

CONSERVATIVE BATTLELINE ONLINE



The "Bold Colors" Conservative Voice in Washington

Issue 109 - June 11, 2008

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Why Not Multiple Wives?

by Donald Devine

Issue 109 - June 11, 2008

On April 3, 2008, hundreds of police raided the Yearning for Zion Ranch near Eldorado Texas and removed 460 children from Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints parents because officials determined that the "pervasive belief system" of the sect put the children at the ranch compound in danger of either participating in or becoming victims of sexual abuse and/or forced marriage.



Seven weeks later a Texas appeals court ruled the State of Texas Department of Family and Protective Services' evidence was insufficient to warrant a lower court's decision ordering the removal of the children from their parents. The seizures were instigated by a caller claiming to be a 16 year old at the ranch forced to marry an abusive older man but later believed to be an outside anti-abuse activist. The children, who had been forced into foster care around the state at a cost of \$5.26 million according to the head of the Health and Public Services Commission, were ordered to be returned to their parents. TDFPS appealed the decision to the state Supreme Court and lost.



What was the "belief system" the authorities were concerned about? The 10,000 member FC-LDS (which had split with the central Mormon church when it abandoned polygamy in 1890) bought the 1,500 acre ranch in 2004. Because its 52 year old "prophet" of polygamous living had been convicted of accessory to rape for performing an under-aged wedding in 2001, the local compound had been under official scrutiny. Its members openly practiced polygamy but were not actually acted against until the spurious report of abuse. Subsequently, Angie Voss, an investigator with Child Protective Services, justified the raid because she had evidence that "more than 20 girls, some of whom are now adults, have conceived or given birth under the age of 16 or 17" (however, at follow-up hearings, CPS admitted that 15 of the girls were probably over age 18).

The initial public sympathy in the case was for the abused younger women and children. As columnist William Murchison noted:

Reflexive trust in the benevolence of the state's intentions (specifically those of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services) likely stems in part from the multifarious horror stories that have filled heads and minds in recent decades--accounts of child abuse by adults, of the reduction of the innocent to objects of prey by the powerful. Priests, day-care center operators, youth workers and, yes, parents--whom can you trust any more? We seem to have overdosed on these stories--some true but many constructed on flimsy evidence--to the point that child-adult relationships now invite almost automatic suspicion. We appear to sometimes no longer trust adults in general to do right by children in general. The flip side of too much trust--alas--is too little, which could be where we are now.

Soon, however, fears of abuse by public authorities took center stage. The 1993 Federal raid on the Branch Davidian compound in Waco Texas was the most obvious comparison since it occurred in the same state. That siege ended with 82 dead. In 1953, government officials had even acted previously against the same Fundamentalist LDS group, leading to its fear of future outside intervention, which

its leader used to assert more control over them. With the Texas Supreme Court decision, sympathy had shifted decisively to the parents.

But what about polygamy? Certainly it rested at the heart of the state decision to intervene. It is illegal in every state and nationally. But why? It has been a widely accepted practice over the world since the beginning and the Jewish patriarchs practiced it or concubinage. It was not banned by an authoritative Ashkenazi interpretation until the 11th Century AD, and then first only in Christian lands, and still survives among some smaller branches Judaism. The second largest world religion, Islam, allows up to four wives to this day. Hinduism did not eliminate polygamy until forced by the British after they controlled India. Buddhism never forbade it, allowing consorts in addition to wives until various states limited it, mostly in modern times.

Of the major belief systems, only Christianity has consistently forbidden the practice and even there Martin Luther said he could not "forbid a person to marry several wives, for it does not contradict Scripture" and granted at least one ruler a dispensation to take a second wife, although he has been in a very small minority even among Lutherans. As long as Christianity greatly influenced Western nations, its views on marriage were law. But the advance of secularism and multiculturalism led to questioning its conventional marriage even within that tradition, leading to some denominations allowing first liberal divorce and then marriage of same sex couples. If the moral exclusivity given to the permanent union between a man and a woman is not absolute, why not more than one partner, or even more than one with other species? If serial polygamy is acceptable in divorce, why not real polygamy?



Secular morality on the matter has taken several forms. Beginning with a child custody case in Utah in 1991, the American Civil Liberties Union has opposed laws against polygamy, as does the U.S. Libertarian Party platform, under the logic that if people freely desire multiple marriages, they should be free to enter them. The left-libertarian Nation columnist Katha Pollitt reported that "every person I spoke to connected" allowing polygamy with supporting single sex marriage, quoting one famous ACLU director agreeing that polygamy is "the price" for logically demanding gay marriage. Pollitt, however, opposed polygamy even if done freely, comparing it to progressives not allowing people to work below a minimum wage. Polygamy is "radically inegalitarian," she insisted, because the wife only has a part of the husband. Yes, monogamous marriage is unequal too so she was finally forced to the conclusion that "marriage itself has to go." Apparently, the secular view is that either there should be no limits on marriage or marriage must be eliminated entirely.

The secular argument for monogamy is made by the Charles Darwin Professor of Anthropology at Rutgers University, Lionel Tiger, who reasons that:

One of the triumphs of Western arrangements is the institution of monogamy, which has in principle made it possible for each male and female to enjoy a plausible shot at the reproductive outcome which all the apparatus of nature demands. Even Karl Marx did not fully appreciate the immense radicalism of this form of equity.... The victims [of polygamy] are not only young women but young men too. They are reproductively and productively disenfranchised, and are in effect forced to leave the communities to become hopeless, ill-schooled misfits in the towns of normal life. No dignified lives as celibate monks with colorful costumes for them. Again, the issue is cross-cultural. Osama bin Laden has at least five wives, which means that four young men of his tribe have no date on Saturday night and forever. They may become willing jihadists, or desperate suicides eager to soothe their god by killing infidels and Americans.

So monogamy is a matter of national security! It is demanded by nature for reproductive peace. We will not have dates! "The fact is that," he continues, "despite all the blather about faith and freedom of religion, the men operating the various compounds in question are behaving in virtually the same manner as countless dominant males in countless primate troops observed over the years." But

what can a Darwinist possibly have against that? Nature "demands" reproductive enfranchisement? If so, how did so many social systems survive so long with polygamy and, indeed, endure to this day, especially serial polygamy, with less attractive mates presumably also unequally distributed within the tribe? If all the apparatus of nature demands monogamous reproduction why have serial polygamy and declining fertility evolved as characteristic of the modern West?



F. A. Hayek

When traditional morality and common understandings are eliminated as justifications, secular rationality comes to one of three conclusions: marriage is demanded by nature to be monogamous, marriage is the free union of any set or number of beings, or marriage must be eliminated. Apparently, secular hyper-rationality has no one conclusion. This is precisely why rational agnostics like F.A. Hayek believed that even the free society must base its predominant social assumptions on its accumulated traditions. The fundamental social paradox is that a free society must be based upon a tradition or freedom has no base of assumptions upon which to build and will end in chaos, even as Darwinists understand it.

The West has been built upon a particular tradition that has relied upon monogamy, which has undoubtedly partially explained its success. That tradition—our tradition—has given a high value to freedom but that very support for liberty led it also to support the traditions thought necessary to undergird it, including monogamy. As Edmund Burke put it, "Men are qualified for civil liberty in exact proportion to their disposition to put moral chains upon their own appetites...Society cannot exist, unless a controlling power upon will and appetite be placed somewhere; and the less of it there is within, the more there must be without."

One of those "chains" has been monogamous marriage and one must simply concede that the only reason polygamy can be considered wrong—especially given its popularity worldwide and historically—is because our tradition (and, contra Luther, its initiator) command it.

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Editor**

Coherent Assimilation Culture

by Paul Weyrich

Issue 109 - June 11, 2008

When my father came from Germany as a 19-year old the very first thing he did was to enroll in a class taught at a local public school to learn English. My aunt told me that he became proficient in English in only six weeks. He wanted to be an American and to do so he had to learn the language. Of course, he retained his German heritage. However, assimilation was important to him, as it was to most immigrants.



Paul M. Weyrich

For years America has drifted away from assimilation, which has become an unspeakable word among the cultural elite. Instead, we are told that we must recognize and celebrate the diversity of various groups without demanding any compromise from them. This has hurt immigrants more than anyone else because many have become isolated in cultural ghettos without a proper command of English, the American political and legal systems or American history and culture. That said, it also has fractured American society.

For the past several years pro-illegal immigration groups have rallied at the beginning of May to demand citizenship opportunities for the estimated twelve million illegal immigrants in the United States and an end to raids on and deportations of these immigrants. This year was no different. There were protests in California, Michigan, Florida, Texas, Illinois and other places. One slight change, however, was the attendance: this year the protests were markedly smaller than before. In 2006, the first these immigration rallies were held, the attendance was around one million people. This year crowds were down to between 300 and 500 per rally.

Many activists were quoted as saying that the drop in attendance was due to fear of government reprisal and deportation among the illegal immigrants themselves. This is highly implausible. Since 2006 the Federal Government has made little progress in enforcing our borders and deporting illegal immigrants.

What worries me is that all three of the remaining presidential candidates – Senators John S. McCain III (R-AZ), Barack H. Obama (D-IL) and Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY) – support a general amnesty for illegal immigrants. And this amnesty is without any prior successful closure of the U.S.-Mexican Border that would halt further waves of immigrants. McCain pays lip-service to border security and assimilation on his campaign website. He states, "A secure border will contribute to addressing our immigration problem most effectively if we also: recognize the importance of a flexible labor market to keep employers in business and our economy on top, and recognize the importance of assimilation of our immigrant population, which includes learning English, American history and civics, and respecting the values of a democratic society." Obama's website is similar, listing border security as his main priority, followed by "bring[ing] people out of the shadows" to become citizens. Clinton uses much more flowery language but essentially posits the same message.

It should be noted that illegal immigrants do not live in the shadows. They attend American schools, use our hospital emergency rooms as though they were a general practitioner's office and work in specific businesses. If the Federal Government wanted to enforce our current immigration laws, which are sufficient to solve the problem, it could. But there is no willpower to do so.

I suspect that the reason for the drop in attendance at the rallies is not a new burst of patriotism for America among prior attendees but because the issue is not as pressing. What we need to do is return the debate to the topic of assimilation, of learning to speak English, of the value of becoming a citizen, and of pride in a country that provides immigrants from around the world with more opportunities for success than any other country on earth. The latter will be the most difficult. Immigrants need to assimilate to American culture but if we are to demand that they do we must first restore a proper sense of patriotism among American citizens. How can we demand that

foreigners respect our country when our own elites so vehemently criticize and disdain everything connected to American history, culture, ideals, governance and traditions?

A return to assimilation and a coherent culture will not begin until we put our own house in order. We cannot expect others to respect us when many Americans themselves are ashamed of their country.

Paul M. Weyrich is Chairman and CEO of the Free Congress Foundation.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Turkey Reform Islam?

by Daniel Pipes

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Accounts from Turkey suggest that the government is attempting a bold re-interpretation of Islam.

Its unusually named ministry of religion, the "[Presidency of Religious Affairs and the Religious Charitable Foundation](#)," has undertaken a three-year "Hadith Project" systematically to review 162,000 *hadith* reports and winnow them down to some 10,000, with the goal of separating original Islam from the accretions of fourteen centuries.



Daniel Pipes

The *hadith* reports contain information about the sayings and actions of Muhammad, the prophet of Islam. They augment the Koran and have had a major role in shaping the Shari'a (Islamic law), thereby deeply influencing Muslim life. Despite their importance, Muslim reformers have devoted little scrutiny to them, due to their vast size, unwieldy nature, and the challenge of discerning "sound" from "weak" *hadiths*.

One of the project's 85 theology professors, [Ismail Hakki Unal](#) of Ankara University, explains its goal: "The Koran is our basic guide. Anything that conflicts with that, we are trying to eliminate." The project website explained that its work is "an important step for carrying the universal message of the Prophet of Islam to the twenty-first century."

Its director, [Mehmet Görmez](#), adds that the purpose is a scholarly one, to understand the *hadith* better: "We will make a new compilation of the *hadith* and re-interpret them if necessary." More broadly, Görmez explains, "The project takes its inspiration from the interpretations of the modernist vein of Islam. ... We want to bring out the positive side of Islam that promotes personal honor, human rights, justice, morality, women's rights, respect for the other."

This means, for example, reinterpreting *hadiths* that "present women as inferior beings," such as those that encourage female genital mutilation, honor killings, and the prohibition of women traveling without their husbands. One participant, [Hidayet Sevkati Tuksal](#), goes so far as to declare some *hadiths* as bogus because they intend "to ensure male domination over women." However, despite the intense current debate in Turkey over the headscarf, the project avoids that particular issue. Another sensitive topic concerns the right of Muslims to convert out of their faith; the project permits such conversions.

Some Turks have great hopes for the Hadith Project, which aims to produce a multi-volume book in Turkish, Arabic, and Russian by year's end. [Taha Akyol](#), a political commentator, sees a revolution taking place. "In other countries you have reform of Islam pushed through by despotic or modernist regimes but in Turkey you are seeing the reform taking place in the middle classes. And that is real reform." Another commentator, [Mustafa Akyol](#), believes that the revised *hadiths* "will be a step to change mindsets."

[Fadi Hakura](#) of Chatham House goes further, calling the project "somewhat akin to the Christian Reformation." He applauds the project being sponsored by the Justice and Development Party (AKP) of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. AKP involvement means that "this reform movement is not being implemented by a secular group, but by the ruling [party, which] is very religious and conservative. So this is an authentic internal process of change."

Other observers are more skeptical. Hashim Hashimi, a former MP, for example, states that "There are established views on Islam and how it should be practiced that have been in place for 1400 years. And they aren't going to change any time soon." Even the head of the ministry, [Ali Bardakoğlu](#), acknowledges that "we are not reforming Islam; we are reforming ourselves."

What to make of this initiative? Serious efforts to modernize Islam, which this appears to be, are most welcome. At the same time, one has to wonder about agendas when government intercedes in the subtle and even subversive domain of religious reform. Specifically, the AKP's Islamist nature arouses mistrust that the Hadith Project will limit itself to the relatively easy social issues and avoid the tougher political ones in order to fashion an ideologically more defensible Islam even while maintaining some of its more problematic aspects. Does the project's avoidance of the headscarf topic also imply its not taking up female legal rights, women marrying non-Muslim men, *riba* (interest on money), jihad, the rights of non-Muslims, and the creation of an Islamic order?

By limiting its subject matter, the project might forward Islamism more than modernize Islam. True reform awaits true reformers – not Islamist functionaries but independent, modern individuals intent on aligning Islam with the best of modern mores.

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Editor**

Best Westerns

by Spencer Warren

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As I've written here before, the classic Western, which reached its apex in the 1950s, is the ultimate American movie genre, and the ultimate conservative movie genre.

It depicts the heroic essentials of our forebears' taming and settlement of our vast continent, it dramatizes heroes acting in a universe of objective moral truth, and it presents us with moral conflicts, the answer to which defines our nature as human beings. And it does all this on a vast stage whose natural beauty, as captured on film by great directors and their cinematographers, elevates the audience and raises their sights toward high ideals. Viewing these wonderful films takes one back to an America before popular culture was debased, before the critical spirit of the left had turned many liberals into enemies of our country, and before the left had taken over much of Hollywood. The classic movie Western was largely played out by the mid-1960s, increasingly replaced by a revisionist view which by the 1980s and 1990s had made this once most popular of genres virtually extinct.



Before beginning our list, we must note some great Westerns of the silent era. William S. Hart set the image of the Westerner as the tall, slender, silent hero, slow to anger but quick on the draw. He also created the Western prototype of the "good bad man." *The Toll Gate* (1920) is one of his best films. Two epics of the settlement of the Wild West are *The Covered Wagon* (1923) – a wagon train – and *The Iron Horse* (1924) – the transcontinental railroad, directed by John Ford, who would become the greatest director of Westerns. Another superb Ford silent is *Three Bad Men* (1926) – three "good bad men" who rescue a helpless young girl.

Now to our list:

1. *Shane* (1953)

Director George Stevens transforms into an epic poem the Western staple of the weary gunfighter (Alan Ladd) who wants to hang up his holster and join civilized life – as defined by family – but who ultimately has to be what he is in order to defend family and civilization. Stevens elevates this old tale with his visual eye as a director (perhaps equaled in this genre only by Ford), his use of the setting of the Grand Tetons in Wyoming, the musical score by Victor Young, and of course his choice of material -- the classic novel by Jack Schaefer. There is no more urban filmmaker than Woody Allen, who several years ago described the final scenes of *Shane* as "some of the best . . . I've ever seen in an American movie." Stevens's poetic visual direction also captures early in the film the essential heroism of the Western homesteader, Joe Starrett, as played by Van Heflin.

2. *My Darling Clementine* (1946)

Our first of many John Fords. Here he takes the legend of Wyatt Earp (Henry Fonda) and Doc Holliday's (Victor Mature) shoot-out with the Clanton clan at Tombstone's OK Corral and elevates it to the highest level of myth with his trademark poetic visual style. Much of the film takes place at night and is filmed with Ford's vintage long shots, which in daylight frame the story against the heroic American landscape of Ford's beloved Monument Valley in Arizona. As an example of the visual subtlety of movies of this period, note how the town's one street has buildings on one side only; the other side is open to the natural wilderness, with which Ford's camera envelops the action. The film's first of two famous scenes is the Sunday morning church dance on the site of the church-to-be, beneath an American flag high on a pole whipping in the wind – a wonderful image of the

settlement of our young country, which takes place at the church site, not the government building. The second is Wyatt Earp's shy good-bye to his new girl, depicting the lasting image of the hero as the strong, silent type, who also is always courtly toward women. We must not forget that no one could stage action better than Ford, and his Gunfight at the OK Corral is unsurpassed – exciting, short but never grisly.

3. Stagecoach (1939)

With this picture, Ford rescued the Western genre after almost a decade in the doldrums (except for the still popular, cheaply made B Westerns, where John Wayne was making his living). Again, we see an artist taking a hackneyed story -- here a motley group of passengers on a stagecoach trip through dangerous Indian country – and transforming it with his signature personal style. One example of many: Ford's long shot as the stagecoach starts out on the rugged trail – taking in the imposing scenery in the background (Monument Valley again) which will witness its travails – is alone worth the price of admission. Several times Ford uses the noble buttes and mesas of Monument Valley in extreme long shots of the stagecoach's journey – this man did not need color or widescreen to create epic vistas. Two more standard scenes as directed by Ford are probably the greatest ever in the long history of Westerns. The first is the Indian attack on the stagecoach as it reaches endless flat ground. Despite the comparatively primitive equipment Ford and his crew had to employ (not least their motor vehicles), this thrilling scene could not be bettered today, seventy years on. Finally, when all seems lost, the passengers having run out of ammunition and the arrows flying closer and closer, we hear a distant trumpet, whereupon Ford cuts to the cavalry, galloping hell for leather, with "The Battle Cry of Freedom" blaring on the soundtrack. This scene, like all of Ford's and all of these films, truly has to be seen in a big movie theater. I wanted to stand up and cheer when I saw it this way. The second scene raised to classic status by Ford comes when the stagecoach has arrived safely in Lordsburg. The Ringo Kid (John Wayne, in the role that made him a star), has a score to settle with the Plummer brothers, who murdered his brother. Their ritual confrontation in the deserted town street, preceded by the ritual saloon scene, is a perfect demonstration of Ford's genius as a director, in particular his economy of expression. Also note that as the shooting starts, Ford cuts to Ringo's girl (Claire Trevor), waiting anxiously in the distance. Ford uses long shots and cutting away from the violence to allow the audience to experience the emotions on its own, whereas contemporary directors tend to shove it down the audience's throat with extreme close-ups and lots of gore.

4. Fort Apache (1948)

Ford had a rather formal visual style, as can be seen in his non-Western dramas of the thirties, such as *The Informer* (1935), his first best direction Oscar. His filming here of the formation of the cavalry for its (insane) attack on the Indians -- long shots of lines of troopers forming up in great open space – brings that style out of doors, with a more natural, less self-conscious manner than in his thirties films. This scene, culminating in the Indians' overrunning of the troopers' last rebout, which disappears amidst the dust kicked up by the thundering hooves of the braves' galloping horses, is another of Ford's unforgettable set-pieces, which, again, needs to be seen on a large theatrical (i.e. not multiplex) screen. All directors with strong visual styles have their films somewhat miniaturized on home video. This film also carries interest for our current debates about American national identity. Leftists like the Obamas, other liberals (including Bush "conservatives" like the president and Condoleeza Rice) define America in terms of the gulf they perceive between our ideals – whose meaning they tend to corrupt – and the reality of American life. Anything less than perfection is cause for denigrating our entire national experience. But to Ford, America is a family. The regiment in the film is led to disaster by a stubborn, foolhardy officer from the East (Henry Fonda), but its action is still glorious because the true glory of America, its identity, lies not so much in its abstract ideals but in the daily lives of the people who make up America – and in its history, their history. That is why Ford dwells in the film on the families at this Western outpost -- the Irish Sergeant-Major (Ward Bond) reading his Bible, then looking up first with surprise, then with pride, at his newly arrived son, just posted to the fort upon his graduation from West Point. The women looking out from a hilltop, one (Shirley Temple) commenting, "All I see are the flags," as the regiment departs on its fateful mission, its trumpets blaring "The Girl I Left Behind Me." Ford was a New Deal liberal, but like most people of his time, compared to today, he was a cultural conservative.

5. *Seven Men from Now* (1956)

After John Wayne, Randolph Scott was the biggest Western star of the fifties. Like Gary Cooper, Scott fit the taciturn, lanky mold of the Western hero better than Wayne, and he also was, with Cooper, was the most accomplished horseman. Scott turned 60 in 1957, but he kept himself very fit, and his final films before retiring in 1962 are his best; several, starting with this one, are among the greatest of all Westerns. From 1956 to 1960 Scott made seven Westerns with director Budd Boetticher. The best of these were written by Burt Kennedy. Running only about 80 minutes, with small casts, these films ran on the second half of double bills. But today they have enormous reputations because of how they encompass ideals of the Western with the utmost simplicity; simplicity is their art. Scott always plays a more complex hero, and the villains also are more rounded characters. Scott's character is an older, lonely, hard-bitten man who is on a search, for the men who murdered his wife in a hold-up, or for his wife, long ago kidnapped by Indians, and so on. Along the way he encounters a couple, or a woman, who need his help. In the course of each film, he dramatizes the basic nobility of character of the Western hero, the plainspoken knight on horseback. This film had not been seen for many years until it was restored and shown at the New York Film Festival in 2000. The then 84-year-old Boetticher was in attendance; he received a standing ovation, having lived to see his little film attain immortal status. Lee Marvin fans take note: his widow says this film features Marvin's personal favorite of all his movie death scenes from his initial roles as the bad guy!

6. *The Naked Spur* (1953)

As written in our James Stewart centenary tribute in the last issue (<http://www.acuf.org/issues/issue108/080524med.asp>), Anthony Mann directed Stewart in six Westerns in the fifties. Like Scott, Stewart's heroes were more complex characters than audiences were used to. No one staged violent action better than Mann (though Ford and Boetticher match him), and he approached Ford in his spectacular use of landscape, using it as the setting for his climactic final clashes between good and evil, most memorably in this picture: a promontory looking down on a river rushing through a deep gorge.

7. *The Hanging Tree* (1959)

Along with Boetticher and Mann, Delmer Daves was, after Ford, the greatest director of Westerns. The films of Boetticher, Mann and Daves focus on personal dramas without Ford's epic context; their scripts also tend to have more interesting characters and be tighter than Ford's, who had a weakness for low comedy and horseplay. Daves (see my discussion at <http://acuf.org/issues/issue92/070922med.asp>) directed six Westerns between 1956 and 1959, with his last, *The Hanging Tree*, being his masterpiece. Another Western stalwart in one of his last roles, Gary Cooper, plays Doc Frail, the toughest man, though a doctor, in a remote mining town. Like the Scott and Stewart heroes, he has some emotional pain, unknown to us, lurking from his past. For some reason he wears black, the symbol of a penitent. He is feared by everyone, except the needy, to whom he tends with kindness and generosity. The early scene when he feeds milk to a poor young girl, and a later one when he restores sight to a woman blinded in a stagecoach hold-up (Maria Schell), mark Daves as an intimate director with unusual sensitivity and delicacy. He also could build up a crescendo to a thrilling climax like no one else. Here, Doc Frail is saved from a frenzied mob, which is dragging him to the "hanging tree" (led by George C. Scott in his first film) in an outburst of rage at this man they had long feared and hated. But he is rescued by the woman whose eyesight he had restored (and whose affections he had spurned due to his past) and whom he had just rescued from rape by a drunken miner (Karl Malden). This explosive climax, with the Doc now in need and the woman as his savior, leads to Doc's moral catharsis.

8. *The Searchers* (1956)

Most critics cite this Ford effort as the greatest of all Westerns, but the story is too simple to carry the weight of all the themes Ford seeks to dramatize: civilization versus savagery, the violent man of action (Wayne in his greatest role as Ethan Edwards) who is needed to defend civilization but who (like Shane) cannot join it, and white racial prejudice and violence as something of a mirror image of the Indians, to name the most prominent themes. It would seem reasonable to surmise that the latter is the reason so many critics (leftists all) love this film. The first forty minutes, including the Comanche attack on the homestead (not seen but suggested), the Texas Rangers going after the

Indian raiding party, and Wayne's departure on his epic quest for his kidnapped niece, all filmed against the epic buttes and mesas of Monument Valley in the new widescreen VistaVision, are among the most spectacular scenes Ford ever filmed. How exciting to see his stunning compositions, subtlety and economy of expression move to the larger canvass of the bigger screens of the fifties. But, the film trails off and Ford's traditional plot is not up to his thematic ambitions.

9. *High Noon* (1952)

Many readers must have been wondering when we would get to this famous film, for which Gary Cooper won his second best actor Academy Award as the abandoned marshal who stands alone against the criminal gang out for revenge against him. Not only the townspeople, but even his new bride (the young Grace Kelly) turns her back on him – she is a Quaker. The ballad that opens the film, sung by Frankie Laine (lyrics by Ned Washington, music by Dimitri Tiomkin, a Russian who wrote many Western scores in this period) is the perfect expression of the manliness of the Western hero. Written by the subsequently blacklisted Carl Foreman, the film actually is a parable against McCarthyism. The film represented a new step for Westerns, later followed by the revisionist Westerns of the sixties and later, in that the cowardly townspeople are seen as not worth saving. John Wayne was disgusted by the end, when Cooper's Will Kane, having killed three of the four bad guys (his wife shot the fourth), confronts the townsfolk, removes his badge and throws it in the dust. The director, Fred Zinnemann, though receiving far more acclaim in his time than Boetticher, Mann and Daves, has now had his reputation eclipsed by them. Zinnemann's direction is rather studied and self-conscious, in contrast to the greater vigor and spontaneity of the others. Daves's original 1957 version of *3:10 to Yuma* (see link for Daves above) is known as the poor man's *High Noon* because its plot revolves around the same moral dilemma – should the hero stay and fight, or flee for the sake of his loved ones? – but is preferred by many for this reason.

10. *Comanche Station* (1960)

Our title "Ten of the Greatest" was chosen because it is not fair or worthwhile to reduce the many great classic Westerns to such a small number. One cannot make distinctions, for example, between the best films of Boetticher, Mann and Daves. So, with a promise to return to this subject in future, we will end with the final Scott- Boetticher classic. Scott is Jefferson Cody, deep in Indian country to trade, hopefully, for his long-ago kidnapped wife. But the woman produced is another kidnap victim, the wife, Mrs. Lowe (Nancy Gates) of a wealthy man in town. In perhaps the best scene of the series, Mrs. Lowe is seated at the campfire Cody has started before they retire for the night (well apart). She is looking up at Cody, who is standing, with the camera facing her, placed behind and just to the side of Cody. He is dressed in black. She haltingly asks him, if his wife had been kidnapped by Indians (she does not yet know why he came upon her, nor do we), would he still love her if he got her back. (In the civilized world of 1960 popular culture, words like rape were not spoken, but left between the lines.) Cody, still standing with his back to the camera, quietly answers, "No m'am. If I loved her, it wouldn't matter at all." Boetticher's placing of the actors in this shot, plus Cody's black costume, makes the scene dramatize – visually – our Western hero as the archetype of a noble soul.

Ronald Reagan's Best Western

Our favorite movie star, Ronald Reagan, made a few movie Westerns in his time, in addition to hosting and starring in some episodes of TV's *Death Valley Days*. His best is the little known *Tennessee's Partner* (1955), from a story by Bret Harte (and filmed twice before). Reagan is a good-hearted fellow known only as Cowpoke ("My friends call me Cowpoke," he tells everyone he meets) who arrives in town to marry his beloved, Goldie. Goldie (Coleen Gray, an appealing actress of the period) is suitably named, because she is a gold-digger. She is known as such to the tough gambler in town, Tennessee (John Payne), who, unbeknownst to the kindly Cowpoke, appears to have a past with Goldie. Cowpoke saves Tennessee's life when some varmints try to kill him, but is deeply wounded when told about Goldie by Tennessee. Cowpoke is such a great guy he just can't believe ill of his sweetheart, and she comes between him and Tennessee. Well, Cowpoke and Tennessee find themselves saving the day in the end, with Cowpoke's goodness unimpaired. Critic Peter Bogdanovich calls this Reagan's "most likeable performance." (I would add his Sergeant Bill Page, on leave in wartime New York, falling for Eleanor Parker's slightly cooky aspiring actress Sally

Middleton, while forced to sleep on her apartment sofa as the hotels are all booked, in the very charming *Voice of the Turtle* (1947)).

Spencer Warren is ConservativeBattleline.com's media critic.

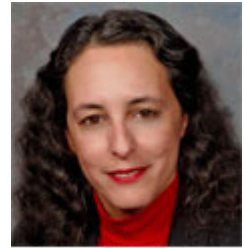
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Editor**

NBC Gross Bias

by Lisa Fabrizio

Issue 109 - June 11, 2008

On his recent visit to Israel, President George W. Bush committed what much of our media and all of our leading Democrats considered a great offense; comparing people who seek a rational dialogue with Iran to Neville Chamberlain and others who sought conciliation with Adolf Hitler and the Nazis. To liberals, this is the ultimate insult, which they claimed was aimed at Barack Obama, and one that could not be taken lying down. So they protested.



Lisa Fabrizio

Of course, that's not what the president said, although you'd be hard-pressed to discover that by watching your network news, especially if your flavor of preference is of the NBC variety. The White House took NBC News to task in [a letter](#) which points out the network's deception in an interview graciously granted them by President Bush on this subject.

When asked by NBC's Richard Engel if he was referring to Obama in his remarks to the Israeli Knesset, Bush said:

People need to read the speech. You didn't get it exactly right, either. What I said was is that we need to take the words of people seriously. And when, you know, a leader of Iran says that they want to destroy Israel, you've got to take those words seriously. And if you don't take them seriously, then it harkens back to a day when we didn't take other words seriously. It was fitting that I talked about not taking the words of Adolph Hitler seriously on the floor of the Knesset. But I also talked about the need to defend Israel, the need to not negotiate with the likes of al Qaeda, Hezbollah and Hamas. And the need to make sure Iran doesn't get a nuclear weapon.

All but one sentence of this response was edited out of the televised interview as was the president's answer to Engel's follow-up question in which he stated that "And I have made it clear to the Iranians that there is a seat at the table for them if they would verifiably suspend their enrichment."

Somehow, the media missed erstwhile presidential candidate, [Gary Hart](#), who recently warned that "radical forces, usually called neoconservatives, [have] perverted language as recommended by the National Socialist Party in 1930s Germany." He claimed that the right's strategy is:

"Continue to demonize liberals, blame them for all social and economic problems, and soon enough no one will be willing to admit to being a liberal. Claim that liberals and Democrats are too soft to combat terrorists and soon enough a majority, even in the oldest democracy on earth, will believe it."

NBC distorting President Bush's message and missing one by a prominent Democrat that did make the charge directly is gross bias of the worst sort. And we right-wing radical forces didn't even need to pervert any language to demonstrate who is trying to demonize whom.

[Lisa Fabrizio](#) is a columnist who hails from Connecticut.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Celebrity Carbon-Guzzling

by Tom Sykes

Issue 109 - June 11, 2008

Is the hot air emitted by celebrities when they spout ecological platitudes a greenhouse gas?

If so, then the melting of the polar ice caps just moved a step closer, following calls by Trudie Styler, a leading celebrity ecological hypocrite - call them hippy-crites for short - for the general public to eat more locally grown vegetables.

Campaigning against food miles might seem an unlikely cause for Styler, given that a tribunal last year heard how she ordered her personal chef to travel over 100 miles to make a bowl of pasta for her youngest child and has sold olive oil and honey from her Tuscan estate, Il Palagio, 1,000 or so miles away, in Harrods in London.

So it was hardly surprising that an alert journalist present at the lecture, which was being staged as part of the Earls Court Real Food Festival, had the wit to question the environmental record of Styler and her husband Sting.

The couple's carbon footprint, the impertinent ink-stained wretch pointed out, has been estimated at 30 times greater than the average Briton's. How did Styler and Sting - who have seven homes - square that with their environmental crusading?

Styler conceded that as Sting "has a 750-person crew to bring around the world, it is a difficult challenge".

Her rare moment of ecological candour was shortly replaced by the more familiar self-congratulation and justification, however.

"I would like to think that we both work pretty hard for the rights of indigenous people and for the rights of conservation of the Amazon rainforest, but we do need to get around," she said.

Of course, Sting and Trudie's "do as I say not as I do" approach to the dilemma of environmental pollution is by no means unusual among the carbon-guzzling lifestyle of the celebrity elite.

[Here's a roll call of some other startlingly hippy-critical celebrities...](#)



**E-mail the
Editor**

Legal Farm Bribery

by Timothy Carney

Issue 109 - June 11, 2008

Former U.S. Rep. Duke Cunningham is in jail today for bribery, but 318 of his colleagues just set up a corrupt deal nearly identical to the one that landed Cunningham behind bars. While Duke's 2003 deal involved military contractors and a house in [Del Mar, Calif.](#), Congress' 2008 deal involves sugar growers and ethanol — and this time the congressmen are the bribers rather than the bribed.

The Farm Nutrition and Bioenergy Act, which cleared the House on Tuesday 318-106, is a cornucopia of boondoggles, rip-offs and handouts, but perhaps the most inexplicable part is the provision instructing the federal government to buy "surplus" sugar from sugar growers and then sell it to make ethanol. Taxpayers will buy overpriced sugar and then sell it to ethanol makers at an artificially low price — a sweet deal for sugar and ethanol barons, and a raw deal for taxpayers.



Tim Carney

Here's the Cunningham analogy: In 2003, Cunningham sold his house in Del Mar to defense contractor [Mitchell Wade](#) for \$1.675 million. Cunningham had used his perch as a defense appropriator to steer contracts to Wade's company. Wade, it appeared, had deliberately overpaid: He immediately put the house back on the market and sold it for less than \$1 million.

At least Wade paid the bribes using his own money. Congress is now the briber, using tax dollars to overpay for sugar, which the government will then sell at a loss. It is "bribing" the sugar growers and ethanol producers, who, in return, are sweetening many of these lawmakers' campaign coffers. The farm bill has a handful of sugar subsidies, all of which make life more expensive for the rest of us, but guarantee a continued flow of sugar cash for congressmen.

Sugar growers are a politically active bunch in both lobbying and campaign contributions. According to the [Center for Responsive Politics](#), the industry has averaged more than \$3 million per cycle this decade and gave to 301 House members in the 2006 last cycle. [Hillary Clinton](#) has been its top recipient this cycle, followed by [Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Tom Harkin, D-Iowa](#).

Sugar companies need to be this active politically because their business depends on government regulation and subsidies. The farm bill headed to the [White House](#) this week guarantees that 85 percent of all sugar sold in the [U.S.](#) will be grown domestically. That means the federal government will fiercely restrict imports from other nations, driving up the price we pay for sugar.

This continues the long-running restrictions on sugar imports, which make our sugar more expensive. In 2007, raw sugar cost \$11.60 per pound in the rest of the world, but \$20.99 per pound here. Of course this makes our food more expensive.

The farm bill also ramps up the special loans taxpayers give sugar growers. Sugar growers currently receive an 18-cent loan from the [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#) for each pound of raw cane sugar (and a higher rate for beet sugar) they grow. The collateral is the sugar, meaning that if a sugar company can't sell its stuff for more than 18 cents, the government buys it. That rate would go up to 18.75 cents under the farm bill.

Finally (actually, there are other sugar subsidies in the farm bill, but too many to list), there is the seemingly Cunningham-inspired sugar-to-ethanol program: The USDA buys "excess sugar" and sells it to ethanol makers — and only ethanol makers. The first problem here is that "excess sugar" means any sugar that sugar growers want to keep off the market to further drive up prices. Second,

when the USDA can sell the sugar only to ethanol makers, there's no way the USDA will get a good price.

Buy high, sell low. That's what Uncle Sam is doing to benefit sugar growers and ethanol makers, who in turn contribute to congressional re-elections. I wonder whether [Duke Cunningham](#) has room for 318 colleagues in his cell.

Timothy Carney is a columnist with the Washington Examiner, where this first appeared.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Irrational Health World

by John Goodman

Issue 109 - June 11, 2008

In a rational world, deductibles and copayments serve an economic purpose.

Where it is appropriate and desirable for patients to make choices (e.g., primary care, small-dollar services), out-of-pocket cost sharing allows patients to bear some or all of the costs and reap some or all of the benefits of the choices they make. Where patient choice is not appropriate or desirable (e.g., on a hospital gurney, large-dollar services), we would not expect to see cost sharing. At least these are the principles that govern other insurance markets.



John Goodman

Yet in the market for health insurance, those principles are increasingly being turned upside down. In the small group market a typical plan covers primary care visits from the first dollar, but imposes high deductibles and copayments for inpatient hospital care. And whereas tiered pricing for drugs once encouraged generics over more expensive brand names, today tiered pricing is being used to impose thousands of dollars of cost on patients who must take expensive drugs with no generic substitutes. (See article [here](#))

Welcome to the irrational world of health insurance, where normal market forces have been systematically suppressed and no one ever faces a real price for everything. State and federal regulations have made it illegal to charge employees premiums that reflect their individual expected health care costs or to deny them employment for health reasons. But in outlawing discrimination, politicians have not outlawed self interest.

The brutal reality: In today's market, employers and insurers have every incentive to attract the healthy and avoid the sick. And since it's illegal to do that directly, many are doing it indirectly by choosing health plans that appeal to the healthy and repel the sick. The implicit message for people with health problems imbedded in many health plans is: "We don't want you in the first place and should you enroll (by some mistake) we hope you will quickly go elsewhere."

Ironically, there is only one product in the insurance marketplace that by law must limit the out-of-pocket exposure of the chronically ill. That product is Health Savings Accounts!!!

But haven't we been told over and over again that HSA plans are bad for the sick and only good for the healthy? Yes. The battle against the syllogism is unending.

John Goodman is President of the National Center for Policy Analysis

**E-mail the
Editor**

End Pain Harassment

by Richard Morrison

Issue 109 - June 11, 2008

Millions of Americans live in chronic pain, without adequate access to prescription pain medications, because their doctors are too afraid of being harassed or even arrested by the Drug Enforcement Administration to prescribe sufficient doses. To help combat this problem, the Competitive Enterprise Institute is launching its "[Politics of Pain](#)" campaign to support reform of DEA rules and procedures.

"DEA is attempting to control drug abuse by regulating the practice of medicine," said CEI General Counsel Sam Kazman. "But DEA consists of bureaucrats, not physicians, and its views on treating chronic pain often amount to malpractice."

The Politics of Pain campaign has collected personal stories from physicians and patients who have explained first hand how difficult it can be to either offer or find sufficient treatment for pain conditions. In [one video interview](#), Gulf War veteran James Fernandez and his wife tell their story of how he, once a robustly healthy U.S. Marine, is now virtually confined to his home because of severe, ongoing pain that has been under-treated for years.

Of course, the small number of doctors who have abused their prescription authority should be held accountable. However, when it is too easy to single out doctors simply for prescribing certain types of pain medicines, the result is what we are seeing now: Many of America's best doctors simply will not prescribe these medicines, or will not prescribe sufficient doses. That leaves thousands of Americans without an adequate remedy for their chronic pain, and it often destroys the lives of doctors who simply want to provide the best possible care to their patients. The Association of American Physicians and Surgeons [has documented several examples](#) of prosecutorial abuse involved in the politics of pain.

Consider the following:

- Dr. Robert Weitzel of Utah was convicted of negligent homicide, but then acquitted in a new trial after the prosecutor was found to have concealed exculpatory evidence. The jury needed only a few hours of deliberation to find him not guilty. Nevertheless, Weitzel was sent to federal prison based on an unrelated admission of a record-keeping violation.
- Dr. Deborah Bordeaux of South Carolina was convicted under a "drug kingpin" statute carrying a mandatory minimum sentence of 20 years, after working a mere two months in a locum tenens position – that is, temporarily filling in for another doctor – treating chronic pain and other ailments.
- Dr. Jeri Hassman of Arizona, who had the largest pain practice in Tucson, was threatened with a 28-year prison term on 362 criminal counts, apparently because a small fraction of her patients used the prescriptions in unauthorized ways. Federal prosecutors called her "a drug dealer with a pen." Dr. Hassman, a single mother with two children, had little choice but to be pragmatic and accept a plea agreement on four counts of failing to notify authorities that patients had admitted using other family members' prescription drugs. She was sentenced to two years of probation, but had her practice destroyed and her reputation maligned by the federal government.
- Dr. William Hurwitz of Virginia was convicted and had all his property seized, even though his pain practices were under the careful supervision of the state medical board, which believed all his prescriptions were written in good faith. Dr. Hurwitz was initially sentenced to four 25-year sentences and forty-six 15-year sentences, and he was fined more than \$1 million. His conviction was overturned on appeal because the trial judge had prevented the jury from considering Hurwitz's defense. After a second trial, in 2007, Dr. Hurwitz was sentenced to



four years and nine months in prison despite the judge's conclusion that most of his practice was legitimate medicine that saved patients' lives, and that medical literature increasingly supports Hurwitz's theories on the propriety of large drug doses to treat patients in chronic pain.

Although the pain and damage caused by prescription drug abuse are real, the insufficient treatment of chronic pain has destroyed lives and livelihoods. It is time to reconsider America's tragic war on prescription pain medication.

"Pain patients aren't drug abusers looking for a prescription fix," said CEI Senior Fellow Gregory Conko. "It's a genuine tragedy that the DEA often treats them and their doctors as if they were. It's as though the agency just doesn't care whether its single-minded waging of the war on drugs imposes collateral damage."

In [another video interview](#), Dr. Alexander DeLuca, a board-certified specialist in addiction medicine, describes the obstacles faced by a physician trying to deliver the "standard of care" called for by his own medical training. According to DeLuca, virtually no patients in the country today receive proper treatment for chronic pain.

Richard Morrison is with the Competitive Enterprise Institute, a non-profit, non-partisan public policy group dedicated to the principles of free enterprise and limited government. For more information about CEI, please visit our website at www.cei.org.

**E-mail the
Editor**

31,000 Kyoto Skeptics

by Dennis Avery

Issue 109 - June 11, 2008

In 1998, Dr. Arthur Robinson, Director of the Oregon Institute for Science and Medicine, posted his first Global Warming skeptic petition, on the Institute's website (oism.org). It quickly attracted the signatures of more than 17,000 Americans who held college degrees in science. Widely known as the Oregon Petition, it became a counter-weight for the "all scientists agree" mantra of the Global Warming crowd.

Recently, with America being dragged toward Kyoto-style energy limits by cadres of alarmists, Robinson mailed a new copy of the petition to his original signers, asking them to recruit additional qualified scientists. Now his list includes well over 31,000 American man-made warming skeptics with science qualifications. More than 9,000 hold scientific PhDs. Almost 32,000 thousand skeptics happens to be twelve times as many scientists as the 2,500 scientific reviewers claimed by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to form a scientific consensus.



Dennis T. Avery

Last week Robinson held a press meeting at the National Press Club in DC, followed by a luncheon on Capital Hill, to which members of Congress and their aides were invited. Not surprisingly, attendance was low.

Robinson's petition states a truth: "There is no convincing evidence that human release of CO², methane or other greenhouse gases is causing or will cause, in the foreseeable future, catastrophic heating of the Earth's atmosphere and disruption of the Earth's climate."

What do these approx 32,000 scientists believe has caused the earth's warming since 1850 if it isn't CO²? He points to the sun. Robinson notes that over the past 150 years the sunspot index has predicted the Earth's temperature changes—with 79 percent accuracy—about ten years before they happen. The sunspots actually predicted the 2007 global temperature decline; the index turned down in 2000. The computer models didn't foresee it.

The correlation between Earth's temperatures and CO² is only at the "accidental" level—22 percent and declining sharply over the past decade as the temperatures have refused to increase with the CO² levels. Robinson says the lack of correlation between CO² levels and past Earth temperatures proves that CO² is not dominating our climate.

The Oregon chemist warns that "no other major scientific problem has ever been tackled the way the UN has approached global warming." The UN hosted a big meeting of scientists, he says, and then a small group of "authors" summarized the discussions into a global action plan. But the UN has never produced any evidence that humans are warming our climate. The UN panel says CO² became the culprit "by the process of elimination" but such a process is neither scientific nor admissible in a court of law.

The forecasts of desperate temperature increases all come from computer climate models, notes Robinson. But the computer models keep forecasting more warming than we get. In fact, 70 percent of the earth's recent warming occurred before 1940, while virtually all of humanity's greenhouse gas emission has occurred since that date. The Earth's net warming since 1940 is a tiny 0.2 degree C.

"If CO² isn't causing our tiny warming, then banning all our energy will simply make people poor and helpless, says Robinson, "The cold spells and heat waves nature will always throw at us, will then indeed, threaten human lives on the planet."

DENNIS T. AVERY is a senior fellow for the Hudson Institute in Washington, DC and is the Director for the Center for Global Food Issues. (www.cgfi.org) He was formerly a senior analyst for the Department of State. He is co-author, with S. Fred Singer, of Unstoppable Global Warming Every 1500 Hundred Years.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Forecasting Hurricanes?

by Alan Caruba

Issue 109 - June 11, 2008

Recently, AccuWeather.com, led by Joe Bastardi, its chief meteorologist, issued a news release that was, to be kind, pure mush. The early warning forecast for 2008's June to November hurricane season said that conditions like La Nina and a "continued warm water cycle in the Atlantic Basin" held forth the "chance for U.S. landfalling storms."



The operative word here is "chance" when predicting hurricanes because it is largely a question of gaming odds on how many. What no self-respecting meteorologist, whether in private forecasting or working for the U.S. government's weather service, wants you to know is that their highly sophisticated computer weather models quite simply cannot factor in a whole range of factors, not the least of which is clouds. Yes, clouds.

As I am fond of telling people, the best definition of the weather is "chaos" which is to say, beyond maybe four days, accurately predicting it is nearly impossible. This is not to denigrate the work of meteorologists and the scholarship of climatologists who study long-term trends and cycles. Bless them, bless them all!

Men have been trying to predict the weather since ancient shamans studied the entrails of chickens. The weather is one of the great determinant factors in all aspects of life on Earth and it is in a constant state of change.

A fine example is the last ten thousand years or so of temperate, even moderate, weather the planet has enjoyed. It gave rise to civilizations based on agriculture, allowing some to grow food while others engaged in conquest on foot, on horseback or sailing to places they then claimed for themselves. Nasty bunch those human beings. What we call history some might uncharitably call organized thievery, but farmers still want to know if it will rain next week.

Knowing about hurricanes takes on importance these days because most of the nation's population lives within fifty miles of either coast. Since hurricanes are an East Coast and Gulf of Mexico event, the West Coast has to content itself with earthquakes (entirely unpredictable), wildfires, and other unpleasantries.

In recent years, environmentalists and just flat-out liars like Al Gore have taken to claiming that global warming has been responsible for more intense hurricanes, but in April a prominent hurricane specialist, MIT's Kerry Emanuel, publicly reversed his opinion that global warming had anything to do with it.

The fact that the Earth has been cooling since 1998 might have had something to do with that. Emanuel said he'd checked his data and now concluded that there would not be any substantial increase in frequency or intensity of hurricanes for the next two centuries. He had nothing to offer regarding a pending ice age.

In July 2007, James M. Taylor of the Heartland Institute pointed out that the previous month's issue of "Nature" had published an article about the way scientists had documented Atlantic Ocean hurricane activity dating back 270 years. "They found the 1970s and 1980s were periods of 'anomalously low' hurricane activity compared with historic norms." This ironically corresponds to

the period when environmentalists switched from warning about a coming ice age to global warming. What followed in the 1990s was merely "a recovery to normal hurricane activity."

Given the record of some presumably very smart meteorological people, it almost doesn't matter what any of them have to say on the subject of hurricanes. I'm not being mean because even the predictors are quick to say they haven't gotten things right in a while. In fact, for the last three years, they've been mostly wrong or shall we just say surprised?

"We are calling for a very active hurricane season this year," said Phil Klotzbach of Colorado State University, "but not as active as the 2004 or 2005 seasons." In 2005 Hurricane Katrina obliterated New Orleans and a large swath of Louisiana and Mississippi.

Though everyone knew the Gulf was due a Category Five hurricane it still totally astonished most people. Typically they were not prepared and the aftermath was a perfect example of why expecting either your state or the federal government to do anything right is probably a bad idea. In the end, local communities, neighbors, put things right.

The thing about hurricanes that make landfall so awful is the fact that so many people live close to the East Coast. It just intensifies the level of damage even a mid-sized hurricane can and will do. Predicting how many will occur, however, is (a) a great way to get your name in the newspaper and (b) fairly useless. If there was a reasonable level of accuracy it might be helpful, but bad forecasts just make people anxious for no good reason.

I personally love scientists, but they often get things wrong, are oblivious to human nature, and haven't a clue how their predictions—when they make them—can have seriously consequences in places that depend heavily on tourism, which is pretty much the entire East Coast from Florida up to the Carolinas.

The way I see it, if folks want to vacation in Florida between June and November they can take their chances just like the people who live there. I lived in Florida for four years while a student at the University of Miami and returned for a brief stint around 1962. If there were hurricanes then I was blissfully unaware of them. Coming from New Jersey I just assumed they were just really big storms. There is no denying I was, well, young and not the brightest child on the bus.

This fatalistic behavior pretty much describes most folks in the path of any hurricane. An Associated Press headline in November 2007 said, "A quiet season for hurricanes stirs some fears." Having dodged the bullet, Floridians returned to a reasoned degree of apathy after putting out the patio furniture once again and those responsible for public safety officials were worried about it.

The point is that it just doesn't matter how many hurricanes are predicted. What matters is how many make it across the Atlantic Ocean and arrive with a bad attitude. There will be hurricanes. They are a perfectly natural event.

Be satisfied that satellites can spot them and give you some idea where they are headed. That's called progress. What you do with the information after that is your responsibility.

If any of us had a scintilla of humility, we would know that we have two choices, either batten down the hatches or run like hell.

Alan Caruba writes a weekly column posted on the Internet site of The National Anxiety Center, www.anxietycenter.com. He blogs at <http://factsnotfantasy.blogspot.com>

**E-mail the
Editor**

University Free Speech

by Warner Huston

Issue 109 - June 11, 2008

We are certainly used to seeing the Mainstream Media causing trouble for conservatives and this one is no different at least on that level. But the interesting thing here is that the trouble a social conservative discovered was as a result of what *she* wrote in the MSM as opposed to what was written about her *by* the MSM.



The University of Toledo, Toledo, Oh

It seems that the [opinion editorial written by Crystal Dixon](#) for the Toledo Blade got her [fired by the University of Toledo](#)

because... well, you know how universities are all about free expression and speech, right? Unfortunately for Dixon, though, hers wasn't the proper, politically correct sort of speech that is officially approved of by the thugs at the University of Toledo.

You see, Crystal Dixon made the mistake of believing that this whole silly idea of "freedom of religion" also applied to our institutions of higher learning. She foolishly asserted in her Toledo Blade op ed that as far as her religious beliefs are concerned, homosexuality is a choice made by the individual instead of some genetic predisposition, that someone chooses to engage in homosexual activities instead of assuming that being gay is forced upon one by "nature."

Of course, Dixon based her entire op ed on her Christian religious beliefs. It was no hate filled rant and was quite civil, even tempered, and to the point. But the gay mafia inside the University of Toledo must be awfully powerful. Or, at the very least, fear of them was enough to stifle — no, execute — Mrs. Dixon over what the president of UoT must imagine is her wretched religious extremism.

President Dr. Lloyd Jacobs dashed off a letter summarily firing Mrs. Dixon from her \$134,383 a year job as associate vice president for employee resources.

A letter to Ms. Dixon informing her of her termination, stated "The public position you have taken in the Toledo Free Press is in direct contradiction to university policies and procedures as well as the core values of the strategic plan which is mission critical."

It went on to say her position calls into question her ability to continue in her role as an administrator in charge of personnel actions and decisions and that "the result is a loss of confidence in you as an administrator."

Don't you DARE have any religious beliefs in an American university. Well... unless it is the church of Satan, or Islam, global warming, anti-Jewish or feminism you want to belong to. Those are perfectly fine religious opinions in the halls of our fetid universities it should be noted.

So, what sort of evil, no good, rotten thing did Mrs. Dixon say in her [op ed for the Blade](#)? I mean, it HAD to be the most scurrilous thing on record, right?

She began with this:

I respectfully submit a different perspective for Miller and Toledo Free Press readers to consider.

SHOCKING! Wanting to be respectful of her opponents and to add to the debate? Say it ain't so! She is off to a bad start with this. We all know that no university wants any different perspectives, don't we? As soon as she finished her first words she should have known her job was lost.

First, human beings, regardless of their choices in life, are of ultimate value to God and should be viewed the same by others. At the same time, one's personal choices lead to outcomes either positive or negative.

OUTRAGE! Speaking of God dooms this woman to the educational purgatory reserved for conservatives and other nefarious inhuman cretins as far as the denizens of our universities are concerned.

I won't replay her entire op ed here, but it's filled with some great stuff. But I do have to reiterate one of her themes before I close this article of mine.

As a Black woman who happens to be an alumna of the University of Toledo's Graduate School, an employee and business owner, I take great umbrage at the notion that those choosing the homosexual lifestyle are "civil rights victims." Here's why. I cannot wake up tomorrow and not be a Black woman.

You know, I have often wondered why the civil rights establishment has allowed homosexual extremists to co-opt the mantle of civil rights for their own agenda? Dixon is exactly right. I can no more "decide" not to be white as she can "decide" not to be black. And, if people are to attack Mrs. Dixon because of the color of her skin, this is something so inherently wrong as to be axiomatic that a civil right would be violated by oppression based on that reality. But, it is possible to decide not to be gay. It is something eminently under the control of the individual to change. It is a behavior, not an unalterable fact.

But, all that aside, if Mrs. Dixon's religious beliefs dictate that homosexuality is a choice, then how is it the right of the university to fire her over that belief? Has it affected her job in the past? I don't see how it could have. After all, she has risen through the ranks of the university to a rather high position. If no one noticed her religious beliefs had affected her job by now, then it is safe to say that she was not acting in a discriminatory manner in the execution of her duties.

Warner Todd Huston is a Staff Writer for the New Media Alliance, Inc. (www.thenma.org).

**E-mail the
Editor**

Republicans in Denial

by Tom Coburn

Issue 109 - June 11, 2008

As congressional Republicans contemplate the prospect of an electoral disaster this November, much is being written about the supposed soul-searching in the Republican Party. A more accurate description of our state is paralysis and denial.

Many Republicans are waiting for a consultant or party elder to come down from the mountain and, in Moses-like fashion, deliver an agenda and talking points on stone tablets. But the burning bush, so to speak, is delivering a blindingly simple message: Behave like Republicans.



Tom Coburn

Unfortunately, too many in our party are not yet ready to return to the path of limited government. Instead, we are being told our message must be deficient because, after all, we should be winning in certain areas just by being Republicans. Yet being a Republican isn't good enough anymore. Voters are tired of buying a GOP package and finding a big-government liberal agenda inside. What we need is not new advertising, but truth in advertising.

Becoming Republicans again will require us to come to grips with what has ailed our party – namely, the triumph of big-government Republicanism and failed experiments like the K Street Project and "compassionate conservatism." If the goal of the K Street Project was to earmark and fund raise our way to a filibuster-proof "governing" majority, the goal of "compassionate conservatism" was to spend our way to a governing majority.

The fruit of these efforts is not the hoped-for Republican governing majority, but the real prospect of a filibuster-proof Democrat majority in 2009. While the K Street Project decimated our brand as the party of reform and limited government, compassionate conservatism convinced the American people to elect the party that was truly skilled at activist government: the Democrats.

Compassionate conservatism's starting point had merit. The essential argument that Republicans should orient policy around how our ideas will affect the poor, the widow, the orphan, the forgotten and the "other" is indisputable – particularly for those who claim, as I do, to submit to an authority higher than government. Yet conservatives are conservatives because our policies promote deliverance from poverty rather than dependence on government.

Compassionate conservatism's next step – its implicit claim that charity or compassion translates into a particular style of activist government involving massive spending increases and entitlement expansion – was its undoing. Common sense and the Scriptures show that true giving and compassion require sacrifice by the giver. This is why Jesus told the rich young ruler to sell his possessions, not his neighbor's possessions. Spending other people's money is not compassionate.

Regaining our brand as the party of fiscal discipline will require us to rejoin Americans in the real world of budget choices and priorities, and to leave behind the fantasyland of borrowing without limits. Instead of adopting earmarks, each Republican can adopt examples of government waste, largess and fraud, and restart the permanent campaign against big government.

Republicans can tear up the "emergency spending" credit card and refuse to accept any new spending whatsoever, including for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, until Congress does its job of eliminating wasteful spending. The federal budget contains a vast unexplored area of offsets. My office alone has identified \$300 billion in annual waste. Borrowing from the next generation when we haven't done our job of oversight is unconscionable.

Regaining our brand is not about "messaging." It's about action. It's about courage. It's about priorities. Most of all, it's about being willing to give up our political careers so our grandkids don't have to grow up in a debtor's prison, or a world in which other nations can tell a weakened and bankrupt America where we can and can't defend liberty, pursue terrorists, or show compassion.

John McCain, for all his faults, is the one Republican candidate who can lead us through our wilderness. Mr. McCain is not running on a messianic platform or as a great healer of dysfunctional Republicans who refuse to help themselves. His humility is one of his great strengths. In his heart, he's a soldier who sees one more hill to charge, one more mission to complete.

Mr. Coburn is a Republican U.S. senator from Oklahoma. This originally appeared in the Wall Street Journal

**E-mail the
Editor**

Disadvantaged Obama?

by Dave McKeeman

Issue 109 - June 11, 2008

While Barack Obama is bright and has accomplished much, his campaign distorts his life circumstances suggesting that he has come from a disadvantaged background. In fact, he was a child of relative privilege.

Here are the facts.

Campaign Speech: My father was a poor Kenyon goat herder who was brought to America to attend college under a John Kennedy education program. **Fact:** Barack Hussein Obama Sr. was wealthy by African standards, spoke fluent English, excelled in academia and was already a graduate student at the University of Hawaii when he met and married Barack' mother before Kennedy was elected. He eventually went to Harvard University.



Sen. Barack Obama

Campaign Speech: I lived with my grandparents; they did not have money. **Fact:** Barack's maternal grandfather managed ever larger furniture stores in Kansas, Texas, California, Washington state and finally in Honolulu. Barack's maternal grandmother always worked, usually in banks and became a Vice President of the bank in Mercer Island. She joined a Honolulu bank in 1960 and was again promoted to Vice President in 1970.

Campaign Speech: My mother was a "Kansan, who grew up in the "dab-smack, landlocked center of the country". **Fact:** Barack's grandparents moved frequently. Barack's mother, Ann Dunham was born in Kansas but moved while young and lived in four states before high school in Mercer Island Washington. She moved with her parents to Honolulu upon graduation.

Campaign Speech: My mother was "a single parent, impoverished, survived on food stamps." My father abandoned the family after only two years of marriage. **Fact:** Barack's mother, Ann Dunham, twice married, twice divorced was single by choice choosing education and career over marriage and child rearing. When his father was admitted to Harvard, she refused to move and stayed at the University of Hawaii in her pursuit of a degree in anthropology. His grandparents provided for his mother and infant Barack. Ann met and married Lolo Soetoro, a Muslim Indonesian oil manager on sabbatical to further his education at U. of Hawaii. When Barack was 5, his stepfather returned to Jakarta taking Barack and his mother. Lolo worked for an American oil company and as an educated English-speaking Manager was well paid. Barack chose to return to Hawaii, when he was 10 to live with his maternal grandparents and his mother agreed. Later, his mother returned to Hawaii anthropology graduate school. Following graduation, she was an anthropologist in Indonesia and around the world, divorcing Lolo in the mid 70's. His mother ultimately attained her Doctorate in Anthropology and continued field research until she contracted cancer and returned to the care of her mother. She died of cancer in 1995 at age 52.

Campaign Bio- My mother home schooled the children in correspondence courses in English and the teachings of world philosophers. **Fact-** In Indonesia, Barack always attended private schools (one Muslim and one Catholic) and lived in a middle class neighborhood with predominantly Dutch residents. He lived with his grandparents from the age of ten. They enrolled him in the prestigious Panahou School which he attended until graduation in 1979. Panahou is a private College Prep school, famous for prominent, successful alumni, including leaders of business, commerce, finance, government, politics, sports and academia. Barack's grandfather died. His grandmother retired, an avid Bridge player, and lives in the same ocean view high rise and continues to be very supportive of her grandson.

Campaign Speech- He said he and his wife Michelle have only recently paid off their tuition loans. **Fact-** Following graduation, in 1979, from Panahou Prep School, Barrack enrolled in Occidental College, a distinguished Los Angeles liberal arts college that ranks among the top ten liberal art colleges. After two years Barack transferred to Columbia University, New York City, where he graduated with a degree in political science. In 1988, Barack entered Harvard Law School where he graduated with honors in 1991. Michelle LaVaugh Robinson entered Princeton University in 1981 and graduated cum laude with a BA in Sociology with a minor in African American Studies. She entered Harvard Law School and obtained her Juris Doctor degree in 1988.

With 8 and 12 years attending exclusive, expensive universities Barack & Michele Obama surely could have amassed sizable student loans. Failure to pay off student loans, however, appears a matter of choice rather than ability to pay. Student loans are low interest and allow long repayment terms. Michele was a successful attorney when they met and married. She reportedly earns over a quarter of a million dollars per year as an affirmative action lawyer and executive. Barack authored books and has been both a State and US Senator. Both serve as paid board members.

Their tax returns report earnings approximately of one quarter million in 2000, 01, 02, 03 and 04, which escalated to \$1.6M in 05, \$1M in 2006 and \$4.2M in 2007. The newly married Obamas bought a home in exclusive Hyde Park and have now replaced it with a \$1.6 million mansion in a transaction that has been questioned as other than arms-length. There have been numerous trips to visit Baracks mother in exotic locales and to grandparents in Hawaii. They dress fashionably, live very well, and have prospered in their comfortable liberal world, which hardly seems to have been disadvantaged.

Dave McKeeman writes from Fort Wayne Indiana

**E-mail the
Editor**

Costs of Image

by David Keene

Issue 109 - June 11, 2008

John McCain is getting ready for a tough fall campaign and has apparently decided that as part of his preparation, many of those who have gotten him to where he is are going to have to go.

The senator obviously takes great pride in his image as an "independent maverick." He is willing not only to cross the aisle to work with Democrats and liberals on issues of common interest, but to abandon his friends and fellow Republicans when he's convinced they're wrong.



David Keene

It's an image that, in the current atmosphere, is an asset of incalculable value. In fact, it is this independent image that underlies his strength in head-to-head polls against this fall's likely Democratic nominee.

What is becoming clear is that McCain not only understands the importance of his image, but is almost infuriatingly willing to do anything to protect or enhance it. Indeed, at times he seems to revel in doing so. He seems, for example, to find it incredibly difficult to speak to supporters or would-be supporters without hinting that he doesn't really like them all that much and disagrees with them on various fundamental issues. Whether this will work in the long run remains to be seen, but it's a strategy he's pursuing with a vengeance.

Successful politicians often combine a stubborn idealism with a single-minded ruthlessness that can shock even their most ardent supporters, and this is certainly the case with McCain.

During the course of the last week McCain has been publicly forcing many of his strongest, earliest and most devoted supporters out of the campaign, throwing them under the proverbial bus to protect his image as the enemy of lobbyists and the Washington culture they represent.

It's been ugly and unfair to many of his loyalist backers and must have others wondering whether they're next. In politics as in life, perception often trumps reality. John McCain is widely perceived as an anti-establishment Washington reformer when he has in fact been a part of the Washington establishment for longer than most of those who will vote this fall have been alive. His national campaigns have been run and financed by his friends and those whose concerns have resonated with him in the Senate.

Many of these friends are, well, lobbyists, who have worked with him, raised money for him, and come to admire him over the years. They made up the core of his support against governor and candidate George W. Bush eight years ago and stuck with him in the darkest days of this year's campaign. Indeed, had it not been for his lobbyist friends, John McCain would not be where he is today.

There is no hint that any of these folks have done anything wrong. Indeed, some of them are apparently being sent packing because their firms took on clients four years ago for whom they didn't even lobby personally and others because, since they lobbied for positions the candidate himself supported, his critics might charge that they influenced him.

So they have become something of an embarrassment. His insistence in the past that their presence shouldn't be a problem because he doesn't listen to them may be true since many who know him argue that he doesn't listen to hardly anyone, but his opponents are beginning to use their presence to hack away at the image he likes to project, and that is something he won't and perhaps can't afford to tolerate. As a result, many of them are being quietly thanked for their service, led to the public square and politically executed for the greater good.

According to reports, those he still needs are being asked to make sure they are no longer registered as lobbyists, so he apparently believes in redemption for a few who will be able to escape their

allegedly unsavory pasts and continue to work for him at least for as long as they're needed.

The sad truth in politics is that for those on top, loyalty is all too often a one-way street. A candidate's supporters are expected not only to be steadfast in their support regardless of what happens, but to be ready to sacrifice themselves, and often their reputations, if by doing so their candidate's prospects can be enhanced.

In return, the candidate is required to do little and certainly can't be expected to stand by a supporter who has become a problem.

McCain's willingness to jettison friends and supporters who have done absolutely nothing wrong is not unique, but it is a little sad.

David Keene is the chairman of the American Conservative Union

**E-mail the
Editor**

Politics of Oil

by Doug Edleman

Issue 109 - June 11, 2008

Once again, in response to constituent outcry over gasoline prices, Oil Company executives have been hauled before Congress to get their posteriors ripped into by self-serving grandstanding Senators.

Senator Leahy went so far as to question the salary of the executives – as if this was in some way relevant.



But these self-appointed watchdogs are barking up the wrong tree. The Oil Companies are not to blame for our pain at the pump!

Oil companies profit margins are around 10%. They actually make only around 8 cents profit on a gallon of gas! The station owner only makes around 2-3 cents per gallon. Where does the rest go? Part goes to the well owner – in most cases an OPEC nation. A good portion is represented by the costs to transport the crude across the world, to refine it into gasoline, and to distribute it to the local gas station. Some goes back into exploration, and R&D. The rest is taxes!

Last year Exxon Mobile may have profited \$40 Billion – but they paid \$105 Billion in taxes! Just WHO is the oil profiteer? Our friendly watchdogs in Congress!

In truth, our high gas prices are due to a great number of influences, and MOST of them can be blamed directly on the environmentalists! We can't drill, we can't build refineries, and we must produce boutique fuels.

ANWR: Nope, can't drill there – we might disturb the porcupine caribou. But this species migrates over 1500 miles annually, and the enviro-wonks think our drilling in an area the size of Kennedy Airport (YES that's all it would take!!) will threaten their existence!

Offshore: OMG! What if there's a spill? (Environmentalists will cry.) But we have seen real-life demonstrations of the safety of offshore oil rigs. Hurricane Katrina tore some existing rigs in the Gulf loose and tossed them onshore. How much oil was spilled? NONE! After the storms, the rigs were repaired, towed back into place, and production began again!

On the other hand, our current oil needs are met by floating billions of barrels across the oceans on ships! VERY environmentally friendly! Hundreds of diesel burning ships traverse the planet continuously, each carrying an eco-disaster load of oil in its hold. While shipping spills of the magnitude of the Exxon Valdez are rare – ships DO get into trouble on the high seas... and what is the first course of action for a ship in trouble? Lighten the load by dumping cargo! Now THERE'S a nightmare scenario for you! (Remember, Exxon Valdez only spilled a PORTION of its cargo!)

Refineries: We haven't built a refinery since the Carter Administration due to environmentalist objection. In the interim, a number of refineries have come off-line for a variety of reasons. Even if our crude supply increases, our refining capacity is already running at or near 100% now. And they have a further obstacle in their way...

Boutique Fuels: Environmental regulations require region-specific formulations of fuel. It's illegal to sell fuel blended for one region in another region. Refineries must predict demand for a particular blend – produce that blend, then RETOOL to produce another blend. If they inaccurately predict demand – there may be a shortage in one region and a glut in another. The surplus of one region can't be tapped to meet the shortage in the other. A price disparity occurs, with the price rising in

the shortage area – and the next thing you know – they notice they’re paying more than their neighboring region, and they cry “GOUGING”!

But let’s get back to those “obscene” profits of the Oil Companies.

WHO gets those profits? No doubt the execs make a good salary – and they deserve it! There are only a handful of companies who manage to provide the needs of the oil hungry planet! Individuals who can manage such enterprises, which operate on such a massive planetary scale efficiently and profitably, are worthy of a premium salary. But all the exec salaries combined represent a very small percentage of the companies’ earnings – so where does it go? Well, apart from reinvestment into exploration, research & development etc... it goes to the SHAREHOLDERS. Virtually every mutual fund has some of its money in oil... so if you have an IRA or a 401K, you yourself probably reap some oil profits.

So what else is driving our gas prices up?

TAXES: Federal, state and local taxes on a gallon of gas exceed 75 cents in some locales!

Speculation: Commodity futures are traded based on EXPECTED prices – and uncertainties drive prices UP. Given our mid-east oil dependency... middle east turmoil or instability increases uncertainty.

Weak Dollar: Global economic conditions have weakened the dollar making it less valuable abroad. Since we are dependent on FOREIGN sources of oil – it takes more dollars to pay the same value in foreign currency – so even if THEY were charging the same price in their own currency as before... it would cost more in dollars than it did!

Supply and Demand: Yes, real economic fundamentals are in play! As emerging nations are entering the 21st century – their demand for oil products is growing exponentially! The US is not the only HUGE consumer of oil. Africa, India, China and other nations are growing their economies, and their energy requirements have exploded. And while we’re no longer the only game in town, we can’t just waltz into Saudi Arabia and tell the Prince “what’s what” and demand increased production or lower prices. They can tell us to pound sand, because there are other markets happy to pay the price and buy the oil! Until we begin to dramatically increase domestic production and reduce our dependency on foreign sources to meet our demand – we will remain at the mercy of less than friendly nations who can now afford to cut us off entirely if they desire, as they have adequate alternative markets to sell to!

The time has come to tell the enviro-wackos to just shut up, and to drill in ANWR, drill offshore off Alaska, California, in the Gulf, and off Florida. (We’d BETTER get to it in the Gulf and Caribbean before our environmentally responsible friend and neighbor CUBA lays claim to all the oil in that region!) We must build refineries. We must pursue technologies to extract oil from oil shale. We must build nuclear plants to provide electricity without burning fossil fuels. If an initiative was announced to accomplish these items within 5 years – we’d see oil prices drop OVERNIGHT, as those very futures traders would foresee reduced prices down the road.

Doug Edelman is a conservative political commentator and a contributing editor for The Conservative Voice. His work is also seen on News By Us, The American Daily, The Post Chronicle, New Media Journal, Capitol Hill Coffee House etc. For the support of his family, however, he is also an IT Consultant/Contractor and owner of a Computer Services Business.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Romney Move On Arnold?

Issue 109 - June 11, 2008

Mitt Romney is moving to San Diego, and could anyone guess that the abode he's clamped his mitts upon is in La Jolla ? He claims that the move is not political and that he already has family in the San Diego area, but it's hard to believe that Romney is not mulling a run for governor, as at least a backup to a possible national role.



Wasn't the first thing we heard from Bob Barr last year, upon his switch to the Libertarian Party, that he DIDN'T plan to run for any office?

Romney's former home ground of Massachusetts, where he was very successful, has similarities to California. California fell in 1998 to a status similar to Massachusetts, that of being a majority Democrat state.

A loyal Republican element that made it possible for Republicans to dominate the governorship from 1966 to '98, allowing only the interim deviation of one Democrat, is still present in California-- waiting loyally to back a deserving ally.

Consider also that Romney also ran very strong in California in the recent Presidential primary, leading by eight points in the final-day polling, before a withering 11th hour McCain ad campaign, vowing to enforce the borders worked like magic to head-off the expected Romney victory.

It'll be interesting to see if Arnold Schwarzenegger's newly-acquired Democrat trappings will be sufficient to ward off Romney's possible reaching for a governorship. Is it time to move over, Arnold?

Al Lemon Grove

**E-mail the
Editor**

Reader Comments*Issue 109 - June 11, 2008*

**CONSERVATIVE
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Editor: Another excellent editorial, "Legal Lawlessness." This article on judicial activism caught me on a day when I had just been found in Contempt of Court (for the third time actually) and facing another large monetary judgment. My crime? I raised and spent money putting measures on the ballot after a liberal Multnomah County judge, whose son is a teacher's union president, granted the Oregon Education Association a blatantly unconstitutional injunction ordering me to stop raising and spending money putting measures on the ballot. I am getting so weary of the current judicial system. Judicial arrogance and activism is the norm here in Oregon. Here, the public employee unions have the most influence, even at the highest levels, and few judges will cross them. The editorial made one minor statement that is not accurate. In regard to our over-abundance of laws, he said that even God only needed Ten Commandments. There may have been only Ten Commandments written on the stone tablets and later stored in the Ark of the Covenant, but there were hundreds and hundreds of additional laws (clarifying the Big Ten) in the pages directly following Exodus Chapter 20. Laws always breed more laws and more laws breed more administrative rules. But in all fairness, Jesus actually boiled the Ten down to just two: Love God and love your neighbor as yourself. If we could all do that, there would be no need for laws at all. We would all be fighting over the chance to give the other guy the biggest piece, which is what the Apostle Paul was suggesting when he wrote that believers should stop suing one another and suffer wrongs, at least from other believers. Bill Sizemore, Oregon

Editor: Regarding "Legal Lawlessness," Hitler did everything lawful. He just made a law he wanted and it was then lawful. Where do you think we are headed in this country? I have an idea! Diversify! Diversity will be the end of this country! Klinka

Editor: Thanks for taking the words right out of my mouth and giving some ammunition in your editorial, "Legal Lawlessness." Yesterday, I dashed-off a query to visionamerica.com on a post on the nuts--emphasis nut--and bolts of impeaching these activist Judges who ignore the rule of law in reference to a post they ran about a year ago. There are few more in Massachusetts and elsewhere who need to be added to the public enemy list. Do we have a list of these sociopaths? Sincerely yours, Bud Spencer

Editor: "Legal Lawlessness" is a very good article on what is destroying our country. Our voting choices for President prove that government is moving in the wrong direction. It looks like the only way to save our country is for the people to pick up their arms and take back their rights. H.T., TN

Editor: Thank you for your article "Legal Lawlessness." I support your position and I am sick and tired of Judges who have to get their names in the paper by overruling the law and the wishes of the majority. This new gay marriage in California is to start on June 14th which is now Flag Day. Is there any hidden symbolism in that? Sincerely yours, William O'Connor

Editor: "Legal Lawlessness" is a very well done article and fits in with the positions of <http://vote-itz-ur-right.com> and <http://an-american-for-sovereignty.com> that "We the People" need to gel together and stop mincing words and put forth action through the voting booth while we still have that power to wield. This is exactly why voting is so crucial and to give excuse as to why you didn't doesn't wash and America doesn't need it. America needs Americans exercising this God given right and freedom we have here in America to assure we have no Judges such as he sitting in such a high and to be honorable position. Boyd Lieberman, Kansas City, MO

Editor: "Legal Lawlessness is EXCELLENT!!! Thank you! Mark Evans

Editor: Some comments on Alan Caruba's piece, "Ten Oil Truths." In Fact Two, the author says current oil prices have nothing to do with supply and demand. In Fact Three, he says increasing demand from China and India is part of the problem. These two facts do not comport. Supply and demand have to be a factor to some degree. In Fact Ten, author says ExxonMobile profit margin is about 10%. I have never heard it to be that high. But, I did read recently that the industry average is 7.5%, certainly modest when compared to Microsoft at 33%. Finally, an analyst recently claimed that 20 years ago the US was using 18 million barrels a day. In 2006, the US was still using just 18 million barrels a day. He claimed that improving efficiencies in appliances, home construction, autos, etc have allowed the US to keep its barrel consumption stable. Can you confirm? J.E. Murray

I appreciate Alan Caruba's "Ten Oil Truths and its accurate summation of the oil issue. Jack Canzonetta Warren, Oh

Editor: In his "Ten Oil Truths," Mr. Caruba should have added that no new oil refineries have been built in about 20 years and we have lost about half of them since then. Please confirm these figures but there are only about half as many gasoline refineries left and together their production capacity is slightly less than was produced in 1985. No one wants to build one because of the overwhelming cost and environmental legal hurdles. Perhaps the government could build a few and operate them when private enterprise refineries are stretched to capacity. That way, consumers wouldn't be able to believe that oil refineries are being intentionally hobbled to drive the price of gas up. A

Editor: Great article by Alan Caruba, "Ten Oil Truths." But I question Fact 2. Maybe I missed something but does not fact 3 deal directly with demand and facts 4,5,6,7,8,9,AND 10, deal directly or at least indirectly with supply? I think supply and demand have much to do with the cost of fuel. What don't I understand? Sam Pacagri

Editor: Thanks for the great article on "Ten Oil Truths" by Alan Caruba. Ron Werkmeister, Corporate Testing Manager, ANSYS, Inc.

Editor: Thank you for the excellent article by Spencer Warren regarding James Stewart, a man we wish was the type for today's movies. I live in Pennsylvania and have visited his museum and my granddaughters love his old movies. They were movies to laugh and cry in without the explicit sex and junk found in today's movies. We mourn that Hollywood gives us no values to live up to, not many are any kind of role model, babies born to lovers instead of married couples to the applause of many. Where has the movie industry gotten with more movies of animals that talk and sing, but not many stories of bravery, dignity, or values or the good person winning? I am of course of the older and hopefully wiser generation. We had lives where authority was honored as well as lives well lived. Maybe you can encourage the movie makers to look back and see when life was better and more was expected of young folks. Thanks for reminding me of James Stewart, a man to be admired. Lois Deaton

Editor: I thoroughly enjoyed Spencer Warren's article on Jimmy Stewart, who is one of my favorite actors and American patriots. Thank you. Sincerely, Joe Gregorio

Editor: I have opened and read all of the articles in the current issue of Conservativebattleline.com. Those you have featured are not only well written, but well-reasoned. Thank you for including me in your mailing list. John C. Graham

Editor: Nice issue. Jameson Campaigne

**E-mail the
Editor**