8, 2012, (<http://www.wltx.com/news/national/article/193348/142/Obama-Health-Care-Law-Divides-Supreme-Court-Conservatives>)

President Obama's health care law has divided the political world from the moment it was proposed.

Now it appears to have divided the Supreme Court's conservative bloc.

Jan Crawford of CBS News writes that "discord at the Supreme Court is deep and personal" after Chief Justice John Roberts switched his vote and upheld the Obama health care law, drawing criticism from conservative colleagues.

"This discord is going to affect this Court for a long time -- and no one has any idea how it will be resolved," writes Crawford, who detailed Roberts' vote switch last week after leaks from within the normally secretive Supreme Court.

Roberts' opinion on the health care law drawing a critical dissent from fellow conservatives Antonin Scalia, Anthony Kennedy, Clarence Thomas, and Samuel Alito.

We can't help but think this is sweet music to Obama, who has clashed with the court's conservative majority over a high-profile campaign finance case and other issues.

Writes Crawford of the high court's troubles:

Conservatives feel a sense of betrayal. They feel that Roberts changed his mind for the wrong reasons.

If Roberts had been with the liberals from the beginning, sources tell me that would have been one thing; but switching his position - and relatively late in the process - infuriated the conservatives.

Of course it's unclear why he switched. He may have been focused solely on the law. But that is not what some of his colleagues believe. ...

It's not unheard of for the Court to erupt into conflict; *Bush v. Gore* in 2000 was a famous example. But some people say you would have to go back nearly 70 years to see this kind of tension, and almost bitterness, that now exists among the justices.

20120708-05	14:59	Art	Re: "Obama Health Care Law Divides Supreme Court Conservatives" (reply to MarthaH, above)
-----------------------------	-------	-----	---

I think Roberts like Huntsman finally just looked around at who and what he was associating with and said, "No more".

I simply cannot comprehend how any thinking adult can justify the tea party idiots and their like.

20120708-06	16:59	Marci	Fw: 1960's Hits Renamed for Older Baby Boomers
-----------------------------	-------	-------	--

[I don't know anything about any of these, I'm too young to know what this is about. —SteveB]

1960 Hits Renamed

Some of the artists of the 60's are revising their hits with new lyrics to accommodate aging baby boomers who can remember doing the "Limbo" as if it were yesterday.

They include:

Bobby Darin --- Splish, Splash, I Was Havin' a Flash

Herman's Hermits --- Mrs. Brown, You've Got a Lovely Walker

Ringo Starr --- I Get By With a Little Help From Depends

The Bee Gees --- How Can You Mend a Broken Hip?

Roberta Flack --- The First Time Ever I Forgot Your Face

Johnny Nash --- I Can't See Clearly Now

Paul Simon --- Fifty Ways to Lose Your Liver

The Commodores --- Once, Twice, Three Times to the Bathroom

Procol Harem --- A Whiter Shade of Hair

Leo Sayer --- You Make Me Feel Like Napping

The Temptations --- Papa's Got a Kidney Stone

Abba --- Denture Queen

Tony Orlando --- Knock 3 Times on the Ceiling if You Hear Me Fall

Helen Reddy --- I Am Woman; Hear Me Snore

Leslie Gore --- It's My Procedure, and I'll Cry if I Want To

And Last, but NOT least:

Willie Nelson --- On the Commode Again

20120708-07 22:53 SteveG Video: "The American People Are Angry"

Anyone disagree with Bernie?

I don't care if you are left, right, conservative, liberal, progressive, independent, socialist, republican, or democrat you owe it to yourself and to the country to spend a half hour listening and then recheck your thinking.

Video: "The American People Are Angry" by Sen. Bernie Sanders

June 27, 2012, (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Y-u0UnKZ_U&sns=fb)

20120708-08 23:59 SteveB Photo: "Hark, now hear the sailors cry, / Smell the sea, and feel the sky / Let your soul & spirit fly, into the mystic..." — Van Morrison

http://www.sky-wallpaper.com/free-wallpaper/free_wallpapers,43135.html



—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