



FRIENDS OF THE MIDDLE NEWSLETTER #220 — SEPT. 6, 2012

Welcome to always lively political discussion and whatever else comes up.
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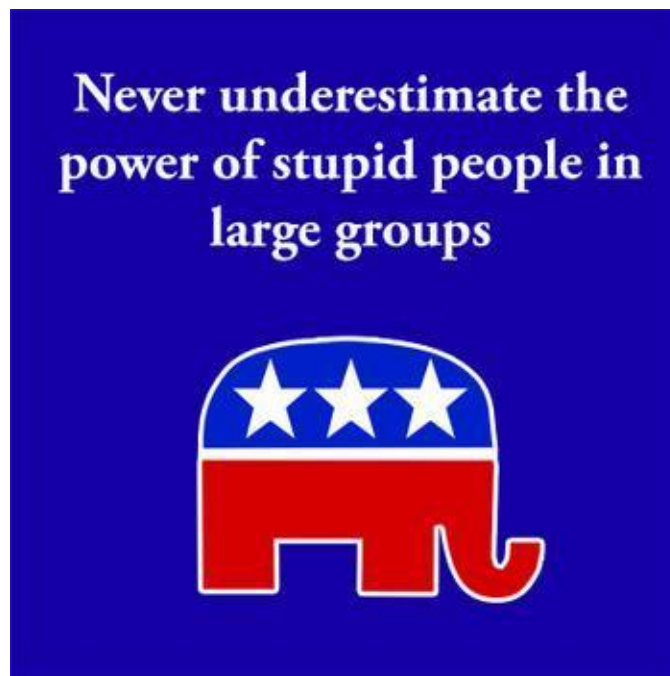
'...Give Me Truth.'

(posted by Steven W. Baker / SteveB, Sept. 6, 2012)

"The great enemy of the truth is very often not the lie, deliberate, contrived and dishonest, but the myth, persistent, persuasive and unrealistic."—John F. Kennedy

"Defyin' the Ever-lovin' Lyin' Blitz" by Robert S. Becker, NationofChange

Sept. 5, 2012, (<http://www.nationofchange.org/defyin-ever-lovin-lyin-blitz-1346852026>)



Fancy Liar's Poker? Why not Liar's Politics? This week, faint-hearted journalists crept from quasi-permanent stupor to broadcast Paul Ryan's astonishing duplicity. That spectacle raises this shocking question: **is Romney's truth-averse mission to lie himself into the White House, or did corporate media draw a clear line separating consensual truth from compulsive fibbing?** Wasn't it Oscar Wilde's jest that few journalists could distinguish a bicycle accident from the end of civilization?

Can you recall an emptier, worse run, more cringe-worthy Convention, where fatuous speechifying simply interrupted low-class sniping, low-class even for Rethuglicans? Fortunately, neither nominee is better at lying than proposing improvements for 95% of domestic inhabitants. Instead of Mitt's bizarre PR "job tour" to stimulate growth, why not a small feint towards a "truth tour"? Who figured truthiness would outshine this nonsense?

Beware: Ryan is smoother, slicker and more treacherous than the Palin Ninny, the miscast starlet who never overcame (or realizes to this day) her appearance in the wrong movie. Fortunately, V.P. candidates don't win elections, even when seemingly more genuine than his ticket mate (how could he seem less?). The mystery remains why an unpopular, distrusted campaign, with the base in tow and desperate to reach the information-averse undecideds, fired blank cartridges at party fanatics, not substance at decisive November voters.

Countering counter-factoids

Having fleetingly redeemed themselves, will media worthies take on any national ticket whose arrogance (read: Romney team) openly scorns independent fact checking? Obama abuses civil and legal rights but not reportage, not yet declaring "this isn't intended to be factual." Isn't there an obscure democratic statute that outlaws revving up crude propaganda into barefaced mendacity? Apparently not, as the right turns its faith-alone folly into self-referential fixations: "you're either with us or criminal, subversive, a minority, or aligned with the devil." Talk about taking exception(alism) to new heights.

Misrepresentation extends beyond frothy Neo-Extremists for Democrats are hardly models of truth telling; they are, however, smarter at fudging, lying more by omission than commission. Ideologues on the right are now so extreme, one doubts their awareness of their own chronic duplicity. A favorite line of mine is when a dissembling diplomat in *Lawrence of Arabia* scolds the flawed hero: "If we've been telling lies, you've been telling half-lies. A man who tells lies, like me, merely hides the truth. But a man who tells half-lies has forgotten where he put it."

No such distinction lets Ryan, his party's sole "intellectual" since Ayn Rand's demise, off the hook when serving up counter-factual red meat. CNN's David Gergen, not yet dumb as a post, had to concede some (!) "mis-statements," but "let's not forget that this was a speech about big ideas." Right, as if big enough ideas automatically enhance a weak argument.

Bigger the idea, harder they fall

In fact, the magnitude of some political pretension, whether big brother or big government, reflects big britches rather than big brains. Audacity of hope, systemic change, even progress – alas, big ideas that fell hard. Plus, bad politicians with loads of bad, big ideas, like Bush-Cheney, produce fiascos. Whenever the right defends some creep's "big ideas," what pops up is their cousin, "Big Lie." And the irony now couldn't be richer: what's "big" about GOP ideas since Reagan is the scale of the shambles. Rightwing consistency, that hobgoblin of little minds, remains addicted to "ideas" forever shrinking in front of our eyes, spewing conspiracy and paranoia.

Yes, "a lie told often enough becomes the truth." Or, because thugs push discredited myths, JFK's warning applies: "The great enemy of the truth is very often not the lie, deliberate, contrived and dishonest, but the myth, persistent, persuasive and unrealistic." Indeed, "an unexciting truth may be eclipsed by a thrilling lie" (Aldous Huxley) but not by the likes of Ryan, per Jerome K. Jerome: "It is always the best policy to speak the truth, unless of course you are an exceptionally good liar." What draws me finally to aphorism fresh off the presses: "the best liars always think they're telling the truth -- and always for the best of reasons."

Does anyone doubt that Romney-Ryan, looking desperate around the gills, would defy even the fabled Führer: "It is not truth that matters, but victory." Today's glut of fraud recalls Adlai Stevenson's bulls-eye, "If [Republicans] will stop telling lies about Democrats, we will stop telling the truth about them." Ouch. When, if ever, will Obama unzip such zingers -- or unearth the audacity of sharply-pointed repartee?

Stuffed by a lawn sprinkler?

For a context beyond elections, look to Malcolm Muggeridge's observation, what "we've developed to a very high level is the sin of credulity. It has been said that when human beings stop believing in God they believe in nothing. The truth is much worse: they believe in anything." Adds Watergate journalist Carl Bernstein, "The lowest form of popular culture -- lack of information, misinformation, disinformation, and a contempt for the truth or the reality of most people's lives -- has overrun real journalism. Today, ordinary Americans are being stuffed with garbage."

The best salvage for the disengaged dimwits in the center is take Albert Einstein's caution seriously: "Anyone who doesn't take truth seriously in small matters cannot be trusted in large ones either." I revere Henry David Thoreau but not this unfashionable call to virtue, "Rather than love, than money, than fame, give me truth." Whither our most prominent quarter-billionaire, if not driven by love (of power), money, and fame? Robert J. Ringer captures our cynical, though nostalgic age, "People say they love truth, but in reality they want to believe that which they love is true." And no one is immune.

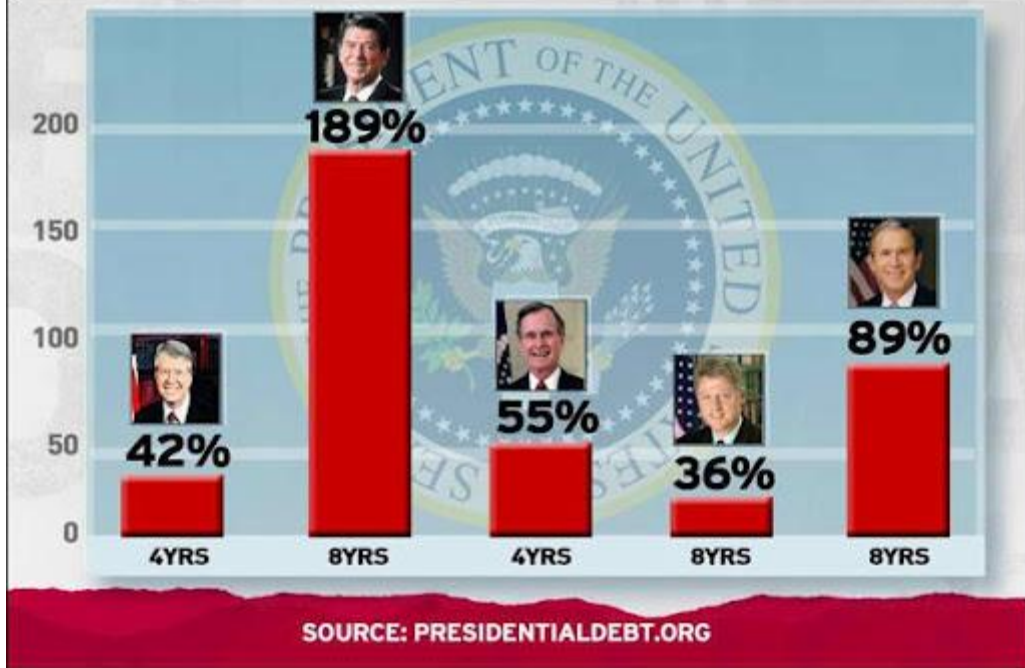
As fast-draw bloggers fire away, telling your truth goes beyond hunting up wit in the shadows. Yet for pundits hoping to entertain, director Billy Wilder nailed it, "If you're going to tell people the truth, be funny or they'll kill you." To shake up the polls, President Obama should work not on soaring rhetoric, with its untidy residue of undeliverable promises, but his stand-up comedy routine. Not just "likable," be entertaining while informing -- and how hard will that be after Todd Akin, Clint Eastwood or Romney, dullness incarnate.

If this president doesn't quickly rev up his road act, we'll confront a double whammy: not just pummeled by a fistful of bad, shrinking ideas (replays worse than Bush's originals), but bored stiff by the great GOP Stiffness. Speeches from a lawn sprinkler, as one wit depreciated Mitt's oratory, should disqualify anyone from four years at the helm. What country sustains the myth of its own exceptionalism when the winner's inauguration delivers all the excitement of a small, rotating machine going "spritz, spritz." And bereft of awareness when he's speaking the truth.



Dating in an Honest World

NATIONAL DEBT INCREASE



If The Truth Offends You,
You Must Be A Republican.

**PREVENT
TRUTH DECAY
STOP VOTING
REPUBLICAN**

FotM NEWSLETTER #220 (Sept. 6, 2012)—HYPERTEXT INDEX

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<u>20120905-01</u>	05:18	SteveG	"Obama's Health Care Plan Mimics Nixon's"
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Nixon had a health care plan. Bet you didn't know.

"Obama's Health Care Plan Mimics Nixon's" by Caitlin Handerhan, *The Merciad*

Mar. 22, 2011, (<http://merciad.mercyhurst.edu/content/obamas-health-care-plan-mimics-nixons>)

On March 23, 2010, President Barack Obama signed into law what was arguably the most historic piece of legislation passed by the 111th Congress: the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. As liberals rejoiced and conservatives grimaced, the Affordable Care Act became law.

Commonly known as health care reform, this landmark law brought the tyrannical reign of insurance companies to an end. Despite irrational opposition from the right, the final passage of the bill provides fair and affordable options for the estimated 46 million Americans living without health care coverage.

With the national fervor surrounding healthcare reform simmering down, it seems timely to take a look at the actual content of the bill in a comparative context with previous attempts at reform, most notably under Republican administrations.

As early as the Jan. 30, 1974, State of the Union address, President Richard Nixon was touting the benefits of not only reforms to the health care system, but also the need for a universal health care plan to enable every American to gain access to care.

The Nixon Era proposals for health care reform were not defeated due to public unrest or aversion to the proposed content. During this period in the battle for reform, the bill became a victim of circumstance. By 1974, Watergate had come to dominate the national discourse and Nixon's health care lost traction; the 1970s became another failure in the annals of reform.

The bill Obama signed in the spring of 2009 forbids insurance companies from placing an annual or lifetime limit on a policy, bans dropped coverage of an ill patient, and eliminates discrimination against children with pre-existing conditions, along with many other provisions which echo Nixon's call for coverage of all.

Clearly, upon comparatively examining these two attempts at health care reform, the levels of hypocrisy within the conservative platform become evident.

The health care plan proposed under President Nixon's Administration is very similar to the plan which President Obama proposed almost 40 years later, and the same Republican party which once came close to historically implementing reform has become the 'party of no' in a futile effort to block it.

20120905-02	09:41	Art	Re: Obvious Message in This Photo... (reply to SteveB, FotM Newsletter #219) & Observations on Political Convention Goers
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Hi, SteveB. Glad to see the continuing dialogue about the guy flipping off the Obama Campaign bus. To me that one picture captures the essence of the issue:

A fat middle aged white guy, going nowhere, expressing his hatred and jealousy for someone who is going somewhere.

On another note did the contrast between the visual image the Democratic Convention versus that of the Republican Convention strike anyone else. For me, I looked at the Republican crowd, white on white, and saw a collection of the rich, along with racists and religious intolerant fundamentalists all gathered together to really do one thing, get that ni**er out of the White House. That had to be at least 80% of that crowd. The Republicans could have nominated Adolf Hitler, even knowing what we do today, and that mob would have cheered loudly.

By contrast when I looked at the Democratic crowd, I just saw the People. The same people I run into daily at the 7-11 where I get my coffee, the Home Depot, the grocery store, and whenever I go throughout the day. Just all kinds of people.

I really am a middle-of-the-road guy and have probably voted Republican more often than Democrat, but that visual image really hit me this time.

20120905-03	09:55	SteveG	Fw: CREDO Action Petition: Don't Let Republicans Steal the Election in Colorado!
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from CREDO Action:

From Florida to Pennsylvania, Republican officials have launched an all-out effort to steal the 2012 presidential election for Mitt Romney. They are using every tactic imaginable at their disposal — from purging eligible citizens off voter rolls to implementing discriminatory voter ID laws — to disenfranchise thousands of voters in battleground states.

Colorado has emerged as the latest front in the Republican scheme to disenfranchise voters. Colorado Secretary of State Scott Gessler, a Republican, has taken a page straight out of Katherine Harris' and Rick Scott's Florida playbook of voter suppression by sending ominous and legalistic letters to thousands of voters in Colorado, questioning their eligibility to vote.

Gessler targeted "suspected non-citizens" who applied for a driver's license with a non-citizen document, even though it is "entirely possible to apply for a license before becoming a citizen and before registering to vote." Gessler's tactics appear to be nothing more than another Republican attempt to suppress anti-Romney votes in a crucial battleground state.

Tell Attorney General Eric Holder: Immediately suspend and investigate Colorado Secretary of State Scott Gessler's efforts to purge eligible citizens from the voter rolls in Colorado. [Click here to automatically sign the petition.](#)

The facts indicate that Gessler's voter purging attempt in Colorado disproportionately targeted Democrats, the same as Rick Scott's attempt in Florida. So far Gessler's politically motivated search hasn't turned up any non-citizens who voted in previous elections. In fact, the records show that 88 percent of the so-called "suspected non-citizens" run through a federal database by Gessler's office are U.S. citizens.

What is happening in Colorado is the same old story of Republicans using the irrational fear of "voter fraud" as cover while they work to disenfranchise eligible voters. The truth is, voter fraud is exceedingly rare. More Americans are struck by lightning than commit voter fraud. As noted by legal scholar Jeffrey Toobin:

As many independent studies have found, "voter fraud" is a cure in search of a disease. There is no significant voter-fraud problem in the United States. Rather, these laws are transparent attempts by Republican majorities to stifle and suppress the number of minorities and poor people (mostly Democrats) who go to the polls.

The real problem, the one that can affect the outcome of our elections if we're not vigilant, is voter suppression. Which is exactly what Gessler appears to be engaging in as part of a large-scale Republican crusade to suppress participation by thousands of Democratic voters in the 2012 presidential election.

As the top election official in Colorado, Gessler should be trying to help more eligible voters participate in the democratic process, not disenfranchising new citizens who have worked for years to become part of the American civic process. And he certainly should not be disenfranchising U.S. citizens for the explicit purpose of swinging the battleground state of Colorado to Romney's column in November.

Tell Attorney General Eric Holder: Immediately suspend and investigate Colorado Secretary of State Scott Gessler's efforts to purge eligible citizens from the voter rolls in Colorado.

The Justice Department has jurisdiction to investigate any partisan voter purging under the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) if it is done within 90 days of a federal election. Gessler's reported partisan voter purging in Colorado falls within that 90-day time frame.

Additionally, while Colorado is not covered by Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, which requires certain states with a history of racial discrimination to have changes to their voting practices and procedures precleared, Attorney General Holder has indicated that the Justice Department could pursue investigations against non-Section 5 states in order to "stop intentional — deliberate — attempts to limit voting rights." The Justice Department has already launched such an investigation targeting voter ID practices in non-Section 5 state Pennsylvania.

We cannot let Colorado or any other crucial battleground state of 2012 become the Florida of 2000. We can't let that nightmare play out again. Romney and President Barack Obama are locked in a tight election race which could very well be decided by Colorado's 9 electoral votes.

Click below to automatically sign our petition and urge Attorney General Holder to investigate the Republican efforts to purge voters in Colorado today:

http://www.credoaction.com/campaign/holder_colorado_voterpurge/?rc=homepagel.

Thank you for all you do to protect the integrity of our Democracy.

Murshed Zaheed, Deputy Political Director

**DON'T LET
REPUBLICANS
STEAL
THE ELECTION**

20120905-09 13:54 SteveB Fw: UltraViolet Petition: Tell CNN to Fire Erick Erickson!

from UltraViolet:

Michelle Obama's speech last night at the Democratic National Convention was amazing. So were fair pay champion Lilly Ledbetter's and Iraq war hero Tammy Duckworth's. All of these women spoke powerfully about the need for pay equity, the importance of health care reform, and reproductive freedom for women.

And CNN contributor Erick Erickson's reaction to all these inspiring women? **He commented: "First night of the Vagina Monologues in Charlotte going as expected."**

Seriously? He hears powerful, eloquent women talking about crucial issues and that's his reaction? Perhaps it shouldn't be that surprising, given his history of insulting women. Earlier this year, he defended Rush Limbaugh's attacks on Sandra Fluke, saying "her testimony before congress that American taxpayers should subsidize the sexual habits of Georgetown Law School students because, God forbid, they should stop having sex if they cannot afford the pills themselves."

Erick Erickson is paid by CNN to offer conservative viewpoints--but he repeatedly offers sexist and offensive commentary. Enough is enough: CNN must fire him right away. There are plenty of conservative commentators to replace him who aren't offensive to 52% of the population.

Sign the petition urging CNN to fire Erick Erickson.

Erickson has a long history of inflammatory comments about women. He even blamed women for the U.S. military intervention in Libya, saying, "By the way, it's the women's fault...It's, apparently, the women in the Obama administration who have decided we needed to go to war in Libya...But this is like women drivers. We're going to war in Libya, we have no plan, we have no map."

Erickson and CNN are getting a lot of heat for his tweet last night--and CNN is still under fire for its botched reporting on health care so they can't afford another PR crisis. **If enough of us push right now, we can make sure they get rid of Erickson. But if we don't, he'll probably get away with it again.**

So let's get as many people as possible to sign this petition today. Click below to sign, and then forward it to five of your friends. Let's show CNN that Erickson has gone too far, and their viewers won't stand for it.

<http://act.weareultraviolet.org/sign/erickson/>

Thanks for speaking out, Nita, Shaunna, and Kat, the UltraViolet team

20120905-04 10:40 Pam Re: 1994 R0mney-Kennedy Debate for US Senate (reply to SteveG, FotM Newsletter #219)

I miss Teddy. He screwed up big time in his youth, but I believe he redeemed himself as he got older. We need more legislators like him.

[20120905-06](#) 11:13 Bill Re: 1994 R0mney-Kennedy Debate for US Senate (reply to SteveG, FotM Newsletter #219)

MAJOR flip-flop.

[20120905-05](#) 11:03 Pam "The Graphic Every Obama-Blaming Conservative Needs to See"

"The Graphic Every Obama-Blaming Conservative Needs to See" (<http://bit.ly/R8p1qe>)

What Obama Inherited	What We Have Now
Worst recession in 75 years	Recession is over
13 straight months of job losses	27 straight months of job increases
Record job losses with more to come	Over 4 million private sector jobs recovered
Unemployment going up	Unemployment coming down
Dow Jones Ind. down to \$8,000	Dow Jones Ind. over \$13,000
DJI plummeted 35% in 2008	DJI has regained all lost value and more
\$1.4 T deficit	\$1.3 T deficit
GM & Chrysler on the brink of extinction	GM & Chrysler profitable
Two Wars	One war and an exit strategy
Osama Bin Laden on the loose	Osama Bin Laden DEAD!

**Obama Inherited The Worst Mess
Since The Great Depression!**
AND HE HAS THE ECONOMY HEADED IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION!

[And I think Obamacare should be added to this list of what we have now, after inheriting *nada*. Too bad we can't add the extinction of the Bush tax cuts on over \$250,000 income. -SteveB]

[20120905-07](#) 12:05 Pam Michelle's Speech

Political conventions make me nervous (like watching a student of mine give a presentation to the class), so I avoid the nightly coverage. Today, though, I clicked on Michelle Obama's speech that was posted on Facebook and was blown away. Wow. She delivered a powerful, articulate, substantive, passionate speech that moved me as much as anything I've heard in a long time. I loved it that the audience was filled with people of color--all colors--that Michelle stood up for gay couples who simply ask to be treated like everybody else, that she understands from the inside how she and Barack got to the White House--through hard work, commitment, and, yes, pride--in themselves and in America. This couple is the best role model we've had in the White House--ever. They are real people that we can all relate to. They know what a loaf of bread costs and how hard it is to pay back student loans. They didn't have the luxury of borrowing the money from their parents, and they got into Harvard because they were smart and diligent, not because they were well connected. Their parents knew, as did they, how important education is. Well, I could go on and on. I truly can't understand how anyone could vote for anyone else but Barack Obama.

20120905-08 13:08 SteveM "Fact Check: First Lady's False Fairy Tale of Struggle"

"Fact Check: First Lady's False Fairy Tale of Struggle" by ConservativeByte.com

Sept. 5, 2012, (<http://conservativebyte.com/2012/09/fact-check-first-ladys-false-fairy-tale-of-struggle/>)

First Lady Michelle Obama's pitch to voters last night relied on the premise that she and her husband understand what it is to struggle to make ends meet. She spoke movingly about their early years—about how a young Barack Obama drove a car that was "rusted out" and found his furniture "in a dumpster," how they both came from families that had to "scrape by." Her fairy tale—however well-delivered—was one great, big, colorful lie.

Both Michelle Robinson and Barack Obama began their adult lives with a leg up on the rest of America. They attended elite schools: Michelle went to Whitney Young, the public magnet school for Chicago's upper class, while Barack attended Punahou, the private prep school for the top stratum of Hawaiian society. They were accepted to Ivy League schools despite undistinguished credentials, and both attended Harvard Law School.

"[B]elieve it or not, when we were first married, our combined monthly student loan bills were actually higher than our mortgage," Michelle said. That sounds like a raw deal—but in fact reflects their fortunate circumstances. They had both just graduated from a very expensive law school, and their combined income from cushy law firm jobs dwarfed the repayments. Barack also soon enjoyed a second salary from the University of Chicago.

They had expensive tastes, reflected in the \$277,500 two-bedroom condo they bought in 1993—a high price even by today's standards. Several years later, they moved into their \$1.65 million mansion in Hyde Park—with the help of fraudster Tony Rezko. Barack often told a story of hardship on the campaign trail in 2008 about having his credit card declined—once. The fact that he thought this counted as real hardship speaks volumes.

20120905-10 14:00 SteveB Re: "Fact Check: First Lady's False Fairy Tale of Struggle" (reply to SteveM, above)

More lies. You are being manipulated and played for a sucker by the Right.

For instance, this is a blatant lie: "...their combined income from cushy law firm jobs dwarfed the repayments." There certainly was never a cushy law firm job for Barry, though he could easily have had one. This didn't happen. This is a lie. That tells you this as written by a liar. Why would you believe any of the rest of his or her lies? (Whoever the author is.)

Are you jealous of these people's success?

You really think your guy, Mittens, lives or has ever lived in the real world? Maybe if he had or did, he wouldn't make such a fool of himself all the time.

20120905-13 23:10 SteveM "Fact Check: Clinton Claims of Compromise a Stretch"

"Fact Check: Clinton Claims of Compromise a Stretch" by Matt Apuzzo and Tom Raum, AP

Sept. 6, 2012, (<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/huff-wires/20120906/us-cvn-democrats-fact-check/>)

(WASHINGTON) It's a fact of life in Washington that what one party considers a principled stand, the opposition considers pigheadedness. Compromise? That's the other guy's problem.

But when former President Bill Clinton took the stage at the Democratic National Convention on Wednesday, he portrayed President Barack Obama as a pragmatic compromiser who has been stymied at every turn by Republicans. There was no mention of the role that the president and the Democrats have played in grinding compromise to a halt on some of the most important issues facing the country.

That was among the lines by the former president and others Wednesday that either cherry-picked facts or mischaracterized the opposition. A look at some of them:

CLINTON: "When times are tough, constant conflict may be good politics but in the real world, cooperation works better. ... Unfortunately, the faction that now dominates the Republican Party doesn't see it that way. They think government is the enemy and compromise is weakness. One of the main reasons America should re-elect President Obama is that he is still committed to cooperation."

THE FACTS: From Clinton's speech, voters would have no idea that the inflexibility of both parties is to blame for much of the gridlock. Right from the beginning Obama brought in as his first chief of staff Rahm Emanuel, a man known for his getting his way, not for getting along.

One of the more high-profile examples of a deal that fell apart was the outline of a proposed "grand bargain" budget agreement between Obama and House Speaker John Boehner in 2011.

The deal would have required compromise from both sides. It slashed domestic spending more than most Democrats wanted and would have raised some taxes, which most Republicans oppose.

Boehner couldn't sell the plan to tea party factions in the House or to other conservative activists. And Obama found himself accused of going too far by some Democratic leaders. The deal died before it ever even came up for a vote.

In another instance, Obama appointed a bipartisan group, known as the Simpson-Bowles Commission, to recommend ways to fix major fiscal problems like Social Security and Medicare. The commission issued its recommendations but fell three votes short of formally endorsing them. And Obama mostly walked away from the report. He later incorporated some of the less contentious proposals from the report into legislation he supported.

But that ensured the tough compromises would not get made.

The problem with compromising in Washington is that there are few true moderates left in either party. The notion that Republicans are the only ones standing in the way of compromise is inaccurate.

CLINTON: Clinton suggested that Obama's health care law is keeping health care costs in check.

"For the last two years, health care spending has grown under 4 percent, for the first time in 50 years. So, are we all better off because President Obama fought for it and passed it? You bet we are."

THE FACTS: That's wishful thinking at best. The nation's total health care tab has been growing at historically low rates, but most experts attribute that to continued uncertainty over the economy, not to Obama's health care law.

Two of the main cost-control measures in Obama's law – a powerful board to keep Medicare spending manageable and a tax on high cost health insurance plans – have yet to take effect.

Under the law, Medicare has launched dozens of experiments aimed at providing quality care for lower cost, but most of those are still in their infancy and measurable results have yet to be obtained. Former administration officials say the law deserves at least part of the credit for easing health care inflation, but even they acknowledge that the lackluster economy is playing a major role.

Meanwhile, people insured through the workplace by and large have seen little relief from rising premiums and cost shifts. According to the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation, the average premium for job-based family coverage rose from \$13,375 in 2009 when Obama took office to \$15,073 in 2011. During the same period, the average share paid by employees rose from \$3,515 to \$4,129.

While those premium increases cannot be blamed on the health care law – as Republicans try to do – neither can Democrats claim credit for breaking the back of health care inflation.

CLINTON: "I know many Americans are still angry and frustrated with the economy. ... I experienced the same thing in 1994 and early 1995. Our policies were working but most people didn't feel it yet. By 1996, the economy was roaring, halfway through the longest peacetime expansion in American history."

THE FACTS: Clinton is counting on voters to recall the 1990s wistfully and to cast a vote for Obama in hopes of replicating those days in a second term. But Clinton leaves out the abrupt downward turn the economy took near the end of his own second term and the role his policies played in the setting the stage for the historic financial meltdown of 2008.

While the economy and markets experienced a record expansion for most of the rest of Clinton's two-term presidency, at the start of 2000, there were troubling signs. Then-Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan warned in February 2000 that "we are entering a period of considerable turbulence in financial markets."

Sure enough, the tech-heavy Nasdaq composite stock index and the Dow Jones industrial average both peaked in March 2000. The bursting of the high-tech bubble dragged down the economy and markets through the rest of the year. From September 2000 to January 2001, when Clinton left office, the Nasdaq dropped 46 percent. Even now, in 2012, the Nasdaq has not returned to its 2000 peak. By March 2001, the economy toppled into recession.

Also, as president, Clinton supported the 1999 repeal of the Glass-Steagall Act, a law dating back to the Great Depression that separated banking from high-risk financial speculation. Robert Rubin, who had been Clinton's first treasury secretary, helped broker the final deal on Capitol Hill that enabled the repeal legislation to pass. Some financial historians say the repeal of the law paved the way for banks to invest in risky investments like mortgage-backed securities and collateralized debt obligations that played a role in the 2008 financial meltdown.

CLINTON: "Their campaign pollster said, 'We're not going to let our campaign be dictated by fact checkers.' Now that is true. I couldn't have said it better myself – I just hope you remember that every time you see the ad."

THE FACTS: Clinton, who famously finger-wagged a denial on national television about his sexual relationship with intern Monica Lewinsky and was subsequently impeached in the House on a perjury charge, has had his own uncomfortable moments over telling the truth. "I did not have sexual relations with that woman, Miss Lewinsky," Clinton told television viewers. Later, after he was forced to testify to a grand jury, Clinton said his statements were "legally accurate" but also allowed that he "misled people, including even my wife."

(AP writer Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar contributed to this report.)

20120905-14 23:25 SteveB "Bill Clinton DNC Speech: 15 Best Lines"

"Bill Clinton DNC Speech: 15 Best Lines" (w/ video) by Mackenzie Weinger, Politico

Sept. 5, 2012, (http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0912/80812.html?hp=I1_b1)

Former President Bill Clinton on Wednesday night delivered a very long speech filled with off-script riffs that thrilled the Charlotte crowd. Here's POLITICO's round-up of Clinton's 15 memorable lines from his address at the Democratic National Convention:

1. "We believe 'we're all in this together' is a far better philosophy than 'you're on your own.'"
2. "Democracy does not have to be a bloodsport. It can be an honest enterprise."
3. "Senator, I hate to break it to you, but we're going to keep President Obama on the job!"
4. "One reason we need to reelect President Obama is he is still committed to constructive cooperation."
5. "So here's another jobs score: President Obama plus 4.5 million, congressional Republicans zero."

6. "No president, no president — not me or any of my predecessors, no one, could have repaired all the damage he found in just four years. But he has laid the foundation for a new, modern, successful economy, of shared prosperity, and if you renew the President's contract you will feel it. You will feel it."
7. "So are we all better off because President Obama fought for health care reform? You bet we are."
8. "When Congressman Ryan looked into that TV camera and attacked President Obama's Medicare savings as quote 'biggest coldest power play,' I didn't know whether to laugh or cry. Because that 716 billion dollars is exactly, to the dollar, the same amount of Medicare savings that he has in his own budget. It takes some brass to attack a guy for doing what you did."
9. "You won't be laughing when I finish telling you this."
10. "As their campaign pollster said 'we're not going to let our campaign be dictated by fact checkers.' Now that is true. I couldn't say it better myself."
11. "I think this [debt] plan is way better than Gov. Romney's plan. First, the Romney plan fails the first test of fiscal responsibility: The numbers don't add up."
12. "We simply cannot afford to turn the reins of government over to someone who will double down on trickle-down."
13. "Now people ask me all the time, how we go four surplus budgets in a row. What new ideas did we bring to Washington? I always give a one word answer: Arithmetic."
14. "The most important question is, what kind of country do you want to live in? If you want a you're-on-your-own, winner-take-all society, you should support the Republican ticket. If you want a country of shared prosperity and shared responsibility — a we're-all-in-this-together society — you should vote for Barack Obama and Joe Biden."
15. "Though I often disagree with Republicans, I actually never learned to hate them the way the far right that now controls their party seems to hate our president and a lot of other Democrats."

20120905-15	23:58	SteveB	Cartoon: Score!
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The Right

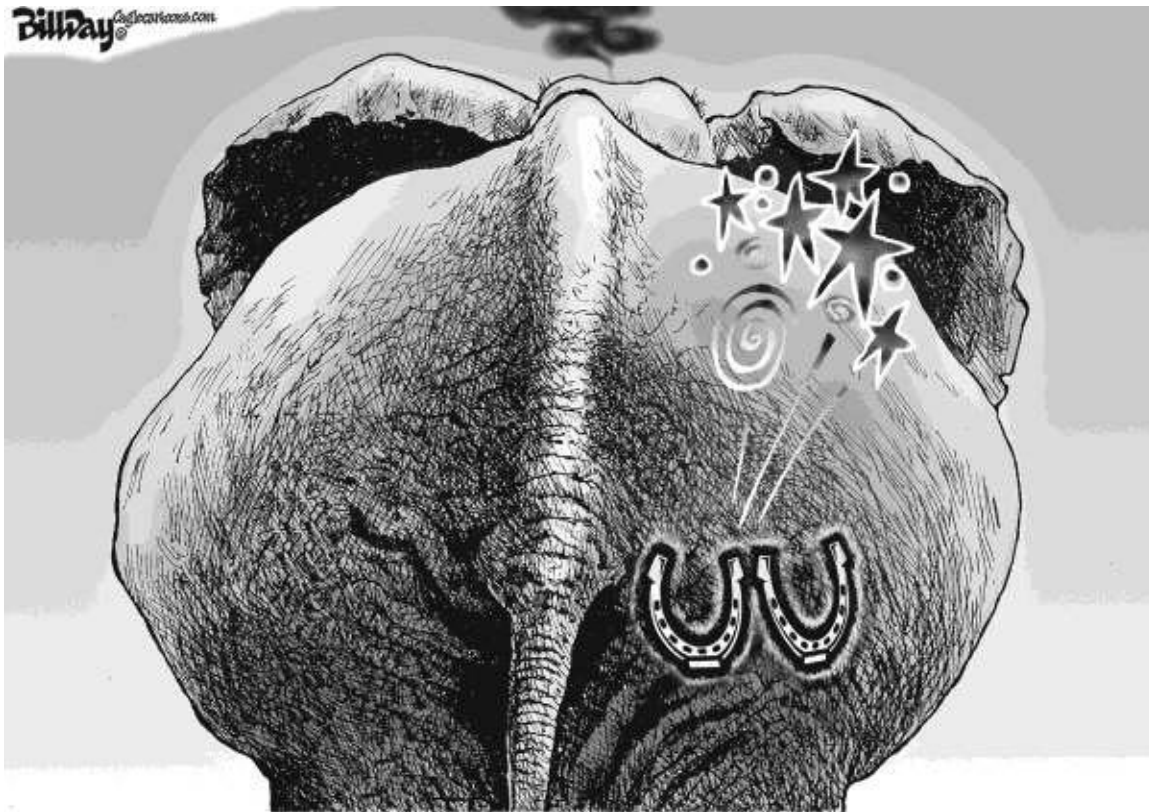
It's funny how none of them, dumb or smart, will listen to any logic or think that they don't have every answer down pat (which, notice, they have memorized in every case).

Is this what "bad" education produces?

People who think they know it all without bothering to *think* or *know*?

...the Sarah Palins of the world!

(I guess I'm getting fired-up, with the convention going on, and I did like Michelle's and Bill's speeches!)



20120905-11 15:17 MarthaH Southern Poverty Law Center

I just completed reading the monthly mailing from the Southern Poverty Law Center and decided to share the information on their website, thinking we all detest this and hope to see it lessen, not increase as it seems to be doing. We all recall the atmosphere of our youth; although some naively thought those times are past, current atmosphere and hate emails prove they are not. For the land of opportunity, some feel like only the group they think they belong to is privileged to enjoy it. Sad...and scary...We all know some personally, too.

Fighting Hate • Teaching Tolerance • Seeking Justice (<http://www.splcenter.org/?ref=logo>)

[Good "find", Martha. Lots of good articles, information, and work here. Thanks! --SteveB]

20120905-12 19:06 Ben Photo: Today's Lunch at Apple

Sometimes food is just so pretty that you want it all. That happens a lot around here, as you have seen in previous mailings.

When I enter the cafeteria, I enter at the nearest door, and walk the length of it between the tables and the "Gallery", the counter along the window), where I usually sit. That way, I can gauge the crowd in the serving areas, choose my approach past Faith's Gauntlet, and -- most important! -- see what people are eating.

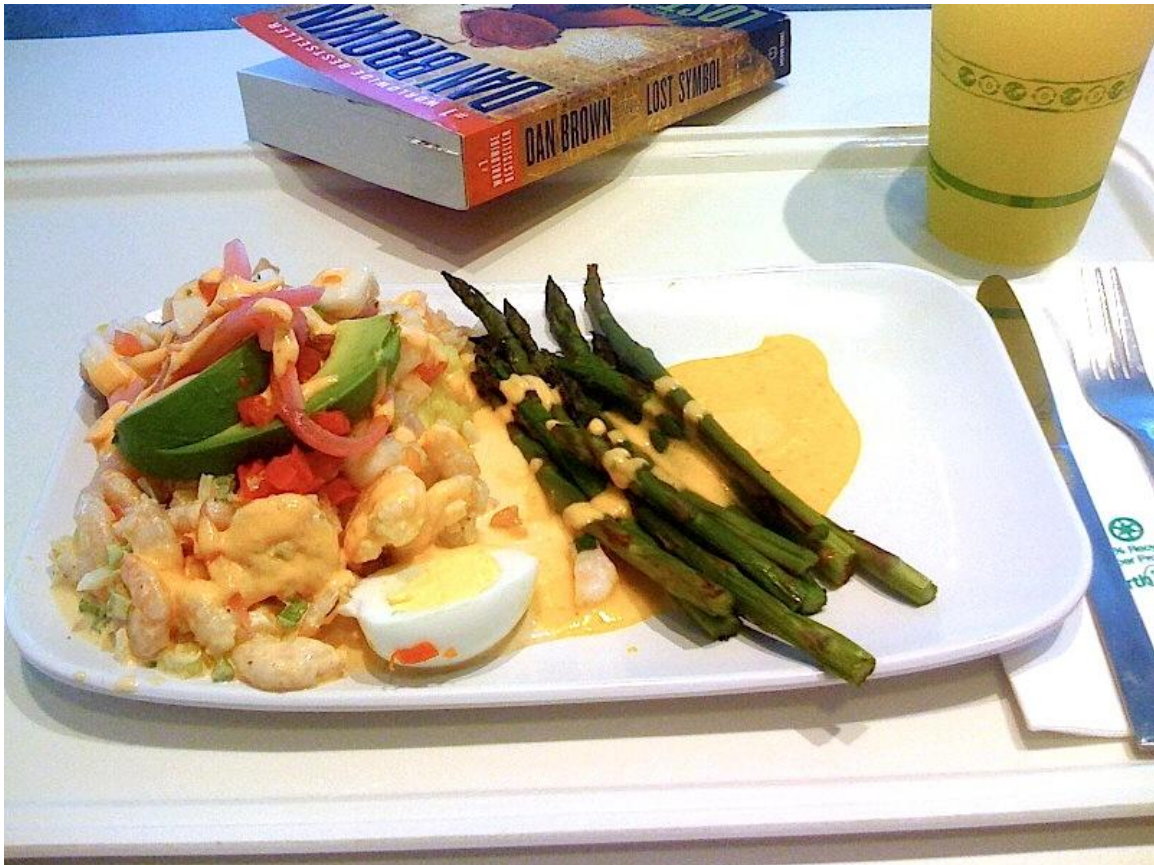
Today, colleague Sam S (who I know to care about food quality) was sitting at the Gallery, looking quite happy with his iPad and Ceviche. The Ceviche looked fine to me, too, and was on my list of possibilities, so of course, I asked how it was. "Great!" he said, with heartfelt enthusiasm. I figured that locked in my choice. But I toured the pasta line, where poached Scottish salmon (from Scotland!) was being laid across coarse-textured Israeli cous-cous with loving care, and the Far East line, but my gaze was drawn to the Bistro, where Chef Bladimir was doling Shrimp Causa into go-boxes. The beauty of the golden Peruvian potatoes drew my eye; stiff, more coarsely textured than typical mashed potatoes, not creamy or shiny, but richly colored... a gorgeous underlayment for a lovely dish;

roasted green asparagus, slices of boiled egg, and a searingly yellow sauce combined to make the dish a riot of color and texture. The ceviche featured curls of tomato and red onion, with avocado slices and tortilla chips...

I was torn. Both dishes looked tremendous.

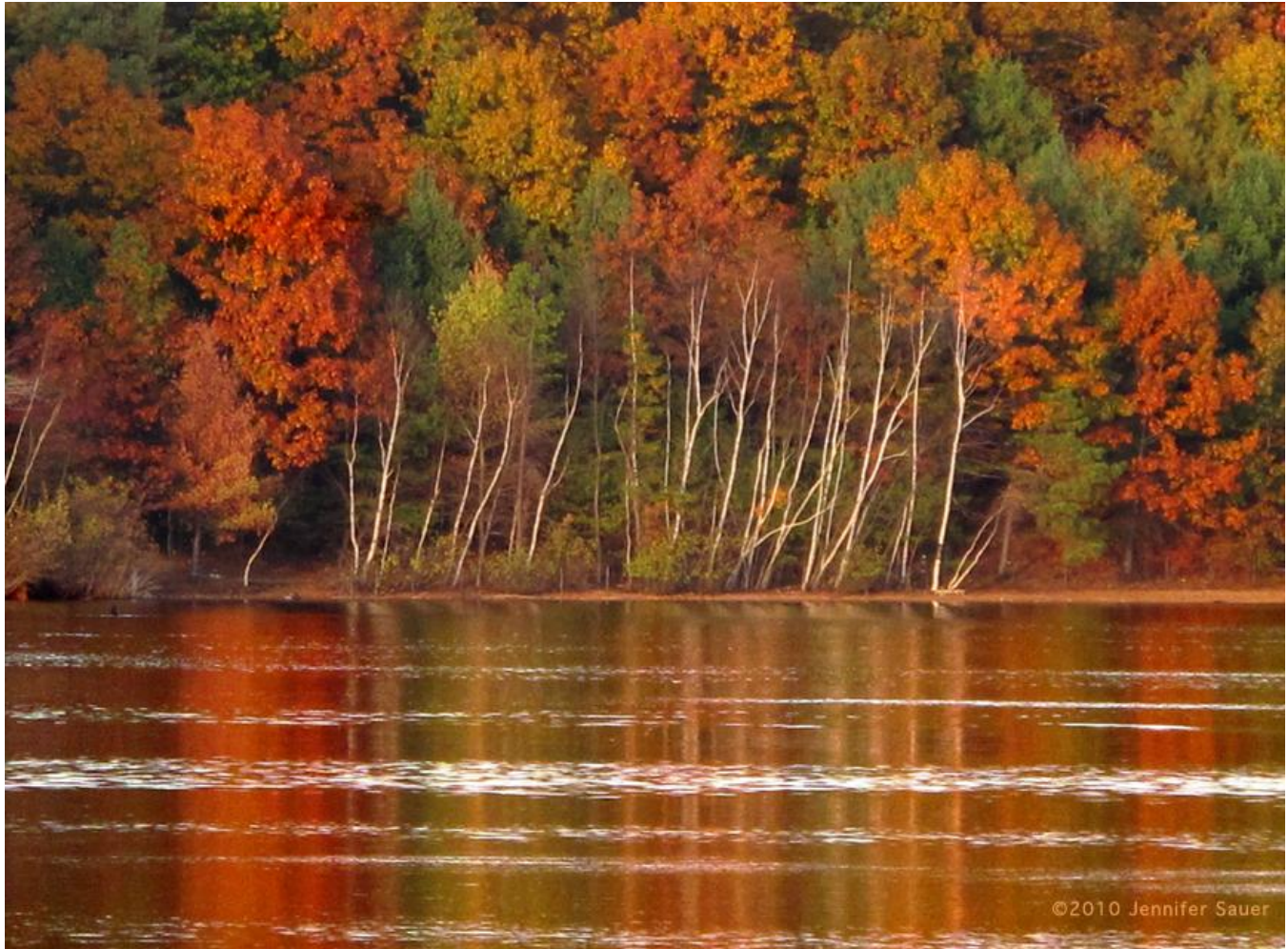
I asked Blad which he'd rather eat; he said they were both fine.

Seeing me dithering, Chef Blad took sympathy on me: he knew I wanted to try them both. So he said "I'll fix you some of each". The result was the delicious and beautiful result you see in the photo below: a wonderful mixture of ultra-fresh bits of Gulf black drum, Gulf shrimp, and bay scallops, with curls of fresh tomato and red onion and avocado, supported on a golden puck of Peruvian potato patty, tempered by the linearity of darker green slightly charred roasted asparagus spears... dressed with a fiery yellow sauce of subtly mysterious ingredients I cannot identify... YUM! Another astonishing and exotic lunch, supplemented with delicious Valencia orange lemonade:



Ceviche and Shrimp Causa Combo Plate with Roasted Asparagus and Rocket Sauce

<http://bonteavant.com/2010/10/tea-and-nature.html>



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

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