



FRIENDS OF THE MIDDLE **NEWSLETTER #275 — NOV. 22, 2012**

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Rubbing It In One More Time

(posted by Steven W. Baker / SteveB, Nov. 22, 2012)

This was just too funny and right-on to resist. Besides, if anything is worthy of celebration and reflection it's history, right? And major history was certainly made that I'm proud to have been a small part of...

"Republicans Seek Sweet '16 Solutions" by Jason Linkins and Sabrina Siddiqui, Huffington Post

Nov. 20, 2012, (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/11/20/republicans-sweet-2016-solutions_n_2168278.html?utm_hp_ref=politics)



It's been just two weeks since The Most Important Election In Our Lifetime, and the side that lost is gearing up to be a better competitor by the time the next Most Important Election In Our Lifetime happens, in 2016. But first, there comes a period of soul-searching. What went wrong? And who went the wrongest? How does the Republican Party move forward (but not like, you know ... Obama Forward). Over the past few weeks, various GOP thought-leaders have offered suggestions. Bill Kristol said he thinks the party should go ahead and raise taxes on upper-income earners. David Frum said he thinks that the Republican Party should embrace "cultural modernity." Karl Rove said he wants to return to the "50 State Solution." And lots of people seem to generically agree that the next Republican candidate for president should "do some Hispanic stuff."

But other ideas have drawn a lot more attention, suggesting an amusing step-by-step process that your Huff Post List shall now run down for you.

1. For Starters, Reject Romney Thoroughly.

As Ben Smith pointed out, Mitt Romney is getting disappeared from the GOP ranks faster than a dissident in Milton Friedman's Chile. It's easy to see why. Who wants to be associated with the guy who was just at the receiving end of a shellacking from President Barack Obama, especially after an election that was deemed to have been handed to Republicans on a silver platter. Not only did the party come together to unanimously condemn Romney's "gift" comments (huh, weird how there were mostly crickets when the whole 47 percent debacle went down) -- but now Sen. Marco Rubio is also reiterating his opposition to Romney's "self-deportation" remark made during the GOP primaries. It's true that Rubio has taken issue with Romney's choice of words before, but like most in his party, he spent the last months leading up to the election pivoting to jobs and the economy when asked about his nominee's non-existent position on immigration. No more.

2. Then, I Dunno...Get Better Candidates, I Guess?

Republican party bigwigs will be retconning 2012 for years, wondering what might have been if only Mitch Daniels, or Jeb Bush, or Chris Christie had run for the nomination and won. (You don't think that candidate Christie and President Barack Obama would have bro'ed out in mutual love for one another, do you?)

But the need for better candidates is more painfully felt down-ticket, where -- as Mike McAuliff reports -- memories of the damage done by some of the GOP's leading lowlights remain fresh:

The most remarkable losses were in Indiana and Missouri, where the GOP had been looking at near-certain wins until their right-leaning standard-bearers both took controversial positions on abortion. Missouri Rep. Todd Akin declared women don't get pregnant from "legitimate rape." Indiana Treasurer Richard Mourdock proclaimed that pregnancy from rape is "something God intended to happen."

3. Or Maybe We Can Just Have the Same Sort of Candidates, Only They Remember to Stop Saying the Stupid Stuff Everybody Hates Out Loud.

After keeping a relatively low profile during the presidential race, Bobby Jindal suddenly has all the answers. The Louisiana governor took to various media outlets to decry the GOP for coming across as the "stupid party", and then again to denounce Romney's 'Obama's policies were gifts to minorities' comments ... and then yet again to urge the Republican Party to go back to the basics. Of course, those "basics" didn't differ in many meaningful ways from Mitt Romney's basics -- Jindal's preferred tax policies aren't a whit different from Romney's. And for all of Jindal's talk about not being the "stupid party," he's the guy who supports creationism.

Besides, I think a lot of Republicans are just going to hear Jindal's admonitions about not being the "stupid party" and think, "Well, that's pretty rich coming from the guy who endorsed Rick Perry."

4. That's a Lot of Work, Can't We Just Run George P. Bush?

Yeah, we get it. He's a Bush, and he's handsome, and he's Hispanic, and he's ready to, like, TOTALLY run for something? Maybe land commissioner? Whatever you got, basically. But it's not actually going to be that easy, reckons Alex Pareene:

There was honestly never much of a reason to expect that Hispanic American voters -- a diffuse group of lots of very different types of voters -- would end up voting as a bloc. But then the Republican Party started encouraging and explicitly campaigning on nativism and ferocious white racial resentments, instead of merely profiting from them. In doing so, Republicans might have served to make the non-white portion of the country liberal for a generation at least, which would be a major problem.

[...]

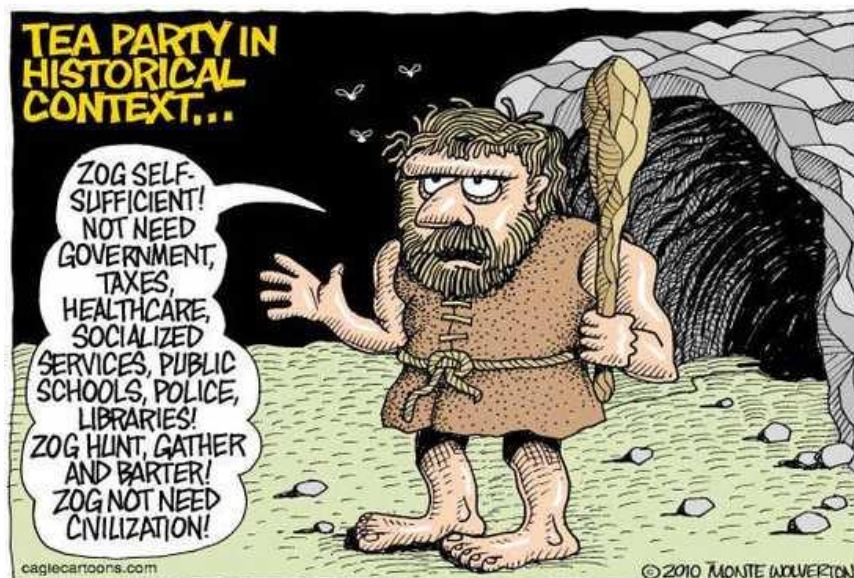
If that's the case, if the Tea Party and Sheriff Joe have liberalized a generation of Latino voters, the Republican Party's demographics problem will not be fixed simply by embracing individuals like Marco Rubio, who share the same batshit beliefs as the party. (Nominating a white guy did not win the former Confederacy for Democrats in 2004.) But it also might not help that much to nominate a guy like George P. Bush, who merely subscribes to most of the beliefs of modern conservatism. It could take years, and a series of Democratic missteps, to erase the damage done in the last few elections.

5. Screw It, Then, Why Don't We Just Bring Palin Back?

While GOP operatives point to the likes of Chris Christie, Marco Rubio and Jeb Bush as potential 2016 frontrunners, conservative columnist Charlotte Allen tossed another name into the mix: Sarah Palin. Cause, remember how well that worked out the last time? "Palin can more than keep up with the Democrats in appealing to voters' emotions," Allen wrote in a column that apparently was not satire. "Hardly anyone could be more blue collar than Palin, out on the fishing boat with her hunky blue-collar husband, Todd." Ha, ha: no. (<http://wonkette.com/490149/charlotte-allens-startling-insight-lots-of-voters-are-idiots-so-sarah-palin-2016>)

6. Wait I Got It!

Remember all those amazing engineers and technologists that Alexis Madrigal profiled in his great post-election article on the Obama campaign and the brilliant geek-savants who built the system that powered the president to victory? Well, can't you guys just pay those nerds triple what Obama was paying them? I mean, you are Republicans, after all.



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20121121-01	00:38	Tom	Photo: It's What's for Dinner
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[Mmmm...thanks, Tom. -SteveB]

This is the way to go...

"Sen. Murray: Dems Would Let Bush-Era Rates Expire before Taking 'Unfair Deal'" by Meghashyam Mali, The Hill

Nov. 11, 2012, (<http://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/news/267253-sen-murray-dems-would-let-bush-era-rates-expire-before-taking-unfair-deal>)

Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) on Sunday said Democrats were prepared to allow the expiration of all George W. Bush-era tax rates to take place if Republican lawmakers objected to raising taxes on the wealthiest earners.

"We can't accept an unfair deal that piles on the middle class and tell them they have to support it. We have to make sure that the wealthiest Americans pay their fair share," said Murray on ABC's "This Week."

Murray said one option would be to let the lower rates expire across the board and then return to the table next year with new talks on a tax-cut package.

"So if the Republicans will not agree with that, we will reach a point at the end of this year where all the tax cuts expire and we'll start over next year. And whatever we do will be a tax cut for whatever package we put together. That may be the way to get past this," said Murray.

The Washington senator is likely to become chairwoman of the Senate Budget Committee, and previously served on the congressional "supercommittee" that failed to finalize a deficit-reduction plan, which will trigger sequestration cuts in January 2013 unless Congress acts to block them.

Economists warn that the tax-rate rises and automatic spending cuts could bring another recession, and both parties have said they hope to avoid the so-called "fiscal cliff."

"Look, no one wants to go off the fiscal cliff. But a fair deal is absolutely critical here," said Murray on Sunday.

President Obama and Democrats have called for raising taxes on the wealthy to pay for the deficit-reduction plan, while Republicans want to extend all the Bush-era rates.

The president will meet with lawmakers next week to begin talks on a deal and said he was "encouraged" last week when House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) said Republicans were open to new revenues in any such deal.

Appearing with Murray, Sen. Saxby Chambliss (R-Ga.) praised Boehner. "I thought he showed great leadership by saying that revenues need to be on the table," said Chambliss.

But Chambliss cautioned that new revenues needed to be matched with measures reforming entitlement programs and said the Bowles-Simpson model could provide a template for negotiators.

"Bowles-Simpson said, look, eliminate all these tax credits and tax deductions. You can generate somewhere \$1 to \$1.2 trillion in additional revenue. You can actually lower tax rates by doing that," said Chambliss.

Today is kind of a strange day in Bolivia. It happens every ten years.

It's National Census Day. As I write, an army of young college students and others are working to knock on every door in the country and count every one and not more of the 10,400,000+ people in the country. They started at one minute after midnight last night and will finish, I guess, by midnight tonight.

In the meantime, no one else in the country can go out of their houses. All businesses are closed, including ours. There's no public transportation and no non-essential vehicles are allowed on the streets or roads. All air traffic has been halted except for a few international arrivals. If you go out, you can be ticketed or arrested (I guess they also count the inmates).

The job gets done fast, with quickly available results, and at little cost, except the rather large hit of an entire day of lost national productivity, which the U.S. avoids.

Interesting the differences in the way things are done in America and Bolivia.

So we're lazing around having a nice mid-week day off. Marci cooked me a rare, big American breakfast, and we're having some of my favorites for lunch. We decided there are going to be a lot of little Bolivians born about nine months from now...

[20121121-06](#) 13:40 Ben Re: Bolivia's National Census Day (reply to SteveB, above)

Census taking is census building. Nation building, if you will.

[20121121-07](#) 16:04 SteveB Re: Bolivia's National Census Day (reply to Pam & Ben, above)

The nicest young lady came to count us. Census and election duties work a lot like jury duty in the U.S. Here, everyone is expected to help out in some way and young people have to spend a year of military or service duty.

Our Census Taker went to 20 households, filling out a little booklet for each person and finishing before lunch. She will be paid 20 bolivianos (about \$3).

Now, when can we break out of this prison?

[20121121-10](#) 17:25 Pam Re: Bolivia's National Census Day (reply to SteveB, above)

I can't imagine such a thing happening in the U.S. A mid-week weekend can't be all bad.

[20121121-04](#) 10:19 MarthaH The House Republicans vs. Susan Rice

In a typical right-winged attack on anything they can grasp, the HOUSE has attacked Susan Rice. Well, hunky-dory...What percentage know the House has no responsibility here--but blowing hot air. Can anyone find the list who signed? I haven't been able to do so, and I really want to read it--and their districts of origin? Are they Americans???? :-)...Show me their birth certificates, ha. If they know they have no power here--which should be true--WE know why...on several levels. And we know the underlying issue besides gender. Politics as usual. I am not very happy with them, but what is new!

[20121121-05](#) 13:31 Art Happy Thanksgiving!

Happy Turkey day to all and especially to you, SteveB. Great job on the Newsletter this past year and thanks again for bringing us all together.

[20121121-08](#) 16:52 SteveB Re: Happy Thanksgiving! (reply to Art, above & to all)

Thank you, Art!

It's been such a pleasure for me to get to know all of you a little or a little better, as the case may be!

May your Thanksgiving be full of joy and stuffing!

For us here on the ground in Bolivia, it will be business as usual, but—hey—everyday is like a holiday in paradise...

[20121121-09](#) 17:20 Pam Re: Happy Thanksgiving! (reply to Art, above & to all)

I second that! I'm thankful for so much this year: my new-found son, my family, my friends, and that includes my FotM buddies. Happy Thanksgiving, everybody!

[20121121-11](#) 19:53 Art Fw: Professional Predictions from Experts

Just goes to show you.

Best wishes for Thanksgiving to all. Glad for the cease fire for my Israeli and Arab friends.

Professional Predictions...

"Man will never reach the moon regardless of all future scientific advances."
—Dr. Lee DeForest, 'Father of Radio & Grandfather of Television.'

"The bomb will never go off. I speak as an expert in explosives."
—Admiral William Leahy, commenting on the US Atomic Bomb Project

"There is no likelihood man can ever tap the power of the atom."
—Robert Millikan, Nobel Prize in Physics, 1923.

"Computers in the future may weigh no more than 1.5 tons."
—Popular Mechanics, forecasting the relentless march of science, 1949. [Date??? –SteveB]

"I think there is a world market for maybe five computers."
—Thomas Watson, chairman of IBM, 1943. [Date??? –SteveB]

"I have traveled the length and breadth of this country and talked with the best people, and I can assure you that data processing is a fad that won't last out the year."
—The editor in charge of business books for Prentice Hall, 1957.

"But what is it good for?"
—Engineer at the Advanced Computing Systems Division of IBM, 1968, commenting on the microchip.

"640K ought to be enough for anybody."
—Bill Gates, 1981.

"This 'telephone' has too many shortcomings to be seriously considered as a means of communication. The device is inherently of no value to us,"
—Western Union internal memo, 1876.

"The wireless music box has no imaginable commercial value. Who would pay for a message sent to nobody in particular?"
—David Sarnoff's associates in response to his urgings for investment in the radio in the 1920s.

"The concept is interesting and well-formed, but in order to earn better than a 'C,' the idea must be feasible."
— A Yale University management professor in response to Fred Smith's paper proposing reliable overnight delivery service. (Smith went on to found Federal Express Corp.)

"I'm just glad it'll be Clark Gable who's falling on his face and not Gary Cooper,"
—Gary Cooper on his decision not to take the leading role in *Gone with the Wind*.

**"A cookie store is a bad idea. Besides, the market research reports say America likes crispy cookies, not soft and chewy cookies like you make."
—Response to Debbi Fields' idea of starting Mrs. Fields' Cookies.**

"We don't like their sound, and guitar music is on the way out."
—Decca Recording Co. rejecting the Beatles, 1962.

"Heavier-than-air flying machines are impossible."
—Lord Kelvin, president, Royal Society, 1895.

"If I had thought about it, I wouldn't have done the experiment. The literature was full of examples that said you can't do this."
—Spencer Silver on the work that led to the unique adhesives for 3M "Post-It" Notepads.

"Drill for oil? You mean drill into the ground to try and find oil? You're crazy!"
—Drillers who Edwin L. Drake tried to enlist to his project to drill for oil in 1859.

"Stocks have reached what looks like a permanently high plateau."
—Irving Fisher, Professor of Economics, Yale University, 1929.

"Airplanes are interesting toys but of no military value."
—Marechal Ferdinand Foch, Professor of Strategy, Ecole Superieure de Guerre , France.

"Everything that can be invented has been invented."
—Charles H. Duell, Commissioner, US Office of Patents, 1899.

"The super computer is technologically impossible. It would take all of the water that flows over Niagara Falls to cool the heat generated by the number of vacuum tubes required."
—Professor of Electrical Engineering, New York University

"I don't know what use any one could find for a machine that would make copies of documents. It certainly couldn't be a feasible business by itself."
—The head of IBM, refusing to back the idea, forcing the inventor to found Xerox.

"Louis Pasteur's theory of germs is ridiculous fiction."
—Pierre Pachet, Professor of Physiology at Toulouse, 1872.

"The abdomen, the chest, and the brain will forever be shut from the intrusion of the wise and humane surgeon."
—Sir John Eric Ericksen, British surgeon, appointed Surgeon-Extraordinary to Queen Victoria 1873.

And last but not least...

"There is no reason anyone would want a computer in their home."
—Ken Olson, president, chairman and founder of Digital Equipment Corp., 1977.

[20121121-12](#) 21:40 SteveB "Study Finds Mammograms Lead to Unneeded Treatment"

"Study Finds Mammograms Lead to Unneeded Treatment" by Marilynn Marchione, MSN News

Nov. 21, 2012, (<http://news.msn.com/science-technology/study-finds-mammograms-lead-to-unneeded-treatment>)

Mammograms have done surprisingly little to catch deadly breast cancers before they spread, a big U.S. study finds.

More than a million women have been treated for cancers that never would have threatened their lives, researchers estimate.

Up to one-third of breast cancers, or 50,000 to 70,000 cases a year, don't need treatment, the study suggests.

It's the most detailed look yet at overtreatment of breast cancer, and it adds fresh evidence that screening is not as helpful as many women believe. Mammograms are still worthwhile, because they do catch some deadly cancers and save lives, doctors stress. And some of them disagree with conclusions the new study reached.

But it spotlights a reality that is tough for many Americans to accept: Some abnormalities that doctors call "cancer" are not a health threat or truly malignant. There is no good way to tell which ones are, so many women wind up getting treatments like surgery and chemotherapy that they don't really need.

Men have heard a similar message about PSA tests to screen for slow-growing prostate cancer, but it's relatively new to the debate over breast cancer screening.

"We're coming to learn that some cancers — many cancers, depending on the organ — weren't destined to cause death," said Dr. Barnett Kramer, a National Cancer Institute screening expert. However, "once a woman is diagnosed, it's hard to say treatment is not necessary."

He had no role in the study, which was led by Dr. H. Gilbert Welch of Dartmouth Medical School and Dr. Archie Bleyer of St. Charles Health System and Oregon Health & Science University. Results are in Thursday's New England Journal of Medicine.

Breast cancer is the leading type of cancer and cause of cancer deaths in women worldwide. Nearly 1.4 million new cases are diagnosed each year. Other countries screen less aggressively than the U.S. does. In Britain, for example, mammograms are usually offered only every three years and a recent review there found similar signs of overtreatment.

The dogma has been that screening finds cancer early, when it's most curable. But screening is only worthwhile if it finds cancers destined to cause death, and if treating them early improves survival versus treating when or if they cause symptoms.

Mammograms also are an imperfect screening tool — they often give false alarms, spurring biopsies and other tests that ultimately show no cancer was present. The new study looks at a different risk: Overdiagnosis, or finding cancer that is present but does not need treatment.

Researchers used federal surveys on mammography and cancer registry statistics from 1976 through 2008 to track how many cancers were found early, while still confined to the breast, versus later, when they had spread to lymph nodes or more widely.

The scientists assumed that the actual amount of disease — how many true cases exist — did not change or grew only a little during those three decades. Yet they found a big difference in the number and stage of cases discovered over time, as mammograms came into wide use.

Mammograms more than doubled the number of early-stage cancers detected — from 112 to 234 cases per 100,000 women. But late-stage cancers dropped just 8 percent, from 102 to 94 cases per 100,000 women.

The imbalance suggests a lot of over-diagnosis from mammograms, which now account for 60 percent of cases that are found, Bleyer said. If screening were working, there should be one less patient diagnosed with late-stage cancer for every additional patient whose cancer was found at an earlier stage, he explained.

"Instead, we're diagnosing a lot of something else — not cancer" in that early stage, Bleyer said. "And the worst cancer is still going on, just like it always was."

Researchers also looked at death rates for breast cancer, which declined 28 percent during that time in women 40 and older — the group targeted for screening. Mortality dropped even more — 41 percent — in women under 40, who presumably were not getting mammograms.

"We are left to conclude, as others have, that the good news in breast cancer — decreasing mortality — must largely be the result of improved treatment, not screening," the authors write.

The study was paid for by the study authors' universities.

"This study is important because what it really highlights is that the biology of the cancer is what we need to understand" in order to know which ones to treat and how, said Dr. Julia A. Smith, director of breast cancer screening at NYU Langone Medical Center in New York. Doctors already are debating whether DCIS, a type of early tumor confined to a milk duct, should even be called cancer, she said.

Another expert, Dr. Linda Vahdat, director of the breast cancer research program at Weill Cornell Medical College in New York, said the study's leaders made many assumptions to reach a conclusion about over-diagnosis that "may or may not be correct."

"I don't think it will change how we view screening mammography," she said.

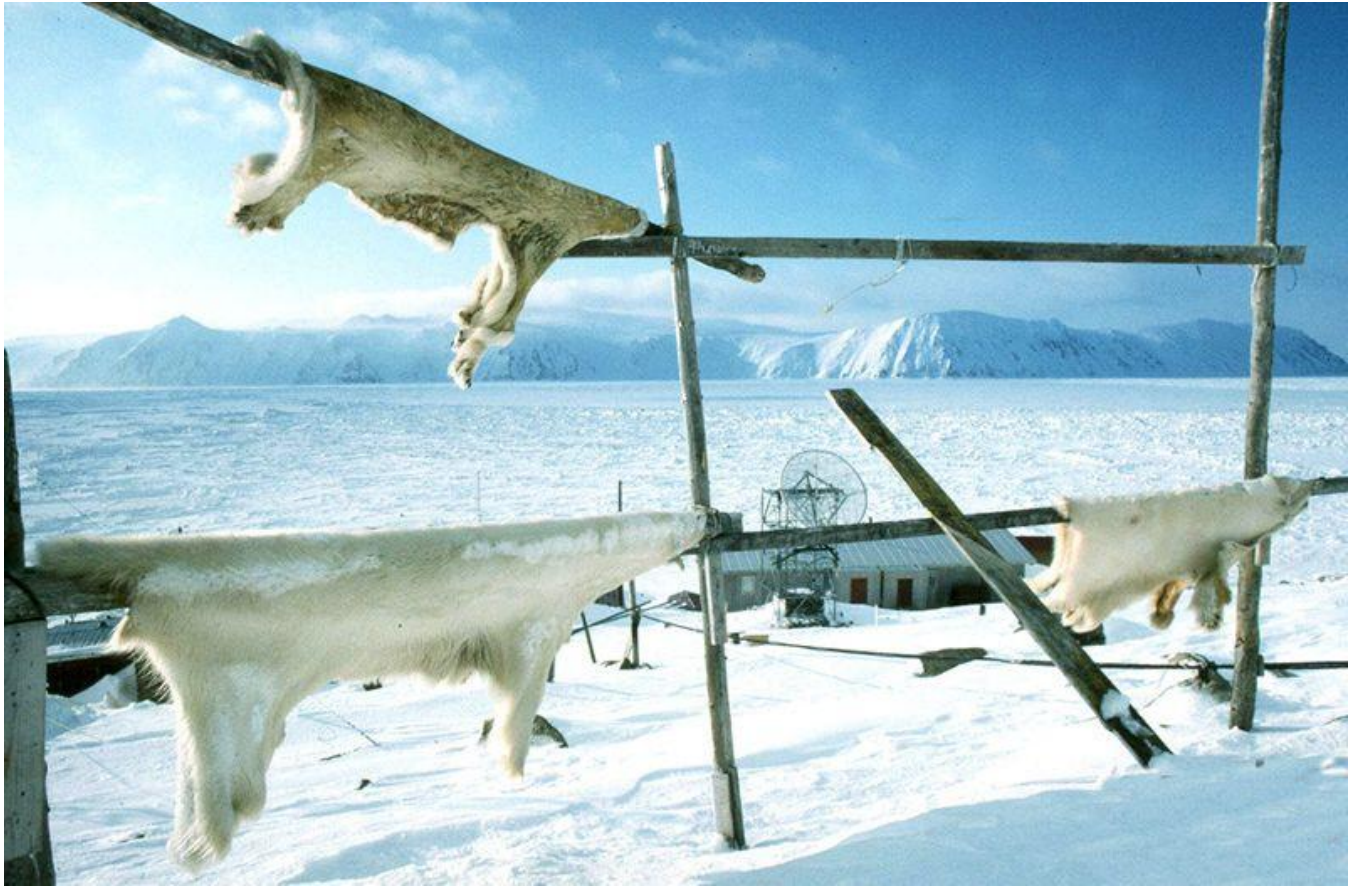
A government-appointed task force that gives screening advice calls for mammograms every other year starting at age 50 and stopping at 75. The American Cancer Society recommends them every year starting at age 40.

Dr. Len Lichtenfeld, the cancer society's deputy chief medical officer, said the study should not be taken as "a referendum on mammography," and noted that other high-quality studies have affirmed its value. Still, he said over-diagnosis is a problem, and it's not possible to tell an individual woman whether her cancer needs treated.

"Our technology has brought us to the place where we can find a lot of cancer. Our science has to bring us to the point where we can define what treatment people really need," he said.



<http://freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/2080507/posts>



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

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