



# FRIENDS OF THE MIDDLE NEWSLETTER #241 — OCT. 5, 2012

*Welcome to always lively political discussion and whatever else comes up.*  
<http://www.FriendsOfTheMiddle.org> [FriendsOfTheMiddle@hotmail.com](mailto:FriendsOfTheMiddle@hotmail.com)

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## **Wake Up, Big Guy!**

(posted by Steven W. Baker / SteveB, Oct. 5, 2012)

I guess there's always next time... My question would have to be, did the President "throw" the debate? Why did he not even defend his positions, let alone not attack even obvious weaknesses? Very, very weird....

"Barack's Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day" by Howard Fineman, Huffington Post

Oct. 4, 2012, ([http://www.huffingtonpost.com/howard-fineman/obama-debate-performance\\_b\\_1940604.html?utm\\_hp\\_ref=politics](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/howard-fineman/obama-debate-performance_b_1940604.html?utm_hp_ref=politics))



(DENVER) Yes, we can. But can he?

Something is not quite right with President Barack Obama. That was clear long before his passive, distracted performance here Wednesday night against Mitt Romney. The president needs to get back some form of his old magic if he hopes to secure a victory that, until the Denver debate, seemed all but inevitable, even to many of his foes.

The evidence of the president's distance and distaste for the campaign is everywhere. He is invisible around Washington, a place he clearly doesn't like and where he has made few new political friends. He mailed in his acceptance speech in Charlotte, N.C., looking at the end like a man who couldn't wait to get off the stage. He has dutifully hit the campaign trail, but not with the zest or the frenzied response of 2008. And he clearly didn't master his brief for the debate when he went to ground in Las Vegas, though he did take time for a day trip to Hoover Dam.

What gives?

Well, no president, cocooned for four years in the adulation of staff and riding around in Air Force One dealing with global issues, like to descend back into the muck of the campaign world.

But most manage to pretend to relish it. Not this president, certainly not last night. He seemed to be close to pouting at times.

This not-quite-there Obama has its roots in the kind of campaign he decided to run: lacking in big new ideas for a second term, essentially defensive, based on the destruction of Romney as an alternative. It doesn't fit the positive, good-guy image that the president had built for himself in his relatively short political career -- and indeed, that he had built in his entire adult life as a star student, community organizer, civil rights lawyer and law professor.

He'd rather be the master of uplift than the king of the put-down.

And any president would rather tell a simple, positive story than a complex, gray one. Obama is stuck with the need to do the latter.

He has been extraordinarily lucky in politics until now. Two opponents' sex scandals, one each for the primary and general elections, cleared his path to the Senate. With luck and timing, he rode to the White House on a wave of disgust with George W. Bush.

But as president, he has faced the worst and most intractable recession since the 1930s, a Republican Party that refuses to deal in good faith, a world economy in the midst of wrenching change and a decline in institutions that once provided order and respect.

It's a tough row. He has had successes, but he has also made mistakes. For a man who was used to getting an A on every exam and winning every coveted accolade, it's tough to know that barely half of the American people, if that, think you are doing a decent job in your current course work.

Obama is trying to deal with this unsettling personal reality largely alone -- in good part by his own choice. He is surrounded by a small circle of good friends that has, if anything, grown smaller and tighter during his time in Washington.

The inner circle -- Michelle Obama, Valerie Jarrett, David Axelrod, Eric Whitaker, Jim Messina and David Plouffe, to name most of them -- tell him how wonderful, destined and inevitable he is. But the president didn't act Wednesday night like a man who believed it. Perhaps their advice is getting a little old, or repetitive, or unrealistic.

The return of Bill Clinton, including his role as the star of the Democratic convention, is a mixed blessing for a prideful, competitive president. After all, in 2008 Clinton dismissed him as a "fairy tale" candidate who was nothing more than an Ivy-educated Jesse Jackson.

Now he needs Clinton more than ever. It's an awkward, galling man-hug.

Obama loves to be liked and doesn't like direct confrontation with people he knows or thinks he knows don't like him. Those two qualities have hampered his presidency and limited his first-debate presentation. He gave up trying to work with congressional Republicans, yet in Denver he tried lamely to claim credit as a deficit hawk, playing a GOP game he was never going to win.

Seeking to be agreeable or at least not confrontational, he allowed Romney -- who cheerfully tossed off inaccuracies or outright lies all night -- to cozy up to him and steal his lunch money on issues such as Social Security and commitment to bipartisanship.

Romney would be a bipartisan president? Did anyone see how he cravenly quaffed the Tea Party Kool-Aid? Did Obama not notice? If he did, he didn't say so.

Above all, President Obama has always believed he was on the right side of history: the brainy young hipster from Hawaii, body-surfing to power on the Big Wave of social and demographic change. That sense of destiny was what he sold so effectively in 2008. When he said, "We are the change we have been waiting for," he meant that he was the change that we had been waiting for.

But now the destined Obama must become the determined one.

He has the inner resources to do it. He has to remember the lessons he learned as the son of a hard-luck single mother: that life isn't just about catching a wave. It's about learning to swim upstream.



"When Romney says he defends small business, let me tell you, I have a small business. I don't need a tax break -- hell, like most small businesses, we don't make money. We need health insurance. We need government loans. **Mr. President, if you can't explain why you are the Commander-in-Chief in this class war against the billionaire bandits attempting to seize our government, then get off the horse and let someone in the saddle who can ride.**" —Greg Palast, <http://www.nationofchange.org/what-hell-happened-1349363594>.

## FotM NEWSLETTER #241 (Oct. 5, 2012)—HYPERTEXT INDEX

<u>DATE-ID</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>FROM</u>	<u>SUBJECT/TITLE</u>
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<a href="#">20121004-08</a>	23:59	SteveB	Photo: Steamroller

<a href="#">20121004-04</a>	13:44	SteveB	"Mitt Romney: Lying to Victory"
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"Mitt Romney: Lying to Victory" by Barbara Morrill, Daily Kos

Oct. 4, 2012, (<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2012/10/04/1139793/-Mitt-Romney-Lying-to-victory?detail=email>)

The results of Wednesday night's first presidential debate are in and it's official: Mitt Romney won round one. He was aggressive, he was decisive, he delivered. Of course he also lied through his teeth for most of the debate.

### Romney lied:

- When he claimed that "pre-existing conditions are covered under my plan." **They're not.**
- When he said that President Obama had "cut Medicare by \$716 billion to pay for Obamacare." **Obama didn't.**
- When he denied proposing a \$5 trillion tax cut. **He did.**
- When he said President Obama had "added almost as much to the federal debt as all the prior presidents combined." **Not even close.**
- When he resurrected "death panels." That was called "one of the biggest whoppers of the night."
- When he stated that half the green energy companies given stimulus funds had failed. **Only if three out of nearly three dozen is half.**

Stay tuned. These just scratch the surface.

[And the President called him out on NONE of these lies! –SteveB]

<a href="#">20121004-02</a>	11:14	SandyI	Graphics: Bumper Stickers for Progressive Thinkers
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Bumper stickers you'll never see on my car but they may be on the front seat.

 **DEMOCRATS**   
Cleaning Up Republican  
Messes Since 1933

**TEA PARTIES**  
are for little girls  
with imaginary friends

**2012** MY PRESIDENT KILLED  
OSAMA BIN LADEN!  
BARACKOBAMA.COM HOW ABOUT YOURS?

You want to take the country back.  
We want to take it forward!

**Bipartisanship**  
 I'll hug your elephant  
if you'll kiss my ass 

**Voting is like driving a car.**  
Choose **(R)** to move backward.  
Choose **(D)** to move forward.

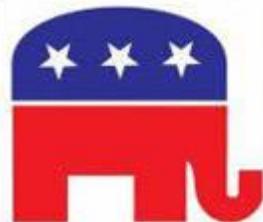
**Proud to Be Everything**  
☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆  
**The Right Wing Hates**

**Tea Party? White Whine  
Party is more like it.**

**HONK IF MY TAXES SUPPORT  
YOUR WHINY TEABAGGING ASS**

**Don't want government?  
Move to Somalia.**

**8 years of insanity  
and NOW you're mad?**

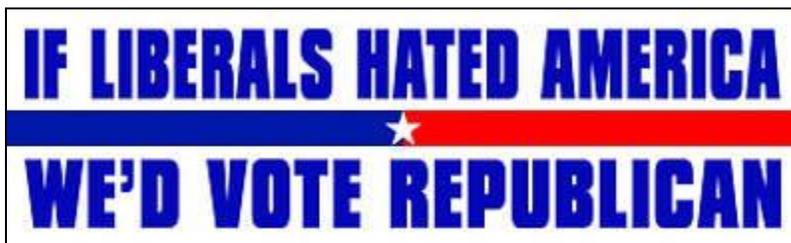


**Republicans 2012**

Keeping Millions Out of Work  
to Put One Man Out of a Job

**When Did Jesus Become  
Pro-Rich, Pro-War and  
Only Pro-American?**

**AM I LIBERAL  
OR JUST WELL-EDUCATED?**



[20121004-03](#) 11:27 Pam Re: Graphics: Bumper Stickers for Progressive Thinkers (reply to SandyI, above)

These are fabulous!

Am I the only interested American who skipped the debates last night? I couldn't bring myself to watch in case what apparently happened happened. I was hoping Romney would show his true colors and come off as an out-of-touch rich boy, but it seems he acquitted himself pretty well. What's with Obama? The stuffing seems to have gone out of him. I thought Bill Clinton was magisterial at the convention, and he obviously has the political genes to keep going like the Energizer bunny. But Obama seems to be forcing himself. I can't say I blame him; he's sitting on a horrible mess and everyone is mad at him. I'd be so depressed in those circumstances I'd never get out of bed. But he's got to get a grip. It's like he's used up all his fuel and is running on fumes. It could be he's depressed. If so, it's a shame he can't get Prozac or something, but that would never do for the leader of the free world. It takes a smart man to see the state of the world as it really is, and he's got the smarts and, I believe, the sensitivity. I read somewhere that intelligence may not be the most important quality for a president. To be blunt, dumber people see things more simply; whereas, the more intelligent consider all the angles, which is usually not so cheery. Clinton has the smarts, but he's fortunate to have a tough hide and enough ambition and confidence to plow through all obstacles. Even his health doesn't seem to have slowed him down all that much. I guess what I'm saying is, I empathize with Obama. That said, he's got to fake it till he makes it.

[20121004-06](#) 17:22 SteveB From the Right: "Bam! Slam! Pow! Crash! BOOM!"

"Bam! Slam! Pow! Crash! BOOM!" by Erick Erickson, Red State

Oct. 4, 2012, (<http://www.redstate.com/2012/10/04/bam-slam-pow-crash-boom/>)

There was a surreal moment after the debate last night. On CNN, the polling went overwhelmingly for Mitt Romney among debate watchers. Basically two-thirds of the American public who watched the debate claimed Romney won.

A majority claimed Romney was with them on taxes, the economy, healthcare, their views of government, etc. He dominated.

A CBS poll of undecided voters who watched the debate mirrored the CNN poll.

Suddenly the Democrats took to the airwaves and twitter to rail against the polls oversampling Republicans and being too heavily skewed, too instant to be meaningful, and clearly not an accurate statistical sample of anything.

About the same time Barack Obama's campaign team was melting down on television, the campaign sent out an email that did not even mention the Presidential debate. It just wanted more money.

The debate was so bad for Barack Obama I expect Eric Holder to send Jim Lehrer to GTMO. Barack Obama suddenly agrees with Republicans on defunding PBS. Without his precious TelePrompTer to feed his Gollumesque addiction to its illuminated, precious words, the President fell flat. Instead of John Kerry for a debate partner, the President should have just gone through airport security a few times or embraced BOHICA as a debate preparation strategy.

Put it to you this way, within ten minutes of the debate ending, Jessica Yellin of CNN spoke with Stephanie Cutter of the Obama campaign. Ms. Cutter conceded up front that Mitt Romney won on both debate preparation and debate style. It went downhill from there. She began parroting talking points about the debate she herself released to Obama surrogate at sun up yesterday morning. She had nothing new to add.

Mitt Romney had substance, counterarguments for Barack Obama's points, rebuttals, and a friendly manner. Barack Obama kept his head down at the podium and refused to make eye contact with Mitt Romney. This too is what Barack Obama did with the economy and Libya.

Barack Obama, at one point, interrupted Jim Lehrer and asked Lehrer to move on to a new topic. It was a brilliant metaphor for what Barack Obama did coming into office. He looked at the economy and decided to move on to Obamacare. His whole career has been one of passing the buck, shifting blame, and failing to take responsibility for tough challenges. He did the same last night.

For four years, Barack Obama has rarely been challenged and he handled it poorly last night. He was ill prepared, flustered easily, and came off as petulant. At some point we should expect the empty chair to ask Barack Obama to take a vacation day and let it debate instead.

I think the explanation for Obama's performance is pretty simple. Gods in the cult of personality do not like to come off Olympus to be challenged by mere mortals.

There is an important point, however, for Republicans. This was one debate. This was not the election. Mitt Romney showed he can do it. But the campaign needs your help now more than ever. Every penny helps. I guarantee you we are about to see the media resurrect the "Obama is the underdog" theme and, in the meantime, look for most media polls to suddenly have a D+20 sample.

Mitt Romney did fantastic last night.

[Could it have been some kind of "rope-a-dope" strategy on the President's part and he's gonna come out swinging and kick a\*s next time, so the press will mega-cover the big comeback/turnaround? Risky, but barely possible. If it's not strategy, why would his own people be so quick to say he did poorly? Most unusual! -SteveB]

20121004-01	08:07	Charis	Slideshow: Santa Cruz, Bolivia
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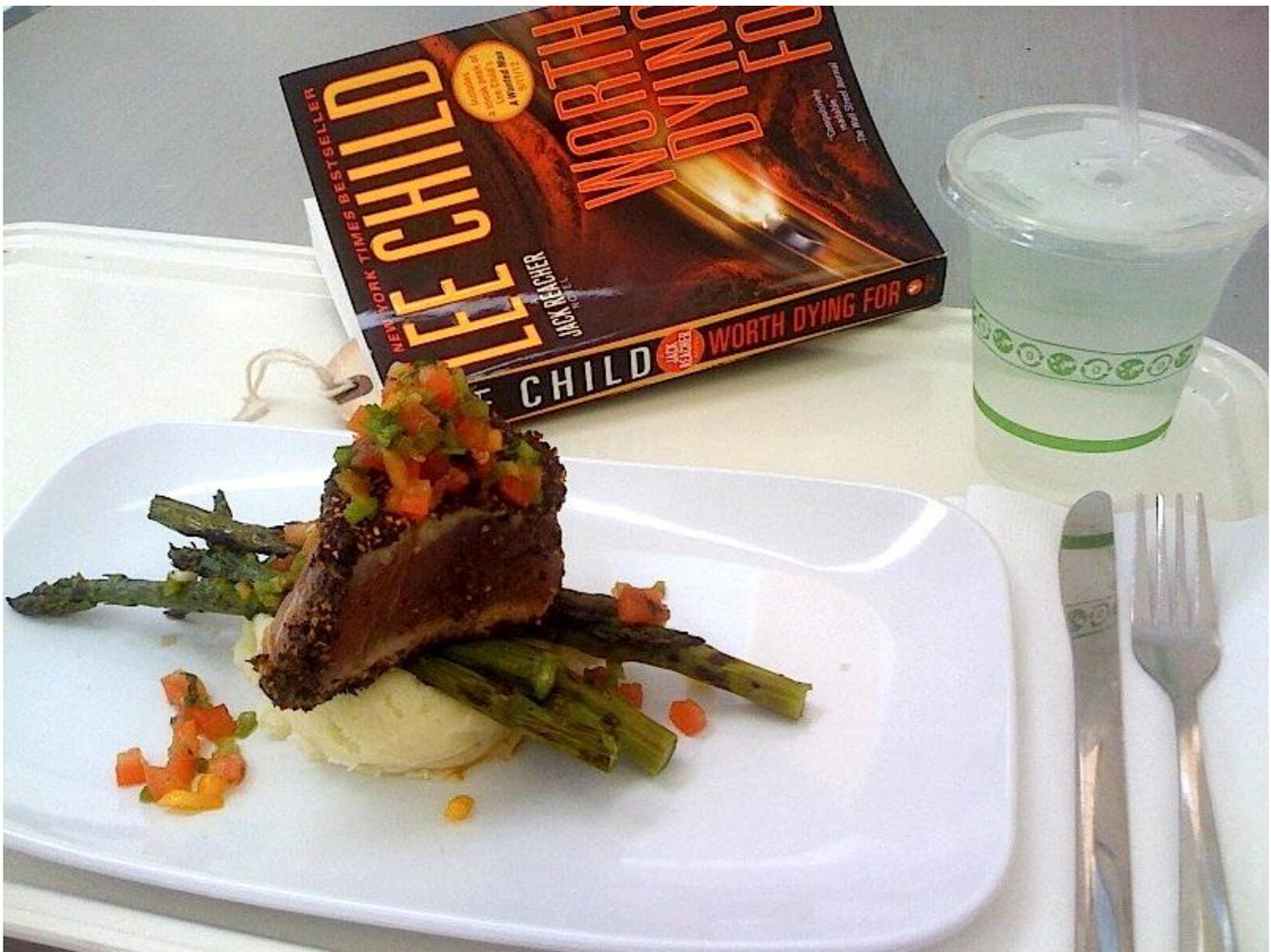
The most viewed Bolivia slideshow on TripAdvisor. :)

<http://tripwow.tripadvisor.com/tripwow/ta-0255-fe10-3980>

Such a classic meal, a favorite of my own among classics: grilled/seared/peppered tuna filet, grilled asparagus, starch item variable.

My tuna filet was over 2 inches thick, a real muscle slab from a large and powerful fish. It had a uniform crust on top and bottom, maybe just over a quarter inch on each side. The inside of the filet was exactly what I'd hoped: "rare is good!" I'd told Chef Kelli (I checked the spelling with her today) as I placed my order. Delicious on the veranda on a breezy mild Texas autumn day, every morsel savored along with a chunk of nicely grilled asparagus or a nibble of quietly fabulous mashers. Wasabi mashers are not really, of course.

That last wasn't a typo, it is a lead-in to a technical note. The potatoes were fresh this morning, of course (they even peel garlic for every meal, here), and the consistency was lump-less perfection, carefully just short of creamy. Definitely potato-forward mashers, exactly as I like. Flavor was zingy fresh-potato, not notably buttery, rich in degree. It's the "wasabi" that's "not". It added a pungent sharpness, and is exactly what you'd think it is, which only to be nitty, is not actually wasabi: it's powdered horseradish.



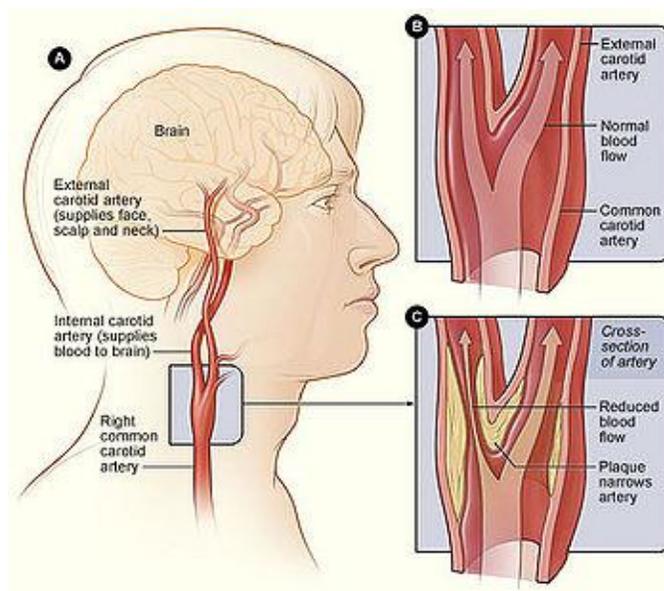
Pepper Crusted Aji Tuna, Grilled Asparagus, Wasabi Mashers

Good to know and remember.

[Source of original email unknown. –SteveB]

This one has been around before, so just to be on the safe side, it never hurts to forward something helpful!!

They Now Have a Fourth Stroke Indicator, the Tongue!



### **STROKE IDENTIFICATION: Remember the 1st Three Letters..... S. T. R.**

During a BBQ, a woman stumbled and took a little fall. She assured everyone that she was fine. They offered to call paramedics. She said she had just tripped over a brick because of her new shoes.

They got her cleaned up and got her a new plate of food. While she appeared a bit shaken up, Jane went about enjoying herself the rest of the evening.

Jane's husband called later telling everyone that his wife had been taken to the hospital - (at 6:00 PM Jane passed away.) She had suffered a stroke at the BBQ. Had they known how to identify the signs of a stroke, perhaps Jane would be with us today. Some don't die. They end up in a helpless, hopeless condition instead.

It only takes a minute to read this.

A neurologist says that if he can get to a stroke victim within 3 hours he can totally reverse the effects of a stroke...totally. He said the trick was getting a stroke recognized, diagnosed, and then getting the patient medically cared for within 3 hours, which is tough.

Thank God for the sense to remember the '3' steps - STR. Read and Learn!

Sometimes symptoms of a stroke are difficult to identify. Unfortunately, the lack of awareness spells disaster. The stroke victim may suffer severe brain damage when people nearby fail to recognize the symptoms of a stroke.

Now doctors say a bystander can recognize a stroke by asking three simple questions:

S — Ask the individual to SMILE.

T — Ask the person to TALK and SPEAK A SIMPLE PHRASE OR SENTENCE (Coherently) (i.e. "Chicken Soup")

R — Ask him or her to RAISE BOTH ARMS.

If he or she has trouble with ANY ONE of these tasks, call emergency number immediately and describe the symptoms to the dispatcher.

### **New Sign of a Stroke: Stick out Your Tongue**

NOTE: Another 'sign' of a stroke is this: Ask the person to 'stick' out his tongue. If the tongue is 'crooked', if it goes to one side or the other that is also an indication of a stroke.

A cardiologist says if everyone who gets this e-mail sends it to 10 people; you can bet that at least one life will be saved.

I have done my part. Will you?



**Stroke**

**WARNING SIGNS**

Stroke is a medical emergency. The American Stroke Association says you should know these warning signs because when it comes to a stroke, every second counts.

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body.
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden, severe headache with no known cause

The poster features a red ECG line graphic on the right side.

[http://www.hotfog.co.uk/rollers/rollers/pages/wallis\\_advance\\_1939/index.htm](http://www.hotfog.co.uk/rollers/rollers/pages/wallis_advance_1939/index.htm)



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

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