



FRIENDS OF THE MIDDLE **NEWSLETTER #266 — NOV. 9, 2012**

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The Zombie Sagas, Part 2: The Disconnect from Reality

(posted by Steven W. Baker / SteveB, Nov. 9, 2012)

How and why listening to the conservative media "echo chamber" did not lead the GOP to the truth (or victory)...

"Will Rove Still Be Boss?" by Craig Unger, Salon

Nov. 7, 2012, (http://www.salon.com/2012/11/07/karl_rove_the_other_big_loser/)

(The GOP's vaunted mastermind had a televised freakout -- and might well be the second biggest loser of the night.)



Mitt Romney wasn't the only big loser last night. For Karl Rove, the coup de grâce came in the hour just before midnight.

It began at around 11:18 p.m., when Fox News called the election and posted its gaudy graphic: "Barack Obama Re-elected President." Brit Hume, Megyn Kelly and a host of pundits offered up brief postmortems. Even the house organ of the Republican Party had conceded.

But then, abruptly, at 11:25, the narrative changed dramatically. "I have great respect for our decision desk," said Fox's Chris Wallace, "and I can see that they're very happy [at Obama headquarters] in Chicago, but I have to tell you that the Romney camp has real doubts by the call that has been made by us and by other networks."

Enter Karl Rove — Machiavellian GOP party boss, master numbers cruncher, and Fox News analyst — to challenge the verdict that everyone had anxiously awaited. Wallace got right to the point and asked Rove if he thought Ohio was locked up for Obama.

"No, I don't," Rove said.

"We've got a quarter of the vote," he explained. "Now remember, here is the thing about Ohio. A third of the vote or more is cast early and is won overwhelmingly by the Democrats."

Rove insisted that calling the election was "premature."

"So, maybe not so fast, folks!" Wallace said.

The unthinkable had just happened. Fox had called the election for Obama, but Karl Rove, its Svengali-like analyst, had just disputed his own network's call.

There was an uncomfortable moment of dead air.

Then, Fox anchor Megyn Kelly addressed the situation with understatement. "Well, that's awkward," she said.

To resolve the issue, she hiked, on camera, all the way back to the analysts' bullpen where the Fox decision desk was located. There, several unidentified analysts confidently assured her they had done their homework, crunched the numbers and explained there was no way Romney could take possibly Ohio. They were 99.95 percent certain. They were not backing off. Too many of the remaining precincts that were unreported were in heavily Democratic precincts.

But Rove wouldn't let go.

Next, Fox brought on conservative pundit Michael Barone, a pal of Rove's who had predicted a Romney victory and who is, in Rove's words' "the smartest guy in America when it comes to precinct results" to set him straight.

By this time, Rove was effectively disputing not just Fox News, but *all* the major news outlets in the country that had called the election for Obama. It was nearly midnight. The spectacle had dragged on for 40 minutes, providing an unparalleled spectacle of schadenfreude for Democrats: Karl Rove, stricken, like Humpty-Dumpty after the fall, as Barone patiently explained to him, as one might talk to a child, that Obama really had won Ohio — and the election.

Fox showed a shot of Obama supporters cheering wildly. "They're not listening to Karl," said Megyn Kelly. "They don't care what Karl says."

Ultimately, it was left to Fox's Bret Baier to make a feeble excuse for the chastened Rove. "Maybe we got you a slow computer," he offered weakly.

Rove's defeat did not come from want of trying. Throughout the entire campaign, on the surface, he played the lofty pundit pontificating for Fox and the Wall Street Journal as if he had no role whatsoever in the campaign. But whenever one looked closely beneath the surface, one found the Mark of Rove. Under the radar, via his surrogates in the Romney campaign, Boss Rove orchestrated massive, multimillion-dollar political ad campaigns that inundated

the swing states with countless ads funded by his super PACs and “dark money” groups. He drummed up narratives portraying Obama as a latter day failed, weak Jimmy Carter, and reawakened paranoid fantasies that suggested America still lived in the aftermath of 9/11, cringing in fear of the terrorist threat. In more than 30 states there were attempts at voter suppression — Jim Crow 2.0 — in one form or another, a strategy Rove had begun to employ by 2004. In Ohio, Republican Secretary of State Jon Husted, who had worked on Rove’s Ohio campaign in ’04, did everything he could to limit early voting. Nathan Sproul, a former Rove operative, launched nationwide schemes to disenfranchise Democrats, but was investigated by authorities for electoral misconduct and voter registration fraud. And various electronic voting machine companies were suspected of positioning themselves to rig the vote.

But in the end it was all for naught. Vigilant Democrats, often helped by the courts, had rebuffed him. Astoundingly, no one was cowering in fear of Boss Rove.

What went wrong? For Rove, just about everything. Throughout the entire campaign, the bitter division between the GOP establishment — Rove and his cronies — and the Tea Partiers severely limited his power. Rove’s inability to oust Missouri senatorial candidate Todd “illegitimate rape” Akin played a key role in allowing the Democrats to retain control of the Senate. Mitt Romney’s attempts to straddle the two wings of the party reduced him to an Etch-A-Sketch candidate who did not have a clearly defined narrative. GOP efforts at voter suppression failed to subdue the growing Hispanic vote for the Democrats — a demographic time bomb that will only worsen for Republicans. And ultimately for Rove, running the party by remote control, playing pundit while he secretly pulled the strings, had its limits.

What did Rove get out of it? One can only wonder how much money he made from a campaign in which he controlled the purse strings for hundreds of millions of dollars. What is certain is that it is unlikely that he will ever be forthcoming.

But in the final analysis, it is also certain that the election brought Karl Rove a spectacular defeat. After all, it is unclear what it means to be boss of a political party that is so bitterly divided. Already, Rove and his associates have begun castigating Tea Party candidates such as Todd Akin, Richard Mourdock in Indiana, and others as not ready for prime time. For their part, Tea Party billionaires such as Sheldon Adelson and the Koch brothers may well regret joining forces with Rove at all. Such wounds will not be healed overnight.

Does this mean Karl Rove is gone for good?

Not at all. It is worth remembering Rove has been written off before. In 2007, he was forced out of the White House in disgrace, having narrowly escaped indictment, the target of two of the biggest scandals in the Bush-Cheney era, having barely escaped indictment. The next year, his patron, George W. Bush, left the presidency with a 22 percent approval rating, the lowest in the history of the United States. The Rove brand was tainted irrevocably. Or so it seemed.

All of which means, when it comes to Karl Rove, the Democrats had best play by Chicago rules. “That means when he is dead, you put a stake through his heart,” explained one Democratic operative. “Then you put a bullet through his head. You pour gasoline on him and set him on fire. Then you kill him again. Because he’ll be back.”

[“Romneyworld Reckoning Begins” by James Hohmann and Anna Palmer, Politico](#)

Nov. 7, 2012, (<http://www.politico.com/news/stories/1112/83549.html?hp=11>)

(BOSTON) Advisers to Mitt Romney insisted Wednesday that they were surprised by the scale of their loss to President Barack Obama, while big-time GOP donors griped about the campaign’s unflinching confidence in the final stretch.

As results began to stream in Tuesday night, prominent Romney supporters in Boston tried to stay positive, reassuring themselves that there was still a path to the White House. But dejection quickly turned to anger a day after an Electoral College rout that shocked many who had heard self-assured projections about voter enthusiasm and turnout in private conference calls and meetings in the campaign’s final stretch.

"They ran a 20th-century campaign in the 21st century," said one Romney bundler, frustrated that the campaign made assumptions about the youth vote and voter intensity that didn't pan out. "The anger is that they were entrusted to do certain things. It's not like they were paid a \$5,000 retainer to get a few dozen articles in an inside-the-Beltway paper. This is the major leagues."

Another Republican outside the Romney campaign but privy to its thinking described the defeat as a complete pummeling, with Senate losses adding salt to the wound.

Romney supporters point to a series of brash statements made by advisers that seem out of touch with reality in retrospect. Inside-the-Beltway, Republicans trained their fire on senior Romney advisers like Ed Gillespie and political director Rich Beeson for appearances on last weekend's Sunday shows. Gillespie said the electoral map was expanding, and Beeson predicted a 300 electoral vote win for Romney.

"There were a lot of Republicans who were on calls that the campaign was having led to believe we had shots in Pennsylvania and Minnesota," one Republican operative supporting Romney said. "I think Republicans are split right now between confused and shocked, and also I think they are wondering did the Romney campaign have numbers we didn't have."

In starker terms, the source questioned: "Was last week a head fake, or were they just not that smart?"

Multiple Romney sources buzzed about one number in particular: 15 percent. According to exit polls, that's the share of African-Americans who voted in Ohio this year. In 2008, the black percentage of the electorate was 11 percent. In Virginia and Florida, exit polls showed the same share of African-Americans turned out as four years ago, something that GOP turnout models did not anticipate.

"We didn't think they'd turn out more of their base vote than they did in 2008, but they smoked us," said one Romney operative. "It's unbelievable that they turned out more from the African-American community than in 2008. Somehow they got 'em to vote."

African-Americans supported Obama nearly universally, but Obama still won Ohio only by 1.9 percent.

"We just didn't see the enthusiasm with their base," he added. "We had enthusiasm on our side. So we thought, 'Yeah, we're gonna win this.' ... We hit our numbers in rural areas. When Fox called it, we still thought we had a chance based on what we could figure was in and what was still out."

On a rainy and dreary post-Election Day here, as Romney staffers turned in their BlackBerrys at campaign headquarters and huddled for a late-afternoon staff meeting, most were more focused on housekeeping than relitigating strategic decisions. They were disappointed but circumspect, although a more exhaustive review is planned in the next few days.

Inside tight-knit Romneyworld — where many of the GOP nominee's senior aides have worked together since Romney's time as Massachusetts governor — there was a sense Tuesday that the White House was within reach. Over the past few weeks, especially after Romney's strong Denver debate performance, some staffers were openly speculating about jobs they might nab in a Romney administration and discussed the shape of the transition effort. By Wednesday, many were looking for work but taking the long view.

At the Boston convention center where Romney conceded in the wee hours of Wednesday morning, Romney's high command — including Eric Fehrstrom and Kevin Madden — looked glum. Hugs and handshakes were exchanged after Romney spoke for five minutes and then stood on stage with his family and his running mate, Paul Ryan.

After getting some sleep, a senior campaign official praised the skill of his opponents in Chicago, saying Obama's team ran a "technically proficient campaign."

"People really did think we were going to win," he said. "I thought going into yesterday that we could and would win. You've got to give them a lot of credit: They changed the electorate."

Romney bundlers and mega-donors were optimistic Tuesday afternoon as they mingled in the Westin Boston Waterfront hotel lobby, picking up their donor packets and prepping for a private party before what they believed would be a Romney victory.

Romney's team believed that it would be hard to lose if they won independents, but it happened. They said they thought they could perform as well with men as Obama did with women, but they didn't. They thought there would be fewer young voters in 2008, but turnout was roughly on par.

Obama campaign officials noted Wednesday that they had years to build up a field operation that was often not visible to the other side. The director of Obama outreach to African-Americans in Ohio oversaw a barber shop and beauty salon program that helped register new voters and distribute literature. A Congregations Captains Program helped the campaign arm supporters in traditionally African-American congregations with what they needed to mobilize other parishioners.

"Obviously, there was still room to grow," said an Obama campaign official. "We didn't reach 100 percent capacity in 2008."

Internally, Hurricane Sandy received a share of blame. The campaign's messaging mavens say they lost several key days where they couldn't roll out attacks because of the storm. Worse, Romney had been attacking Obama for being small — and his response to the storm made him look big. A key component of Romney's closing argument was that Obama could not work across the aisle, a campaign official said, but then the president wandered around New Jersey with GOP Gov. Chris Christie.

"No one here is expressing any regret," an adviser said. "It's the nature of the game....This was not McCain '08 ... You have an organization with a few hundred people worth a billion dollars. There will be days with disagreement, no doubt ... But there's a sense of camaraderie."

The candidate himself isn't coming out unscathed. Given his background at Bain Capital and reputation as a details and data-driven employer and candidate, many Republicans are also questioning whether Romney was personally engaged enough in key decisions.

Meanwhile, the bundlers and mega-donors who put their reputations on the line — helping raise more than \$1 billion for the Romney operation — continued to praise the finance team as first class. But there is little love lost among them for pollster Neil Newhouse and chief strategist and ad maker Stuart Stevens.

Simply put — many GOP-ers said that when the dust settles, the verdict will be this was an election that Romney should have won.

Fred Malek, who chaired Sen. John McCain's (R-Ariz.) 2008 presidential bid, said that Romney and his campaign team ran a good race, but that in the final weeks all of the breaks were in Obama's favor — from the positive jobs reports to the storm interrupting Romney's momentum coming out of the debate.

"People are going to carp, but many of us are in this for the long term, and probably don't like to lose. It's democracy, and if we want to spend time recriminating or criticizing or going after what could have been, that's not healthy, it's not going to help," he said. "These things ebb and flow a bit, it just happened to ebb at the wrong time for us."

Perhaps the Romney insiders in Boston drank a little too much of their own Kool-Aid. Huge crowds are common for both sides in a campaign's closing days. Romney himself was moved by an unplanned massing of a thousand well-wishers who waited for him at the airport in Pittsburgh Tuesday afternoon.

"You know intellectually I've felt we're going to win this and have felt that for some time, but emotionally just getting off the plane and seeing those people standing there — we didn't tell them we were coming, we didn't notify them when we'd arrive, just seeing people there cheering as they were — connected emotionally with me,"

he told reporters on the flight from Pittsburgh to Boston before polls closed. "I not only think we're going to win intellectually, I feel it as well."

Romney said on that flight that he has no regrets.

"I feel we have put it all on the field," he said. "We left nothing in the locker room. We fought to the very end."



WHY VOTE AT ALL WHEN SOME SAY THE CANDIDATES ARE "THE SAME"?
HERE'S A HANDY COMPARISON.

OBAMA AT HIS WORST	★	ROMNEY AT HIS BEST
DIDN'T PUSH FOR SINGLE PAYER HEALTH INSURANCE		WOULD PUSH 45 MILLION PEOPLE OFF OF HEALTH INSURANCE
CONTINUING THE DRONE STRIKES		MIGHT REFRAIN FROM NUKING IRAN
NOT HARD ENOUGH ON WALL STREET		IS WALL STREET
STILL CLINGS TO "BIPARTISAN" STRATEGY THAT LETS HIM GET STEAMROLLED.		STEAMROLLER RIDE SOMETIMES BUMPY FROM RUNNING OVER REMAINING SPINES OF DEMOCRATS
TOOK A WHILE TO WARM UP TO GAY MARRIAGE		MIGHT TAKE A WHILE TO ANNIHILATE GAY MARRIAGE
TALKS ABOUT "CLEAN COAL"		SEE LOS ANGELES IN "BLADE RUNNER"

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"How a Race in the Balance Went to Obama" by Adam Nagourney, Ashley Parker, Jim Rutenberg, and Jeff Zeleny, *The New York Times*

Nov. 7, 2012, (<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/08/us/politics/obama-campaign-clawed-back-after-a-dismal-debate.html?pagewanted=all&r=1&>)

Seven minutes into the first presidential debate, the mood turned from tense to grim inside the room at the University of Denver where Obama staff members were following the encounter. Top aides monitoring focus groups — voters who registered their minute-by-minute reactions with the turn of a dial — watched as enthusiasm for Mitt Romney spiked. "We are getting bombed on Twitter," announced Stephanie Cutter, a deputy campaign manager, while tracking the early postings by political analysts and journalists whom the Obama campaign viewed as critical in setting debate perceptions.

By the time President Obama had waded through a convoluted answer about health care — "He's not mentioning voucher-care?" someone called out — a pall had fallen over the room. When the president closed by declaring, "This was a terrific debate," his re-election team grimaced. There was the obligatory huddle to discuss how to explain his performance to the nation, and then a moment of paralysis: No one wanted to go to the spin room and speak with reporters.

Mr. Romney's advisers monitored the debate up the hall from the Obama team, as well as at campaign headquarters in Boston. Giddy smiles flashed across their faces as their focus groups showed the same results.

"Boy, the president is off tonight," said Stuart Stevens, the senior Romney strategist, sounding mystified, according to aides in the room. Russ Schriefer, a senior adviser, immediately began planning television spots based entirely on clips from the debate. As it drew to a close, Gail Gitcho, Mr. Romney's communications director in Boston, warned surrogates heading out to television studios: "No chest thumping."

The Oct. 3 debate sharply exposed Mr. Obama's vulnerabilities and forced the president and his advisers to work to reclaim the campaign over a grueling 30 days, ending with his triumph on Tuesday. After a summer of growing confidence, Mr. Obama suddenly confronted the possibility of a loss that would diminish his legacy and threaten his signature achievement, the health care law. He emerged newly combative, newly contrite and newly willing to recognize how his disdain for Mr. Romney had blinded him to his opponent's strengths and ability to inflict damage.

After watching a videotape of his debate performance, Mr. Obama began calling panicked donors and supporters to reassure them he would do better. "This is on me," the president said, again and again.

Mr. Obama, who had dismissed warnings about being caught off guard in the debate, told his advisers that he would now accept and deploy the prewritten attack lines that he had sniffed at earlier. "If I give up a couple of points of likability and come across as snarky, so be it," Mr. Obama told his staff.

As his campaign began an all-out assault on Mr. Romney's credibility and conservative views, the president soon was denouncing Mr. Romney's budget proposals as a "sketchy deal" and charging that the Republican nominee was not telling Americans the truth.

Mr. Obama recognized that to a certain extent, he had walked into a trap that Mr. Romney's advisers had anticipated: His antipathy toward Mr. Romney — which advisers described as deeper than what Mr. Obama had felt for John McCain in 2008 — led the incumbent to underestimate his opponent as he began moving to the center before the debate audience of millions of television viewers.

But as concerned as the White House was during the last 30 days of the campaign, its polls never showed Mr. Obama slipping behind Mr. Romney, aides said. The president was helped in no small part by the tremendous amount of money the campaign built up, which had permitted him to pound his Republican rival before he had ever had a chance to fully introduce himself to the nation.

That was just one of several ways that Mr. Obama's campaign operations, some unnoticed by Mr. Romney's aides in Boston, helped save the president's candidacy. In Chicago, the campaign recruited a team of behavioral scientists to build an extraordinarily sophisticated database packed with names of millions of undecided voters and potential supporters. The ever-expanding list let the campaign find and register new voters who fit the demographic pattern of Obama backers and methodically track their views through thousands of telephone calls every night.

That allowed the Obama campaign not only to alter the very nature of the electorate, making it younger and less white, but also to create a portrait of shifting voter allegiances. The power of this operation stunned Mr. Romney's aides on election night, as they saw voters they never even knew existed turn out in places like Osceola County, Fla. "It's one thing to say you are going to do it; it's another thing to actually get out there and do it," said Brian Jones, a senior adviser.

In the last days of the campaign, Mr. Romney cast himself as the candidate that he may have wanted to be all along: moderate in tone, an agent of change who promised to bring bipartisan cooperation back to Washington, sounding very much like Barack Obama in 2008.

But he could never overcome the harm that Mr. Obama's advertising had done over the summer or the weight of the ideological baggage he carried from the primary. On Tuesday night, a crestfallen Mr. Romney and his family watched as the television networks showed him losing all but one battleground state.

Even as the networks declared Mr. Obama the winner, Mr. Romney, who had earlier told reporters he had written only a victory speech, paused before the walk downstairs from his hotel room in Boston. It was 11:30 p.m., and Romney field teams in Ohio, Virginia and Florida called in, saying the race was too close for the candidate to give

up. At least four planes were ready to go, and aides had bags packed for recount battles in narrowly divided states. Bob White, a close Romney friend and adviser, was prepared to tell the waiting crowd that Mr. Romney would not yet concede.

But then, Mr. Romney quietly decided it was over. "It's not going to happen," he said.

As Ann Romney cried softly, he headed down to deliver his speech, ending his second, and presumably last, bid for the White House. Four decades earlier, his father and inspiration, George Romney, a former Michigan governor failed in his own such quest.

By the end of the 30 days, after Air Force One carried Mr. Obama on an almost round-the-clock series of rallies, the president had reverted back to the agent of change battling the forces of the status quo, drawing contrasts between himself and Mr. Romney with an urgency that had been absent earlier in the race. Mr. Obama had returned, if not to the candidate that he was in 2008, as a man hungry for four more years to pursue his agenda in the White House.

A Difficult September

As the summer came to a close, the Romney campaign was stuck in a tense debate over how to rescue a struggling candidacy. On some nights, it did not even bother with the daily tracking poll. Why waste money on more bad news? Mr. Obama's attack on Mr. Romney's role at Bain Capital, the private equity firm he founded, was in full swing, the Democratic convention had been an unequivocal boost for the president, and a videotape had surfaced that caught Mr. Romney at a private fund-raiser saying that 47 percent of the nation did not pay taxes, a line that reinforced Democrats' efforts to portray him as an out-of-touch elitist.

"We had struggled pretty dramatically in September," said Neil Newhouse, Mr. Romney's pollster. "The 47 percent remark came out, and that was on top of the bounce that Obama got from his convention, so needless to say September was not our best month. It showed in our data. It was grim."

There was, advisers decided, one last opportunity on the horizon: the presidential debate in Denver.

Mr. Stevens argued that Mr. Obama's dislike of Mr. Romney would lead the president to underestimate him. "They think there's something intellectually inferior there," he said later. Mr. Romney's advisers also believed that Mr. Obama had demonized Mr. Romney to such an extent that their candidate would benefit when judged against the caricature.

In August, Mr. Romney began testing out one-liners on friends flying with him on his campaign plane. On issue after issue, Mr. Romney led discussions on how to frame his answers, to move away from the conservative tone of his primary contests in front of the largest audience he would have as a candidate.

Senator Rob Portman of Ohio was recruited to play Mr. Obama, and he embraced the role, even anticipating how the president would open his first debate, which fell on his wedding anniversary. "I've got to tell you, tonight's a really special night," Mr. Portman said, playing Mr. Obama. "I see my sweetie out there, boy, 20 years ago."

(Mr. Romney's advisers broke out in laughter when the real Mr. Obama opened with a similar line, and nodded approvingly when a very prepared Mr. Romney countered with a gracious response that even Democrats said put Mr. Obama off balance.)

Nothing had been left to chance: Mr. Romney put on full makeup and did his final practice in a room set up to replicate, down to the lighting and temperature, the hall where he would meet Mr. Obama.

On the Sunday before the debate, a group of top advisers and elected Republican officials from across the country, calling themselves the War Council, gathered in Boston to reassure Mr. Romney after his rough month — essentially saying "this is a place in the race, but it isn't a destiny" as Beth Myers, a senior adviser, put it — and to boost his confidence. George W. Bush phoned Mr. Romney, too. Pointing to his own history, he predicted that Mr. Obama would fumble, according to aides.

Democrats advising Mr. Obama saw the same peril for the president in the first debate that Mr. Romney's aides did. Ronald A. Klain, a Democratic strategist who has overseen debate preparation for presidential candidates for nearly 20 years, warned Mr. Obama at his very first debate session, a PowerPoint presentation in the Roosevelt Room on a sweltering day in mid-July, that incumbent presidents almost invariably lose their first debate.

"It's easier for a candidate to schedule the time to prepare; it's easy for the challenger to get away; the president has competing needs," Mr. Klain told Mr. Obama, according to aides who witnessed the exchange.

Ken Mehlman, who had managed Mr. Bush's re-election campaign in 2004, ran into one of Mr. Obama's advisers at a party, and warned him that presidents are not used to being challenged, and unlike candidates, are out of practice at verbal jousting. Mr. Romney had gone through 20 debates over the past year.

Mr. Obama showed no interest in watching the Republican debates. But his aides studied them closely, and concluded that Mr. Romney was a powerful debater, hard to intimidate and fast to throw out assertions that would later prove wrong or exaggerated. At one debate, Gov. Rick Perry of Texas criticized Mr. Romney for having praised Arne Duncan, the education secretary, days earlier. Mr. Romney flatly denied it, leaving Mr. Perry speechless.

At the White House, Mr. Obama's communications director, Dan Pfeiffer, took note of that moment, intending to mention it to Mr. Obama. He would later fault himself for failing to fully understand "the magnitude of the challenge" Mr. Romney's debate style presented.

Mr. Obama displayed little concern. When he went to a resort outside Las Vegas for several days of debate preparation in September, his impatience with the exercise was evident when he escaped for an excursion to the Hoover Dam.

Mr. Klain and David Axelrod, a senior strategist, told Mr. Obama that he seemed distracted, but he shrugged them off. "I'll be there on game day," he said. "I'm a game day player."

Shortly after the debate began, Mr. Obama's aides realized they had made their own mistakes in advising Mr. Obama to avoid combative exchanges that might sacrifice the good will many Americans felt toward him. In Mr. Obama's mock debates with Senator John Kerry, a Massachusetts Democrat, Mr. Kerry drew Mr. Obama into a series of intense exchanges, and Mr. Axelrod decided that they were damaging to the president.

In 90 minutes, Mr. Obama crystallized what had been gnawing concerns among many Americans about the president. He came across, as Mr. Obama's advisers told him over the next few days, as professorial, arrogant, entitled and detached from the turmoil tearing the nation. He appeared to be disdainful not only of his opponent but also of the political process itself. Mr. Obama showed no passion for the job, and allowed Mr. Romney to explode the characterization of him as a wealthy, job-destroying venture capitalist that the Obama campaign had spent months creating.

The voter-analysis database back in Chicago noted a precipitous drop in perceptions of Mr. Obama among independent voters, starting that night and lasting for four days, long before the public polls picked it up. Voters who had begun turning to Mr. Obama were newly willing to give Mr. Romney another look.

What was arguably the most dismal night of Mr. Obama's political career could hardly have come at a worse time: Early voting was already under way in some states. Absentee ballots were on voters' coffee tables that very night.

After the debate, Mr. Obama called Mr. Axelrod on his way back to the hotel room. He had read the early reviews on his iPad.

"I guess the consensus is that we didn't have a very good night," Mr. Obama told Mr. Axelrod.

"That is the consensus," Mr. Axelrod said.

For the next 30 days, Mr. Romney and his advisers tried to capitalize on Mr. Obama's mistakes. And Mr. Romney continued his drift toward the center, softening his language on abortion and immigration from the positions that had defined him during the Republican primaries. It was something that the White House had expected he would do. Perhaps most important, the debate gave him a swagger, confidence and presidential bearing that had been absent.

Mr. Romney soon recognized the scope of his accomplishment. He flew from Denver to Virginia for a rally the next day, and as the motorcade headed toward the event, there was so much traffic that Mr. Romney and his top advisers thought there must have been an accident. In fact, the roads were jammed with people on their way to see him.

A Storm's Effect

It was clear that Hurricane Sandy was going to upend Mr. Obama's final week of campaigning, but aides in Chicago were determined to squeeze in one more visit to Florida. It almost became a calamity.

To get ahead of the storm, the president flew to Orlando on Oct. 28, the evening before a morning event. But overnight, the storm intensified and accelerated. Well before dawn, the Air Force One crew told the president's advisers that if he was going to beat the storm back to Washington, he had to leave at once. His aides blanched at the image of Mr. Obama stuck in sunny Florida as the storm roared up the Eastern Seaboard.

The White House announced the change of plans at 6:45 a.m. The president returned to the White House at 11:07 a.m. and went directly into the Situation Room, canceling his political events. The decision was costly to a campaign so dependent on organization: Mr. Obama used his rallies to collect supporters' telephone numbers and e-mail addresses.

Once the storm struck, it was more of a problem for Mr. Romney. It put him in the position of struggling to explain the skepticism he had expressed during the Republican primaries about a federal role in disaster relief. Even worse, the hurricane pushed him off the stage at a crucial time.

In Boston, Mr. Romney's aides broke out in a chorus of groans as they watched on television as Gov. Chris Christie of New Jersey offered effusive praise of the president's handling of the disaster. They viewed it as a self-serving act of disloyalty from a man whom they had expected to deploy that very weekend on Mr. Romney's behalf. The praise of Mr. Obama from a Republican governor came at the same time Mr. Romney had been portraying Mr. Obama as partisan and polarizing.

The same week, the president's campaign released an advertisement in which another Republican, Colin Powell, a former secretary of state, endorsed Mr. Obama. The ad, Mr. Obama's aides said, produced a spike of support from independent voters. (Mr. Obama's aides grabbed the clip from a television interview with Mr. Powell, deciding not to chance asking him for permission).

Mr. Romney was finding Ohio, a state central to his victory, a stubborn target, as Mr. Obama benefited from the auto industry rescue he championed and that Mr. Romney had opposed. The Romney campaign sought to undermine Mr. Obama with an advertisement misleadingly implying that Jeep was moving jobs from Ohio to China. By every measure, the ad backfired, drawing attacks by leaders of auto companies that employed many of the blue-collar voters that Mr. Romney was trying to reach.

The futility of that effort was apparent outside the sprawling Jeep assembly plant in Toledo, which had just had a \$500 million renovation for production of a new line of vehicles, a project requiring 1,100 new workers.

"Everyone here knows someone who works at Jeep," Jim Wessel, a supply representative making a sales visit. He said no one would believe the ad. Speaking of Mr. Obama's efforts to rescue the auto industry, he said, "I can just tell you I'm glad he did it."

Mr. Romney was running out of states. He made an impulsive run on Pennsylvania, chasing what his aides said were tightening polls there. Mr. Romney had spent little time or money there before roaring in during the campaign's final hours.

On the last weekend of the race, Mr. Romney scheduled a rally in Bucks County. Supporters began arriving at 2 p.m. But his plane was delayed, and as the hours rolled on — and the temperatures dropped — dozens of people were temporarily blocked by the Secret Service as they sought to leave. Mr. Romney arrived to an unpleasant scene: clusters of angry, cold supporters.

That Tuesday, Mr. Romney lost the state by 5 percentage points and watched Mr. Obama hold a 50,000-vote lead in Florida — a state that he had once been confident of winning.

(Michael Barbaro, Michael D. Shear and Peter Baker contributed reporting.)

20121108-02	07:32	MarthaH	"Karl Rove's Election Debacle: Super PAC's Spending Was Nearly for Naught"
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"Karl Rove's Election Debacle: Super PAC's Spending Was Nearly for Naught" by Michael Isikoff, NBC News

Nov. 8, 2012, (<http://openchannel.nbcnews.com/news/2012/11/08/15007504-karl-roves-election-debacle-super-pacs-spending-was-nearly-for-naught?lite>)

(Karl Rove's American Crossroads super PAC had big-money backers, but achieved minimal results, according to a study by the Sunlight Foundation.)

Karl Rove was the political genius of the George W. Bush era -- the architect of the last Republican president's two electoral victories. But this week, he may have had the worst election night of anybody in American politics.

Not only did Rove insist on Fox News that Ohio was still winnable for Republican challenger Mitt Romney after all the TV networks had called it for President Barack Obama -- causing anchor Megyn Kelly to march down to the Fox "decision desk" mavens, who assured her on air that they were "99.9 percent" confident in their call -- but his trailblazing "independent" super PAC operation was virtually shut out on election night.

A study Wednesday by the Sunlight Foundation, which tracks political spending, concluded that Rove's super PAC, American Crossroads, had a success rate of just 1 percent on \$103 million in attack ads -- one of the lowest "returns on investment" (ROIs) of any outside spending group in this year's elections.

Money can't buy happiness, or an election

NBC's Michael Isikoff discusses Super PAC spending during the 2012 election and the bang for each donation buck.

American Crossroads spent heavily, not just on Romney, but on attack ads on behalf of GOP Senate candidates in eight states -- thanks to mega contributions from conservative donors like metals magnate Harold Simmons (\$19.5 million), Texas homebuilder Bob Perry (\$7.5 million) and Omni hotel chief Robert Rowling (\$5 million.)

The super donors didn't get much for their money. Six of the eight GOP Senate candidates that American Crossroads spent money to try to elect -- Tommy Thompson in Wisconsin, George Allen in Virginia, Josh Mandel in Ohio, Richard Mourdock in Indiana, Denny Rehberg in Montana and Todd Akin in Missouri -- lost their races, along with Romney. The group did, on the other hand, help to elect Deb Fischer in Nebraska and Dean Heller in Nevada.

(The Sunlight Foundation calculation of "return on investment" was based on the percentage of money it spent on individual races-- and since Crossroads spent the most on the races it lost on, the group earned its low 1 percent "return on investment" or ROI. A sister group, Crossroads GPS, which operates out of the same offices as American Crossroads but does not disclose its donors, fared little better, netting a return on investment of only 13 percent, according to the Sunlight Foundation report.)

Some in his own party also were unimpressed by the performance of Rove's Crossroads operation. Donald Trump posted a message on Twitter saying: "Congrats to @KarlRove on blowing \$400 million cycle. Every race @CrossroadsGPS ran ads in, the Republicans lost. What a waste of money."

Campaign spending by Super PACs in this election cycle topped \$1 billion – nearly four times the amount spent by such groups in 2008. Former White House Deputy Press Secretary Bill Burton and former RNC Chairman Michael Steele discuss.

Jonathan Collegio, a spokesman for American Crossroads, dismissed the Sunlight Foundation report.

"GOP super PACs helped keep the race close and winnable, despite Obama's massive financial advantage," he wrote in an email to NBC News. "On the Senate races, run the numbers. If you don't count the long-shot self-funders in CT and PA, Senate Democrats outraised their GOP opponents by \$60 (million) this cycle – and that disparity is greater if you factor out GOP primary fundraising. The DSCC (Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee) outraised the NRSC (National Republican Senatorial Committee) by another \$20 (million). Few have reported on this."

"You can't have an accurate view of the role of super PACs without the context of how Democrats leveraged incumbency to outraise their opponents by literally hundreds of millions of dollars," he added.

The American Crossroads debacle was only the most dramatic example of the limits of big money in this election, according to the Sunlight Foundation report. About \$1.3 billion was spent by outside groups overall -- about two-thirds on the Republican side -- and for the most part their returns were equally low. The Chamber of Commerce, for example, spent \$31 million-and had a 5 percent return, according to the Sunlight study. The conservative American Future Fund spent \$23.9 million and also realized a 5 percent return. The National Rifle Association spent \$11 million, and got shut out.

"It may mean people really don't like big money in politics," says Kathy Kiely, the Sunlight Foundation analyst who co-authored the study. "Maybe they prefer it be spent on something else."

[Now I read tthat Carl Rove is claiming victory because all those \$millions kept it close. Close? What good is that? It was victory, and an easy one at that, that was promised. Sorry! –SteveB]

20121108-06	11:35	Art	Re: "Karl Rove's Election Debacle: Super PAC's Spending Was Nearly for Naught" (reply to MarthaH, above)
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Some good articles in the *Washington Post* on this. They spent hundreds of millions \$ and got very little out of it. Yeah!!!

20121108-07	11:40	Pam	Re: "Karl Rove's Election Debacle: Super PAC's Spending Was Nearly for Naught" (reply to MarthaH & Art, above)
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Maybe this is when we hit bottom and begin looking for a way out of this destructive behavior.

20121108-11	16:08	SandyI	Re: "Karl Rove's Election Debacle: Super PAC's Spending Was Nearly for Naught" (reply to all, above)
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I am having difficulty not celebrating their losses, both political and financial. But with their bottomless bank accounts, I'm sure they will be back again, more divisive and vindictive than ever. Boehner is out there already and he doesn't sound like a "let us reason together" kind of guy.

"Change will occur in almost every aspect of our lives,
We can learn to embrace it while releasing the past with grace." —Daily OM

20121108-03 07:38 MarthaH "Money Can't Buy Happiness, or an Election"

When I think of all that money could have done instead, it makes me ashamed for them that they weren't taught better. Power grabbing doesn't trump loving thy neighbor!

"Money Can't Buy Happiness, or an Election" by Rachael Marcus and John Dunbar, The Center for Public Integrity/NBC News

Casino magnate Sheldon Adelson poured \$53 million into the 2012 elections via controversial super PACs to back these candidates. All lost. From left to right, Mitt Romney, Connie Mack, George Allen, Allen West, Joe Kyrillos, Rabbi Shmuley Boteach, David Dewhurst and Newt Gingrich. West is demanding a recount, however, claiming 'disturbing irregularities at the polls.'

Money can't buy happiness, nor can it buy an election, apparently.

The top donors to super PACs in 2012 did not fare well — casino magnate Sheldon Adelson, the No. 1 super PAC contributor with more than \$53 million in giving, backed eight losers at this writing.

Adelson was top backer of the pro-Mitt Romney Restore Our Future super PAC, with \$20 million in donations. Romney lost to President Barack Obama. In addition, Adelson's contributions to super PACs backing U.S. Senate candidates in Florida, Virginia and New Jersey were also for naught.

He was not the only conservative billionaire who had a bad night.

Contran Corp. CEO Harold Simmons, (No. 2), homebuilder Bob Perry (No. 3) and TD Ameritrade founder Joe Ricketts, (No.4), also bet on Romney. Collectively, the trio gave \$13.4 million to Restore Our Future, and Ricketts' super PAC, Ending Spending Action Fund, spent an additional \$9.9 million helping Romney's failed bid.

Fred Eychaner, founder of Chicago-based alternative-newspaper publisher Newsweb Corp., was the only one of the top five donors to super PACs to back a winner -- President Barack Obama.

The super donor winner of the night was Newsweb Corp. CEO Fred Eychaner (No. 5). Eychaner gave \$3.5 million to pro-Obama super PAC Priorities USA Action through the most recent filing period, which ended Oct. 17, according to Federal Election Commission records.

In Florida, Republican Rep. Connie Mack lost his challenge to the popular Democratic Sen. Bill Nelson, who won with 55 percent of the vote. Adelson gave \$2 million to the pro-Mack super PAC Freedom PAC, and Simmons and Perry gave a combined \$255,000 to the group.

The hotly contested Senate race in Virginia attracted \$2.5 million from Adelson and Perry, both giving to Independence Virginia, the super PAC supporting former Republican Sen. George Allen. His opponent, Democratic Gov. Tim Kaine, won the seat with 52 percent of the vote.

Adelson also invested in the re-election of Rep. Allen West, R-Fla., in Florida's 18th District, who narrowly lost to Democratic newcomer Patrick Murphy. On Wednesday, however, West's campaign called for a recount, citing "disturbing irregularities reported at polls."

The casino billionaire's \$1 million to Patriot Prosperity, a New Jersey-specific super PAC supporting the Republican candidate for U.S. Senate, Joe Kyrillos, and the Republican candidate for U.S. House in the state's 9th District, Rabbi Shmuley Boteach, did not pay off.

Sheldon Adelson, chairman and CEO of the Las Vegas Sands Corp., pumped \$53 million into the election, but apparently backed only one minor winner by helping defeat a Michigan ballot initiative.

During the primary season, Adelson's \$16.5 million in contributions to the super PAC Winning Our Future was not enough guide former House Majority Leader Newt Gingrich to a Republican presidential nomination, though it is credited with keeping him in the race longer than expected. Nor were Adelson's contributions enough to help Texas Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst win the GOP primary for Texas Senate earlier this year, a cause to which gave at least a quarter-million dollars.

Adelson did score one point with his \$2 million contribution that helped sink a Michigan ballot initiative seeking to enshrine collective bargaining in the state's Constitution. Adelson runs the only non-union casinos on the Las Vegas Strip.

Win-Loss Rundown (giving to candidate-specific super PACs in the federal election):

Sheldon Adelson, Republican, \$53.7 million*

Mitt Romney — loss
Connie Mack (Florida Senate) — loss
George Allen (Virginia Senate) — loss
Allen West (House, Florida's 18th) — too close to call, but leaning toward loss
Joe Kyrillos (New Jersey Senate) — loss
Shmuley Boteach (House, New Jersey's 9th) — loss
Newt Gingrich (GOP presidential primary) — loss
David Dewhurst (GOP primary, Texas Senate) — loss

Harold Simmons, Republican, \$26.9 million*

Mitt Romney — loss
Connie Mack (Florida Senate) — loss
Rick Santorum (GOP presidential primary) — loss
Newt Gingrich (GOP presidential primary) — loss
Rick Perry (GOP presidential primary) — loss
David Dewhurst (GOP primary, Texas Senate) — loss
Orrin Hatch (GOP primary, Utah Senate) — win

Bob Perry, Republican, \$21.5 million*

Mitt Romney — loss
George Allen (Virginia Senate) — loss
Connie Mack (Florida Senate) — loss
Rick Perry (GOP presidential primary) — loss
David Dewhurst (GOP primary, Texas Senate) — loss
Joe Ricketts, Republican, \$12.9 million*
Mitt Romney — loss

Fred Eychaner, Democrat, \$12 million*

Barack Obama — win

Tuesday marked the first presidential election under the new campaign finance regime installed following the 2010 *Citizens United* U.S. Supreme Court decision. The ruling paved the way for super PACs and nonprofits, allowing them to accept unlimited contributions from individuals, corporations and unions, which could be spent on advertising backing or opposing candidates.

*As of Oct. 17, 2012 for the 2011-2012 election cycle. Source: Center for Responsive Politics and Center for Public Integrity analysis of Federal Election Commission records. Totals include contributions from individuals, family members and corporations that are controlled by the individual super donor.

The Center for Public Integrity is a non-profit independent investigative news outlet. For more of its stories visit: <http://www.publicintegrity.org>.

[What I fear is that, in the future, these rich a-holes will figure out how to do a much better job of manipulating public opinion with their, mainly, lies and slander. We badly need election reform, but for this round at least, the people triumphed. –SteveB]

20121108-04 07:51 MarthaH "Where Do You Fit? The Political Party Quiz"

I wish I had had this "tool" when I taught! The whole thing won't copy/paste, but it really shows the tendencies. It's strongly disagree--agree strongly mode.

"Where Do You Fit? The Political Party Quiz" by the Pew research Center

date unknown, (<http://www.people-press.org/political-party-quiz/>)

[Wow! I'm really insulted! It said I was a "socialist"! ;-) –SteveB]

20121108-05 10:21 Pam Re: Good News from Florida (reply to SteveG, FotM Newsletter #265)

I love Alan Grayson. We've got Elizabeth Warren and Grayson. A dynamic duo!

20121108-08 11:43 Art Re: Energy Independence? (reply to SteveB, FotM Newsletter #265)

I'm pretty sure oil is an international commodity and the price is determined by international futures bond and stock traders. Everyone has seemingly forgotten that spike during the last Bush Administration when refined gasoline went up to almost \$5.00 a gallon. If you looked at supply and demand during that period, it had not changed appreciably at all. So the oil was there and the demand was the same and yet prices almost doubled. Why? It begged looking into by the incoming Obama Administration but then got buried in the economic crash at the end of the Bush years.

SteveB makes a good point below but in the end it doesn't matter where you pump it. It will go to whoever pays the highest price.

Another thing that need fixing.

[Art: "It will go to whoever pays the highest price." Yes, now, but maybe not our oil in our future... --SteveB]

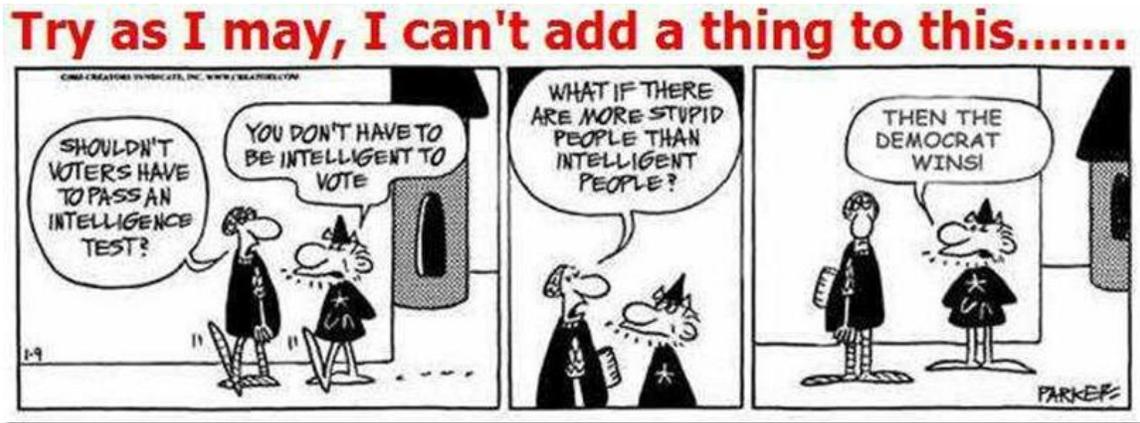
20121108-09 12:26 Art Republican Gerrymandering & FotM Newsletter #265

Great lead in article and the rest also, of course.

Have you noted in the recent election that the only places the Republicans seemed to do well was in the gerrymandered congressional districts. In almost every other case where the electorate was spread across a broad brush of the population, despite spending hundreds of \$ millions, they lost.

Hmmm?

20121108-10 14:58 Tom Cartoon: Democrats



20121108-12 20:30 SteveG "What the Election Means for the Fiscal Showdown"

"What the Election Means for the Fiscal Showdown" by ThinkProgress War Room

Nov. 8, 2012, (<http://thinkprogress.org/progress-report/?mobile=nc>)

President Obama won a decisive victory on Tuesday. He's the first Democrat since FDR to be elected twice with over 50 percent of the vote.

As soon as the election was over, discussion immediately turned to the upcoming fiscal showdown. Over the course of the next few weeks, Congress has to resolve numerous fiscal issues:

- The fate of the Bush tax cuts, particularly those for the wealthiest Americans.
- \$1.1 trillion in automatic cuts to both defense and domestic discretionary spending.
- The debt ceiling, which may be hit as soon as the end of next month.

If nothing is done by the end of the year, the automatic cuts kick in and taxes revert to Clinton-era rates for everyone, not just the wealthy.

Republicans are already indicating that they think the election either didn't mean anything or somehow actually validated their viewpoint. House Speaker John Boehner (R) said yesterday that tax hikes for the wealthy were off the table. He then floated what he called a "compromise," but in reality is basically the same tax plan that Mitt Romney just ran on— and lost. For his part, House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R) has already taken the debt ceiling hostage to deep cuts to entitlements and other spending. Cantor also insisted that Obamacare be on the table during negotiations.

Here's why the election provides President Obama with a mandate to push his vision — a balanced approach that invests in the middle class, makes smart spending cuts, and, most importantly, makes the wealthy pay their fair share. Conversely, the election was also a definitive repudiation of the GOP's failed top-down approach.

Candidates Ran on Tax Fairness — And Won

The President made raising taxes on the wealthiest Americans a centerpiece of his campaign, and never wavered from that position. On election night, one of [Politico's](#) top headlines read: "Exit polls 2012: Most say hike taxes." **In fact, 6 in 10 voters nationwide say they think taxes should be increased.** The question of returning the high end tax rates to those during the Clinton era played an even more central role in key Senate races in blue, purple and even deep red states:

- **Wisconsin (D51, R46):** Rep. Tammy Baldwin was the lead sponsor of the Buffett Rule in the House of Representatives and made it a central element of her campaign, including in her advertising. Her opponent, Tommy Thompson, opposed the Buffett Rule, calling it "discriminatory." He also ran on a tax plan that would lower taxes for the wealthy while raising them on the middle class and the poor. American Crossroads, Crossroads GPS and the Chamber of Commerce all spent heavily to define Baldwin as a "tax and spend" liberal; in fact, in the final two months these three groups spent over \$3.6 million to attack Baldwin on her tax plans. Yet, fifty-two percent of Wisconsin voters said that taxes should be increased for those making over \$250,000, according to exit polls (with another 12 percent supporting tax increases for all incomes and 32 percent against tax increases for high earners).
- **Connecticut (D55, R43):** Linda McMahon released a [tax plan](#) that was identical to Gov. Romney's proposal and similarly pitched her plan as a tax cut for the middle class even though analysts agreed it would provide massive tax breaks to the wealthy and corporations. Rep. Chris Murphy centered himself as the candidate "on the side of the middle" class, featuring McMahon's tax policy that benefited the richest in [multiple ads](#), declaring "it's time to make the rules fair." According to an analysis of Kantar Media CMAG data by CAP Action, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce spent at least \$550,000 in the final week of the election championing McMahon's tax plan and contrasting it with "politicians who raise taxes so they can keep spending more".
- **North Dakota (3,000 votes):** Even in solidly red North Dakota, Heidi Heitkamp championed tax fairness and campaigned in support of the Buffett Rule. She also attacked her opponent, Rep. Rick Berg, for twice voting in favor of the Republican budget, specifically citing its tax cuts for the wealthy. Heitkamp also strenuously defended her support for Obamacare, even turning Berg's support for repealing it into an attack. Crossroads GPS spent heavily against Heitkamp with more than half a million dollars in the final eight weeks used to define Heitkamp on the tax issue.

The American people voted for candidates up and down the ballot that supported getting rid of tax giveaways and special loopholes that favor the richest corporations and individuals.

A Debate Between Two Visions for the Economy

This election across the country was a proxy debate on two competing visions for economic growth: the trickle-down model that suggests that the only job creators are the richest, where it is enough to grow profits without sustaining jobs or wages, and the "middle out" vision of the economy that says the government has a role to play in making prosperity possible for more Americans. And what happened? The middle class as the engine of economic growth won.

- Exit polls show that a majority believes that the economy generally favors the wealthy (55 percent); what's more a majority also said that Romney's policies favor the rich (53 percent). But it wasn't just about Romney's support of policies that benefit the wealthiest; it was that people rejected the basis of his top-down economic theory.
- A poll of 1700 presidential voters the night of the election found that while voters credited President Obama with being better on the economy by only a point, when it came to "restoring the middle class", voters favored Obama by twelve points.
- Joel Benenson, chief pollster for the Obama campaign, wrote for [New York Times](#) about an 800 person poll they conducted for their own firm, finding: "Spending cuts alone could not address voter concerns — 89 percent of those surveyed agreed that "for my children to have the economic opportunities I've had, we need to make real investments in education, creating world-class schools and making college more

affordable.” Benenson continued, “And when asked what the key to growing our economy was, nearly two in three voters said it was building a strong middle class over creating a “healthy climate for business.”

Americans made clear this week that they are more interested in investing in growth through the middle class than austerity measures that place more of the burden on the middle class. There is broad support for cutting wasteful spending, including tax giveaways that favor the wealthiest, rather than cutting investments in programs that protect social mobility and growth, like education, infrastructure and public health.

As Elizabeth Warren stated in her speech after defeating Sen. Scott Brown, “This victory belongs to you...we’re going to fight for a level playing field and we’re going to put people back to work.”

The Choice

The choices we make over the next few weeks will have huge consequences for the middle class and our economy for a generation to come: will Congress ask the wealthiest Americans to pay their fair share, or will they keep the game rigged for the wealthy at the expense of the middle class? One path asks the wealthy to pay a little more in order to reduce the deficit while making investments in the middle class that we need in order to grow the economy over the long-term. A different path asks the middle class and seniors to foot the bill by slashing Medicare and Social Security just to provide another round of tax cuts to the wealthiest – tax cuts that have proven to not create jobs and would effectively preclude investments in energy, education and infrastructure.

As Republicans and Democrats make their case to the American people during the fiscal showdown, they would be wise to look closely at what Americans said loudly and clearly in this election and the brinkmanship and pledges they rejected.

BOTTOM LINE: Republicans made their case to the American people and the American people rejected their approach.

20121108-13 21:11 MarthaH Cartoon: Florida Does It Again! (We Need Election reform!)



"Lincoln Only Won 39.8 percent of the Popular Vote" by delanceyplace.com

Nov. 6, 2012, (http://delanceyplace.com/view_archives.php?2104)

Review/excerpt: *American History Revisited* by Seymour Morris Jr., Broadway Books, 2010)

In today's selection - Abraham Lincoln only won 39.8 percent of the popular vote in his first presidential victory, and used a questionable tactic to help win his second. In fact, since 1820, the last year an essentially uncontested election was held, most presidential elections have been extremely close. Only four presidents received more than 60 percent of the vote, nine elections saw a candidate win between 55 and 60 percent of the vote, and candidates who received less than 50 percent of the vote have won 18 presidential elections:

He was the luckiest man to run for president: He won with only 39.8 percent of the popular votes cast -- the smallest percentage ever recorded. He had no help from his running mate: he only met his vice president Hannibal Hamlin on Election Day. How did Abraham Lincoln manage to win?

The remaining 60.2 percent was split among three other candidates: Stephen A. Douglas (29 percent), John C. Breckenridge (18 percent), and John Bell (13 percent). Had it not been for the presence of *two* 'third-party' candidates -- Breckenridge and Bell -- Lincoln might not have been elected. (In that year there were four candidates because each of the two parties had nominated an upstart South-ern candidate as well as an official North-ern one.) Says the historian Jay Winik: Lincoln's victory 'was in many ways a fluke and nothing more.'

Naturally, lacking a strong 'popular mandate,' Lincoln had a difficult time leading the country. In 1864, with the Civil War going badly, Lincoln made preparations to go home, fully expecting General George McClellan to be his successor. ... Observes the historian James McPherson, 'If the election had been held in August 1864 instead of November, Lincoln would have lost.' ...

In the middle of an unexpectedly long war that had -- in Walt Whitman's memorable words -- turned the nation into 'one vast central hospital,' the president needed all the help he could get in his faltering reelection bid. His primary support came from soldiers and those who continued to believe in the war.

Of the twenty-five states of the Union, only fourteen permitted soldiers to vote in the state they happened to be in while fighting. Soldiers from the remaining eleven states would be out of luck because they were not home. One of the critical states was Indiana. The state's Republican governor went to Secretary of War Edwin Stanton and told him that without the support of Indiana's fifteen thousand soldiers, Lincoln would lose. How about giving the soldiers 'sick leave' so they could come home to vote?

A letter immediately went out, signed by the president, to General William Tecumseh Sherman: 'Indiana is the only important State victory in October, whose soldiers cannot vote in the field. Anything you can do to let her soldiers, or any part of them, go home to vote at the State election will be greatly in point.' Never in the history of warfare had soldiers been permitted to go home to vote, thought Sherman when he read the letter, but then, this was different. 'Our armies vanish before our eyes and it is useless to complain,' he wrote his wife, 'because the election is more important than the war.' (He also knew if Lincoln lost, he would be out of a job.) ...

The Democrats were furious when they heard what Lincoln had done, but there was nothing they could do, lest it impugn the patriotism of their fighting men. They became even more frustrated when they saw what happened on Election Day. From every direction, thousands of soldiers got off the train to vote and sweep Lincoln to victory. Exactly who these thousands of troops were, nobody could be sure. It was, in the words of one historian, 'the day that Michigan, Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Ohio voted in Indiana.'

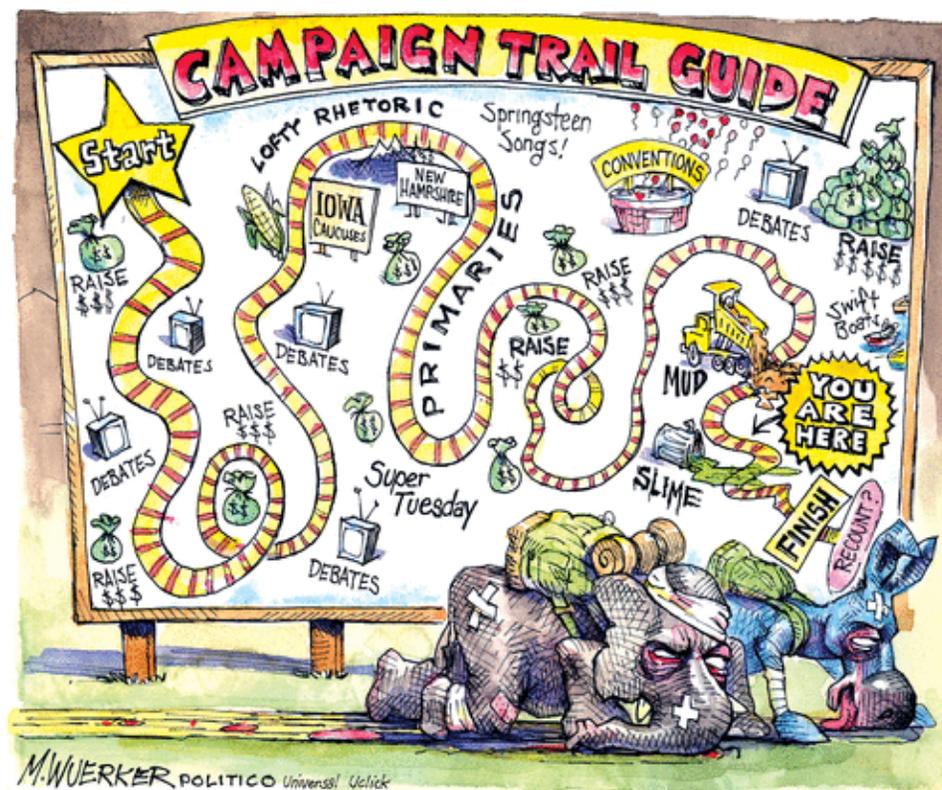


The Devil is Ready to Clean the Greens! I wonder if Dyson will pick up on this all-terrain enhancement.





[Very simple and clever! Ingenious. So often the most obvious things escape us! -SteveB]



<http://www.funny-potato.com/dead-end.html>



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

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