



# FRIENDS OF THE MIDDLE NEWSLETTER #295 — DEC. 20, 2012

*Welcome to always lively political discussion and whatever else comes up.*  
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**INDEX: Click here.**

## **Lock and Load**

(posted by SandyI and MarthaH, Dec. 20, 2012)

So refreshing to hear a voice of reason in all the madness but then I agree with him and simply can not understand people who want more guns to make us safer. Perhaps, because I so recently heard someone load many guns to "not let them take me" I am biased against guns but then maybe, just maybe, that experience convinced me that the Second Amendment is incorrectly interpreted accidentally on purpose. —SandyI

"On Guns, Take Action Now" by Eugene Robinson, *The Washington Post*

Dec. 17, 2012, ([http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/eugene-robinson-on-guns-take-action-now/2012/12/17/5f300f98-4888-11e2-ad54-580638ede391\\_story.html?hpid=z2](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/eugene-robinson-on-guns-take-action-now/2012/12/17/5f300f98-4888-11e2-ad54-580638ede391_story.html?hpid=z2))



We are not helpless to stop the massacre of innocent children. We must begin — today, right now, this minute — taking guns out of the hands of madmen, and the first step should be a ban on military-style assault weapons such as the rifle used to turn a Connecticut school into a slaughterhouse.

That won't be enough to end all the carnage, but it will save some lives. It is admirable that President Obama, members of Congress and other elected officials are deeply horrified and saddened by what happened Friday in Newtown. But the moment calls for action, not words, and politicians who are too craven or stupid or ideologically rigid to finally move forward on gun control will have the blood of future victims on their hands.

We must begin with the guns.

Yes, there are other factors that play their roles in these mass shootings. We need to talk about mental-health issues. We need to explore why the assassin is always a troubled young man whose alienation was noticed by others but not adequately addressed. We need to examine the impact of hyper-violent video games on impressionable minds. We need to remember that horrors such as Columbine, Blacksburg, Aurora, Tucson and Newtown are statistically insignificant compared to the everyday bloodshed on our streets and in our homes.

But we have to start somewhere. If we wait for a perfect, comprehensive, foolproof solution, we'll do nothing. Tough, aggressively enforced, nationwide gun control is the most effective single initiative we could undertake, and shame on us if we wait another month, another week, another day.

The National Rifle Association and other apologists for murder will object, of course. They will say that Connecticut's gun control laws are already among the nation's toughest, and yet they failed to prevent Adam Lanza from annihilating 20 children and six adults at Sandy Hook Elementary School, his mother and himself. Therefore, these sophists will argue, gun control doesn't work.

What a crock. The truth is that gun control is ineffective because laws considered "tough" are, in reality, tragically weak.

There is no reason an everyday citizen needs to possess a Bushmaster AR-15-style semiautomatic rifle — the gun used not only in Newtown but in the Aurora, Colo., movie theater shootings and as recently as last week in a deadly shooting at a shopping mall near Portland, Ore. At the very least, these high-powered weapons developed for use by soldiers, not hunters, should be outlawed — and surrendered to authorities for destruction.

Lanza's mother had the Bushmaster and several other guns in her arsenal, and because of the Second Amendment, it is hard to imagine legislation that could have eliminated all of them. But she knew her 20-year-old son had profound psychological problems. She should at least have been required to keep her weapons under lock and key, securely out of his reach.

If you buy a gun for "protection," it probably will never be fired in anger. There is almost no chance you will ever use it to defend yourself against an intruder. Much more likely than the home-invasion scenario is that you will use the weapon on yourself or someone you know — or that someone else in the household will use it, perhaps on himself or herself, perhaps on you.

That some right-wing lawmakers and commentators have responded to Newtown by calling for teachers, principals and campus security guards to be armed is beyond obscene — and beneath contempt. More guns, with amateurs firing every which way, surely would have meant more dead children and more grieving families.

"We can't tolerate this anymore," Obama said Sunday at the Newtown memorial service, the fourth such sad ceremony he has attended during his four years in office.

"These tragedies must end. And to end them, we must change," Obama said. "We will be told that the causes of such violence are complex, and that is true. No single law, no set of laws can eliminate evil from the world or prevent every senseless act of violence in our society, but that can't be an excuse for inaction. Surely we can do better than this."

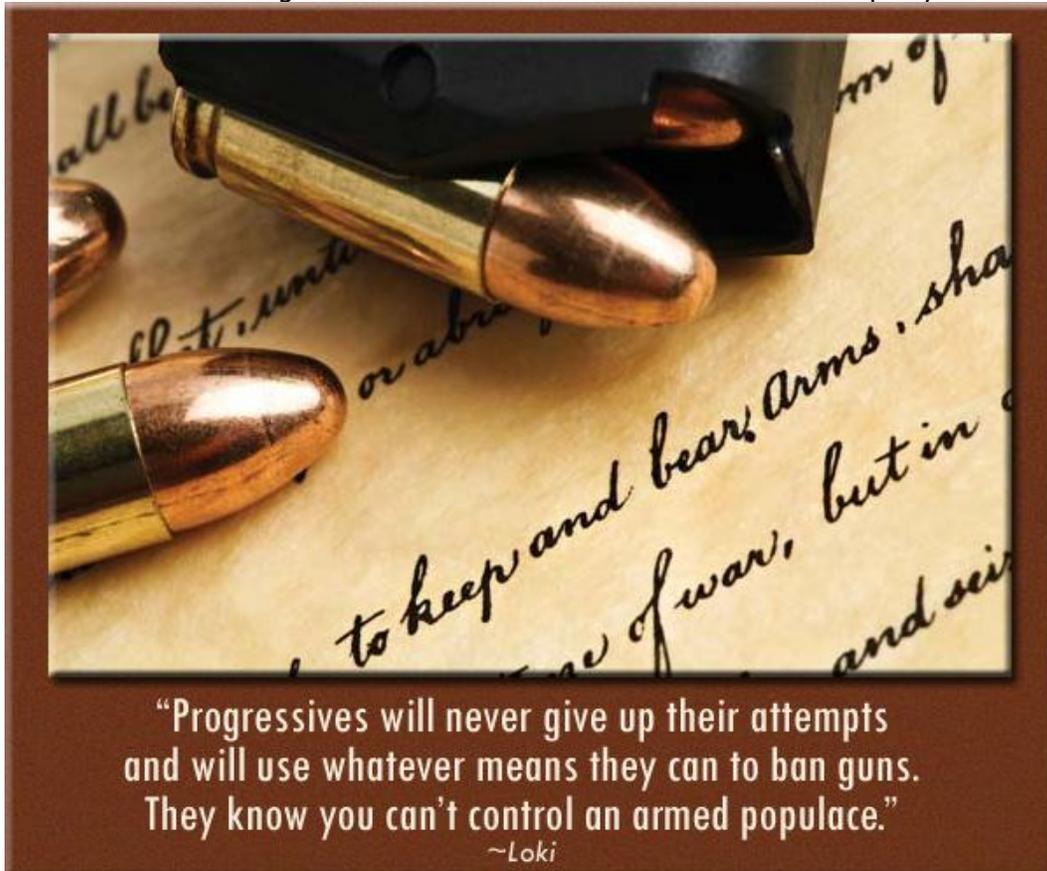
We can, and we must. We should begin with a strict assault weapons ban. Here are 20 reasons why:

Charlotte Bacon, 6. Daniel Barden, 7. Olivia Engel, 6. Josephine Gay, 7. Dylan Hockley, 6. Madeleine Hsu, 6. Catherine Hubbard, 6. Chase Kowalski, 7. Jesse Lewis, 6. Ana Marquez-Greene, 6. James Mattioli, 6. Grace McDonnell, 7. Emilie Parker, 6. Jack Pinto, 6. Noah Pozner, 6. Caroline Previdi, 6. Jessica Rekos, 6. Avielle Richman, 6. Benjamin Wheeler, 6. Allison Wyatt, 6.

Dogs Sent to Newtown to Comfort Grieving Children



Damn betcha! Is this what the Right wants—to be out of control? Wonderful! Stupidity and evil unleashed!



**FotM NEWSLETTER #295 (Dec. 20, 2012)—HYPERTEXT INDEX**

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<a href="#">20121219-09</a>	23:56	Tom	Photo: Go Out & Enjoy Nature #9
<a href="#">20121219-10</a>	23:57	SteveB	Photo: Cats Imitating Art #6 (Carlo Dolci, <i>St. Catherine Reading A Book</i> , Late 17th Century)
<a href="#">20121219-11</a>	23:58	MarthaH	Cartoons: Christmas #4
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<a href="#">20121219-01</a>	14:48	Pam	Re: Lock and Load (reply to SandyI & MarthaH, above)
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I can hardly bear to watch the news, so I'm not entirely up to speed on what Obama is doing about the Newtown shootings. I agree with everyone who is calling for him to stand up to the gun lobby. I am so sick and tired of the argument "guns don't kill people; people kill people." Well, arsenic doesn't kill people, poisoners do. That doesn't mean the sale of arsenic isn't regulated. Our murder rate by guns is off the charts compared to other developed countries, not that I consider us very developed in this regard. Enough is enough. I don't want to hear that there's nothing we can do. I don't want anyone to be able to buy a gun online or without an extensive background check, proper training, registration of the gun, and a license to possess firearms. This is common sense, not a conspiracy to enslave us. This is not a choice between security and liberty; it's about taking the necessary precautions to ensure the safety of all of us, especially innocent little children. We need options for the mentally ill and their families that don't require prison or homelessness, which is what we've got today. I don't want to chain crazy people to a wall, but I don't want them walking down my street either. There must be a balance somewhere if politicians would cut the crap and do what's right.

<a href="#">20121219-03</a>	15:20	Dennis	Re: Lock and Load (reply to Pam, above)
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Assuming that the Second Amendment guarantees the right to own guns -- which it has only been interpreted as such since being hijacked by the radical right-wing in the 1970s -- I maintain that insuring the Constitutional right to "domestic Tranquility" supersedes it. 30,000 deaths per year by guns is hardly the mark of a tranquil society. There are all sorts of attempts at scapegoating going around, including blaming mental illness, video games, abortions (thanks for that brilliant insight Hucklebee), et al. Apparently having 87% of the guns in all the 23 wealthiest countries doesn't register as the problem with the macho exponents of weapons of mass murder who fund the domestic terrorist organization that the NRA has become.

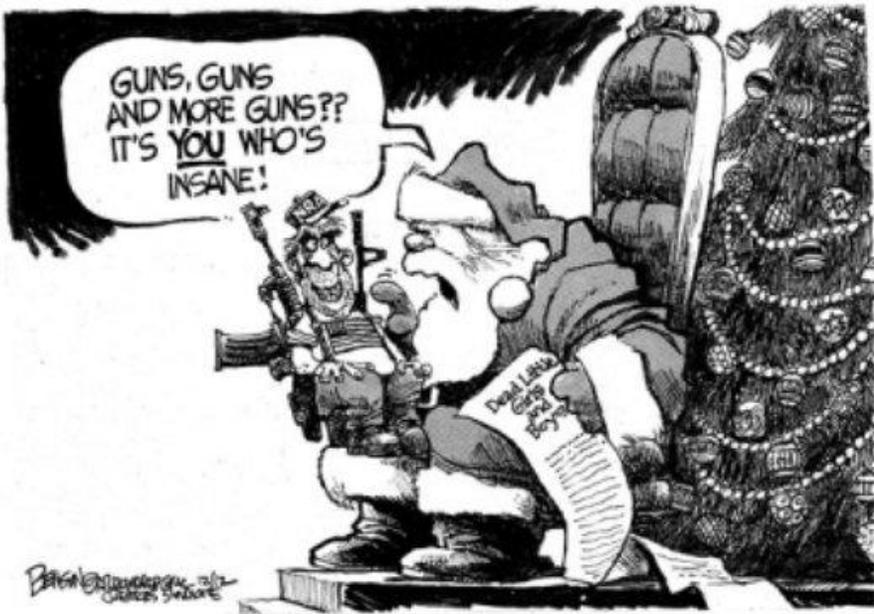
<a href="#">20121219-05</a>	17:05	Pam	Re: Lock and Load (reply to Dennis, above)
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Well said. I'm in total agreement. We still need better options for the mentally ill though.

20121219-07 19:15 Dennis Re: Lock and Load (reply to Pam, above)

I did casework with mental patients at one time and I can attest that they were not nearly as crazy as some right-wing ideologues. Dealing with America's obsession with gun violence should start with confronting domestic terrorists like the leaders of the NRA: <https://www.facebook.com/OccupyTheNRA>.

20121219-08 20:35 SteveG Cartoon: Guns, Guns, and More Guns



20121219-02 15:00 Tom Graphic: Don't



20121219-04

15:49

Ben

Photo: Today's Seafood Lunch at Apple

It was a yummy as it is lovely. Pale white delicate flounder, with a creamy tart yogurt dill sauce, over fragrant lemony cous cous. Delicious crunchy slices of roasted baby root vegetables: parsnips, turnips, pale beets, garnished with a generous dollop of tangy, vividly green-and-purple beet greens. This was a plate of balanced textures and flavors that .... I want to take a nap, now... I am so spoiled...



Baked Flounder with Dill Sauce and Root Vegetables

20121219-06

18:24

SteveB

"Rearranging the Deck Chairs on the Republican *Titanic*" & "Why the Formerly Grand Old Party Needs to Change & Won't"

"Rearranging the Deck Chairs on the Republican *Titanic*" by Tom Engelhardt, TomDispatch

Dec. 13, 2012, (<http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175628/>)

It's barely a month since Election 2012 put Barack Obama back in the White House and Mitt Romney in the Republican doghouse (or even perhaps on the roof of the GOP's family car). Still, TomDispatch is already behind the eight ball in its election coverage. After all, we're still thinking about the past election while the rest of the media didn't take a breath before launching campaign 2016. And here's the real question that, it turns out, should rivet us all: Will Hillary run? Reporters and pundits were already asking even before Election Day. Immediately after the votes were counted, the first Iowa poll came in. (She was way ahead of Vice President Biden and New York Governor Cuomo.) Now you can hardly avoid the subject of how invincible she would be -- unless you care to jump off that "fiscal cliff."

Last week, "will she or won't she?" hit the front page of the *New York Times* in a piece that highlighted all the truly crucial and confounding political conundrums of our moment. Can Hillary, for instance, make piles of money working for law firms handling clients from the wrong -- i.e., rich -- side of the tracks or can she forge a new monumentally moneymaking life "advising foreign countries on geopolitical risk, or at an investment bank or a

private equity firm"? Yes, without a doubt is the answer in all cases, but not, it seems, if she wants to run for president. The poor woman might have to rely on peddling (for multi-millions) a tell-nothing tome on her years traveling the world as secretary of state doing... well, whatever. (Again, if she wants to run for president, it's common wisdom in Washington and in the media that you can't write a book with genuine content -- it might be used against you!)

Yes, folks, get ready for 2016 early and often. In the supersized, never-ending American election season it's going to be a meaty four years of media speculation.

At the moment, it seems that the only question outrunning Hillary & Co. is: Can we avoid that dreaded fiscal cliff (and all the mixed metaphors that go with it)? You hear it intoned relentlessly on the nightly news, with accompanying countdowns ("only 20 days to...") and everything but Jaws-style ominous music. Of course, the tectonic political plates that raised that cliff we may "go over" and the river of money that gouged out the abyss into which we may "fall" were Washington-made and the cliff itself, like any fabulous stage set, is potentially moveable. Still, let's keep our eye on the ball. And while we're revving up for the ultimate Washington clash about cliffing it -- to jump, or not to jump: that is the question -- and preparing for the Democratic presidential race to 2016, let's not forget those Republican'ts. What's the story there?

We considered conducting a TomDispatch séance to get in touch with them, since these days they reportedly live in another world that may be located somewhere in the vicinity of planet Earth. Instead, we decided to turn to Jeremiah Goulka, our resident "former Republican," to fill us in on just what to make of the cliff -- fiscal, physical, or demographic -- that the Republican'ts are threatening to throw themselves off in the wake of Mitt Romney's defeat.

"Why the Formerly Grand Old Party Needs to Change and Won't" by Jeremiah Goulka, TomDispatch (see above)

Mitt Romney had hardly conceded before Republicans started fighting over where to head next. Some Republicans -- and many Democrats -- now claim that the writing is on the wall: demography is destiny, which means the GOP is going the way of the Whigs and the Dodo. Across the country, they see an aging white majority shrinking as the U.S. heads for the future as a majority-minority country and the Grand Old Party becomes the Gray Old Party. Others say: not so fast.

In the month since 51% of the electorate chose to keep Barack Obama in the White House, I've spent my time listening to GOP pundits, operators, and voters. While the Party busily analyzes the results, its leaders and factions are already out front, pushing their own long-held opinions and calling for calm in the face of onrushing problems.

Do any of their proposals exhibit a willingness to make the kind of changes the GOP will need to attract members of the growing groups that the GOP has spent years antagonizing like Hispanics, Asian Americans, unmarried women, secular whites, and others? In a word: no.

Instead, from my informal survey, it looks to this observer (and former Republican) as if the party is betting all its money on cosmetic change. Think of it as the Botox Solution. It wants to tweak its talking points slightly and put more minority and female Republicans on stage as spokespeople. Many in the GOP seem to believe that this will do the trick in 2014 and beyond. Are they deluded?

You've heard the expression "putting lipstick on a pig," haven't you?

### The Blame Game and the Short-Term Outlook

Although most Republicans see hints of future demographic challenges in the exit polls, many prefer to focus on other factors to explain Romney's loss out of a desire not to "blow up the party if there are less radical solutions." (Hence, the delusional quality of so many of their post-mortems and the lack of interest in meaningful change.)

1. They cite the Romney factor: a weak candidate, too moderate -- or too conservative -- who failed to fight the Obama campaign's early efforts to paint him as an out-of-touch plutocrat. In other words, his history (Bain Capital and Romneycare) depth-charged him before demographics could even kick in. He was,

unfortunately, the perfect quarter-billionaire candidate for a Democratic narrative that the GOP is only out for the rich and doesn't "care about people like me." (He predictably lost that exit poll question by a margin of 81% to 18%). Running a "vulture capitalist" (and a Mormon) drove a number of Republican voters to stay home or even -- gasp! -- vote for Obama. It's a mistake that won't be repeated in 2016.

2. They point to the Obama factor. In both 2008 and 2012, he attracted unprecedented levels of minority and young voters, a phenomenon that might not be repeated in 2016. Some Republican operatives are also convinced that his campaign simply had a much better "ground game" and grasp of how to employ technology to turn out voters. (Half of self-identifying Republican voters think, as they did in 2008, that Obama simply stole the election through registration fraud involving African Americans.)

3. They emphasize the powers of incumbency. Romney only became the presumptive front-runner because the GOP's A-list -- mostly too young in any case -- feared the huge advantage an incumbent president enjoys and stayed home. 2016, they swear, will be different. Nor do they seem to fear a reprise of the 2008 and 2012 primary circuses because the A-listers in 2016, they insist, will all have well-established conservative bona fides and won't have to bend over backwards to cultivate the conservative base.

Trying to appeal to the Right while facing various nutcase candidates, Romney shot himself in both feet, labeling himself a "severe conservative" and staking an extreme anti-immigration position. George W. Bush, on the other hand, could run as a "compassionate conservative" in 2000 because his street cred on the Right was unchallengeable. Indeed, Paul Ryan is already talking up "compassion," while Ted Cruz, the new (extreme) senator from Texas, is hawking "opportunity conservatism."

4. There is the perceived success of Republicans other than Romney, particularly in what white Republicans call the "Heartland." GOP operatives are still angry at Todd Akin and Richard Mourdock for losing two gimme Senate seats to the Dems by "saying stupid things" (in the words of Bobby Jindal, Louisiana governor and frequent visitor to Iowa), and they wonder how they lost in Montana and North Dakota.

Still, they kept their majority in the House of Representatives, losing only a handful of seats. (That the GOP lost the majority of total votes cast gets less attention.) The Party also added a 30th governor to its roster, and held onto its control of the majority of top offices and legislative chambers in the states. Come 2014, GOP operatives expect the Party to do quite nicely, as the opposition party often does in midterm elections, especially if turnout demographics look like 2006 and 2010. Another lesson many movement conservatives have learned is that the more they pound away on their issues, the more they shift American politics rightward even when they lose.

All of this suggests to anxious Republicans that they are not crazy for seeing no immediate need to make big changes to appeal to demographic groups outside the Party's aging white base. But the short term is likely to be short indeed. Think of them, then, as the POD or the Party of Denial.

#### Meanwhile, on the Bridge of the *Titanic*

Avoid it as they may, the long-term picture couldn't look grimmer for the Party. Demographics may well be destiny. Even a cursory look at the numbers exposes the looming threat to the Party's future prospects.

- **Whites:** About three-quarters of the electorate (and 88% of Romney's voters) this year were white, but their numbers are steadily sinking -- by 2% since 2008. Yes, many whites may have stayed home this year, turned off by Mr. Car Elevator, but whites are projected to become a demographic minority by 2050 -- or possibly even before 2040 -- and minority births are now outpacing white births.

- **White Christians:** The bulk of Romney's supporters (79%) were white Christians (40% of whom were evangelicals), but this is an aging and shrinking group. Three-quarters of senior voters but only a quarter of millennial voters are white Christians, and the generations in between are much less likely to consider themselves "strong" members of their religion than seniors. (Non-white Christians, Jews, observers of other faiths, and the growing number of the religiously-unaffiliated all overwhelmingly vote for Democrats.)

- **Hispanics:** According to the *Washington Post* exit polls, Obama received 71% of the Hispanic vote in 2012 (67% in 2008). Already 10% of this year's voters (9% in 2008), the Hispanic population is exploding, accounting for half of U.S. population growth.
- **Asian Americans:** The nation's fastest growing demographic group -- now 3% of this year's voters (2% in 2008) -- gave Obama 73% of its vote in 2012 (62% in 2008).
- **Unmarried Women:** The percentage of unmarried women has been growing slowly since the 1970s, about 48% of women as of last year. Even among subgroups favoring Obama, there was a marriage gap in which unmarried women (23% of this year's voters) favored Obama by huge margins. Despite winning 53% of (mostly white) married women, 31% of this year's voters (down from 33% in 2008), Romney lost women overall by 11 points.
- **The Young:** The millennial generation (born between 1978 and 2000) has been voting overwhelmingly for Democrats (66% for Obama in 2008, 60% this year). They are projected to be 40% of the eligible voting pool by 2020. Because they are relatively diverse and secular, the GOP cannot assume that enough will emulate previous generations and swing to the right as they age.

Such polling figures should frighten GOP leaders. There's no reason to believe that what we saw on November 6th was anything but the tip of the iceberg.

The factions in the party that are not socially conservative see these looming threats as an opportunity to get the GOP to drop the social stuff. But movement conservatives aren't going to cede ideological ground, not when they (correctly) think it's a necessity if they are to attract their base voters. "This country doesn't need two liberal or Democratic parties," is the way Bobby Jindal puts it, typically enough.

Like right-wing pundit Fred Barnes, many movement conservatives and Tea Party leaders will continue to insist that whites are going to remain "the nation's dominant voting bloc... for many elections to come." Hedging their bets, they have decided to become more "inclusive" or at least just inclusive enough in these days of micro-targeting and razor-thin election margins. After all, Romney would have won New Mexico, Florida, Nevada, and Colorado if he had captured even slightly higher shares of the Hispanic vote and he could have won in the Electoral College if fewer than 200,000 voters in key states had switched their votes.

To get more inclusive, however, these leaders offer an entirely cosmetic approach: emphasize the Party's middle-class message, increase outreach or "partnership" with Hispanics and Asian Americans, back off the anti-immigration message a tad, say fewer stupid things à la Akin and Mourdock, cross your fingers, and hope for the best.

### A Nonsense Strategy

When it comes to why this won't work down the line, it's hard to know where to start. Take that middle-class message. Many Republicans think that it should offer "crossover appeal" on its own, so long as it's said loudly enough.

But what exactly is it? After all, it's never about jobs going abroad, retirement worries (except insofar as the GOP wants to increase insecurity by privatizing Social Security), underwater mortgages, missing childcare for working families, exploding higher education costs, or what global warming is doing to the Midwestern breadbasket and coastal agriculture (much less the long-term capability of the planet to sustain life as we know it). Instead, it remains about "choice," lowering taxes (again), "entitlement reform," and getting the government out of the way of economic growth.

As if what the middle class really wants or needs is "choice" in education (Jindal's plan to divert tax funds to private and parochial schools through vouchers was just ruled unconstitutional); "choice," not affordability, in health care (the #1 cause of personal bankruptcy in America); and ever more environmental pollution, as well as further challenges to getting workman's comp if you get injured on the job.

Studies have repeatedly shown that most Americans are “operationally” liberal on the substance of most policy issues. In other words, Republicans will support “small government,” until you ask about cutting spending on anything other than anti-poverty programs. In fact, less than a third of self-identifying Republicans surveyed by Reuters/Ipsos this year “somewhat” or “strongly” disagreed with the proposition that the wealthiest Americans should pay higher tax rates.

As a counter to the charge that the GOP is the party of the rich, Jindal offered this on Fox News: “We... need to make it very clear... that we’re not the party of Big: big businesses, big banks, big Wall Street, big bailouts.”

Um... who other than Republican true believers will buy that?

### The Jerk Factor

As for those demographic groups the GOP needs to start winning over in the medium- and long-term, putative 2016 A-lister Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker wants to see a middle class “message of prosperity and freedom for all” communicated loudly to immigrants and the young. But as one astute Republican insider said to me, “Hispanics won’t hear our message so long as they think our immigration platform says, ‘We hate Mexicans.’”

Bobby Jindal was right to say, “If we want people to like us, we have to like them first.” But the Party hasn’t truly begun to grasp what might be called the liking gap between the GOP and the groups it needs to cultivate. It’s time for Republicans to take a long, hard look in the mirror. It’s not just recent anti-immigration fervor that repels Hispanics and others from the party. The GOP needs to internalize the fact that the dead bird hanging from its neck is its entire modern history.

It’s true that the Democrats were once the segregationists and Abraham Lincoln and the conservationist, trust-busting Teddy Roosevelt were Republicans, as Republicans are fond of pointing out. But that’s ancient history.

The Party’s modern history began when business leaders got politicized in response to the New Deal and then the GOP began courting the Dixiecrats after President Lyndon Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act in 1965 (despite knowing that he had “just delivered the South to the Republican Party”). The white South started voting for GOP presidential candidates in the Nixon years and would soon become solidly Republican. At 70% of the electorate (nearly 90% in Mississippi), it remains so today.

White-flight suburbs around the country followed suit. Add in the fervent cultivation of evangelical Protestant Christians -- anti-gay, anti-choice, anti-evolution, anti-science -- and the various modern incarnations of nativist Know Nothings. Don’t forget the ejection of moderates from the Party, and you have the essential history of the modern GOP in two paragraphs.

So the GOP can say that it wants to and plans to like Hispanics, Asian Americans, unmarried women, and secular youth, but to be believable, merely easing off on its anti-immigration message or going quiet on abortion won’t do the trick. And if it wants to *prove* that it cares, it will have to put some real money where its mouth is.

### What the Party Should Do -- and Won’t

Here’s an idea: how about some “extraordinary financial gifts” like the ones Mitt Romney denounced just days after his loss!

To really go after the groups it needs, the GOP would have to do the inconceivable: drop the “entitlement reform” racket, open the wallet, and reach below a restrictive definition of the middle class. It might, for instance, mean adding more money to Food Stamps, rather than poking fun at the “food stamp president,” because a full quarter of Hispanics and 35% of Hispanic children are poor.

According to the Census, the median income for Hispanics in 2009 was \$38,039 versus \$51,861 for whites. The difference is far starker when you compare median net worth: Thanks to the economic crisis, Hispanic households lost 66% of their median net worth, falling to \$6,325 in 2009, compared to \$113,149 for white households (a 16% loss).

It would undoubtedly mean supporting equal pay for equal work, which the GOP has consistently opposed. It would mean working to make healthcare more affordable for everyone. That's how you prove you care in politics -- and it would also be good for the nation.

Similarly, if the Republicans want to be taken seriously as "defenders" of the middle class, they would need to do something to defend it from its predators. No, not the lower class but the *upper* class, the predatory lenders and speculators, the fraudsters, the manipulators of the financial system, the folks who got bailed out while everyone else shouldered the risk.

It hardly needs to be said that this isn't likely to happen in any of our lifetimes.

So far the only Republican suggestion I've heard that seems more than (barely) cosmetic is for the Party to drop its aversion to gay marriage. That would, at least, be a beneficial, if cynically motivated, move to look less hateful.

### Hesitation in the Face of Change

It is, of course, theoretically possible that Senator Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) could attract enough Hispanic and other voters in 2016 to win the presidency. Provided that the primaries don't turn into another bizarre battle. Provided that the tone set by Rick Santorum, Michele Bachmann, or fringe candidates of their ilk doesn't sink the A-listers. Provided that not too many "stupid" things are said -- on abortion, immigration, evolution, or global warming. (Rubio has already gotten to work on that one by punting on a question about the Earth's age to keep the creationists happy.)

But come 2020, 2024, or 2028, whatever's left of the GOP is going to be kicking itself for not having built a foundation of anything other than words that no one outside its rank-and-file actually believed. Texas, after all, could go purple by 2020 or 2024.

Of all the signals emanating from the GOP since Election Day, perhaps the most significant came last week when the socially and fiscally conservative Tea Party kingmaker Jim DeMint voted with his feet. The man who would rather have "30 Republicans in the Senate who believe in principles of freedom than 60 who don't believe in anything" is leaving that body for the Heritage Foundation -- a hint about the future of what is arguably the most important GOP organization in the country.

It looks like the GOP is at the wheel of the *Titanic*, sailing toward that iceberg, while the band plays "Nearer My God to Thee" for all it's worth.

20121219-09

23:56

Tom

Photo: Go Out & Enjoy Nature #9



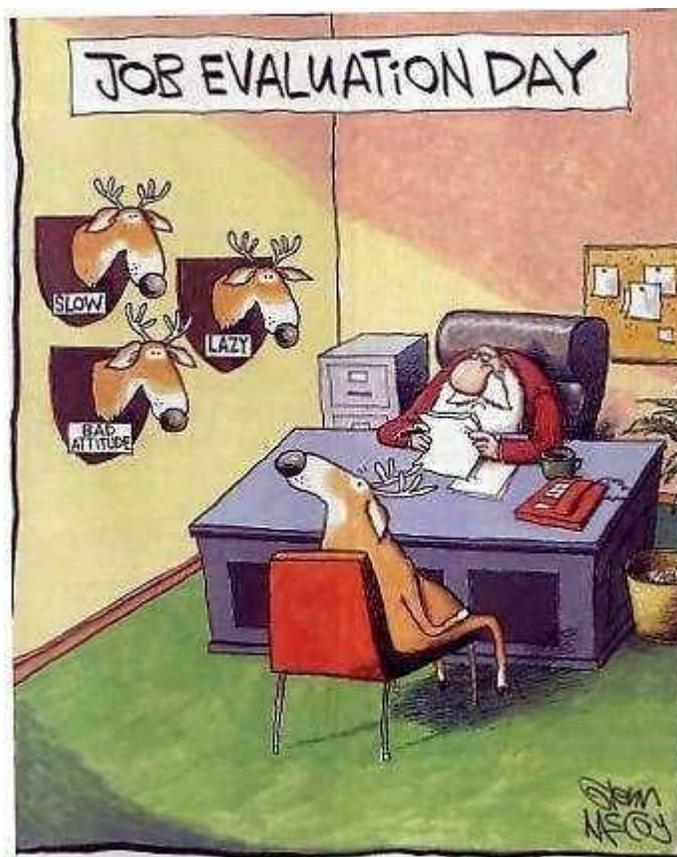
20121219-10

23:57

SteveB

Photo: Cats Imitating Art #6 (Carlo Dolci, *St. Catherine Reading A Book*, Late 17th Century)





<http://flywithmeproductions.com/blog/?tag=fly-with-me-productions&paged=3>



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Steven W. Baker (SteveB), Editor/Moderator

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