



FRIENDS OF THE MIDDLE NEWSLETTER #188 — JULY 24, 2012

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

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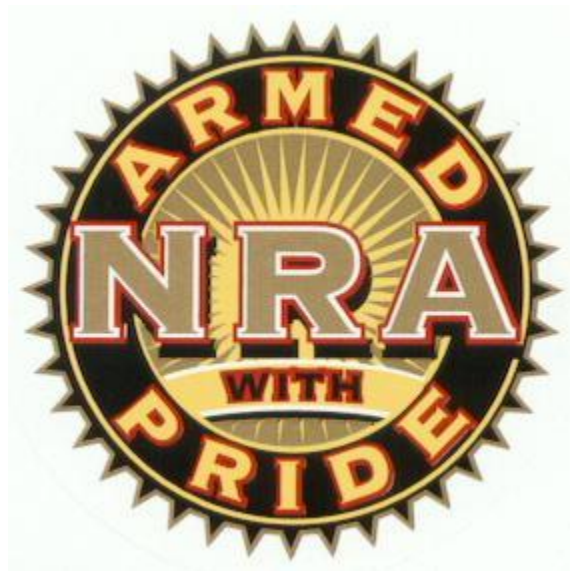
Blessed Be Thy Killing Guns

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

You want yer guns, America, you got `em!

"Congress Cowers to Terrorist-Enabling NRA" by Brad Friedman, The Brad Blog/OpEdNews

July 23, 2012, (<http://www.opednews.com/articles/Congress-Cowers-to-Terrori-by-Brad-Friedman-120723-547.html>)



The fact that they haven't yet been labeled a terrorist-associated group is due only to the fact that if they were, they would rain down hellfire -- and one of the mightiest propaganda and lying campaigns you've ever seen -- against those associated with having made that decision.

That, of course, is how any terrorist group worth its assault plies its trade: Scare the hell out of those who might oppose them. Let them know there will be serious consequences to those who even try, to those who even discuss it. So that anyone even thinking of it becomes crippled with fear to the point they won't do a thing to even appear to threaten the terrorists' agenda in any way.

In this case, of course, it's mostly just political terrorism. But in the real world, given the carnage they continue to enable year after year and tear after tear, it's difficult to say whether the NRA should best be described as terrorist enablers, or just plain terrorists, for the all of the indescribable violence they help perpetuate and, arguably, even help to fund.

Without the help of the NRA and those who fund them, James Holmes, the alleged gunman of Colorado's latest massacre, might not have been able to shoot nearly 70 Americans in a matter of minutes, killing 12 of them, in a sold-out movie theater just after midnight last Friday night. Neither would it have been so simple for Jared Loughner to shoot 19 Americans and kill 6 of them, including nearly murdering Rep. Gabrielle Giffords in Tucson, AZ just over a year ago, leading to her eventual resignation from Congress.

Thanks to years of terror-enabling by the National Rifle Association, both the AZ and CO sociopaths were able to maximize their rage through a maximum of carnage against their fellow citizens. And both incidents are just a drop of blood in the NRA's great American bucket.

Despite AZ and CO and the tens of thousands of deaths by firearm in this country each year, despite even coming within a hair's breadth of losing one of their own last year in the bargain, Democrats and Republicans in the U.S. Congress are unable and unwilling to lift a finger to do a damn thing about any of it. Neither is the President of the United States. They are all cowards, shriveling in abject fear of the almighty menace to sanity and common-sense and domestic tranquility that is today's NRA...

Remember, the NRA is the same organization which has been fighting for years to ensure that those on the government's "terrorist watch list," who may not even board a commercial airplane without triggering extra security scrutiny, may go out and buy any number of deadly weapons they like without even being flagged. Because, ya know, "freedom"! And if they make their purchases at a gun show, they may do so without even the need to pass a minimal criminal background check.

Thanks in no small part to the NRA, the apparent CO shooter was able to legally buy some 6,000 rounds of ammo and a 100-round drum clip for use with his semi-automatic AR-15 (which he also purchased legally), enabling him to fire on some 50 to 60 Americans per minute, according to the Aurora Police Chief left to clean up the mess. Holmes was even able to pick up 150 lbs. of ammunition from FedEx, without ever having to answer a question.

But want to buy Nicotine patches? Be prepared to have your drivers license scanned at the point of purchase.

Holmes' Friday Night "freedom," of course, was nothing short of a great victory for the NRA, which has worked for years to make sure the modest, almost entirely useless restrictions on some automatic weapons and large, multiple round magazines contained in the Brady Law (named for Ronald Reagan's Press Secretary, who was nearly killed by a would-be assassin soon after Reagan took office in 1981) would not be renewed, after those modest 10-year restrictions had sun-setted in 2004.

So let's be sure to thank the NRA for all they've done for this nation through their long campaign of terror and money and lying which are all waged against any elected official or candidate for political office who even dares to display the temerity to even discuss the "well regulated" part of our 2nd Amendment. (You remember that part, right? "A well regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed." Did you forget that "well regulated" part? You can thank the NRA for that too. They've been working hard for years to help you do exactly that.)

Of course, one needn't discuss "well regulating" the right to bear arms, to become the victim of the NRA's Big Lies. Just ask President Obama who expanded gun rights shortly after taking office by signing a bill to allow firearms in our national parks and on trains. His thanks? Another NRA Big Lie campaign to fool more of their gullible, frightened funders into believing Obama has a secret plan to undermine the 2nd Amendment by tricking two-thirds of the U.S. Senate into ratifying a U.N. treaty that would somehow, in defiance of the U.S. Supreme Court, take precedence over the U.S. Constitution and then, naturally, allow your guns to be taken away from you!!!

And, just in case you didn't know about that particular latest Big Lie being circulated by the NRA (because all of the suckers and chumps and dupes and stooges and patsies who watch Fox "News" and receive the NRA's fundraising letters certainly know about it!) be sure to read up on how they're terrifying Americans into believing the completely phony scam about the Obama Administration agreeing to a U.N. international arms treaty which is secretly a back door way to allow them to take away your guns!!!

Despite the most recent tragic slaughter (the second mass shooting of the week, by the way, in case you hadn't heard about what happened in Alabama days earlier, as most haven't, because, ya know, "freedom" and all) it's unlikely a damned thing will be done to make such senseless killings even the tiniest bit more difficult to pull off in the future, because the NRA prefers the "rights" of the terrorists over the people, and the Congress is made up of cowards afraid to stand up to the terrorists-enablers.

As noted by my friend Cenk Uygur yesterday, "Nearly 100,000 people get shot every year. That's 270 people a day and 87 dead because of gun violence every day. That's seven Colorado shootings per day!"

Imagine how many countries we'd have to go war against if even one day's worth of gun deaths in this nation were caused by a foreigner with dark skin.

And yet, despite all of that, and despite the fact that even the majority of gun owners and NRA members believe there should be common sense regulation on the sale of guns, there can, and will, be no such thing.

There can be no limits placed on the number of rounds in any high-capacity magazine used with any weapon. Thanks, NRA! There can be no tracking of someone who buys 6,000 bullets on the Internet, no questions asked. Thanks, NRA! And, worse, there may not even be any legitimate debate in the U.S. Congress about any of it, because best of luck to the soon-to-be-former elected official who tries it. Because "freedom" and "liberty" -- and thanks, NRA!

Thanks to the patriotic works of the NRA, there are now, apparently, millions of gullible Americans who believe that Obama will be signing a U.N. treaty to take away your guns because the NRA would very much like them to believe that, thanks, and remember to send them some money so they can keep protecting your rights against imaginary threats.

How imaginary? Well, according to Politico, within the past few hours, on his way out to comfort the victims of the Aurora, CO Massacre, "White House press secretary Jay Carney told reporters aboard Air Force One...that the Obama administration has no plans to push new gun-control measures in the wake of the deadly shooting rampage at a Colorado movie theater."

Of course he doesn't. Very courageous, Mr. President. The terrorists of the NRA win again.

from "NRA Prepares for Explosion of Common Sense" July 23, 2012,
(<http://thenewsosphere.wordpress.com/2012/07/23/nra-prepares-for-explosion-of-common-sense/>):

After the horrific shootings in Aurora, Colorado, leading members of the National Rifle Association are telling their members to brace themselves for the worst, particularly an unstoppable flood of common sense when it comes to gun laws. "We pride ourselves on our preparation for and handling of anything, usually by shooting it, but this incident may possibly persuade people to reconsider their attitudes about guns, and we can't have that," said a NRA representative. "Luckily, we have donated to several unnamed Super PACs to make sure it doesn't happen." — Glenn Rogers (a Texan)

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20120723-16	23:59	Marci	Photo: Monkey Orchid

20120723-01	10:29	Pam	Re: Franklin D. Roosevelt Speeches (reply to SteveG, FotM Newsletter #188)
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The only one I've read so far is the one about saving private industry. It applies in every way to our situation today. WHY can't we look at what FDR did that worked and apply it now? Are people really so selfish? So ignorant? It's deja vu all over again, and most of the country is asleep. I read an article on Obama that faults him for being nebulous and more of an intellectual than a politician. I can't disagree. He's a conciliator, not a strong leader. I know he has a plan and has confidence in it, but he isn't sharing it with the people. I worry about Republicans' ulterior motives; this article suggested that their real aim is to take control of the Middle East, then turn to Russia and China and "make them our bitches." (My quote.) War with Iran factors in, which scares me to no end. Romney is a disaster waiting to happen. Obama is better than that, but I wish he were more forceful.

20120723-02	12:13	SteveB	Fw: FMF Action: Help Keep Embattled Clinics Open!
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from Feminist Majority Foundation:

Anti-abortion extremist groups – Operation Rescue and Operation Rescue/Operation Save America (OSA) – are out in force in Charlotte, North Carolina. But dozens of pro-choice supporters outnumbered their ranks on Saturday, the first day of the anti-abortion extremists national week-long siege targeting Charlotte clinics. Yes - with your help - we are standing up for abortion providers!

On Sunday, OSA once again targeted individual doctors at their homes. This conduct is outrageous, especially after OSA leader Phillip "Flip" Benham was convicted in a jury trial of criminal stalking of a Charlotte doctor who was brave enough to press charges. Benham is appealing the conviction.

We need your help to keep these courageous women's health care clinics open and safe! Please make a tax-deductible contribution today to support our National Clinic Access Project.

https://salsa.democracyinaction.org/o/1400/shop/custom.jsp?donate_page_KEY=2117

Our National Clinic Access Project and our Campus Staff are on the ground in Charlotte leading clinic defense community organizing and working with federal, state, and local law enforcement to protect doctors, staff and patients – but we need your help! Please make a tax-deductible contribution today!

Anti-abortion extremists who have been arrested many times for actions such as blockading clinics and stalking doctors have descended on Charlotte.

This week's siege is preparation for planned actions against clinics during the Democratic National Convention, which will be held in Charlotte in September.

This is just the beginning of OSA's week of intimidation, bullying and fear-mongering. Clinic defenders reported overhearing OSA members discussing their 'warrior assignments.' We will remain on alert and vigilant. We are determined to protect the brave doctors and clinic staff in Charlotte and to keep the clinics safe and accessible to women seeking reproductive health services.

Please help the Feminist Majority Foundation do everything we can to help embattled clinics, healthcare workers and doctors this summer. With your help, we are providing on-the-ground support in Charlotte. And we'll be on the ground in Charlotte again during the Democratic National Convention.

Without clinics and dedicated doctors and health care workers, there simply is no choice.

For Women's Lives, duVergne Gaines, FMF Legal Coordinator and Campus Director

20120723-03	13:15	SteveB	"Banks, Global Elite Confirmed to Hold \$32 Trillion in Offshore Accounts"
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"Banks, Global Elite Confirmed to Hold \$32 Trillion in Offshore Accounts" by Anthony Gucciardi, NationofChange

July 23, 2012, (<http://www.nationofchange.org/banks-global-elite-confirmed-hold-32-trillion-offshore-accounts-1343057197>)

Major banks and the financial global elite are now confirmed to have as much as **\$32 trillion in hidden assets stashed away in offshore accounts** that are subject to little or no taxation. As a result, around \$280 billion is estimated to be lost in tax revenues. In other words, the multi-trillion dollar banks and elite families are avoiding any taxation while **forcing United States citizens to foot the bill**. Amazingly, the \$32 trillion stashed away represents the overall *GDP of the United States and Japan combined*.

In order to reach the monetary figure, which many are calling quite conservative, economist James Henry commissioned was by the Tax Justice Network — a group that seeks to bring tax evasion to light. Even the Tax Justice Network was quite shocked by the outcome, with spokesperson John Christensen saying he was ultimately startled by the "scale" of the numbers. What's more concerning than the numbers, however, is the entities behind them. The report revealed that major banks such as Bank of America and Citigroup were among the many major corporations and banking organizations to hide their assets in offshore tax havens.

In an interview with the news organization Al Jazeera, Christensen explains just how deep the report goes:

We're talking about very big, well-known brands – HSBC, Citigroup, Bank of America, UBS, Credit Suisse – some of the world's biggest banks are involved...and they do it knowing fully well that their clients, more often than not, are evading and avoiding taxes.

To find the incriminating information, Henry (the economist working for Christensen and the Tax Justice Network) actually utilized data from deep within the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, United Nations, and central banks to reach his final figure. Embedded in what could potentially be the largest and most publicized

breaking story on the subject of large-scale tax evasion by the wealthy elite, Henry also found that the offshore tax havens are actually **"attractive to entire developing nations"** — not just major banks and ultra-rich families.

Used by 'private elites' to hide the wealth of developing nations, Henry found the balance sheets of **139 developing countries on record**. Since the 1970s, he estimates that among the richest of these nations currently disguising their true asset value had amassed around \$7.3 to \$9.3 trillion. A figure that is completely unknown to the rest of the world due to the fact that is 'unrecorded' as offshore wealth.

The findings are continuing to gain mainstream attention, and pinpoint just how far big banks and major corporations will go in ensuring that they do not have to pay a dime in taxes while at the same time calling for mass tax increases for the average citizen. Furthermore, it shows the financial mischief of the financial elite, depositing trillions upon trillions of dollars into offshore accounts with unknown value

20120723-04	14:21	SteveB	From the Right: "5 Ways to Get America Working Again"
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I'd have to respond: These must be the five things we don't want to do! Yet, finally, something concrete from the Right!

"5 Ways to Get America Working Again" by David Harsanyi, *Human Events*

July 23, 2012, (<http://www.humanevents.com/2012/07/23/david-harsanyi-5-ways-to-get-america-working-again/>)

Step one? Please, stop.

It would probably strike the average politician as absurd to argue that the best way to fix the economy is to stop trying to "fix it." But as John Taylor, former economist at the Council of Economic Advisers and professor of economics at Stanford University, argues, the most effective way to regain our edge is to change the way we think about the economy. This means returning to "first principles." As an economic matter, Taylor defines this by saying that "families, individuals, and entrepreneurs must be free to decide what to produce, what to consume, what to buy and sell, and how to help others."

Not exactly a radical notion. Yet, from health care reform to environmentalist policy, from fiscal reform to the gutting of welfare reform, the economic agenda of Washington the past four years—and even longer—has corroded our traditional understanding of economic freedom.

Washington has many immediate tasks in front of it, of course: stopping the fiscal cliff that would result in a bevy of 2013 tax hikes, reforming entitlements and dealing with the explosion of dependency programs. But on a macro level, what the nation needs most, as Taylor argues, is predictable government, the rule of law, incentives that derive from the free-market system rather than activist government.

In other words, we need to get back to basics. Here are five ways Washington can stop "fixing" and start helping:

1. Austerity now!

Not long ago, few Americans knew, or cared, about the Baltic nation of Estonia. Nowadays, the small country is mentioned regularly within free-market economic circles as a pristine example of how cutting back government spending can spur economic growth. As Daniel J. Mitchell, an expert on supply-side tax policy at the Cato Institute who recently toured some Baltic nations tells Human Events, the turnaround in Estonia is real and so are the cutbacks. "They asked themselves a simple question," Mitchell says, "What do we want? Our government to spend our money or the productive sector of our economy to spend it? Estonia—even though they haven't been perfect—came up with the right answer."

Like the United States, Estonia experienced a brutal recession in 2008, as its economy shrank nearly 20 percent—a number that took Greece five years to achieve. Rather than devaluing its currency or pumping money into

inefficient government institutions, the small nation went the other direction: instituting genuine austerity— unlike the phantom cutbacks of many nations across the continent, or, worse, proposals to raise taxes. Public-sector wages were cut by 10 percent, the retirement age is being raised gradually from 61 to 65 by 2026 and other free-market reforms were instituted.

Estonians didn't riot, but they did reelect the reform government and watched their economy grow at five times the euro-zone average.

Although every nation has its own set of problems, Mitchell points to comparable success stories over the past few decades in Canada, Ireland and New Zealand. By constraining government growth, the United States could also reduce the burden of government on its ailing economy and allow hundreds of billions of dollars to be reallocated from wasteful enterprises to productive industry.

Then, we can start seriously talking about the debt crisis, allowing the American people to regain some of the confidence they've lost in their government.

2. Simplify the tax code

[Yes! Let's rape the country, poor, and middle class even more! –SteveB]

The IRS Taxpayer Advocate Service recently estimated that paperwork associated with the federal tax code costs Americans \$160 billion a year. Paperwork! The code is comprised of 25 volumes, over 76,000 pages, or about nine feet of soul-crushing paper. Two companies publish daily newsletters to keep everyone abreast of the ever-complex changes. We can fix it. Broaden the tax base, close loopholes and flatten the tax rates—all of which would bring more revenue stability and certitude to projections as well as make filing a comparable breeze.

We already have some basis for negotiations. Alan Simpson and Erskine Bowles, co-chairmen of the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, a group established and then promptly ignored by the president, have come up with a plan that would eliminate most deductions, exclusions and credit in the tax code. It would reduce tax rates and put them into three brackets of 8, 14 and 23 percent.

Is the plan perfect? Hardly. But it's a start.

With the recent Supreme Court decision finding Obamacare constitutional, congressional taxing authority has been expanded and now, Washington can use taxation to do just about anything. Simplification of the tax code would not only unlock dormant economic potential, but, in the process, it would blunt the preferred weapon of social engineers, who reward favored industries, punish success and distort economic incentives.

3. Best stimulus? Cheap energy

[But where is this "cheap energy"? Especially if one looks at the real total cost of Republican "solutions" in terms of tax subsidies, drilling subsidies, gifts to big oil, and environmental clean-up costs. –SteveB]

When looking at the states boasting the fastest rate of job creation during this long downturn—Texas, North Dakota, Louisiana, Oklahoma, West Virginia, Utah—you will surely notice that they share one characteristic in common: they produce fossil fuels.

The price of energy is embedded into all of the economy. As a fungible commodity, government has only so much power to affect the cost of energy—and the Obama administration has done nearly all it can to make it more expensive. With less government interference, however, experts estimate that oil and gas industry would create hundreds of thousands of jobs by even modestly expanding on the domestic resources.

Consequently, the Environmental Protection Agency should be regarded as one of the nation's leading job killing institutions. It has not only made oil and natural gas exploration more difficult, but it has instituted draconian rules regarding pollutant limits on coal plants—the same plants that provide us with most of our power. Let energy be, and let the economy grow.

4. No more easy money

The prevailing notion among many high-profile economists and financial journalists is that the Federal Reserve should do more to help the economy. By “help” they mean devalue the dollar.

We have not seen much inflation—not yet. But make no mistake: what these experts are advocating with an array of euphemisms is a devaluing of your home, your bank account and your retirement fund. In the past few years, the U.S. Federal Reserve has used quantitative easing (expanding the money supply by increasing the quantity of reserves in the banking system) and other means to try and kick-start the economy. Yet it has done little to help.

And because the economy remains sluggish, Wall Street’s welfare queens still eagerly await more easy money and rely on negligible interest rates. Economists at major banks like Goldman Sachs are predicting that we’ll soon see a third round of quantitative easing.

But is the problem liquidity? Many banks and companies have vast cash reserves, but they’re not lending and they’re not hiring.

So why pump more? As economist and scholar Thomas Sowell says, “in the old-time Keynesian economic religion will always say that the only reason creating more money hasn’t worked is because there has not yet been enough money created.”

And the Fed’s game of footsie with Wall Street is only creating more uncertainty. Saying no more will allow the economy to move forward on its own.

5. Repeal — then must replace

Health care in America, despite all you hear, still offers us citizens one of the most efficient and highest quality systems in the world. But it’s expensive, and it’s only getting worse.

Last year, the average cost of health care for a family of four increased nearly 7 percent to \$20,728 annually. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services projected that overall national health spending would increase an average of 6.1 percent a year over the next decade. Health care spending will reach about \$4.6 trillion by 2019, according to a report in the journal Health Affairs, accounting for one of every five dollars we spend.

Republicans need a comprehensive free-market plan that will create more competition, more choices and lower costs.

[But they seem absolutely incapable of developing such a plan, don’t they? –SteveB]

Yes, first Washington must repeal — because not only does Obamacare add tremendous new administrative burdens and cost onto businesses but it bends the cost curve up — but then it needs a plan in place that allows individuals and businesses to come up with their own cost-effective solutions. Right now, no one knows what the future will bring, or what the costs will entail. Again, certainty in health care will go a long way in allowing the economy to move forward.

20120723-05 15:06 SteveB Fw: Dennis Kucinich Action: Contact Congress to Pass HR 808!

from Dennis Kucinich:

As we share the grief of the family and friends of the victims in Aurora, it is important to be mindful that each year over 30,000 Americans die from gun violence. This is one of those moments in our national experience when it would be important for all of us to slow down and absorb the impact of a small community of people at a theater, anticipating with excitement the premier of a movie before meeting tragedy. The act is horrific.

There is a level of violence in our society which continues to represent a major social, political and public health challenge. The accounts of violence are so ubiquitous and have become so commonplace, that even the most ghastly events recede in our awareness. We are riveted to aftermaths and consequences of violence, but we have yet to, as a nation, fully explore their origins and roots -- and how to stop these horrific acts from ever happening.

On July 11th, 2001, exactly two months before 9/11, I brought to Congress a broad plan which called forth a new approach to deal with gun violence, gang violence, racial violence, domestic violence, child abuse, spousal abuse, violence in the schools, and violence against gays. The legislation, embodied in HR 808, would create a coordinated, nationwide, systematic approach to dealing with the presence of violence in American society through non-violent conflict resolution, instilled and acted upon through the aegis of a cabinet-level Department of Peace and Non-Violence.

We cannot continue to grope in the dark, hoping to stem a rising tide of violence within our nation through hope or words of consolation alone. We must be resolute in creating a new America, free of the scourge of violence. We must act.

I ask that you contact your member of Congress and ask them to cosponsor HR 808, legislation to form a cabinet level Department of Peace to address violence in our society and create new structures to deal with it directly. Let us grieve for those whose lives ended or have been irrevocably changed by the shootings in Aurora, Colorado. Then let us act to change our nation.

Go to Kucinich Action and get your Representative involved on this meaningful issue:

<http://action.kucinich.us/page/speakout/contact-congress>.

With respect, Dennis Kucinich

20120723-06 15:17 Dennis Re: Morocco (reply to SteveB)

SteveB: When did you go to Morocco? I have a friend there...

I took a Photo Tour group there in May 2010. Are any of these guys your friend?



20120723-09 18:02 SteveB Re: Morocco (reply to Dennis, above)

It looks like that might be Mohammed in the middle, though I don't recognize the colors. It's as exotic there as I have ever wanted to get...

I was happy to see your photos!

20120723-07 15:20 Pam Accountability vs. Greed

I listened to an interesting interview with Eliot Spitzer on NPR today. I wish he had stayed away from ladies of the night, because otherwise I really like him and what he has to say. (Sometimes I really want to ask why some men are so stupid--Jenrette, Clinton, Spitzer, Weiner. Otherwise intelligent men completely lose all judgment when they think they can get something for nothing. Maybe the risk is part of the fun.) Anyway, Spitzer was talking about the financial debacle, including LIBOR and the FED. He named names and didn't hold back, something I wish Obama would do. The banks own the politicians, as we all know, and it's a scandal that no one has been led off in handcuffs, like the Enron creeps. He actually used the word "handcuffs." The Senate committee that questioned Jamie Dimon pretty much licked his boots. I agree with Spitzer that the banks are too big and should be broken up; those responsible for the mess ought to at the very least face stiff fines and be held personally responsible. If Romney gets elected, God forbid, nothing will improve, and things will undoubtedly get worse, as the banks will

figure they can get away with anything. Obama needs to get his ass in gear, fire Geitner and the rest of that crew, stand up to the NRA, and throw some weight around. He won't of course because that might upset too many people, but if he does get re-elected, I want to see him kick some butt. I believe some simple honesty and fair regulation would go a long way toward restoring America's faith in itself, but if we continue to let the Sununu, Geitners, to say nothing of Bonehead and co., keep hold of the reins, we are sunk.

On a much happier note, I'd like to share my recent weekend with my son David. I mention this here because it is more than a personal issue; it's a legal one, which makes it political. David was adopted when he was three weeks old, and I didn't see him until last Friday, when, after 44 years, we met face to face. Words cannot begin to do justice to what that experience was like for both of us. It was beyond incredible, and both of us feel whole for the first time in our lives. There are only a few states that allow adult adoptees and birthparents access to original birth records. New York, where David was adopted, will release absolutely no information, even in the event of extreme medical need. I was able, with the help of sympathetic volunteers, to find David, but I'm one of the lucky ones. So many issues get attention--AIDS, gay rights, racial justice, breast cancer, smoking and drugs--but adoption issues remain the purview of a select and relatively small (though sizable) minority of activists. Much to my surprise, I have discovered that there is a counter movement that wants to keep records sealed indefinitely and has no sympathy for people like David and me who have wanted each other for decades. These opponents would deny access to critical personal information to adults in what is clearly a violation of individual, civil rights. People worry these days about government having access to virtually all of our personal, medical, financial, and educational information, despite HIPPA, and fear losing their privacy and control over their own lives and actions. This is more than a worry for adult adoptees and birthparents; it is a reality we live with every day of our lives. Awareness is the first step toward redressing wrongs, and the way society treated unmarried mothers in the '50s, '60s, and '70s was as wrong as denying black children the right to sit next to white children in school. Historians have brought the "Rape of Nanking" to public attention, and other atrocities have had their day in the public eye. I'm still waiting for adoption and the separation of mothers and their babies to get the attention they deserve. I'm no more optimistic about this than I am about Goldman Sachs becoming a charitable organization, but I would be wrong to say nothing about it. That said, I am happily reunited with a son I love and am proud of. No mother should ever be forced to deny her own child, and every effort should be made to help mothers keep their babies, when questions of abuse, addiction, or mental illness don't arise.

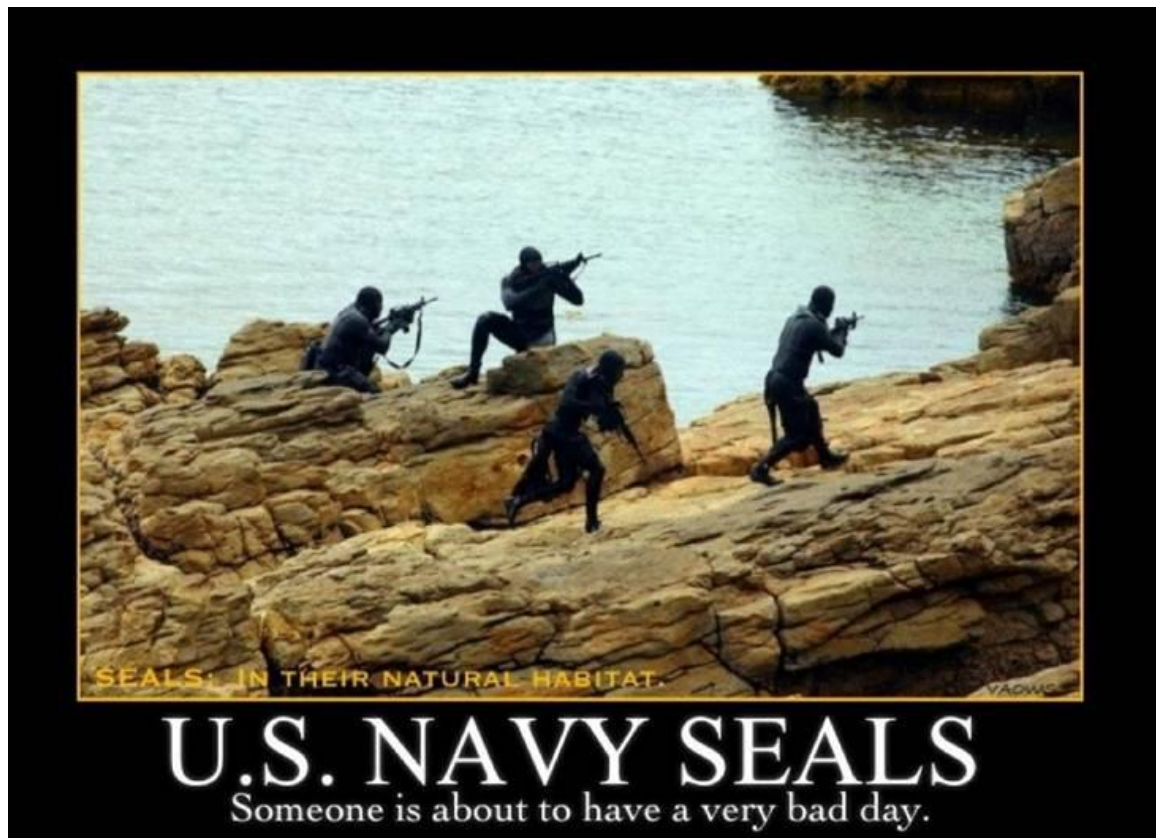
20120723-08	16:05	SteveB	Re: Accountability vs. Greed (reply to Pam, above)
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So there is actually a group (Right-wing, I suppose?) that is opposed to mothers and children reuniting? Amazing!

I don't know why this process should be so difficult. The law should be that once a child is an adult, they have the right to their own information. Where there is the consent of both parties (at this time, the foster parents must yield slightly), they should have the chance to find each other.

Sperm donors are a little different, because they mainly don't want to be found, from what I understand. Yet, I know of at least one case where a woman and son were able to find the father, even though he resided in a foreign country. Perhaps some places have more enlightened laws than the U.S.?

I greatly commend your endeavor, Pam. What a wonderful story and marvelous ending! Thank you for your courage and tenacity, and thank all of you mothers out there for your motherly love, which our world would absolutely not be able to function without!



"Democracy is two wolves and a lamb voting on what to have for dinner. Liberty is a well armed lamb contesting the vote." —unknown

"You only get three choices in life: Give up, give in, or give it all ya got!!" —unknown

[What about: Give a sh*t? ;-)-SteveB]

For some of you, this is like preaching to the choir. BUT, we should all consider this carefully.

[Source of original email unknown.—SteveB]

This ought to concern anyone and everyone who uses a bank for any transactions!

ON JANUARY 1, 2013, THE US GOVERNMENT WILL BE REQUIRING EVERYONE TO HAVE DIRECT DEPOSIT FOR SS CHECKS.

WONDER WHY?

Subject: HR 4646

Be sure to read entire explanation

Watch for this AFTER November elections; remember this BEFORE you VOTE, in case you think Obama is looking out for your best interest.

A 1% tax on all bank transactions is what HR 4646 calls for.

Do you receive a paycheck, or a retirement check from Social Security or a pension fund and have it direct deposit??

Well guess what ... It looks as if Obama wants to tax it 1% !!!

This bill was put forth by Rep. Chaka Fattah (D-PA).

YES, that is 1% tax on all bank transactions - HR 4646, every time it goes in and every time money goes out.

Ask your congressperson to vote NO.

FORWARD THIS TO EVERYONE YOU KNOW!

1% tax on all bank transactions ~ HR 4646 - ANOTHER NEW OBAMA TAX SLIPPED IN WHILE WE WERE ASLEEP. Checked this on snopes, it's true! Check it out yourself ~ HR 4646.

President Obama's finance team is recommending a one percent (1%) transaction fee (TAX). Obama's plan is to sneak it in after the November elections to keep it under the radar.

This is a 1% tax on all transactions at any financial institution - banks, credit unions, savings and loans, etc. Any deposit you make, or even a transfer within your own bank from one account to another, will have a 1% tax charged.

If your paycheck or your Social Security or whatever is direct deposit, it will get a 1% tax charged for the transaction.

If your paycheck is \$1000, then you will pay Obama \$10 just for the privilege of depositing your paycheck in your bank. Even if you hand carry your paycheck or any check in to your bank for a deposit, 1% tax will be charged.

You receive a \$5,000 stock dividend from your broker, Obama takes \$50 just to allow you to deposit that check in the bank.

If you take \$1,000 cash to deposit at your bank, 1% tax will be charged.

Mind you, this is from the man who promised that, if you make under \$250,000 per year, you will not see one penny of new tax.

Keep your eyes and ears open, you will be amazed at what you learn about this guy's under-the-table moves to increase the number of ways you are taxed.

Oh, and by the way, if you receive a refund from the IRS next year and you have it direct deposited or you walk in to deposit that check, you guessed it. You will pay a 1% charge of that money just for putting it in your bank.

Remember, any money, cash, check or whatever, no matter where it came from, you will pay a 1% fee if you put it in the bank.

Some will say, oh well, it's just 1%. Are you kidding me? It's a 1% tax increase across the board. Remember, once the tax is there, they can also raise it at will. And if anyone protests, they will just say, "Oh, that's not really a tax, it's a user fee"!

Think this is no big deal? Go back and look at the transactions you made from last year's banking statements. Then add the total of all those transactions and deduct 1%. Still think it's no big deal?

The following is copied from Snopes [Deceitfully! –SteveB]:

snopes.com: Debt Free America Act: Is the U.S.government proposing a 1% tax on debit card usage and/or banking transactions?

It is true. The bill is HR-4646 introduced by US Rep Peter deFazio D-Oregon and US Senator Tom Harkin D-Iowa. Their plan is to sneak it in after the.....moved beyond proposing studies and submitted the Debt Free America Act (H.R. 4646), a bill calling for the implementation of a scheme to pay down the.....[2010] by Rep. Chaka Fattah (D-Pa.). His "Debt Free America Act" (H.R. 4646) would impose a 1 percent "transaction tax" on every financial transaction...Wed, 02 Nov 2011, 11:27:37 GMT, <http://www.snopes.com/politics/taxes/debtfree.asp>.

20120723-13	22:38	SteveB	Re: Bank Deposit Transaction Fee Beginning Jan. 1, 2013 on All Transactions (reply to Dick, above)
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This one is so bogus you should be able to smell it across the room. I smelled it way down here in Bolivia!

FALSE! FALSE! FALSE! And is OLD! OLD! OLD! Despite the misquoting of Snopes.com at the end of the email.

If you type "HR 4646" into Google, I believe the entire first page is references which debunk this email.

See, just for examples, www.snopes.com/politics/taxes/debtfree.asp, <http://urbanlegends.about.com/od/barackobama/a/Obama-One-Percent-Transaction-Tax.htm>, http://www.defazio.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=642&Itemid=129, <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/111/hr4646>, <http://www.truthorfiction.com/rumors/d/debt-free-America-act.htm>, http://www.washingtonwatch.com/bills/show/111_HR_4646.html, <http://www.godlikeproductions.com/forum1/message1878502/pg1>.

Funny thing, the truth is incredibly rarely found in these right-wing diatribes we all get in our inboxes—especially the ones containing the word "Obama".

Thanks for sending this one to me. I love to demolish them.

20120723-12	20:58	SteveBA	Keystone Pipeline
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To the liberal idiots who support Obama and his ilk on this leftist web site we are seeing the consequences of the idiots who didn't want Canadian oil coming south. As the pm of Canada said we will sell oil to those that want it. With CNOOC's bid for nexen more energy resources are going to our biggest competitor in the world the Chinese. Instead of sending oil to Houston it's going west to china along with the thousands of jobs that could have come with the pipeline. Oh I know solar and wind will save the day. Of course all we get with that nonsense is solyndra and visual pollution.

20120723-14	23:04	SteveB	Re: Keystone Pipeline (reply to SteveBA, above)
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OK, but I don't understand why you would call your friends idiots.

I think you should ask yourself, why does this bitter anger (or whatever it is) always have to spoil communications from the Right?

If you look back at our 4000+ pages of books containing our group's activities, you see this predictable pattern repeated over and over.

The left is civil, the right is name-callers. It doesn't say much for the positions or the people of the right.

But I hope you will continue to point-out the error of our ways.

I treasure the truth.

The truth about Keystone is that those jobs would have been a tiny, temporary thing and the oil was supposed to go to China anyway, not the U.S., though I don't know exactly why.

The big deal was that some fat cats wanted to line their pockets with your money. Gee, too bad they lost and are still crying over their loss. I wonder what they did, exactly, that prompted this very welcome email from you? You are being manipulated, my old friend.

20120723-15 23:58 SteveG Graphic: Mitt R0mney: Helping America Lose \$100 Billion per Year

MITT ROMNEY:
HELPING AMERICA LOSE \$100 BILLION PER YEAR

Goldman Sachs

ROMNEY
BELIEVE IN AMERICA
INVEST IN THE CAJONAS
MITTROMNEY.COM

ExxonMobil

By stashing money in countries with tiny tax rates, wealthy businesses and individuals like Mitt Romney, Goldman Sachs and Exxon Mobil cost the federal government roughly \$100 billion every year, helping the federal deficit reach over 1 trillion dollars.

Source: California Public Interest Research Group "Tax Shell Game"

Paid for by Democracy for America and not authorized by any candidate.

DFA
DEMOCRACY
FOR AMERICA

<http://www.kuriositas.com/2012/06/amazing-monkey-orchid.html>



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

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