



FRIENDS OF THE MIDDLE **NEWSLETTER #224 — SEPT. 12, 2012**

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

INDEX: Click here.

Friends of the Middle: Past, Present, Future

(posted by Steven W. Baker / SteveB, Sept. 12, 2012)

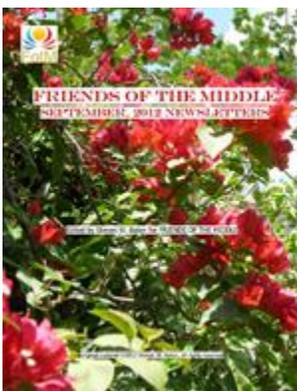
FotM — Past

I've been collecting emails since the beginning of 2007. Almost everything that comes in that isn't personal or business related, especially anything to do with politics or government, gets saved to this day. I take all that, everything you members of Friends of the Middle send to me and everything else, add my comments, occasional writing, and internet "finds", and publish it as the *FotM Newsletter*.

It has been a labor of love that I do to promote what I see with my limited "vision" as the truth. So many things that you all have written have impressed me so much, that I thought it should be preserved. I also have had the goal of trying to preserve something of myself in all the work, so that my children and grandchildren and more, I hope, can come to get to know me a little better. I don't know if that makes sense to you.

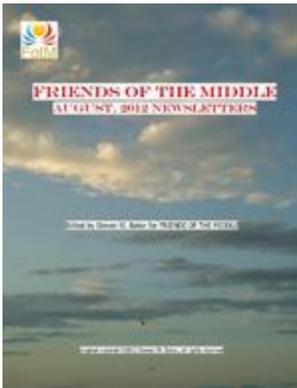
So far, including the important reference material we have gathered, we have, together, written ten complete electronic books and, this month, we are working on our eleventh! (It is already online in its incomplete form with 224 pages already, up through FotM Newsletter #223, yesterday.) Total pages: 5964.

Here's the rundown (to access, click on cover or link):



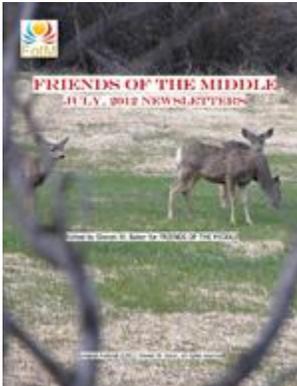
September, 2012 (still adding: 224 pages)

<http://www.friendsofthemiddle.org/2012-newsletters/201209-FotM-Newsletters.pdf>



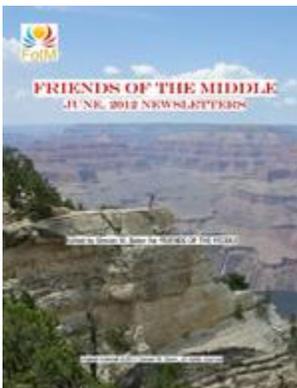
August, 2012 (612 pages)

<http://www.friendsofthemiddle.org/2012-newsletters/201208-FotM-Newsletters.pdf>



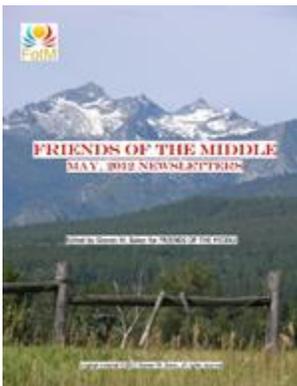
July, 2012 (443 pages)

<http://www.friendsofthemiddle.org/2012-newsletters/201207-FotM-Newsletters.pdf>



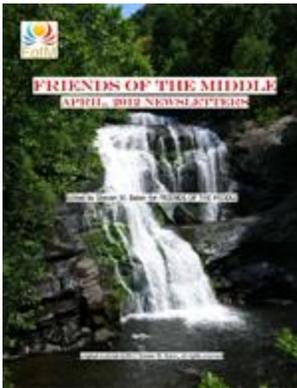
June, 2012 (429 pages)

<http://www.friendsofthemiddle.org/2012-newsletters/201206-FotM-Newsletters.pdf>



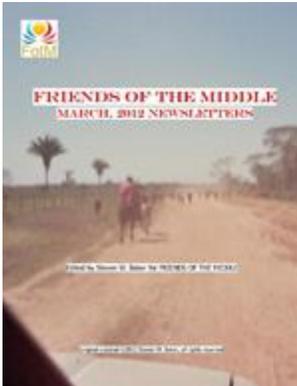
May, 2012 (483 pages)

<http://www.friendsofthemiddle.org/2012-newsletters/201205-FotM-Newsletters.pdf>



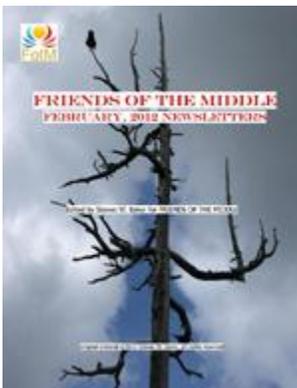
April, 2012 (444 pages)

<http://www.friendsofthemiddle.org/2012-newsletters/201204-FotM-Newsletters.pdf>



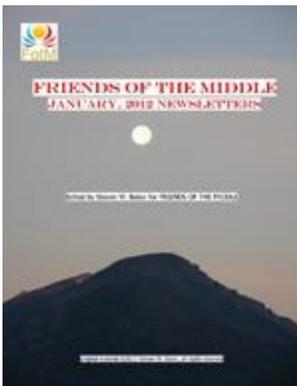
March, 2012 (352 pages)

<http://www.friendsofthemiddle.org/2012-newsletters/201203-FotM-Newsletters.pdf>



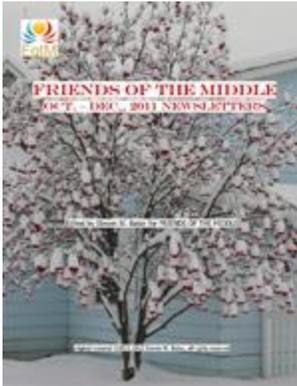
February, 2012 (393 pages)

<http://www.friendsofthemiddle.org/2012-newsletters/201202-FotM-Newsletters.pdf>



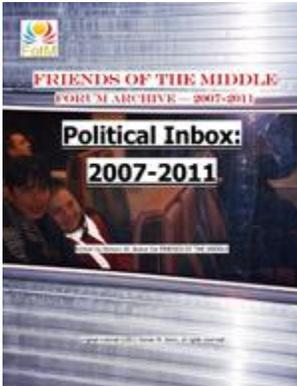
January, 2012 (313 pages)

<http://www.friendsofthemiddle.org/2012-newsletters/201201-FotM-Newsletters.pdf>



Oct. 24 — Dec. 31, 2011 (721 pages)

<http://www.friendsofthemiddle.org/2011-newsletters/2011-FotM-Newsletters.pdf>



Jan. 1, 2007 — Oct. 23, 2011 (1550 pages)

http://www.friendsofthemiddle.org/Political_Inbox_2007-2011.pdf

FotM — Present

I recommend that you download any ebooks which interest you soon. These are the unabridged editions currently online, with all the latest corrections and with all source material intended for FotM Members only. In the future, the website will have only abridged editions with complete articles reduced to a link and a short quote.

With the election approaching now is the time to spread any word worth spreading. I hope the FotM Newsletter contains some of those words (and pictures). I would love to double our circulation before the election! We have over 500 subscribers now and over 100 contributors. I want to double both of those numbers and push our circulation over 1000!

Unfortunately, with my new bakery business, I don't have much time to promote the Newsletter and group. I hope you will help me at this time by forwarding the FotM Newsletter, this email, or just the webpage address to everyone on your email list. What the hay, we might as well pi*s everybody off!

FotM — The Future

I have always intended to produce the Newsletter through the election, at the very least. I will do that, come hell or high water. Lately, I've been thinking that it would be cool to publish at least 300 issues, which would be sometime early next year. That might be possible.

Then, in 2013, Marci and I will be traveling to see all of you in the States and Europe and I intend to make a different kind of project with that. Some kind of a road trip journal, perhaps. Blogs disappoint me.

I want to take this opportunity to thank every one of you who have contributed to this group project, even if that was only to read and to think.

May the Force be with us.

FotM NEWSLETTER #224 (Sept. 12, 2012)—HYPERTEXT INDEX

<u>DATE-ID</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>FROM</u>	<u>SUBJECT/TITLE</u>
20120912-00		SteveB	Friends of the Middle: Past, Present, Future by Steven W. Baker / SteveB
20120911-14	20:19	Pam	Re: Friends of the Middle: Past, Present, Future (reply to SteveB, above)
20120911-18	23:28	MarthaH	Re: Friends of the Middle: Past, Present, Future (reply to SteveB, above)
20120911-01	08:06	SteveB	Candidates or Jokes? A Devastating Day for the R0mney Camp
20120911-02	09:24	SteveB	Poem: "The Crystal Stairs"
20120911-03	11:04	SteveB	Re: "Real Care vs. Photo Op's" (to Dale)
20120911-04	11:45	SteveB	Fw: SignOn Petition: Stop the Citibank Zombies!
20120911-05	12:04	Art	Racism
20120911-06	12:15	SteveB	"Growth Is the Problem"
20120911-07	12:29	SteveM	Fw: "'Creepy'? Joe Biden Cuddles Up to Female Biker"
20120911-08	15:12	SteveB	Re: "'Creepy'? Joe Biden Cuddles Up to Female Biker" (reply to SteveM, above)
20120911-15	21:12	SteveM	Re: "'Creepy'? Joe Biden Cuddles Up to Female Biker" (reply to SteveB, above)
20120911-16	22:12	SteveB	Re: "'Creepy'? Joe Biden Cuddles Up to Female Biker" (reply to SteveM, above)
20120911-09	15:23	SteveB	"911 — They Won"
20120911-10	18:42	SteveG	From the Right: "FDR's Policies Prolonged Depression by 7 Years, UCLA Economists Calculate"
20120911-11	19:07	Art	Re: "FDR's Policies Prolonged Depression by 7 Years, UCLA Economists Calculate" (reply to SteveG, above)
20120911-13	19:18	SteveG	Re: "FDR's Policies Prolonged Depression by 7 Years, UCLA Economists Calculate" (reply to Art, above)
20120911-12	19:08	Marci	Photo: '...the Mother of Invention' #1
20120911-17	22:44	SteveB	"Mitt Romney Criticizes Obama Administration over Response to Libya, Egypt Attacks"
20120911-19	23:58	SteveG	Photo: Teabagger
20120911-20	23:59	SteveB	Photo: Angkor Wat Temple Tree, Cambodia

20120911-14	20:19	Pam	Re: Friends of the Middle: Past, Present, Future (reply to SteveB, above)
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OMY, Steve. This sounds like a valedictory. You can't stop. What you have done here is incredible. I really believe it will be a valued resource for historians for years to come. What was it really like back in the 2000s? What were people actually thinking? How did they feel? It's all here. Whatever you do next, I want to be a part of it. This FotM has kept me sane for a long time. It's my intellectual lifeline. I don't want to lose it.

[Thank you, Pam! –SteveB]

20120911-18	23:28	MarthaH	Re: Friends of the Middle: Past, Present, Future (reply to SteveB, above)
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In my biased opinion, the key to it all is education--formal and personal. Your work has done a lot to help us all broaden our horizons and THINK, something too many people don't do...or take for granted as they march in step. YIKES. The best informal education I ever had was playing devil's advocate with teenaged students. The olden debate societies did that to the participants, but it is lost today for the most part. To advance as a society and culture, we must not fall into cobwebs and stay but learn and move forward. Too many stick themselves in the mud that turns into quick sand for us all. Nothing is perfect, but striving for our best as a society lifts all up, not makes stepping stones out of some to the benefit of others. I tried to get teenagers to see the other side, something that

is sadly missing in our polarization mode. How do we fix that to solve problems and get folks to listen remains the questions worth more than (age showing, :-) \$64,000--big bucks then and not so much now!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Thanks for your efforts.

[Thank you, Martha! –SteveB]

20120911-01 08:06 SteveB Candidates or Jokes? A Devastating Day for the R0mney Camp

<http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0912/81026.html?hp=l3>

<http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0912/81017.html?hp=t1>

<http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0912/81013.html?hp=l4>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/11/opinion/the-bush-white-house-was-deaf-to-9-11-warnings.html>

20120911-02 09:24 SteveB Poem: "The Crystal Stairs"

The Crystal Stairs (Lincoln State Park, RI -- in memory of those who perished 9/11/01)

The first falling leaves are yellow
Orange and red will come later
After the coming chill descends.

My intrepid cat-friend and I
Know these New England woods
Like the back of our paws by now.

We have walked these rocky trails
Even in the dark of night. Sun now
The impending doom of green surrounds us.

The earth reveals her ancient bones here
Hard gray granite boulder outcrops
Stark against the leaf dotted soil.

Nothing here has really changed
Seemingly since the rocks were born
Since the birth of my race or my cat's race.

She still investigates every squirrel
Though she will not really hurt them
Her hunger taken care of by her owner.

We still seek revenge on our enemies
Even though so very loathe to kill...
When death rains from the sky one must stand.

Every year the green turns first to gold
And every year the hatred springs anew
The hunting and the killing go unchanged.

Yet I know of a place in "our" woods
Where a hidden trail leads up a hill
Of massive house-sized boulders.

At one point the almost-path climbs
A wide vein of sun sparkled white quartz
Chiseled by water and ice almost into steps.

I was amazed when we found it
And have never seen anyone else there
The usual litter of cans and bottles missing.

Whenever I ascend those pure white steps
I like to pretend I'm going someplace better
But at the summit there is little to be found.

Just the same lichen-covered granite
The same yearly rain of yellow from green
The same hard truth about what we are.

Yet as my cat still hopes for the catch
It is my nature, I guess, still to hope
That someday we will climb pure crystal stairs
Out of the muck of the world we have created.

©2001,2012 Steven W. Baker

20120911-03	11:04	SteveB	Re: "Real Care vs. Photo Op's" (to Dale)
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Maybe this is a little like talking to an empty chair, but, Dale, I hope you're having a better fall than Mitt R0mney!

We've had quite a controversy lately about R0mney's failure to mention our heroes or wars or Afghanistan in his acceptance speech, and his strange, evasive answers to direct questions on the subject this past weekend.

The conclusion to your email below from Dec. 15, 2011 says:

"This is how people with class respond and pay respect to those in uniform.... Someone, PLEASE, show me anything that will tell us that Obama has ANY respect for the country he leads! I'm looking for just a little sign of respect."

Given all that...how do you feel about R0mney's recent actions? Patriotic? Worthy of a (shudder) Commander-in-Chief?

Oh, and maybe you could give me a spot of help. Is R0mney FOR or AGAINST repealing all of Obamacare as he swore to do on the Book of Mormon?

20111215-31—22:56—Dale— Fw: Real Care vs. Photo Op's

I've seen this before. You probably have too. I still think it's worth another look.

(Pam, please have your snarkiness meter ready for the comments which may follow.)

[Source of original email unknown. —SteveB]

A doctor had his TV on in his office when the news of the military base shootings at Ft. Hood , TX came on. The husband of one of his employees was stationed there.

He called her into his office and as he told her what had happened, she got a text message from her husband saying, "I am okay." Her cell phone rang right after she read the message. It was an ER nurse, "I'm the one who just sent you a text, not your husband. I thought it would be comforting but I was mistaken in doing so. I am sorry to tell you this, but your husband has been shot 4 times and he is in surgery."

The soldier's wife left Southern Clinic in Dothan , AL and drove all night to Ft. Hood. When she arrived, she found out her husband was out of surgery and would be OK. She rushed to his room and found that he already had two visitors there to comfort him.

He was just waking up and found his wife and the visitors by his side. The nurse took this picture:



What? No news crews and cameras? This is how people with class respond and pay respect to those in uniform.

I sent my cousin in Fayetteville , N.C. (Retired from Special Forces) that picture of Geo. W. visiting the wounded at Ft. Hood . I got this reply:

What is even better is the fact George W. Bush heard about Fort Hood, got in his car without any escort, apparently they did not have time to react, and drove to Fort Hood. He was stopped at the gate and the guard could not believe who he had just stopped. Bush only asks for directions to the hospital then drove on. The gate guard called that "The President is on Fort Hood and driving to the hospital."

The base went bananas looking for Obama. When they found it was Bush, they immediately offered escort. Bush simply told them it was o.k. and to let him visit the wounded and the dependents of the dead.

He stayed at Fort Hood for over six hours, and was finally asked to leave by a message from the White House.

Obama flew in days later and held a "photo opportunity" session in a gym, and did not even go to the hospital.

All this I picked up from two soldiers here who happened to be at Fort Hood when it happened.

This Bush/Obama/Ft.Hood story is something that should be sent to every voter in the US . Those who wanted "change". You certainly got it.

Someone, PLEASE, show me anything that will tell us that Obama has ANY respect for the country he leads! I'm looking for just a little sign of respect.

20120911-04 11:45 SteveB Fw: SignOn Petition: Stop the Citibank Zombies!

from SignOn.org:

Our daughter Brittani was killed in a tragic and brutal car accident three days before her twenty-third birthday—just a week before her college graduation.

Brittani had dedicated her life to serving people and making people's lives better. She had her whole life ahead of her.

When Brittani died, she still had student loans to pay off, and for more than three years Citibank demanded repayment from our family. While we grieved, Citibank continued to demand payment, and we struggled to pay these bills monthly.

Tell Citibank to forgive and stop trying to collect student debt from grieving families after their child dies:

<http://www.signon.org/sign/student-dies-before-graduati>.

Our family is lucky. After more than three years of pleading with Citibank, we started an online petition on SignOn.org. With the help of friends, MoveOn, and so many others, our petition spread fast. And once Citibank started to feel public pressure, they called us and agreed to forgive Brittani's student debt.

But what about all the other families in this situation? No one should have to go through this kind of ordeal. And we know we're not the only ones who have had this experience with Citibank and other big banks.

Citibank received a taxpayer bailout, while most families get no help when they need it most. Citibank should institute a policy of student loan forgiveness when a student dies and stop going after family members.

–Keith and Michelle Norris

[Citibank's actions don't seem legal to me. Surely, student loan don't have to be repaid by dead people, do they? – SteveB]

20120911-05 12:04 Art Racism

Had dinner the other night with a couple of acquaintances, business friends of my wife. Both nice people in their own way and both politically right. Naturally we could not stay away from the subject of politics even though we tried. It was interesting how the racism from both slipped through the conversation. She, very nice and a interior decorator contractor my wife works for sometimes, thinks most minorities, read blacks, are just out there having children out of wedlock in great numbers and depending on welfare out of her pocket to raise them. He (boyfriend) works in real estate and thinks they (again read blacks) are just pretty much all just trash.

Of course each could site incidents or situation where they have every right to be indignant, but they simply fail to see that they are putting that label on all people of color and further, not applying the same standards to whites. Hard to get around.

20120911-06 12:15 SteveB "Growth Is the Problem"

"Growth Is the Problem" by Chris Hedges, Truthdig/NationofChange

Sept. 11, 2012, (<http://www.nationofchange.org/growth-problem-1347370654>)

The ceaseless expansion of economic exploitation, the engine of global capitalism, has come to an end. The futile and myopic effort to resurrect this expansion—a fallacy embraced by most economists—means that we respond to illusion rather than reality. We invest our efforts into bringing back what is gone forever. This strange twilight moment, in which our experts and systems managers squander resources in attempting to re-create an expanding economic system that is moribund, will inevitably lead to systems collapse. The steady depletion of natural resources, especially fossil fuels, along with the accelerated pace of climate change, will combine with crippling levels of personal and national debt to thrust us into a global depression that will dwarf any in the history of capitalism. And very few of us are prepared.

"Our solution is our problem," Richard Heinberg, the author of *The End of Growth: Adapting to Our New Economic Reality*, told me when I reached him by phone in California. "Its name is growth. But growth has become uneconomic. We are worse off because of growth. To achieve growth now means mounting debt, more pollution, an accelerated loss of biodiversity and the continued destabilization of the climate. But we are addicted to growth. If there is no growth there are insufficient tax revenues and jobs. If there is no growth existing debt levels become unsustainable. The elites see the current economic crisis as a temporary impediment. They are desperately trying to fix it. But this crisis signals an irreversible change for civilization itself. We cannot prevent it. We can only decide whether we will adapt to it or not."

Heinberg, a senior fellow at the Post Carbon Institute, argues that we cannot grasp the real state of the global economy by the usual metrics—GDP, unemployment, housing, durable goods, national deficits, personal income and consumer spending—although even these measures point to severe and chronic problems. Rather, he says, we have to examine the structural flaws that sit like time bombs embedded within the economic edifice. U.S. household debt enabled the expansion of consumer spending during the boom years, he says, but consumer debt cannot continue to grow as house prices decline to realistic levels. Toxic assets litter the portfolios of the major banks, presaging another global financial meltdown. The Earth's natural resources are being exhausted. And climate change, with its extreme weather conditions, is beginning to exact a heavy economic toll on countries, including the United States, through the destruction brought about by droughts, floods, wildfires and loss of crop yields.

Heinberg also highlights what he calls "the highly dysfunctional U.S. political system," which is paralyzed and hostage to corporate power. It is unable to respond rationally to the crisis or solve "even the most trivial of problems."

"The government at this point exacerbates nearly every crisis the nation faces," he said. "Policy decisions do not emerge from deliberations between the public and elected leaders. They arise from unaccountable government agencies and private interest groups. The Republican Party has taken leave of reality. It exists in a hermetically sealed ideasphere where climate change is a hoax and economic problems can be solved by cutting spending and taxes. The Democrats, meanwhile, offer no realistic strategy for coping with the economic unraveling or climate change."

The collision course is set. It is now only a matter of time and our personal response.

"It could implode in a few weeks, in a few months or maybe in a few years," Heinberg said, "but unless radical steps are taken to restructure the economy, it will implode. And when it does the financial system will seize up far more dramatically than in 2008. You will go to the bank or the ATM and there will be no money. Food will be scarce and expensive. Unemployment will be rampant. And government services will break down. Living standards will plummet. 'Austerity' programs will become more draconian. Economic inequality will widen to create massive gaps between a tiny, oligarchic global elite and the masses. The collapse will also inevitably trigger the kind of instability and unrest, including riots, that we have seen in countries such as Greece. The elites, who understand and deeply fear the possibility of an unraveling, have been pillaging state resources to save their corrupt, insolvent banks, militarize their police forces and rewrite legal codes to criminalize dissent."

If nations were able to respond rationally to the crisis they could forestall social collapse by reconfiguring their economies away from ceaseless growth and exploitation. It remains possible, at least in the industrialized world, to provide to most citizens the basics—food, water, housing, medical care, employment, education and public safety. This, however, as Heinberg points out, would require a radical reversal of the structures of power. It would necessitate a massive cancellation of debt, along with the slashing of bloated militaries, heavy regulation and restraints placed on the financial sector and high taxes imposed on oligarchic elites and corporations in order to reduce unsustainable levels of inequality. While this economic reconfiguration would not mitigate the effects of climate change and the depletion of natural resources it would create the social stability needed to cope with a new post-growth regime. But Heinberg says he doubts a rational policy is forthcoming. He fears that as deterioration accelerates there will be a greater resolve on the part of the power elite to “cannibalize the resources of society in order to prop up megabanks and military establishments.”

Survival will be determined by localities. Communities will have to create collectives to grow their own food and provide for their security, education, financial systems and self-governance, efforts that Heinberg suspects will “be discouraged and perhaps criminalized by those in authority.” This process of decentralization will, he said, become “the signal economic and social trend of the 21st century.” It will be, in effect, a repudiation of classic economic models such as free enterprise versus the planned economy or Keynesian stimulus versus austerity. The reconfiguration will arise not through ideologies, but through the necessities of survival forced on the poor and former members of the working and middle class who have joined the poor. This will inevitably create conflicts as decentralization weakens the power of the elites and the corporate state.

Joseph Tainter, an archeologist, in his book *The Collapse of Complex Societies* provides a useful blueprint for how such societies unravel. All of history’s major 24 civilizations have collapsed and the patterns are strikingly similar, he writes. The difference this time around is that we will unravel as a planet. Tainter notes that as societies become more complex they inevitably invest greater and greater amounts of diminishing resources in expanding systems of complexity. This proves to be fatal.

“More complex societies are costlier to maintain than simpler ones and require higher support levels per capita,” Tainter writes. The investments required to maintain an overly complex system become too costly, and these investments yield declining returns. The elites, in a desperate effort to maintain their own levels of consumption and preserve the system that empowers them, through repression and austerity measures squeeze the masses harder and harder until the edifice collapses. This collapse leaves behind decentralized, autonomous pockets of human communities.

Heinberg says this is our fate. The quality of our lives will depend on the quality of our communities. If communal structures are strong we will be able to endure. If they are weak we will succumb to the bleakness. It is important that these structures be set in place before the onset of the crisis, he says. This means starting to “know your neighbors.” It means setting up food banks and farmers’ markets. It means establishing a local currency, carpooling, creating clothing exchanges, establishing cooperative housing, growing gardens, raising chickens and buying local. It is the matrix of neighbors, family and friends, Heinberg says, that will provide “our refuge and our opportunity to build anew.”

“The inevitable decline in resources to support societal complexity will generate a centrifugal force,” Heinberg said. “It will break up existing economic and governmental power structures. It will unleash a battle for diminishing resources. This battle will see conflicts erupt between nations and within nations. Localism will soon be our fate. It will also be our strategy for survival. Learning practical skills, becoming more self-sufficient, forming bonds of trust with our neighbors will determine the quality of our lives and the lives of our children.”

See long excerpts from:

Richard Heinberg’s *The End of Growth*

(http://books.google.com/books?id=bb7tGxmu1ooC&printsec=frontcover&dq=the+end+of+growth&source=bl&ots=IkEhBpa3i&sig=AqPKyEhXdr4GpL1U6C1_jX51nv8&hl=en&sa=X&ei=WOFKULW8Bq3riQKbtICIAw&ved=0CDUQ6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q=the%20end%20of%20growth&f=false).

Joseph Tainter's *The Collapse of Complex Societies* (<http://books.google.com/books?id=M4H-02d9oE0C&printsec=frontcover&dq=the+collapse+of+complex+societies&source=bl&ots=yNrw5KQ9pg&sig=cz-wZsompZa3aL1Gj4QfvIAycT8&hl=en&sa=X&ei=8OFKUImvPO6VjAKPwIDwCw&ved=0CDIQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=the%20collapse%20of%20complex%20societies&f=false>).

20120911-07 12:29 SteveM Fw: "'Creepy'? Joe Biden Cuddles Up to Female Biker"

[Source of original email unknown. -SteveB]

'Creepy'? Joe Biden Cuddles Up to Female Biker...These Photos Are Priceless

Posted by Michael CHILDS, Admin II on September 10, 2012 at 3:11pm in Patriot Action Alerts

Our beloved Vice President Joe Biden has been known for his unusual and at most times brainless brand of politics. But does he get as intimate with voters as he did during a campaign stop at Cruisers Diner in Seaman, Ohio yesterday.

Biden snuggled up with a group of bikers known as the "Shadowmen." After asking if he could borrow one of the biker's rides (the answer was no), Biden then sat a female biker on his lap, saying at one point "I know who runs the show." According to the White House pool report.

AP photographer Carolyn Kaster captured the moment on camera. Her pictures, posted below, are priceless.





They confirm the notion that Joe Biden is a complete national embarrassment and a bumbling idiot to boot. The pics make him look like a lecherous old man. How ignorant can one man be? Apart from all the "sexually creepy" things, anyone knows that you DO NOT ask a biker if you can ride his bike. Especially after you have had your hands all over one of their own!

A White House pool report says the bikers may be part of a group called the "Shaddowmen," but does not reveal what prompted the unusual campaign stop, the Hill relates.

The report does indicate, however, that Biden asked one of the men if he could borrow a motorcycle.

"Can I borrow one of your bikes? They don't let me ride anymore," Biden reportedly asked.

"Probably not," Jeff Cook responded.

"Probably not," Biden apparently repeated.

But the vice president didn't limit his close encounters to the Ohio diner, it seems:

Disgusting... If my wife saw that she would be outraged. This guy has no morals and has a potty mouth. He is cheap to boot. He is a clown. You would have to be a moron to vote for this regime.

Social media sites have been unable to resist weighing in on the unprofessional behavior, and Twitchy captured a number of relevant tweets.

"Joe Biden is a creepy man," @seanhackbarth commented, while another said Joe Biden must be "getting around" if a picture of him kissing a different supporter at an Ohio rally the night before is any indication.

David Limbaugh concluded on Twitter: "This guy really has no judgement."

The guy on the right looks like he's ready to belt Biden ..But can't because of the ten Secret service guys behind the camera ...His eyes say ..Man I would love to tear this guy up ...But the really, really funny part ...I swear, look at the guy on the right side ..His nick name badge ..Troll ..These things just don't happen ...When I look into the heavens

I know he is with us...

To see a VP act like he's just one of the boys is idiotic and demeaning to us who aspire to be better just in our everyday lives as that of leaders, supervisors, managers etc. We would not act this way at a holiday party with those assembled less we lose all credibility. But old Joe thinks these rules do not apply to him. He's mistaken! You reap what you sow.... but not after another four year run of office.

What a disgrace to the office that he "pretends" to hold! He may have the title & draw the paycheck, but he is anything but a VP!

Obama is out there making jokes ...sure they aren't funny to the 23 million people out of work...but he just is a-grinnin' and a-smilin' like the goon he is; and then we have the old man who is just so full of himself (same word) OH COME ON NOVEMBER!!! We can laugh when we get the constitution back, the sharia law out, the cronies away from the white house and the communist back in their deep, dark hole.

<http://www.theblaze.com/stories/creepy-female-biker-sits-on-joe-bidens-lap-during-ohio-campaign-stop/>

<http://www.businessinsider.com/joe-biden-lady-biker-photos-2012-9>

20120911-08	15:12	SteveB	Re: "'Creepy'? Joe Biden Cuddles Up to Female Biker" (reply to SteveM, above)
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BS!

And you're the guy who loved McCain for almost getting his wife, Cindy (was that her name?), gang raped by bikers after unwittingly almost entering her in some wet T-shirt contest or something at the Sturgis biker rally. Remember?

Actually, no big deal then or now.

The only national embarrassment is the writer of this idiot email. I like Joe Biden and so do most people.

I much prefer him in the White House over that idiot, R0mney! Not mentioning Afghanistan or the troops in his acceptance speech! Shameful! Especially that close to 9/11. You know as well as I do that, exactly and eerily just like McCain-Palin, these two (R0mney-Ryan) are incredibly stupid.

20120911-15	21:12	SteveM	Re: "'Creepy'? Joe Biden Cuddles Up to Female Biker" (reply to SteveB, above)
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I'm glad to see your tolerance for others points of view. Most intolerant liberals would resort to vitriol and demeaning any and all whether they had any thing to do the mail or not. Keep up the good work, you're a constant inspiration to all.

20120911-16	22:12	SteveB	Re: "'Creepy'? Joe Biden Cuddles Up to Female Biker" (reply to SteveM, above)
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It has nothing to do with point of view. My goal is to keep idiots out of government!

I did it 4 years ago and I'll do it again this year. (Haha...at least if my one vote is, hopefully, counted in Florida!)

"911 — They Won" by Rob Kall, OpEdNews

Sept. 11, 2012, (<http://www.opednews.com/articles/911--The-Terrorists-Won-by-Rob-Kall-120911-80.html>)

Ben Franklin said, "Those who would give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety." How sadly prophetic those words were for our times.

Politicians and military and Security organization directors like Leon Panetta are telling us that things are better now. As the baby in the stock trading firm ad says, "What a plant load."

Eleven years after the attack, the US has clearly become far worse because of the attack-- far worse than was necessary, far worse than it could have been.

It has become a police state. Fear has taken hold of American voters, politicians, political parties, police and intelligence agencies. Billions of dollars have been wastefully, misguidedly thrown at the homeland security budget. Local cops now look like robocops or fully armed and armored soldiers. Mainstream media have generated many TV series that constantly fuel the fear.

The police state, the surveillance state, the anti-terrorist state that the US has become is far more dangerous to democracy, to justice and freedom than terrorists ever were. Fusions centers that combine federal, state and local police resources, that are exempt from laws requiring court orders for surveillance or invasion of property, are multiplying, a pox across the nation. We no longer have habeus corpus, or posse comitatus. Already, drones are flying overhead and they will soon be like locusts, a blight upon the skies of America, as they already are in Pakistan and elsewhere.

Two overt wars have cost the US over 6,000 acknowledged lives, but many more troops have died from injuries, from suicide. Those wars have or will cost well over a trillion dollars, probably trillions. And what did they accomplish? They created recruiting grounds for terrorists. They disrupted the balance of power that kept Iran at bay. They allowed corporatist members of congress, ie., most of them, to funnel hundreds of billions of dollars to corporations like Blackwater, Halliburton, and the big military industrial complex corporations. Those billions could have provided far more jobs in the US if they'd paid for repairing and upgrading infrastructure and more, better education.

I offer my sympathy to the families of the people killed by the 911 attackers. But I also offer my sympathy to the millions of family members hurt by the damage that cowardly and/or exploiting leaders in government, police and the military have inflicted through their wars, attacks on freedoms, wasting of funds.

Instead of memorializing the people killed at the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and the jet that crashed at Shanksville, we should honor them by challenging the misguided or corrupt or cowardly actions and decisions that were taken using those deaths as an excuse. We should memorialize them by getting answers to questions that the original 911 Investigation commission failed to address or answer. And no, I am no 911 truther. But there are serious questions that were ignored.

Any fact checks on this?

"FDR's Policies Prolonged Depression by 7 years, UCLA Economists Calculate" by Meg Sullivan, UCLA

Aug. 10, 2004, (<http://newsroom.ucla.edu/portal/ucla/FDR-s-Policies-Prolonged-Depression-5409.aspx>)

Two UCLA economists say they have figured out why the Great Depression dragged on for almost 15 years, and they blame a suspect previously thought to be beyond reproach: President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

After scrutinizing Roosevelt's record for four years, Harold L. Cole and Lee E. Ohanian conclude in a new study that New Deal policies signed into law 71 years ago thwarted economic recovery for seven long years.

"Why the Great Depression lasted so long has always been a great mystery, and because we never really knew the reason, we have always worried whether we would have another 10- to 15-year economic slump," said Ohanian, vice chair of UCLA's Department of Economics. "We found that a relapse isn't likely unless lawmakers gum up a recovery with ill-conceived stimulus policies."

In an article in the August issue of the *Journal of Political Economy*, Ohanian and Cole blame specific anti-competition and pro-labor measures that Roosevelt promoted and signed into law June 16, 1933.

"President Roosevelt believed that excessive competition was responsible for the Depression by reducing prices and wages, and by extension reducing employment and demand for goods and services," said Cole, also a UCLA professor of economics. "So he came up with a recovery package that would be unimaginable today, allowing businesses in every industry to collude without the threat of antitrust prosecution and workers to demand salaries about 25 percent above where they ought to have been, given market forces. The economy was poised for a beautiful recovery, but that recovery was stalled by these misguided policies."

Using data collected in 1929 by the Conference Board and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Cole and Ohanian were able to establish average wages and prices across a range of industries just prior to the Depression. By adjusting for annual increases in productivity, they were able to use the 1929 benchmark to figure out what prices and wages would have been during every year of the Depression had Roosevelt's policies not gone into effect. They then compared those figures with actual prices and wages as reflected in the Conference Board data.

In the three years following the implementation of Roosevelt's policies, wages in 11 key industries averaged 25 percent higher than they otherwise would have done, the economists calculate. But unemployment was also 25 percent higher than it should have been, given gains in productivity.

Meanwhile, prices across 19 industries averaged 23 percent above where they should have been, given the state of the economy. With goods and services that much harder for consumers to afford, demand stalled and the gross national product floundered at 27 percent below where it otherwise might have been.

"High wages and high prices in an economic slump run contrary to everything we know about market forces in economic downturns," Ohanian said. "As we've seen in the past several years, salaries and prices fall when unemployment is high. By artificially inflating both, the New Deal policies short-circuited the market's self-correcting forces."

The policies were contained in the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA), which exempted industries from antitrust prosecution if they agreed to enter into collective bargaining agreements that significantly raised wages. Because protection from antitrust prosecution all but ensured higher prices for goods and services, a wide range of industries took the bait, Cole and Ohanian found. By 1934 more than 500 industries, which accounted for nearly 80 percent of private, non-agricultural employment, had entered into the collective bargaining agreements called for under NIRA.

Cole and Ohanian calculate that NIRA and its aftermath account for 60 percent of the weak recovery. Without the policies, they contend that the Depression would have ended in 1936 instead of the year when they believe the slump actually ended: 1943.

Roosevelt's role in lifting the nation out of the Great Depression has been so revered that *Time* magazine readers cited it in 1999 when naming him the 20th century's second-most influential figure.

"This is exciting and valuable research," said Robert E. Lucas Jr., the 1995 Nobel Laureate in economics, and the John Dewey Distinguished Service Professor of Economics at the University of Chicago. "The prevention and cure of

depressions is a central mission of macroeconomics, and if we can't understand what happened in the 1930s, how can we be sure it won't happen again?"

NIRA's role in prolonging the Depression has not been more closely scrutinized because the Supreme Court declared the act unconstitutional within two years of its passage.

"Historians have assumed that the policies didn't have an impact because they were too short-lived, but the proof is in the pudding," Ohanian said. "We show that they really did artificially inflate wages and prices."

Even after being deemed unconstitutional, Roosevelt's anti-competition policies persisted — albeit under a different guise, the scholars found. Ohanian and Cole painstakingly documented the extent to which the Roosevelt administration looked the other way as industries once protected by NIRA continued to engage in price-fixing practices for four more years.

The number of antitrust cases brought by the Department of Justice fell from an average of 12.5 cases per year during the 1920s to an average of 6.5 cases per year from 1935 to 1938, the scholars found. Collusion had become so widespread that one Department of Interior official complained of receiving identical bids from a protected industry (steel) on 257 different occasions between mid-1935 and mid-1936. The bids were not only identical but also 50 percent higher than foreign steel prices. Without competition, wholesale prices remained inflated, averaging 14 percent higher than they would have been without the troublesome practices, the UCLA economists calculate.

NIRA's labor provisions, meanwhile, were strengthened in the National Relations Act, signed into law in 1935. As union membership doubled, so did labor's bargaining power, rising from 14 million strike days in 1936 to about 28 million in 1937. By 1939 wages in protected industries remained 24 percent to 33 percent above where they should have been, based on 1929 figures, Cole and Ohanian calculate. Unemployment persisted. By 1939 the U.S. unemployment rate was 17.2 percent, down somewhat from its 1933 peak of 24.9 percent but still remarkably high. By comparison, in May 2003, the unemployment rate of 6.1 percent was the highest in nine years.

Recovery came only after the Department of Justice dramatically stepped up enforcement of antitrust cases nearly four-fold and organized labor suffered a string of setbacks, the economists found.

"The fact that the Depression dragged on for years convinced generations of economists and policy-makers that capitalism could not be trusted to recover from depressions and that significant government intervention was required to achieve good outcomes," Cole said. "Ironically, our work shows that the recovery would have been very rapid had the government not intervened."

20120911-11	19:07	Art	Re: "FDR's Policies Prolonged Depression by 7 Years, UCLA Economists Calculate" (reply to SteveG, above)
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This looks like one man's opinion. Much similar to "Why the South lost the Civil War". Probably an interesting read and probably has lots of reasonable logic chains, but you will also find 20 others with different views and equally logical.

There does seem to be some general agreement that WW II somehow got us moving out of the depression although I find that a little difficult to swallow sometimes. Economically what happened? Well, the USG began spending massive amounts of money on Defense and the war. That argues that heavy government spending is how to get out of a depression. Oops, that won't sell well across the aisle, will it?

20120911-13	19:18	SteveG	Re: "FDR's Policies Prolonged Depression by 7 Years, UCLA Economists Calculate" (reply to Art, above)
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To me the best quarterback in the NFL is the one that shows up on Monday morning for Sports Center. Academicians augment their earning power and/or develop their curriculum vita through research and publishing, a demanded part of major universities. Given these points and Art's comments, how do we interpret such writings.



Is R0mney a traitor or just an idiot? The Republican lies are as numerous as grains of sand on the beach. One can never tell whether they actually believe themselves or not.

"Mitt Romney Criticizes Obama Administration over Response to Libya, Egypt Attacks" by Joshua Hersh, Huffington Post

Sept. 11, 2012, (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/09/11/mitt-romney-consulate-attack_n_1875906.html)

The campaign of Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney called the Obama administration's handling of a violent and contentious day at two American facilities in the Middle East "disgraceful" in a statement released late Tuesday night.

The campaign had initially planned to hold the statement until after midnight -- and the end of the eleventh anniversary of September 11th -- but lifted the embargo an hour and a half early as the controversy flared over a series of attacks against the U.S. Embassy in Cairo and the American Consulate in Benghazi, Libya.

"I'm outraged by the attacks on American diplomatic missions in Libya and Egypt and by the death of an American consulate worker in Benghazi," Romney said in the statement. "It's disgraceful that the Obama Administration's first response was not to condemn attacks on our diplomatic missions, but to sympathize with those who waged the attacks."

The two diplomatic outposts had been the site of violent protests on Tuesday evening, as fundamentalist mobs swarmed in rage over rumors about an unreleased American film -- promoted in part by the Koran-burning preacher Terry Jones -- that supposedly projected the Prophet Muhammad in a harshly critical light.

Protesters breached the wall of the embassy in Cairo and burned an American flag on its grounds before replacing it with an Islamic banner. In Benghazi, a mob driven by the Islamist militant group Ansar al Sharia rampaged through the American consulate, firing at least one rocket-propelled grenade, according to the Wall Street Journal. At least one American staffer was killed in the violence.

The violence took a domestic political turn, in part thanks to a statement released early Tuesday by the staff of the Cairo embassy, which condemned the film and the "continuing efforts by misguided individuals to hurt the religious feelings of Muslims -- as we condemn efforts to offend believers of all religions."

The Romney campaign's statement seemed to be an attempt to capitalize on the appearance that the Obama administration -- which has overseen the Arab Spring, and the rise of Islamist governments in both Egypt and Libya -- was capitulating to the sensitivities of an unruly Muslim crowd, rather than backing the right of an American citizen to release a disrespectful film.

But the statement criticized by the Romney campaign came early in the day, before the attacks on the two embassies, and was put out not by the White House, but by the Cairo embassy itself.

[See how the Republican lies work? --SteveB]

The White House later disavowed the statement as not approved by Washington, according to a senior administration official speaking to Politico.

Obama campaign spokesman Ben LaBolt also commented on the statement from the Romney campaign. "We are shocked that, at a time when the United States of America is confronting the tragic death of one of our diplomatic officers in Libya, Governor Romney would choose to launch a political attack," LaBolt said in a statement.

In a statement released late Tuesday, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton condemned the attack on the mission in Benghazi "in the strongest" terms, and added that while the U.S. "deplores" the denigration of religion depicted in the film, it would not countenance such violent responses.

"Some have sought to justify this vicious behavior as a response to inflammatory material posted on the Internet," Clinton said. "The United States deplores any intentional effort to denigrate the religious beliefs of others. Our commitment to religious tolerance goes back to the very beginning of our nation. But let me be clear: There is never any justification for violent acts of this kind."

The Libyan government also released a statement condemning the attack on the American Consulate, calling it a "cowardly act." And the Muslim Brotherhood, the ruling Islamist party in Egypt, said on its Twitter page that that it "regret the attacks on [the U.S. Embassy] by angry protesters, and we urge citizens to express their opinion peacefully."

20120911-19

23:58 SteveG

Photo: Teabagger



20120911-20

23:59 SteveB

Photo: Angkor Wat Temple Tree, Cambodia

<http://captainkimo.com/angkor-wat-temple/>



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

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