



FRIENDS OF THE MIDDLE **NEWSLETTER #265 — NOV. 8, 2012**

Welcome to always lively political discussion and whatever else comes up.
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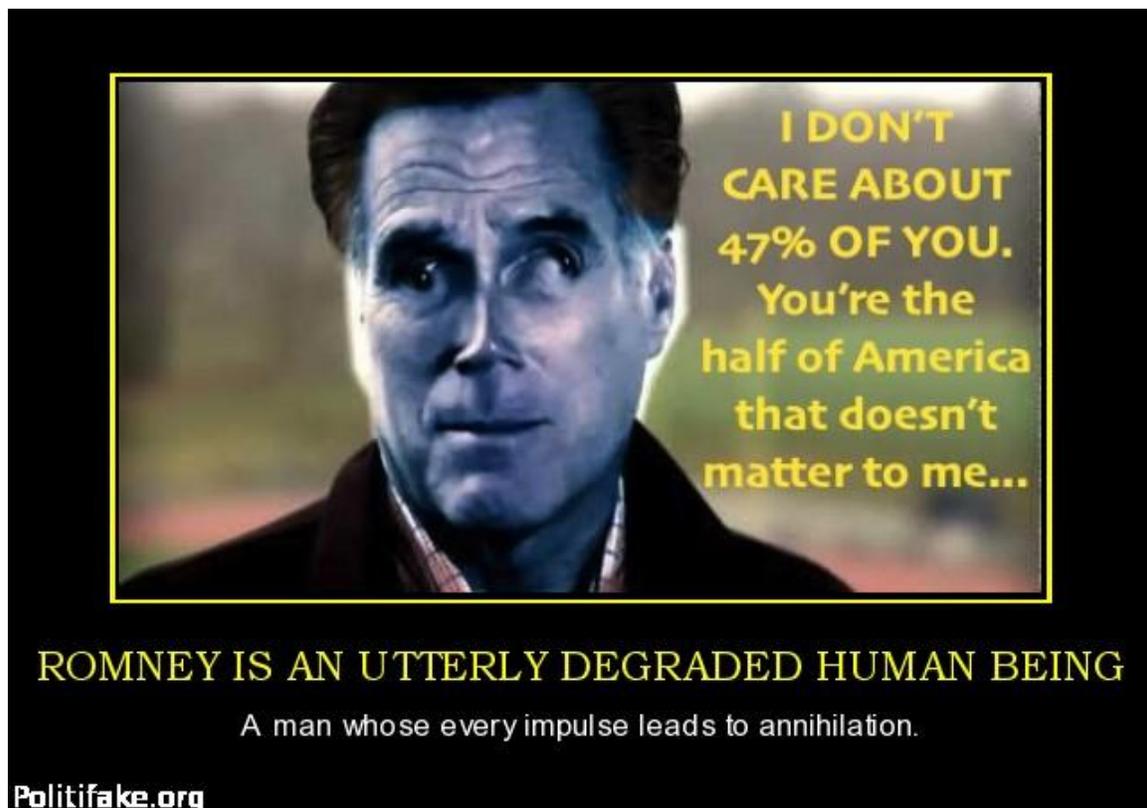
The Zombie Sagas, Part 1: Love Among the 47%

(posted by Steven W. Baker / SteveB, Nov. 8, 2012)

But, of course, there's no "mandate"... I hear so much talk of demographics and right-wing extremism and gaffes, but I wonder if the lies and the essences of the lies came home to roost? An amazing number of Americans didn't seem to mind, but maybe enough did. So happy to see this snake-oil salesman leave the national stage!

"Why Mitt Romney Lost" by Jacob Weisberg, Slate

Nov. 7, 2012, (<http://news.msn.com/politics/why-mitt-romney-lost>)



(Mitt Romney lost the election because he couldn't separate himself from the Republican Party's growing extremism.)

What ought to pain Republicans most about Barack Obama's victory is that 2012 was entirely winnable for them. In European elections over the past few years, voters have thrown out leaders who were in charge during the worst of the financial crisis, whether those leaders deserved the blame or not. Economic indicators in the United States, where an unemployment rate of 8 percent is highly correlated with defeat for the incumbent party, pointed in the same direction. Obama himself had proven a disappointment to many of his former supporters, going from a beloved symbol of generational and social change in 2008 to a detached and remote figure, with limited ability to touch an emotional chord in the electorate.

That Mitt Romney lost nonetheless is in part a tribute to his own weaknesses as a candidate. The Obama campaign put Romney on the defensive early about his work at Bain Capital, and left him there. The Republican nominee made any number of horrendous gaffes. He ran a disastrous GOP convention. He never found a way to talk about himself or his agenda in a way that middle class voters could relate to.

But even a clumsy candidate might have beaten Obama if not for a simple factor that could not be overcome: the GOP's growing extremism. The Republican strategy of making the election a referendum on the president's handling of the economy was perfectly sound. The problem was that the Republican Party couldn't pass the credibility test itself. For many voters disenchanted with Obama, it still was not safe to vote for his opponent.

This failure began with the spectacle of the extended primary season, which was dominated by candidates with views far outside the political mainstream. Rick Santorum rejected the separation of church and state. Newt Gingrich challenged the notion of judicial supremacy. Michele Bachmann claimed the government had been infiltrated by radical Muslims. Donald Trump refused to recognize the validity of Obama's birth certificate. Rick Perry wanted to take down more parts of the federal government than he could successfully name. In the debates, the country saw the GOP talking to itself and sounding like a bizarre fringe party, not a responsible governing one.

Romney is not a right-wing extremist. To win the nomination, though, he had to feign being one, recasting himself as "severely conservative" and eschewing the reasonableness that made him a successful, moderate governor of the country's most liberal state. He had to pass muster with his party's right-wing base on taxes, immigration, climate change, abortion, and gay rights. Many of his statements on these issues were patently insincere, but that was hardly reassuring. Romney's very insincerity and flexibility made it improbable that he would stand up to the GOP's hyper-partisan congressional wing once elected any more than he had during the primaries.

Romney's pandering to the base made it possible for the Obama campaign to portray him as a right-wing radical from the start of the campaign. Fear that he didn't have the base locked down kept Romney from moving smoothly to the center once he had secured the nomination. It further encouraged his choice of Paul Ryan, a popular figure with the Tea Party. And when Romney tried, much too late, to move closer to the center, Republican Senate candidates, like Todd Akin in Missouri and Richard Mourdock in Indiana, kept popping up with disgusting reminders of the GOP's retrograde views on gender issues. For women, Latinos, and young voters tempted to abandon Obama, the old Romney might have been a plausible alternative. The new Romney, fettered by a feverish GOP, was too risky a choice. According to exit poll results, Romney won men as expected, but lost among women by 11 points—too large a gender gap to be overcome.

Demographic change and better economic circumstances stand to make the Republican road back to the White House an even steeper climb in future years. Simply put, the party has to present a more conciliatory and reasonable face to sell itself to swing voters. To do that, it must elevate its own moderate voices, cut loose its theocrats, and liberate itself from the domination of Tea Party know-nothings.

So let the season of Republican recriminations begin. The GOP now faces the challenge of self-examination and internal reform that Democrats began to undertake after losing twice to Ronald Reagan. It desperately needs the kind of centrist reform movement that was led on the other side by the Democratic Leadership Council, which paved the way for the election of a centrist Democrat named Bill Clinton. Without that sort of renewal movement, the 2012 election may come to be seen less as a fluke than a harbinger.

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<u>20121107-01</u>	08:38	SandyI	Sent Only to Those Who Are Happy This Morning
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This is a picture that Greg took in Vermont with the Obama campaign. He didn't post it & didn't boast it. And his sons have a picture signed by the President:



I am so happy that President Obama gets 4 more years and so proud of the integrity and talent of my son. Sorry the picture is so small. Greg's electronic and photographic talent appears not to have been inherited from the female side.

"The best memory is that which forgets nothing but injuries.
Write kindness in marble and write injuries in the dust." —Persian proverb

20121107-02 08:53 MarthaH History Unfolds...

My interim pastor who is standing in for our deployed pastor, in his prayer Sunday, said God knows who the next president is. We just had to wait for the answer. And now we know. Money and all the hatred of the campaign didn't win. The majority crowd celebrating is our country as it should be--colors, creeds, gender, and preferences of all kinds. And those who sent the hateful, nasty emails can SHOVE THEM. In all the votes of my life, I have never felt prouder of US, a majority of Americans who were not bought, despite the dark side of desperate folks. What he stands for is a mirror of us, and I couldn't be prouder... 47%, Jeeps, and all the rest...even Christie's praise...pieces of the puzzle coming together. The only way it could have been better would be a blue Indiana--but we got no Mourdock, :-))))). Hoosiers split their ballots, and it seems they listened to his stupidity and rejected it!!!! Pence can stifle us...Obama lost by 11% in Indiana which seems shockingly close to me, :-). We might have a less reactionary state superintendent if that holds... and through the US Supreme Court will come a less radical majority in the net four years. Ultimately, I see that as the BIG win. Now I will plan my inaugural luncheon to reflect Kenya, Hawaii, and Chicago again. Maybe I will add Michele's winning cookies...:-). Issues await progress. The abyss will require compromise, and we have our parts to do. Bookmark contacts for your members who can calculate solutions.

To quote the refrain of one of a favorite hymn:

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the earth hear His voice;
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the people rejoice;
Oh, come to the Father, through Jesus the Son,
And give Him the glory; great things He hath done.

20121107-12 18:38 SteveB Re: History Unfolds... (reply to MarthaH, above)

So happy Mourdock went down to defeat and the way it happened may end up helping all women.

Sorry to say it, but Indiana is solidly red, it would seem...

20121107-16 21:02 MarthaH Re: History Unfolds... (reply to SteveB, above)

IT was sooo much more fun when we were purple and went BLUE...

20121107-03 10:30 MarthaH An Open Letter to Sen. Mitch McConnell

STEP UP and do your party, daily as needed! Comments are tabulated, if not read, and the future depends on it. Don't make me show up to check your work!

Mr. Senator:

There are serious problems facing our culture. To be a part of the solution you must GROW UP and put on your big boy pants.

I taught government many years, and in the process of being The Devil's Advocate, I learned the "R" left me, and I became a "screaming liberal" by your standards.

What I truly am is a concerned citizen, female, who sees the big picture, not your narrow one. Either we work TOGETHER in compromise or we fail as lemmings. That is what I taught 17-year-olds, and you are above that so you should have it figured out. DO NOT cost our grandchildren their futures out of selfish ideology. The good old days are gone and the good old boys must go, too. This is a new America, made of all sorts and types. That your party has failed to grasp that as a last breath of control has to come to an end. Are you man enough to do that?

Bottom line: GROW UP.

Sincerely, MarthaH

[20121107-05](#) 10:47 Pam Re: An Open Letter to Sen. Mitch McConnell (reply to MarthaH, above)

Amen!!

[20121107-06](#) 11:55 SandyI Re: An Open Letter to Sen. Mitch McConnell (reply to MarthaH, above)

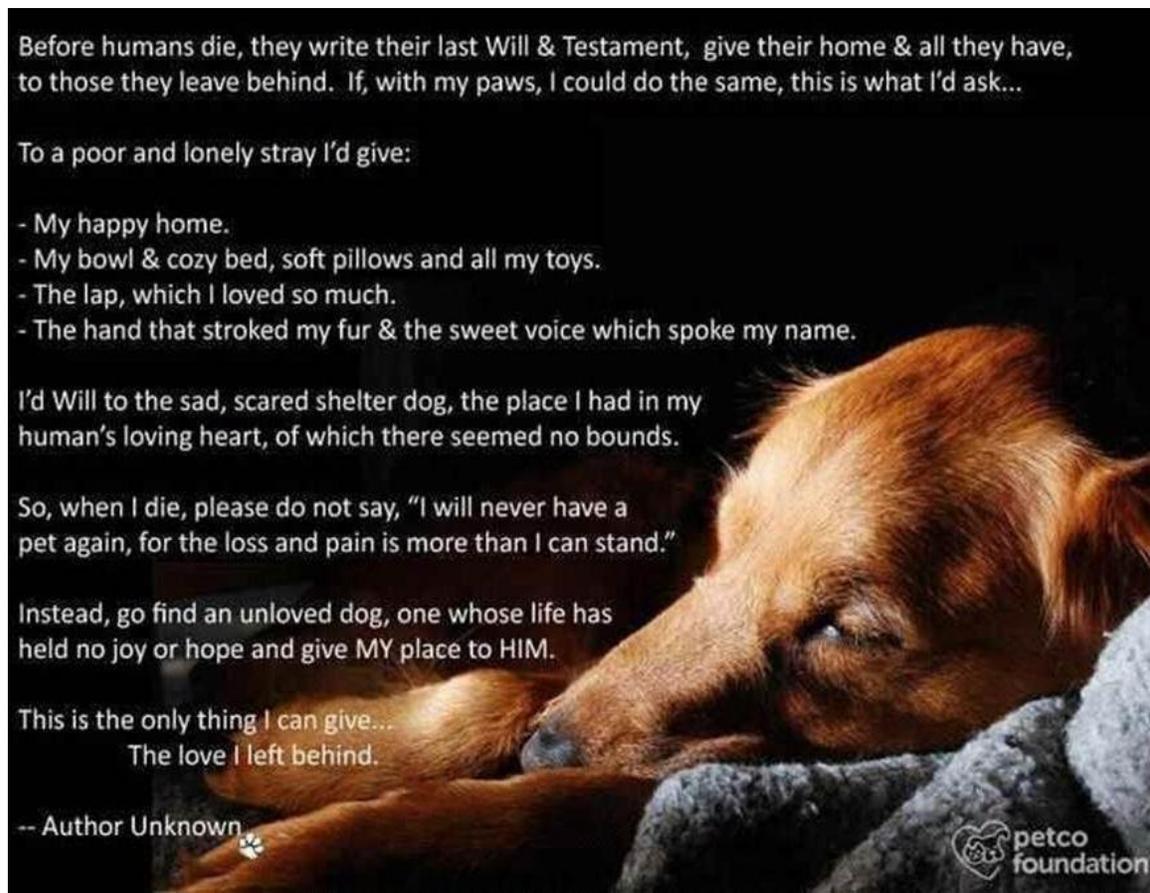
Proud to be your cousin and totally support your position. In other words, YOU GO GIRL.

[20121107-07](#) 12:42 Art Re: An Open Letter to Sen. Mitch McConnell (reply to MarthaH, above)

Well said. I think we should all take a few minutes to write a letter to our Congressman or woman and remind them that they are elected to serve us, the people, not Grover Norquest or some extreme party ideology.

[20121107-04](#) 10:34 Pam Re: "Why I Voted for Mitt Romney" (reply to SteveB, FotM Newsletter #264)

I didn't follow the results, couldn't take it. But it was great to wake up the good news this a.m. Yay!



"High Ambition and Visions of Andean Haute Cuisine" by William Neuman, *The New York Times*

Nov. 6, 2012, (http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/07/world/europe/in-bolivia-high-goals-and-visions-of-haute-cuisine.html?smid=fb-share&_r=0)

(The Danish celebrity chef Claus Meyer is opening a restaurant in La Paz, hoping to start a Bolivian food movement.)



Cooking school students shopped at a market in La Paz. Their school is associated with a restaurant named Gustu and is aimed at creating a new generation of Bolivian chefs.

(LA PAZ, Bolivia) Bolivia has not been kind to foreigners trying to import revolution. The attempt by the Argentine-born Che Guevara to set off a peasant revolt here ended badly. The verdict is still out on the latest foreigner to arrive in this impoverished nation trying to stir things up.

He is a chef, not a Che.

Claus Meyer, a Danish celebrity chef and restaurant entrepreneur, is one of the owners of Noma, a Copenhagen restaurant that is a darling of food critics for its mix of locavore purism and avant-garde cooking methods. *Restaurant* magazine, a trade journal, ranks it the best restaurant in the world.

Now Mr. Meyer is building a restaurant here, an experiment in Andean haute cuisine that comes with hefty side orders of revolution and high ambition.

Mr. Meyer, who came to Bolivia for the first time last year and has been back three times, described the restaurant, Gustu, due to open in January, as much more than a place to get a fancy meal in the continent's poorest country. He and his followers describe it as the start of a Bolivian food movement that will rediscover local ingredients like llama meat, chuños (potatoes dehydrated high in the Andes) and coca, the plant that is used to make cocaine but that has long been used here as a mild stimulant, a tea and a medicinal herb.

Gustu's mission will be to teach Bolivians how to eat in healthier ways, spur economic growth, tourism and exports, support local farmers and turn Bolivian cuisine into the next world food sensation. If all goes well, Mr. Meyer said in a telephone call from Copenhagen, the restaurant will use food "to change the destiny of a country."

The restaurant, being built in the upscale Calacoto neighborhood, hardly looks like a crucible of revolution. On a recent day, workers installed insulation in the roof. The kitchen was stacked with bags of concrete mix and plaster.

Michelangelo Cestari, one of the restaurant's head chefs, said it would be the most advanced restaurant in the country, full of high-tech gadgets of molecular gastronomy that atomize, froth and otherwise transform foods.

The restaurant will serve only ingredients grown or created in Bolivia. Wines will come from the country's handful of wineries and liquor will be limited largely to *singani*, a local grape brandy.

Mr. Cestari pointed to a tall wall where wines will be stored and displayed, although he said there might not be enough Bolivian labels to fill it at first. The idea, he said, is to help create demand for local products.

Mr. Cestari, a pastry chef, is from Venezuela and has worked for years in fine restaurants in Europe. So has his fellow head chef, Kamilla Seidler, who is Danish. The only Bolivian among the restaurant's top cooks is Christian Gómez, the senior sous chef, who worked for years in Spain.

They are keenly aware of the risk of being seen as outsiders. "Perhaps it's arrogant to think we can come here to develop a gastronomy," Mr. Cestari said, "but we hope we can push something."

He said the menu would include items inspired by Bolivian dishes, like a lamb on a cross, made by splaying a whole lamb on an iron cross and cooking it slowly over a smoky fire; or *calapurca*, a soup heated by placing a hot rock in the bowl.

Rather than simply serving typical Bolivian food done well, however, the kitchen will use the method favored by Mr. Meyer in Denmark of focusing on a few basic ingredients and trying to draw out their essence.

"We don't want to do French food or fusion or nouvelle," Mr. Gómez said. "We want to do something new with a Bolivian identity."

Mr. Cestari said that the average dinner tab would be \$50 to \$60 a person, which he said is on par with other top restaurants here but still prompted several Bolivians to gasp. The minimum wage here is about \$143 a month.

Mr. Meyer will address that contradiction soon by opening a bistro and bakery where people can eat more economically. And he said that all profits from the restaurant would go to charitable projects in Bolivia, which he chose partly because it was a developing country with a wide range of unique local ingredients.

The project also includes a cooking school for young Bolivians from poor families, which will provide a trained work force for the restaurant and, Mr. Meyer hopes, create a new generation of experimentally minded chefs.

On a recent morning, students at the school, which is run out of an ornate mansion in central La Paz, buzzed around a cramped kitchen, making pork chops and yucca fries. Then some of them piled into a van for a field trip to a nearby market.

Ms. Seidler, one of the head chefs, said that because she arrived in Bolivia only recently she often finds herself learning from her students. At a market stall, Ms. Seidler and a student, Belén Soria, pored over types of *offal*. Ms. Soria explained how indigenous women prepared a mixture of fried tripe and potatoes that they sell from carts at night.

Ms. Soria, 24, said she grew up helping her grandmother cook and sell *api*, a sweet corn gruel that is a workingperson's inexpensive morning staple.

"Everyone has their own knowledge, things their grandparents told them," she said. But she has less time to help her grandmother now that she is focusing on her studies.

"We're all curious to prepare new things, with our own stamp," Ms. Soria said. "Original things."

20121107-10	13:44	Tom	Illinois Motorcycle Freedom Run for the Middle East Conflicts Wall Memorial
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Video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WEPBQGu74oo&feature=youtu.be>.

Illinois Motorcycle Freedom Run (<http://ilmotorcyclefreedomrun.org>)

In the rural Illinois town of Marseilles, home to Illinois Valley Cellular, there is a memorial to those who have sacrificed all for freedom.

"Freedom isn't free." - photo of a grieving mother and children holding sign at Middle East Conflicts Wall Memorial

IV Cellular is proud to have a role in the Middle East Conflicts Wall Memorial. A testament to private citizens and small business working together to do what is right... Honor those who have given all for freedom.

[20121107-11](#)

16:39

Dennis

"To the Citizens of the United States of America from Her Sovereign Majesty Queen Elizabeth II"

"To the Citizens of the United States of America from Her Sovereign Majesty Queen Elizabeth II"

(<http://www.avolites.com/avo/jokes/queen.htm>)

In light of your failure in recent years to nominate competent candidates for President of the USA and thus to govern yourselves, we hereby give notice of the revocation of your independence, effective immediately.

(You should look up 'revocation' in the *Oxford English Dictionary*.)

Her Sovereign Majesty Queen Elizabeth II will resume monarchical duties over all states, commonwealths, and territories (except Kansas, which she does not fancy).

Your new Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, will appoint a Governor for America without the need for further elections.

Congress and the Senate will be disbanded. A questionnaire may be circulated next year to determine whether any of you noticed.

To aid in the transition to a British Crown dependency, the following rules are introduced with immediate effect:

1. The letter 'U' will be reinstated in words such as 'colour,' 'favour,' 'labour' and 'neighbour.' Likewise, you will learn to spell 'doughnut' without skipping half the letters, and the suffix '-ize' will be replaced by the suffix '-ise.' Generally, you will be expected to raise your vocabulary to acceptable levels. (look up 'vocabulary').
2. Using the same twenty-seven words interspersed with filler noises such as "like' and 'you know' is an unacceptable and inefficient form of communication. There is no such thing as U.S. English. We will let Microsoft know on your behalf. The Microsoft spell-checker will be adjusted to take into account the reinstated letter 'u' and the elimination of '-ize.'
3. July 4th will no longer be celebrated as a holiday.
4. You will learn to resolve personal issues without using guns, lawyers, or therapists. The fact that you need so many lawyers and therapists shows that you're not quite ready to be independent. Guns should only be used for shooting grouse. If you can't sort things out without suing someone or speaking to a therapist, then you're not ready to shoot grouse.
5. Therefore, you will no longer be allowed to own or carry anything more dangerous than a vegetable peeler. Although a permit will be required if you wish to carry a vegetable peeler in public.
6. All intersections will be replaced with roundabouts, and you will start driving on the left side with immediate effect. At the same time, you will go metric with immediate effect and without the benefit of conversion tables. Both roundabouts and metrication will help you understand the British sense of humour.
7. The former USA will adopt UK prices on petrol (which you have been calling gasoline) of roughly \$10/US gallon. Get used to it.

8. You will learn to make real chips. Those things you call French fries are not real chips, and those things you insist on calling potato chips are properly called crisps. Real chips are thick cut, fried in animal fat, and dressed not with catsup but with vinegar.

9. The cold, tasteless stuff you insist on calling beer is not actually beer at all. Henceforth, only proper British Bitter will be referred to as beer, and European brews of known and accepted provenance will be referred to as Lager. South African beer is also acceptable, as they are pound for pound the greatest sporting nation on earth and it can only be due to the beer. They are also part of the British Commonwealth - see what it did for them. American brands will be referred to as Near-Frozen Gnat's Urine, so that all can be sold without risk of further confusion.

10. Hollywood will be required occasionally to cast English actors as good guys. Hollywood will also be required to cast English actors to play English characters. Watching Andie Macdowell attempt English dialogue in Four Weddings and a Funeral was an experience akin to having one's ears removed with a cheese grater.

11. You will cease playing American football. There is only one kind of proper football; you call it soccer. Those of you brave enough will, in time, be allowed to play rugby (which has some similarities to American football, but does not involve stopping for a rest every twenty seconds or wearing full kevlar body armour like a bunch of nancies).

12. Further, you will stop playing baseball. It is not reasonable to host an event called the World Series for a game which is not played outside of America. Since only 2.1% of you are aware there is a world beyond your borders, your error is understandable. You will learn cricket, and we will let you face the South Africans first to take the sting out of their deliveries.

13. You must tell us who killed JFK. It's been driving us mad.

14. An internal revenue agent (i.e. tax collector) from Her Majesty's Government will be with you shortly to ensure the acquisition of all monies due (backdated to 1776).

15. Daily Tea Time begins promptly at 4 p.m. with proper cups, with saucers, and never mugs, with high quality biscuits (cookies) and cakes; plus strawberries (with cream) when in season.

God Save the Queen!

20121107-13	19:00	SteveG	Good News from Florida
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Alan Grayson returns to the House to represent his Florida district after a 2 year absence. Allen West stays home as the first time representative from Florida is defeated. That is a plus 2 for the democrats of Florida.

20121107-14	19:30	SteveB	Re: Good News from Florida (reply to SteveG, above)
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I noticed that. In fact, I heard from Grayson's campaign. But I didn't hear from Allen West's campaign. Darn!

20121107-15	20:03	SteveG	Re: Good News from Florida (reply to SteveB, above)
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Go figure.

20121107-17	21:47	SteveG	Energy Independence?
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In a drive from Washington to Indiana and back we listened to a variety of radio shows – Rush, NPR, comedy channels, oldies, country, etc.

One show stands out in my aging memory banks: In search of energy independence and no importation of oil the cost of US gasoline was compared with Canadian gasoline (which according to NPR does not import oil). When adjusted for currency exchange, taxes, liters to gallons, etc. the cost of Canadian and US gasoline to the customer was the same.

Thought the comparison was interesting.

20121107-18	22:24	SteveB	Re: Energy Independence? (reply to SteveG, above)
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Makes sense, it's a truly international market.

Yes, it does work to import oil. Just as it works to have a big deficit.

The former is why I say we should use-up all "their" oil, especially all the Arab oil, before we more seriously tap into our own, which we should try to save for the future as much as we can (without hurting ourselves).

The latter is why I say let's spend China's money while we have the chance!

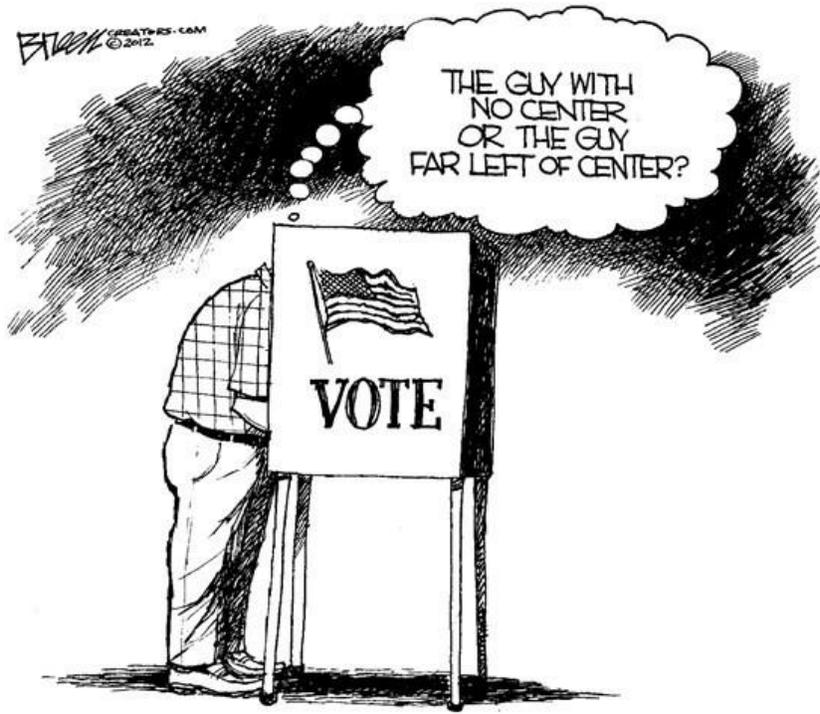
20121107-19	23:55	Marci	Cool Photos #2 (The Edge of Earth — Bunda Cliffs, Australia)
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The Edge of Earth — Bunda Cliffs, Australia



It's half-Woody Wagon on its mother's side.





<http://www.vagabondish.com/photo-of-the-moment-overlooking-la-paz-bolivia/>



LA PAZ, BOLIVIA

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

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Welcome to all our new members who may be here for the first time. We want to hear from YOU! To submit your comment, you can use the form on our website or blog, or reply to this email with your two cents worth. Be sure to sign with your desired user name.

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