



CONSERVATIVE BATTLELINE ONLINE

The "Bold Colors" Conservative Voice in Washington

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Blue McCain, Red Obama?

by Donald Devine

Issue 111 - July 9, 2008

Both candidates are predicting an election of "change." Strangely, they both are correct--but the change will be almost the exact opposite of what either expects. The law of unintended consequences is one of the most important in political science and America is headed for a doozy.

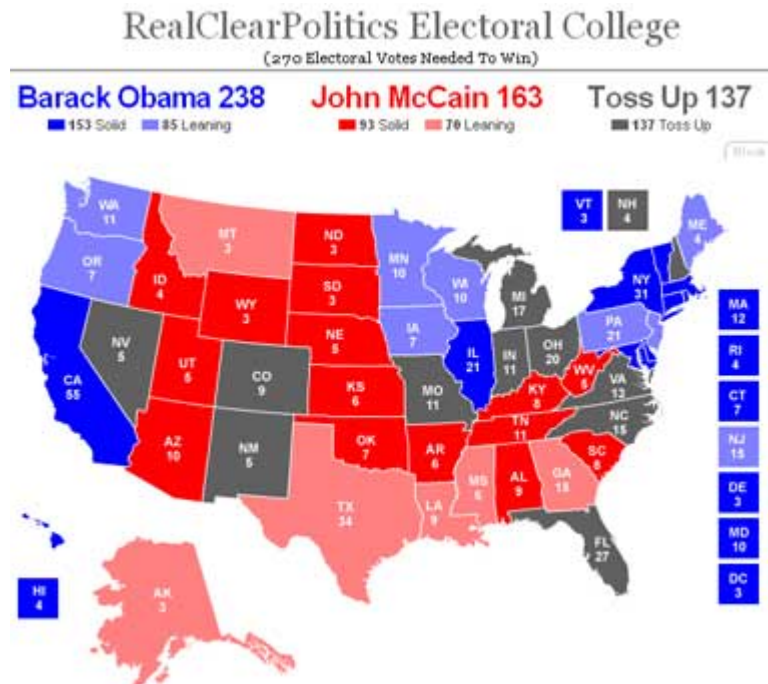
It all has been so predictable. Red state conservatives supporting limited government, traditional values and strong defense battle blue state liberals for big new government programs, government-guaranteed libertine lifestyles and diplomacy over military force. President George W. Bush has mixed things up a bit with his spending spree but the political divide of red and blue states has seemed so normal for so long we ignore it. Anyway, the Bush tenure adds to the reasons why everyone is for change.

Predicting the future is hazardous, of course. Even assuming that either John McCain or Barack Obama will be formally nominated is not one hundred percent since either could die or be incapacitated and the conventions do not take place until later in the summer. We do not even know the vice presidential selections—and they will be very important this year. Still, the future looks very clear to these old political science eyes and, like the reaction to Cassandra's bad news, no one is going to like it one little bit.



The incumbent president sits with among the lowest approval ratings ever collected for a chief executive, in the midst of a recession people at least partially blame on him, with rising inflation including out of sight energy prices, and in a war that most Americans say was his mistake--and which they want to end sooner rather than later. The people tell pollsters by large majorities that things are going in the wrong direction and they are a foul mood generally. Republicans have lost a string of off-year elections in normally safe GOP districts. Under these circumstances, Barack Obama should win in a landslide.

Even under these horrific conditions, the polls still find Sen. McCain within a few points of the Democrat. State-by-state, it looks even better for McCain to run a close race. Indeed, my gut tells me McCain will win narrowly. But conservatives should hold the champagne. It will be a disaster for their philosophy and their party over the long run. Why? It is even more obvious that Democrats will increase their majorities in both houses of Congress in this election. And afterwards, liberals will be so angry flubbing the White House for the third slam-dunk election in a row they will make a President McCain pay dearly.



Democrats already have the most effective House of Representatives majority in years, obvious in the American Conservative Union congressional voting scores for last year. The Democratic leadership there has not lost a single important vote since regaining control in the 2006 election. If not for the Senate, the GOP would be out of the legislative game altogether. They will be out after the 2008 election results even if McCain wins, maybe especially if he wins. It is even very likely the Democrat victory will produce a filibuster-proof Senate in 2009, with the support of a few weak-kneed Republicans it is a virtually certainty.



Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House

Well, a President McCain would have the veto. But he would be trapped by the same dynamics as George W. Bush. To get anything accomplished, ultimately, he needs Congress. Legislators—former and current—are congenitally unable to get along without “results” so they typically give in to a determined majority. The Democrats will be unwavering in their determination to make McCain fail to prepare the way for veto-proof majorities in 2010. Presidents almost always lose seats in the off-years and a frustrated McCain and a quietly reactive Congress will make it inevitable. Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Leader Harry Reid have already demonstrated in the last two years that they know how keep a low profile and play legislative defense, learning from the disastrous tenure of Newt Gingrich.

So the cost of a McCain victory would be overwhelming Democratic control of Congress and the inability of the president to overcome it with even constant vetoes—in the unlikely event he would pursue them in the first place. Two years later, a “do-nothing” Republican president is easy pickings even for your typically hapless “progressive” Democratic presidential nominee. But the liberals should hold the bubbly too. What if they win in 2008? It is all undone! And, as we have noted, all the objective evidence says the Democrats should prevail.

What happens if Sen. Obama wins? Here he comes into office with all his ideas of reforming Washington and adopting an agenda of change to save the American people. The only problem is that he only offers the same old liberal programs the Democrats have been pushing in Congress for generations. There was not a sliver of difference between the 2008 Democratic contestants on the issues. They have no other ideas. So what happens? He submits all his new ideas and the Democrats in Congress immediately recognize them. But they know one thing he does not. These cunning politicians really never wanted to pay for them!

There are no geniuses in Congress but there are few fools either, especially in the Democratic leadership and on the key committees. They pushed all of these expensive programs when they knew the Republicans and their president would defeat them. That way the Democrats got credit for passing the great programs and the GOP received the blame for killing them. With an Obama, the Democrats would have to come up with the money—and it isn't there, and they know it better than anyone. The entitlements are ready for bankruptcy now and there are even bigger bills to be paid a few years further down the road—and do not forget about inflation. This is how the Democrats lost control of the House for the first time in forty years in 1994—after big plans and controls for health care and big taxes to pay for them.



**Marquis de
Condorcet**

These wily pols are not about to let a president, even a Democratic one, turn them out of leadership again. Ask Jimmy Carter. Why do you think Bill Clinton had to “triangulate” by proposing big liberal programs that cost and amounted to almost nothing? Only the Republicans could get away with a big prescription drug plan and it was President Bush who did the big discretionary spending—twice Clinton's levels. It might even occur to Obama as it did to Clinton before

him that to have funds for his favorite programs, much less for any new ones, it might be necessary for the Democrats to begin reforming entitlements.

And forget about getting out of Iraq too quickly. House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer is not going to let Republicans blame him for last minute helicopter exits and American soldiers dying in a precipitous troop withdrawal. Obama's advisors are already whispering that withdrawal will take years. Sen. Obama himself has already retreated on gun control, campaign finance, supporting telecommunications firms' immunity from prosecution for assisting the government in eavesdropping on terrorism suspects and even abortion!

Q.E.D. Conservatives will be annihilated by a McCain victory and liberals will be enraged by an Obama win. The only rational solution is for red conservatives to vote for the Democrat and blue liberals for the Republican. Conservative columnist Bruce Bartley has already collected a short list of conservatives who are for Obama. Perhaps it is the beginning of a trend. Or perhaps it is another political science law at work, first set by the Marquis de Condorcet—for which he was guillotined by the Paris mob--that elections based upon opportunistic stands on individual issues rather than coherent philosophies are only incidentally related to voting rationality. Maybe we can get it right the next time.

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Editor**

Real 'Change' Agenda

by George Liebmann

Issue 111 - July 9, 2008

There is a clear danger that the domestic policy debate will be conducted 'from the trenches,' only on the basis of the usual issues dividing the parties: the 'culture wars' and increased government versus lower taxes. McCain and Obama have histories of independence from their parties' vested interests and have a chance to break this mold. But as yet the McCain and Obama web sites offer promise of little save the usual. Those who perceive a need for expansion of the country's physical and social infrastructure will fail if their proposals focus, like too many of Obama's, on greater funding of centralized bureaucracies and their union clients. Those like McCain professing belief in limited government and low taxation will fail if they deny obvious needs and fail to provide devolved and efficient ways of satisfying them.



George Liebmann

There are better answers to this than negative and defensive ones:

BUILDING-LEVEL SCHOOL BOARDS: The voucher argument will not be won anytime soon. More public sympathy will attach to proposals to make bureaucratic public schools into community schools by giving each school its own board with extensive managerial power. Such schools, unlike individually chartered schools, cannot be obstructed or strangled, one by one, through union pressure. No federal K-12 education funds should pass to a school that cannot manage them at building level. This concept was the basis of the Thatcher government's 1988 Education Act as well as similar legislation in Australia and New Zealand. It ends the educationist monopoly by giving more than a million building-level board members from the business, professional and academic communities outside the union establishment insight into and power in public schools.

TEACHER CERTIFICATION REFORM: No federal K-12 education funds should pass to a state that requires more than one term of education courses as a condition of teacher certification. This will open up teaching to liberal arts graduates, housewives returning to the labor force, and military and law enforcement retirees. All of these are important constituencies.

SCIENCE AND MATH PAY SUPPLEMENTS: A large portion of existing federal aid to education should be reserved for salary supplements for teachers in disciplines in short supply: teachers of science, math, critical languages, the blind, and the seriously physically disabled. Salary supplements for mature teachers, not scholarships for neophytes, are required. Districts declining to provide them because of single-salary-scale union contracts should not receive federal aid. The scientific, academic, industrial; and medical sectors are important constituencies and can be made to understand this issue.

VETERANS' EDUCATION: The G.I. Bill should be returned to its original nature by providing funds adequate for attendance at private colleges, not merely community colleges; R.O.T.C. scholarships should also be enlarged. The pending bill goes some distance in this direction, but not far enough. Encouragement should be given to delayed college entry for students who in Emerson's words "do not postpone life but live already." Short-term concerns about military retention can be addressed by delayed introduction of new rules, or 'grandfathering' of old ones or, as in the currently pending bill, by allowing transfer of benefits to family members..

DISTANCE LEARNING: Colleges should be encouraged to develop programs for mature women desiring to continue their education. Distance (internet) learning is underdeveloped in the United States because of the influence of higher education bureaucracies; it is of particular value to women with child care responsibilities and should be promoted.

CHILD CARE: The existing child care and day care credits should be restructured and focused on pre-school children, as in Norway and Canada, so that more women will have the practical opportunity to stay home or work part-time before they enter school, an important purpose to those concerned with what Learned Hand called "The Preservation of Personality". "Parents", Bertrand Russell observed 80 years ago, "tend to be fond of their children and do not want them made the subjects of political schemes. The State cannot be expected to have the same attitude."

COOPERATIVE PRESCHOOLS: Cooperative pre-school playgroups of the type familiar in Britain and New Zealand should be fostered with publicity and tax credits. These are less expensive than unionized schools and have the advantage of keeping parents in touch with their children and the parents of their children's friends.

HOUSING: The existing housing stock is the sleeping giant of housing policy. Much housing is of a size exceeding family needs by reason of falling family size and the incentives to over-building provided by the mortgage interest deduction, the last middle-class tax shelter. Homeowners should be encouraged to install second kitchens and accessory, mother-in-law or duplex apartments, a mainstay of German and Japanese housing policy. Modest tax credits to foster creation of accessory units in owner-occupied single family homes would be helpful in publicizing the concept, which would also be helpful to small home improvement contractors, including minority contractors, in a recession period. Fears of neighborhood deterioration are mitigated by requirements that homes receiving the credit remain owner-occupied..

ZONING REFORM: This should be fostered by publication of model codes, the way that zoning was originally fostered by Herbert Hoover, to do away with land-wasting and cost-increasing lot size and setback requirements and to eliminate restrictions on very small home-based business and convenience stores and cost-increasing requirements for unduly wide collector roads in new developments.

TIMESHARES: These should be given special incentives vis-a-vis other forms of second-home development, as a land and environment conservation measure.

URBAN REDEVELOPMENT: The system of developer-driven redevelopment known as land readjustment familiar in the Far East and Europe should be fostered. This provides an alternative to public eminent domain by allowing landowners on a block to cooperatively assemble and develop land, and would be of great value in inner cities. There is finally interest in such approaches, as can be seen from the lead article on Land Assembly Districts in the April 2008 Harvard Law Review.

CONGESTION CHARGING: Time of day pricing of roads, which can be revenue-neutral where charges are rebated pro rata to licensed drivers in the affected area, is the only device which can, in the near term, remedy traffic congestion in major metropolitan areas. Here technology is well ahead of politics.

OLD AGE CLUBS: These provide much of the basis for care of the elderly in Japan, and were fostered there through very modest tax credits. They facilitate mutual aid among the elderly, displacing costly social services, and also allow cooperative organization of health clinics, immunizations, and checkups.

HEALTH CARE: Rather than viewing health care as a unitary system, primary care, the part most ready for reform, should be looked at separately. An obvious device would be provision to each patient of an annual voucher for primary care, essentially the basis on which the British health service functioned for its first 80 years. This worked well and was highly popular and inexpensive, until it was under-funded in the 80s. It is distinct from specialist and hospital care, which require market signals, and are best dealt with through a combination of catastrophic insurance, medical savings accounts, and possibly a 'medical chapter 11' allowing medical debts to be paid off over an extended period of years and factored by the providers.

DRUGS: As to the less seriously addictive drugs, notably marijuana, existing federal drug policy has stifled state initiatives and made the criminal law the weapon of first resort, indeed the sole weapon. Schools and colleges are reluctant to embark on testing and treatment programs if doing so is perceived as running the risk of incriminating their students. Careful use of mandatory testing has limited drug abuse in the military and workforce; removal of the federal criminal penalties on simple possession of small quantities is needed if there is to be a serious demand-side approach to drug abuse. This does not imply tolerance of drug abuse--the problem of the spaced-out student is a real one--, but rather the use of more effective methods to combat it at an early stage. Excessive criminalization to the exclusion of other approaches will lead to the militarization of the 'drug war', seen already in our border areas and in Mexico and Latin America.

TAX SHARING: Both parties lament the present state of federal domestic programs. the Democrats for their insufficiency and the Republicans for their bureaucracy and restrictiveness. The major Western European countries, most notably Germany, but more recently France, Italy, Spain, and Britain as well, have in the post-war period accorded state or regional governments, and in France and Germany municipal governments, guaranteed shares of the yields of national growth taxes. Since the Nixon Administration's useful but short-lived revenue-sharing measures, there has been little American interest in these devices. They would produce a somewhat larger, but much more efficient and responsive public sector, but offend against party dogmas. They deserve another look.

CRIME AND TERRORISM: The juvenile reactions of the Clinton and Bush administrations in response to the Oklahoma City bombing and 9/11 have given rise to a dangerous growth of federal criminal jurisdiction and of the size of federal policing and criminal justice agencies. It is encouraging that Congress has belatedly awakened to the possibility of abuses by curbing the President's ability to circumvent Senate confirmation of U.S. attorneys and by reversing 'stealth' legislation allowing the President to displace local law enforcement in broadly defined emergencies. The fact that local governments in the United States have the capacity to act without federal approval is a source of strength, not of weakness. The appropriate federal role is that suggested in the writings on federal of James Madison and John Stuart Mill: dissemination of information about effective practices, not the supplanting or directing of subordinate governments. The best answer to terrorism is a stiff upper lip and the strengthening of normal institutions of government, not the propagation of a 'great fear' and the centralization of control in a frequently erratic 'unitary executive.'

All of these suggestions appeal to suburban and independent voters beyond the usual Democratic and Republican constituencies. All are de-centralist, and do not accord congressmen opportunities to cut ribbons. They partake of the same enabling characteristics as the most successful federal and state laws in the nation's history: the Northwest Ordinance and its land subdivision law; the Homestead Acts, the Morrill Act; the federal mortgage-guarantee programs; the G. I. Bill of Rights; the state municipal incorporation and general incorporation laws; and the state laws authorizing residential community associations and condominium associations. One cannot expect prodigies of transformative thinking and planning in the confusion and turbulence of presidential campaigns. But if the Messrs. McCain and Obama truly wish to 'break the molds' of their respective parties, they would do well to proclaim some willingness to at least look at such suggestions.

George Liebmann, a Baltimore lawyer and recently Visiting Fellow at Wolfson College, Cambridge is the author of Solving Problems Without Large Government: Devolution, Fairness, and Equality (Praeger 2001), reprinted as Neighborhood Futures (Transaction Books, 2005) and The Little Platoons: Sub-Local Governments in Modern History (Praeger 1995) and head of the Calvert Institute for Policy Research, Inc.

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Editor**

Leaving Children Behind

by David Keene

Issue 111 - July 9, 2008

The news that the District's representative in Congress has joined with organized labor and liberals within the Democratic Party to demand an end to Washington's successful voucher experiment shouldn't come as much of a shock.

Voucher programs and public charter schools are under attack all over the country by the very people who like to justify more federal programs than I can possibly list here as needed "for the children." The problem is that in the liberal ideological and political world, the interests of the "children" almost always take a back seat to their belief that every interest must be serviced through government and unionized government workers or not at all.



David Keene

The liberal mindset sees this insistence on denying children, and particularly minority children, access to any institutions other than traditional public schools as evidence of some ethereal goodness and insists that anyone who seeks to change the educational status quo is an enemy of education itself. It seems not to matter a whit to most of these people that many of the schools they would force children to attend don't work.

The answer, they tell us, is not competition or innovation, but money. It is their belief that if government at all levels will simply dump enough money into the existing system, all will be well, though the evidence suggests otherwise. With one of the most expensive per-student expenditures in the country, the problem in the District of Columbia certainly isn't money, but an educational, administrative and municipal bureaucracy that is bloated and largely incompetent. The best teachers are ground down and forced to become little more than babysitters or to seek more rewarding employment elsewhere as quickly as possible.

That schools in the District and many other areas of the country are broken is no secret, yet most everyone within the existing system continues to spend more energy blaming others for the problem than trying to fix it. When they aren't blaming the tax system, the taxpayer or Congress, in fact, they tend to blame parents for sending them children who are unruly or ill-prepared. The one thing they know is that it isn't their fault. The result is that we are turning out class after class of young adults who are finding it harder and harder to compete in a global economy against workers from nations that actually take education seriously.

The rise of the charter and voucher movements, along with the skyrocketing number of parents choosing to home-school their children rather than entrust them to a system that doesn't work, represent a rational response to the problem. Union representatives and elected officials like Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.) claim that rather than giving up on traditional public schools, these parents should stick with them and help fix them.

What she is really asking, of course, is for parents to accept the fact of an ugly and unacceptable status quo. The District's schools have been a disaster for decades and have helped keep the children of District residents from achieving their dreams or the success every parent wishes for his or her children. What Ms. Norton and her cohorts are telling those who have found a better way is that the greater good dictates that they sacrifice the hopes and dreams of their children to the ideological and political demands of those who have failed and continue to fail.

That's the ugly truth in Washington and elsewhere. Charter schools and private schools are under attack around the country today, not because they don't work, but because they do. The fact that the victims of these attacks are often those poor and minority kids who most need a good education seems of little concern to folks like Ms. Norton.

Charter schools and vouchers were originally seen by many as a means not only of providing a way out for children trapped in failing schools that weren't being fixed, but as a way to inject competitive pressure into a monopolistic structure and thus force the traditional public school systems to change and improve. Unfortunately, however, the existing system is responding to competition like most monopolies — by trying to close down its competitors rather than improve what it has to offer.

Barack Obama, like John McCain, claims to be interested in educational innovation and in actually finding solutions to the educational mess in which the country finds itself.

David Keene is the chairman of the American Conservative Union.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Indiana Jones Enjoyment

by Spencer Warren

Issue 111 - July 9, 2008

Exciting movies that allow one to turn off one's brain for two hours, just for sheer fun, have an honorable place in movie history. They have to be well-done professionally, to be sure. Steven Spielberg's *Indiana Jones* movies have earned their place in this pantheon, and I am pleased to report that the fourth installment (and the first since 1989) joins its predecessors in the annals of high-class enjoyment at the movies.

Our archeologist-adventurer Dr. Henry "Indiana" Jones (Harrison Ford), having, with some not inconsiderable effort, finished off the Nazis in the earlier films, is now embroiled with the Russian Communists in 1953, at the height of the Cold War. It seems our Russian friends, led by a woman scientist who is the true Commie from Hell, Col. Dr. Irina Spalko (Cate Blanchett), are after the legendary Crystal Skull of the title; this relic of many, many centuries past, they have heard, holds the secret of total and complete power. Armed as ace commandoes, they seize our Nevada nuclear test site, where they believe they can find the way to the ultimate secret, provided they have the coerced assistance of Indie. From here, off we go on a two hour adventure filled with one hot pursuit after another, each more daring and improbable than the one before, punctuated by some (mild) fisticuffs and (uneven) wry humor. Not to mention a few surprises.



Yes, fans, the game's afoot and so is the stuntwork: across the hallowed campus of Yale (even including its august library) – Yale would be justified in banning motorcycles after this experience -- to a very creepy old cemetery in an obscure village in Peru to the darkest forests of the Amazon, and more. Indie and his new companion, Mutt Williams (Shia LaBoeuf), a fifties teen motorcyclist with greased-back hair of the type made famous as a fifties icon by Marlon Brando in *The Wild One* (1954), are never more than a half-step ahead of the Reds, except when they are held prisoner.

There is much more to this thrilling adventure, such as an army of man-eating ants, not to mention the usual motor vehicle chases, precipices and dangling vines, concocted to perfection by Spielberg, based on the George Lucas-Philip Kaufman creation of the Indiana character. His sure hand never lets us tire of the action heaped upon action; he keeps us riveted to the edge of our seats once the action really gets moving – and he finds no need to indulge himself in gratuitous or explicit violence. John Williams, as always in this series, makes the music a key partner in the pace and rhythm of the picture. And where would we be without the ingeniously imaginative settings and special effects by the many craftsmen (and craftswomen) listed in the end credits? Not to mention, of course, the excellent cast: Ford is a true star with screen charisma and, at 65, has not lost a step, or his looks; he is very ably supported by Ms. Blanchett and all the cast. This is superb summer entertainment for teenagers and their elders.

Spielberg probably has directed more films than anyone in the past three-plus decades – this is about his thirtieth – and he shows no sign of slowing down at the age of 61. A huge power in Hollywood, through his production companies he also has produced more than one hundred films and television projects, including, alas, the atrocious Clint Eastwood falsifications of the Battle of Iwo Jima. (See reviews at [here](#) and [here](#).) His career has alternated between crowd-pleasers like the *Indiana Jones* movies, *Jaws* (1975), *1941* (1979), *Hook* (1991), *Jurassic Park* (1993) and *War of the Worlds* (2005), and serious, ambitious films like *The Color Purple* (1985), *Schindler's List* (1993), *Amistad* (1997), *Saving Private Ryan* (1998) and *Munich* (2005). *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977) and *E.T.: The Extraterrestrial* (1982) seem to fall in between as serious audience-pleasers. Among his current projects is a film version of Doris Kearns Goodwin's historical opus about Lincoln's presidency, *Team of Rivals*, with Liam Neeson playing the great man. (This project may be encountering difficulties and now is postponed from 2009 release – the Lincoln bicentenary—to

2010.) Scheduled ahead of this one and currently in production is *The Trial of the Chicago 7*, with a script by the liberal brain of TV's West Wing, Aaron Sorkin.

Spielberg evidently has many films left in him, but at this point an assessment may be in order. His audience-pleasers tend to be superior to his more serious efforts. He is highly accomplished at his craft, but when it comes to weighty subjects, his professionalism is not matched by a personal vision or artistic weight and maturity; this shortcoming is in part reflected in his more recent interest in topical "current events" films like *Munich* and his upcoming treatment of the Abbe Hoffman "yippies" who disrupted the 1968 Democratic convention, the so-called "Chicago 7." Many of his serious films have unforgettable scenes – the shot on the bedroom wall of the two sisters in silhouette playing patty-cake in *The Color Purple*, the brilliant, harrowing sequence of the Nazi pogrom in *Schindler's List*, the Omaha beach landing in *Saving Private Ryan*, to name three examples – but they lack unified impact as whole works. Unlike most great directors, Spielberg does not stamp a particular vision across his work, either thematically or stylistically. Seen recently in a one-hour interview on Turner Classic Movies, he did not come over as a thoughtful man or a person of depth, although he has done good things, such as using his films to promote greater public knowledge of the Holocaust and the Second World War.

But he does have command of his craft. He still has time to show he is an artist as well.

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**E-mail the
Editor**

American Girl Values

by S.T. Karnick

Issue 111 - July 9, 2008

Critics used to consider movies based on toys to be the lowest of the low, as they were often designed all too obviously to sell the line of toys featured in the narrative. Roger Ebert, for one, habitually complained about this, and most other mainstream critics likewise dismissed such film simply on that basis.

Of course, the source material for a film shouldn't matter a hoot if the movie is good, but typically movies designed to sell toys weren't all that good. The lines began to blur with the release of the *Star Wars* films, however, and in the past decade commercial tie-ins with Hollywood movies are the norm.

Nonetheless, I can certainly imagine Ebert and others cringing a bit at the release of *Kit Kittredge: An American Girl*. The American Girl franchise is a huge goldmine, as young girls across the nation obsessively collect these expensive dolls and their countless high-priced accoutrements.

Yet there is much to like in the American Girl phenomenon. At a time when U.S. public schools have ceased teaching real U.S. history, substituting instead blatant indoctrination in ethnic and sexual victim thinking, the American Girl dolls teach girls what it really was like in America in the past. The dolls represent a variety of ethnic heritages, and each is from a different, important period of American history.

Each doll, moreover, is sold with a book (!!!) that tells the story of that particular girl, placing her life in historical context and not papering over the less attractive aspects of our history as she deals with problems characteristic of that particular time. The narratives and other items are designed to appeal to girls aged approximately seven through twelve.

The American Girl company (now owned by Mattel) also produces other books, magazines, and the like, dealing with the same themes.

There are now nine American Girl dolls, and although owning them all would be a huge investment—easily over \$1,000—girls can of course play together and learn more about American history as they do so. This seems to me to be a very good thing, especially given the lack of knowledge and respect for history characteristic of contemporary America largely as a result of the hijacking of our public schools by left-wing America-haters.

I think that these dolls and their accessories fill a real, perceived need in American families: a view of America and American history that respects our great accomplishments while not denying our shortcomings. The courage and fortitude the girls show in the stories must also appeal to both parents and girls.

I think that the toys and narratives are also salutary in showing today's wealthy, overfed children just how difficult things were in the past, how well they have it today, and what people have had to overcome to make things so good. Of course, the odds are that the sweet little things will still be



largely spoiled modern American kids, but at least they'll have some recognition that things could be otherwise. They might just learn to count themselves greatly blessed.

In addition to all the dolls and accessories, three American Girl movies for television have been produced and shown on American TV: *Samantha: An American Girl Holiday* (2003); *Felicity: An American Girl Adventure* (2005); and *Molly: An American Girl on the Home Front* (2006).

Now the first theatrical film based on the American Girl series is about to be released, as noted above, starring Academy Award nominee Abigail Breslin and directed by Patricia Rozema (*Mansfield Park*). *Kit Kittredge: An American Girl* tells the story of the title character, who is growing up during the Great Depression and is plunged into poverty when her father loses his job.

[According to a story in the Chicago Sun-Times](#), that harrowing experience was precisely what drew the film's producers to this particular story:

"The producers were drawn to the incredible drama and immediacy of Kit's story—a girl who goes from rich to poor overnight, during the scariest economic times our country has ever seen," says Jodi Goldberg, editorial director for American Girl's historical fiction line.

Kit exemplifies the pluck and optimistic spirit that characterized the United States during its first two centuries, as [the Sun-Times story](#) notes:

In her American Girl books, and now in her own movie, Kit deploys optimism and elbow grease as a full partner in her family's fight to hang on to their middle-class lives after her father loses his car dealership during the Great Depression.

The emphasis on good character is intentional in both the stories and the films, as [the story](#) notes:

Most young girls today have no personal link to the grim days of the Great Depression, and indeed the original intent of Pleasant Rowland, who began the American Girl franchise in 1986, was to personalize American history for girls.

Each of the characters embodies some admirable trait associated with her historical time, which is explored throughout the series of books built around that girl.

Kit exemplifies "grit and determination"—useful characteristics during the Great Depression, Tripp says. The paradox of Kit's experience is that every catastrophe that befalls her and her family carries the seeds of exciting new possibilities.

"When everything you have been depending on crashes, all bets are off. You have the freedom to reinvent yourself," Tripp says.

Given those values and valuable lessons, one hopes that the film will carry them over effectively. According to the review in *Variety*, *Kit Kittredge: An American Girl* does just that:

Plucky, likable and determined to succeed, much like its heroine, "Kit Kittredge: An American Girl" is a throwback to the kinds of movies they don't make anymore. Anchored by a fine performance from Abigail Breslin, this wholesome, engaging entertainment offers something for viewers ages 7 to 107 and, given the popularity of the "American Girl" brand, should be an especially hot-ticket item for elementary- and middle-school girls. A platform release should benefit from positive word of mouth among "Kit's" target demo and, just as importantly, the target demo's moms, yielding strong returns.

After the strong performance of last year's *Nancy Drew*, perhaps a successful box-office performance by *Kit Kittredge: An American Girl* will teach Hollywood producers and the book publishing industry that American children (and their parents) really do want high-quality, mature stories that teach positive values.

It's possible. Since the kids aren't allowed to learn this stuff in school, the visual media and book-publishing industry should step in to fill the breach.

They could make a fortune, after all, just like the people behind the American Girl empire—and do well by doing good.

S.T. Karnick edits The American Culture at <http://stkarnick.com/>

**E-mail the
Editor**

Father Knows Best?

by Carey Roberts

Issue 111 - July 9, 2008

Father Knows Best was one of the most widely-viewed and long-running TV shows of the 1950s. True, the program played to a romanticized image of middle-class Americana. But that beats the modern-day alternative of a raging epidemic of sexually-transmitted diseases, safe havens for abandoned infants, and 11-year-old girls wearing thong underwear.

Father Knows Best was yanked from the air in 1960. Before long the popular discourse was filled with the now-familiar litany of feminist grievance.

The women's libbers were especially troubled with the notion of the traditional family. Arch-feminist Simone de Beauvoir argued, "No woman should be authorized to stay at home to raise her children ... precisely because if there is such a choice, too many women will make that one."

Robin Morgan, former editor of *Ms. Magazine*, chillingly predicted, "We can't destroy the inequities between men and women until we destroy marriage." And Andrea Dworkin compared marriage to legalized prostitution.

Most laughed at the hyperbole. But they were dead serious.

Exactly how do you go about destroying the family which is, after all, the primordial unit of society? The best tactic, they decided, would be to go after the provider and protector image of Dear Old Dad.

Homer Simpson became emblematic of the well-intentioned but inept father. "Patriarchal" was inverted into an epithet synonymous with the mistreatment of women. "Paternalistic" was nearly as bad.

Media accounts began to tar men as wife-beaters, deadbeats, child abusers, clods, and all-around dufuses. Every one of those stereotypes was false or highly exaggerated, but no matter. As author Warren Farrell quipped, "father knows best" turned into "fathers molest."

Since men weren't up to the task, the government would need to step in, the Lefties argued. A series of legal opinions, laws, and government programs came along, all claiming to "empower" women: *Roe v. Wade*, Violence Against Women Act, welfare programs, maternal custody preference, draconian child support programs, and more.

If removing flocks of children from their fathers is your yardstick, these programs were successful beyond belief. From 1960 to 1990, says the Census Bureau, the number of American children living with their biological fathers plunged from 82% to 62%. As columnist Dennis Prager recently wrote, "The contemporary absence of men in boys' lives is not only unprecedented in American history; it is probably unprecedented in recorded history."

These fatherless children are far more likely to be poor, to use drugs, to experience a range of educational and behavioral problems, to be victims of child abuse, and to engage in criminal behavior.



But at least they're liberated from the baleful influence of their fathers!

Fortunately, family advocates saw where this was all headed and began to question fem-think. Several groups are now coming to the rescue of daddy-hood (I'm including the web address if you want more information):

- The National Partnership for Community Leadership just held a major conference in Washington DC to honor African-American dads: www.npclstrongfamilies.com
- The National Fatherhood Initiative released a landmark report, "The One Hundred Billion Dollar Man: The Public Costs of Father Absence:" www.fatherhood.org
- Fathers and Families has been working with the media to promote positive images of dads: www.fathersandfamilies.org

And several groups are working to increase father involvement after divorce:

- Marriage Savers has just come out in support of shared parenting, revealing that "of the six states that passed the strongest Joint Custody laws, five experienced the largest drops in the divorce rate." www.marriagesavers.org
- The American Coalition for Fathers and Children is urging citizens to sign a petition that reminds us, "Children thrive with the active involvement of both parents": www.acfc.org
- And the Children's Rights Council has succeeded in introducing a Congressional resolution in favor of joint custody: www.crckids.org

True, frazzled fathers don't always measure up to the iconic images of *Father Knows Best*. But on one point, these groups have hit the nail right on the head: a government program is a lousy substitute for a dad.

Carey Roberts is a staff writer for the New Media Alliance, Inc. The New Media Alliance is a non-profit (501c3) national coalition of writers, journalists and grass-roots media outlets.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Oil Drilling Revolt?

by Paul M. Weyrich

Issue 111 - July 9, 2008

The year was 1967. I was on a private aircraft belonging to an oil company with my boss, the late Senator Gordon L. Allott (R-CO). We were flying to Oklahoma City, where Allott was to address the State GOP Convention. An oil company executive asked me if ever I had seen oil shale. I said I had not. Whereupon he picked up a piece, took out his cigarette lighter, and lit the piece. It burned like high grade coal. The oil company man proceeded to tell me that if oil ever reached \$30 a barrel it would be profitable to develop oil shale. Even with inflation oil has exceeded that price so why aren't we developing the trillions of barrels of oil-shale reserves. There is a one word answer to that question: Congress.



Paul M. Weyrich

I receive mail from folks who tell me they don't vote because there is no difference between the political parties. In some ways they are correct but not when it comes to energy. Representative Roy Blunt (R-MO), House Minority Whip, has presented his colleagues with data which clearly makes the case that in terms of developing oil and natural gas there is a profound difference between the parties, at least in the House of Representatives.

Blunt's figures show that for the past 14 years 91% of House Republicans voted to develop oil at ANWR while 86% of Democrats opposed drilling there. In the conversion of coal to liquid category 97% of House Republicans supported the concept while 78% of Democrats opposed it. Regarding the development of oil shale in Colorado and Utah the level of support among House Republicans was 90% while the level of opposition to the development of oil shale among Democrats was 86%.

When it comes to oil exploration for the Outer Continental Shelf 81% of Republican House Members said yes while 83% of Democrats said no. And look at this figure: 97% of House Republicans want to increase refinery capacity while 96% of Democrats said, no way. Historically, Blunt said, 91% of Republicans have favored development of oil and gas reserves while 86% of Democrats historically have been against oil and gas exploration and development.

Blunt's staff also compared the plans of each of the parties to deal with the skyrocketing price of gasoline. The Democratic plan includes seven investigations of price-gouging, four investigations of speculators, suing OPEC, \$20 billion in new taxes against the oil companies. None of these would reduce the cost of gasoline. The only item in their plan which would do so is to stop the oil going to the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. That would lower the cost of a gallon of gasoline by 5 cents. The Republican plan would develop oil in the Continental Shelf and develop it deep in the sea. It would develop oil shale, and it would abolish earmarks to pay for the Federal gas tax holiday. Republicans and Democrats agree on the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. Taken together these items would reduce the cost of a gallon of gasoline by at least \$1.95 and maybe a lot more depending on the productivity of each of the development projects.

What many of us wonder is this: When will the people of the United States say enough is enough and demand of their elected representatives that we develop our own resources? If we did we would not need to import one drop of oil from these ruthless dictators who would like to see us defeated or dead. I love the pristine beauty of nature, too. But we have made so many strides in new technology that we do not have to ruin the environment to explore and develop oil and gas. \$4 a gallon doesn't yet seem high enough for a public revolt. What will do it? \$5 a gallon? How about \$8 to \$11, which is what some Europeans are paying already. I hope and pray the revolt comes before it is too late.

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

**E-mail the
Editor**

Greens Against Food

by Dennis Avery

Issue 111 - July 9, 2008

What a world!! Global warming alarmists bring us to the brink of world food shortage and economic collapse—using words and computer models, not higher temperatures. As a result, more wildlife species are threatened by palm oil plantations growing biodiesel than by climate change. Heavy sea ice just trapped a big Russian ice-breaker for seven days in the Arctic's Northwest Passage, which the alarmists told us last year would soon be open sailing. The sunspots and a Pacific Ocean cooling phase are forecasting the earth will cool further over the next two decades. In the past, both have accurate in their in their predictions.



Dennis T. Avery

The blue collar world sees no warming, but they surely see economic ruin staring them in the face. Finally, the workers of the world are crying, "Enough of this man-made warming hype without warming!"

- Fishing fleets have gone on strike across Europe against ultra-high diesel prices, while the Greens demand that fuel become even more scarce and expensive
- Truckers are staging fuel-protest slowdowns in major European cities.
- Protesting French farmers have blockaded fuel stations.
- More than 70 percent of Britons now say they will not pay any extra taxes to "save the planet."

Meanwhile, the Vatican, widely flung governments, and dozens of universities have scheduled conferences on the global food shortage.

Guess whose advice we took on shifting much of our cropland from food to biofuels? The advice of the same Greens who told us not to burn coal or oil. We shifted too much of our scarce cropland into corn ethanol and palm oil biodiesel. We forgot that the world's food and feed demand was in the process of doubling due to 1) the last surge in human population growth; 2) rising Third World incomes and expectations; and 3) millions more beloved cats and dogs as households have fewer children and more affluence

Assuming society is not yet ready to starve the poor or euthanize their pets, we must feed them. That means at least twice as much global food and feed per year by 2040. Nor do we want to clear the forests or drain the wetlands to grow more crops. That means there is no "spare" cropland for corn ethanol

Unless the planet starts warming again, quickly and significantly, the Green momentum for a low-carbon society will come to a screeching stop. There are many indications that we are in a long, moderate warming cycle, which began 150 years ago with the end of the Little Ice Age, and may continue for several more hundred years. There is no indication that this modest warming will be bad for humans, or for the wildlife. The thermometers show a net global temperature increase of just 0.2 degree C since 1940 —and even that tiny increase has been inflated by the urban heat island effect.

The big temperature increases are all in those unverified computer models so beloved by the Green movement. The mothers of the world's kids and the workers who grow and catch its food now demand to see the thermometers climb more than .2 degrees before they renounce their food and jobs. Without energy, the workers can't work, the farmers can't farm, and the children can't eat.

Until and unless the Greens and the UN can offer some evidence beyond the guesses of computer models that consistently over-estimate the warming that is occurring, we'll accept the unsung voice of the thermometers

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**E-mail the
Editor**

Bad Health Awards

by John Goodman

Issue 111 - July 9, 2008

New York Times op-ed writer Paul Krugman has offered up so many candidates for worst editorial award it's hard to be fair to all the other columnists. [In a recent entry](#), Krugman blames tainted spinach, poisonous peanut butter and killer tomatoes on Milton Friedman, the Republican Party, conservatives in general and basically anyone else who has any common sense.



John Goodman

I have analyzed this claim before, but this time around we get a 100-year overview. Here is history according to Krugman: Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* exposed meat packers willing to poison the public with tainted meat. To stop these greedy, profit-seeking robber barons, Congress passed the Pure Food and Drug Act and the Meat Inspection Act in 1906. For the next 90 years all went well until a Republican Congress with George W. in the White House held back the regulators and let the poisoners run wild again.

Trouble is: all this is fantasy.

As a college student reading *The Jungle*, I remember wondering: why wasn't everybody dead? Then as a graduate student I discovered the historian Gabriel Kalko had the answer. Federal regulation had little impact on the behavior of the large Chicago meat packers. In fact, they lobbied for the legislation. The reason: it raised the costs for their smaller competitors and put them out of business. As for recent history, Tyler Cowen has put the sword to that myth as well, showing a downward trend in food-borne disease outbreaks over the past decade.

Families USA has so many strong entries for the worst propaganda award by an organization, the chance for most other competitors is remote.

In its latest media-orchestrated broadside, the organization criticizes states for lacking consumer protections--including guaranteed issue and community rating. Yet far from protecting the average consumer, these laws benefit about 5% of policy-holders while doubling the premiums paid by everyone else.

Specifically, Families USA would deny the vast majority of people the opportunity to insure at a premium that reflects their real expected costs and instead force them to pay two or three times as much for their health insurance. Far from defending consumers, FUSA has a history of defending mandated health insurance benefits--which almost always reflect the lobbying power of provider interests rather than the desires of ordinary patients.

The group also claims the individual market is worse than the group market for sick people and turns this judgment into an attack on John McCain. Yet Pauly and Lieberthal discovered that people with a health problem hold on to their insurance longer if they have individual insurance rather than small group insurance.

There are two nominees for the Worst Legislative Proposal that Actually Has a Chance of Becoming Law

Entry No. 1: Studies show that doctor-owned hospitals are typically more efficient and deliver higher-quality care than traditional hospitals. Further, they give doctors financial incentives to hold down costs and create opportunities to specialize in the delivery of hospital care. So what does Congress propose to do? Close them down, of course. [See New York Times story.](#)

Entry No. 2: Ordinarily, Medicare pays for such items as wheelchairs, scooters, oxygen supplies, etc. by relying on a fee schedule determined by the bureaucracy rather than in the marketplace. Yet in a demo project that used competitive bidding by suppliers, Medicare's costs were lowered by 26%. So what does Congress propose to do? End the demonstration and go back to administered prices, of course. See [CMS Fact Sheet](#).

Maybe we will have more awards later.

John Goodman is President of the National Center for Policy Analysis. To view these and other blog posts, visit John Goodman's blog at <http://www.john-goodman-blog.com>

**E-mail the
Editor**

Ireland Rejects Big Government

by Mark Rhoads

Issue 111 - July 9, 2008

No matter how many times a new European constitution gets defeated by the voters, the bureaucrats in Brussels just keep trying to revive it by skating around their own rules. In a welcome surprise, voters in Ireland have just rejected the latest scheme for more complex, more bureaucratic, and a less free European Union constitution called the Lisbon Treaty.

In the picture, a man in Dublin hands out flyers asking for a no vote on the treaty. (PA photos for Time Magazine). The drafters tried to sell the treaty, inked by governments last December, as an "updated and streamlined" version of the 500-page Rube Goldberg contraption that was previously rejected by voters in the Netherlands and France in 2005. By way of contrast, the U.S. Constitution normally runs about 15 pages as printed in the Illinois Blue Book. The 500-page EU draft of 2005 was only the tip of the iceberg because it incorporated by reference dozens of other treaties and previously passed EU laws and regulations running to many thousands of pages that no one person could read or understand.



Ireland voted no this time 53 percent to 47 percent. Eighteen of 27 EU members have ratified but of course not by voters, only by governments. The Irish vote is really a veto because all 27 members have to ratify. But that won't stop the EU brass in Brussels from looking for ways around Irish voters. After French and Dutch voters defeated the first draft in 2005, the bureaucrats in Brussels tried to make sure no one would get to vote to ratify this time around. But the wonderfully stubborn Irish had their own ratification rules that could not be waived and now they might have saved Europe from itself. To belittle the stubborn Irish, the Brussels centrists have been pointing out that Ireland has only 4.9 million people or one percent of the 490 million in all the EU members. But at least the Irish know that legitimacy comes from the ballot box.

The reason voters keep rejecting the EU Constitution is because it wanders so far from the original 1980s vision of a "United States of Europe." If the EU leaders had actually written a document that, like the US Constitution, guarantees basic rights and freedoms for citizens and protects them from encroachments by government, maybe the charter would win more voter support. But every EU scheme turns that idea of freedom on its head and instead focuses on the rights of government to order citizens to do things and their obligations to government. Voters in Europe have become increasingly suspicious of the neo-socialists who dominate the EU bureaucracy and legislature because personal freedom is dead last on their long-term agenda compared to their brave new world agenda where citizens exist for the state--an idea twice beaten back with the the defeats of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia.

The EU Constitution was designed by the bureaucrats and for the bureaucrats to make sure the bureaucracy in Brussels would have a great deal of power with little or no accountability to anyone, least of all ordinary voters. Irish voters knew a bad deal when they saw it. Don't be surprised if the next time the bureaucrats try to revive the EU Constitution the backers will make sure no ordinary citizen gets to cast a vote to ratify or reject. Taking ordinary voters out of the game is the only way the bureaucrats of Brussels can win.

Mark Rhoads is a former Illinois state senator and commentator on state and national politics.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Venezuela Sinks

by Alan Caruba

Issue 111 - July 9, 2008

Coming just a week or so after Rep. Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) publicly said the U.S. government should nationalize the nation's oil refineries, echoing a similar earlier threat by Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA) to nationalize the entire industry, it is instructive to see what has happened in Venezuela where a Communist wannabe dictator, Hugo Chavez, nationalized that nation's oil industry.



Alan Caruba

One would think it was bad enough that Sen. Barack Obama and the Democrats want to enact a windfall profits tax on U.S. oil industry, the same action that in 1980 effectively has reduced exploration and production in the U.S. by nearly sixty percent, but Venezuela's takeover of its oil industry is a case history example of why so many of the world's national oil companies are badly managed and under-performing.

Venezuela has a long history of problems with its various governments dating back to the 1800s when Simon Bolivar fought for its independence from Spain. What followed "was characterized by coups, civil wars, and battle after battle," says Kyle D. Guerrero, an academic who has lived in both Venezuela and the United States.

The June issue of *Energy Tribune* is devoted to Venezuela because, as its editor Michael J. Economides points out, it has the Western hemisphere's largest oil reserves. Don't bother looking for Newsweek or Time to provide the real story because they are still telling Americans that global warming is real and "fossil fuels" are bad, bad, bad.

Consider instead that, aside from its oil, Venezuela with a population of twenty-six million, most of whom reside in its cities, could comfortably fit its 352,145 square miles into the State of Alaska's 663,267 square miles. Despite the billions president Chavez is spending on arms for its army of 120,000 soldiers, claiming that the U.S. intends to invade, the truth is that the U.S. is wisely waiting for the inevitable ouster of this jackass.

Economides says that "Hugo Chavez is in free-fall" and warns that "the uncertain transition that will follow him bodes ill for the stability of the country." This is worrisome for the United States because by 2006 our Venezuelan crude oil imports amounted to about eleven percent of our needs. They represent 60 percent of Venezuela's *total* exports. This mutual dependency stands in vast contrast to the diplomatic relationship between our two nations.

"Chavez," says Economides, "would be a comical character were it not for the \$100-plus oil prices which have papered over his shortcomings and prolong the eventual day of reckoning." It is astonishing to see the way he has devastated the industry that permits him stay in power. In 2003 he fired more than 18,000 highly trained oil workers who went on strike against him. This set in motion a huge brain-drain as ten thousand of them have left the country. An estimated two-thirds of the rest of the population wants to leave as well.

Proving once again that Communism is the worst possible political and economic system known to man, Chavez's only friends these days are people like Cuba's Fidel Castro, and thugs like Iran's Mamoud Amadinejad, Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe, and the FARC guerillas in neighboring Colombia. The one thing they have in common is the way they have destroyed their nation's economies and spread misery among their captive citizens.

In 1992 Chavez led a military coup against the government of Carlos Andres Perez. In 1994 he was pardoned and, in 1998, he was elected president of Venezuela. If that sounds improbable, one has to consider the long history of coups and other difficulties endemic to the governments and economies of South American nations. The Chavez platform was one of "change" that would

redistribute the wealth of the nation based on a variety of "free" programs of medical care, price controls, and other giveaways. It this sounds a lot like a certain Democrat candidate, it is not a coincidence.

The result has been the highest rate of inflation in Latin America, 23 percent last year and still increasing. The breakdown of society is reflected in the way Venezuela in 1988 had 4,500 murders and, during the Chavez regime from 1999 to 2007, this totaled over 105,000. There is virtually no foreign investment and domestic businesses have suffered. Its health system reflects his "reforms" as childbirth mortality rates rise and cases of malaria have doubled.

Poverty is the only growth industry in Venezuela. Aside from oil, its position as a place for illegal drug transit keeps the money flowing, but only for those in charge.

This is a nation that choose Communism at a time when the Soviet Union had already collapsed, whose citizens preferred a typical Latin American "strongman" over democratic reform, and who will suffer far more as the price of a barrel of oil inevitably and eventually returns to a more realistic level.

The real question will be what kind of transition will follow the fall of Hugo Chavez and his followers and the odds are the answer will be very ugly.

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**

Enemy Has a Name

by Daniel Pipes

Issue 111 - July 9, 2008



Daniel Pipes

If you cannot name your enemy, how can you defeat it? Just as a physician must identify a disease before curing a patient, so a strategist must identify the foe before winning a war. Yet Westerners have proven reluctant to identify the opponent in the conflict the U.S. government variously (and euphemistically) calls the "[global war on terror](#)," the "[long war](#)," the "[global struggle against violent extremism](#)," or even the "[global struggle for security and progress](#)."

This timidity translates into an inability to define war goals. Two high-level U.S. statements from late 2001 typify the vague and ineffective declarations issued by Western governments. Secretary of Defense [Donald Rumsfeld](#) defined victory as establishing "an environment where we can in fact fulfill and live [our] freedoms." In contrast, [George W. Bush](#) announced a narrower goal, "the defeat of the global terror network" – whatever that undefined network might be.

"Defeating terrorism" has, indeed, remained the basic war goal. By implication, terrorists are the enemy and counterterrorism is the main response.

But observers have increasingly concluded that terrorism is just a tactic, not an enemy. [Bush](#) effectively admitted this much in mid-2004, acknowledging that "We actually misnamed the war on terror." Instead, he called the war a "struggle against ideological extremists who do not believe in free societies and who happen to use terror as a weapon to try to shake the conscience of the free world."

A year later, in the aftermath of the 7/7 London transport bombings, British prime minister [Tony Blair](#) advanced the discussion by speaking of the enemy as "a religious ideology, a strain within the world-wide religion of Islam." Soon after, [Bush](#) himself used the terms "Islamic radicalism," "militant Jihadism," and "Islamofascism." But these words prompted much criticism and [he backtracked](#).

By mid-2007, Bush had reverted to speaking about "the great struggle against extremism that is now playing out across the broader Middle East." That is where things now stand, with [U.S. government agencies](#) being advised to refer to the enemy with such nebulous terms as "death cult," "cult-like," "sectarian cult," and "violent cultists."

In fact, that enemy has a precise and concise name: Islamism, a radical utopian version of Islam. Islamists, adherents of this well funded, widespread, totalitarian ideology, are attempting to create a global Islamic order that fully applies the Islamic law (Shari'a).

Thus defined, the needed response becomes clear. It is two-fold: vanquish Islamism and help Muslims develop an alternative form of Islam. Not coincidentally, this approach roughly parallels what the allied powers accomplished vis-à-vis the two prior radical utopian movements, fascism and communism.

First comes the burden of defeating an ideological enemy. As in 1945 and 1991, the goal must be to marginalize and weaken a coherent and aggressive ideological movement, so that it no longer attracts followers nor poses a world-shaking threat. World War II, won through blood, steel, and atomic bombs, offers one model for victory, the Cold War, with its deterrence, complexity, and nearly-peaceful collapse, offers quite another.

Victory against Islamism, presumably, will draw on both these legacies and mix them into a novel brew of conventional war, counterterrorism, counterpropaganda, and many other strategies. At one

end, the war effort led to the overthrow of the Taliban government in Afghanistan; at the other, it requires repelling the lawful Islamists who work legitimately within the educational, religious, media, legal, and political arenas.

The second goal involves helping Muslims who oppose Islamist goals and wish to offer an alternative to Islamism's depravities by reconciling Islam with the best of modern ways. But such Muslims are weak, being but fractured individuals who have only just begun the hard work of researching, communicating, organizing, funding, and mobilizing.

To do all this more quickly and effectively, these moderates need non-Muslim encouragement and sponsorship. However unimpressive they may be at present, moderates, with Western support, alone hold the potential to modernize Islam, and thereby to terminate the threat of Islamism.

In the final analysis, Islamism presents two main challenges to Westerners: To speak frankly and to aim for victory. Neither comes naturally to the modern person, who tends to prefer political correctness and conflict resolution, or even [appeasement](#). But once these hurdles are overcome, the Islamist enemy's objective weakness in terms of arsenal, economy, and resources means it can readily be defeated.

Mr. Pipes (www.DanielPipes.org), director of the Middle East Forum, is Taube/Diller distinguished visiting fellow at the Hoover Institution of Stanford University. © 2008 by Daniel Pipes. All rights reserved.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Congressional Power Grab

by Paul Driessen

Issue 111 - July 9, 2008

There is no distinctly native American criminal class, Mark Twain observed – except Congress.

A century later, government power and intrusiveness have increased exponentially. As a result, virtually every business and interest now employs lobbyists who can navigate Washington, explain technology to tech-challenged members and staffs, show why provisions are vital or disastrous, and give clients “a seat at the table” where subsidies, mandates, taxes and penalties are meted out.

The system is both the cause and result of far too many congressmen becoming members of what commentator Charles Krauthammer calls an “ambitious, arrogant, unscrupulous knowledge class” that has arrogated unto itself the right to rule American citizens – today in the name of saving planet Earth.

Even legislators who don’t keep wads of thank-you cash in their freezers have committed misfeasance and malfeasance, by handling vital energy, environmental and economic matters in ways that would likely be prosecuted if done by businessmen. Lawmakers, eco-activists and companies routinely engage in social experimentation and central planning akin to previous Great Leaps Forward – and refuse to acknowledge the damage their actions inflict on workers, families, minorities and other businesses.

They have locked up enough oil, gas, coal and uranium to power the United States literally for centuries. Representatives of six of the nation’s eight biggest petroleum-consuming states routinely vote to ban drilling off our coasts and in Alaska’s Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

The Interior Department says these lands could hold more than the proven oil reserves of Iran or Iraq: 139 billion barrels that could be obtained with today’s technology. When Congress tells Americans we can’t have energy that is rightfully ours, it forces us to import more oil, export trillions of dollars, and give up jobs, tax revenues, royalties and security that developing US resources would generate.

Drilling bans also increase the risk of more spills from tankers carrying oil to replace what politicians have put off limits. In sixty years of offshore oil operations, only the 1969 Santa Barbara blowout resulted in significant oil reaching shore. Offshore oil platforms rarely pollute; they create magnificent artificial reefs. As a scuba diver, I’ve seen them firsthand, including the beauty where that blowout occurred.

When Senator Maria Cantwell and colleagues demand that President Bush tell Saudi Arabia to produce more oil – or else – they are saying: We don’t care if we’re devouring oil the rest of the world desperately needs, and driving up the cost of food and fuel for the poorest families on Earth. No drilling for US oil.

When Congress doles out subsidies for ethanol, it converts tens of millions of acres of crop and habitat land into cornfields, diverts billions of gallons of water and fertilizer from food to energy, and sends fuel and food prices even higher.

When it excoriates corporate executives for making profits – and silently endorses NRDC campaigns to stop petroleum leasing and drilling in western states – it shows it’s happy to eliminate jobs and



Paul Driessen

energy production in the face of soaring demand and prices, and turn those states into playgrounds for wealthy elites, unaffordable for average Americans.

But for sheer arrogance and economy-wrecking, nothing compares to climate change legislation, like the 491-page Warner-Lieberman bill. The Senate rejected it, but it will surely be back.

32,000 scientists have signed the consensus-busting Oregon Petition, saying they find “no convincing evidence” that human greenhouse gas emissions disrupt the Earth’s climate. Atmospheric CO² levels have been rising about 3% per year, while average global temperatures have not increased since 1998. Indeed, the 1.4 degree F global decline in 2007 offsets the total net warming during the twentieth century, notes meteorologist Anthony Watts . Not one of the computer models that conjure up apocalyptic climate scenarios forecast this temperature stabilization and downturn.

However, Senators Clinton, Obama, McCain and colleagues still insist that US carbon dioxide emissions be slashed by 71% – to levels last seen in 1937, during the Great Depression, when our population was one-third of today’s, and electricity use was in its infancy. They would increasingly tax the 85% of our energy that is generated by fossil fuels. And sequestering all that plant-fertilizing CO² would cost trillions of dollars in soaring energy costs, and require vast quantities of electricity.

Many people and lawmakers are only now recognizing the magnitude of these costs. But Senators Reid and Boxer remain determined to enact punitive climate legislation. They have the support of numerous activists, banks, scientists and corporations, who call it landmark “green” legislation – as in \$\$\$\$ for research, complex cap-and-trade tax deals, government handouts, mandates and subsidies for unreliable renewable energy, and opportunities to gain advantages over competitors.

The climate bill “would make an unprecedented investment in conservation of wildlife and habitats,” the National Wildlife Federation recently told outdoor writers – by preventing fanciful computer-generated climate disasters. Notes the *Wall Street Journal*: the \$3.32 TRILLION in cap-and-trade auction revenues that Senator Boxer “expects to scoop up” by 2050 are exceeded only by the trillions in “revenue handouts” she has already promised to friendly companies, activists and local communities.

Certain politicians are promoting a 3-month gasoline tax holiday. But climate legislation would mean this brief holiday is followed by decades of energy and climate tax slavery. Gasoline could hit \$6 or even \$8 a gallon, and the soaring cost of electricity and natural gas could more than double by 2030, according to the American Council on Capital Formation and other analysts.

The impact on services for poor, elderly, disabled and homebound people – and on airlines and manufacturing industries – would be disastrous. In impoverished Third World countries, the effects would be catastrophic and lethal, as global warming pacts are translated into ever higher prices for food, and a permanent dearth of affordable electricity for economic growth, lights, refrigeration and sanitation.

Make no mistake. Warner-Lieberman and its unsavory kin have nothing to do with saving the planet. They are about the power to *control* – and *curtail* – the power we rely on: for homes, offices, hospitals, food, consumer products, transportation and modern living standards.

They are about *who gets to decide*: how much energy we will have ... where that energy will come from ... what it will cost ... whether there will be enough to lift more families out of poverty ... and who will be the winners and losers in the new world of government-mandated energy scarcity. They are about creating a massive, regressive tax and regulatory scheme – to take the hard-earned incomes of millions, and redistribute it to constituencies that politicians judge are most likely to keep them in office.

It’s truly ironic. Fifty years ago, Democrats were defending the Jim Crow laws they enacted to keep blacks from schools, lunch counters, buses and drinking fountains. Today, Democrats are leading the

fight to impose what Congress of Racial Equality chairman Roy Innis aptly calls “[Jim Crow energy policies](#)” that block access to energy, drive up prices, and keep minorities from achieving economic civil rights.

Even more ironic, four decades ago, Republicans led by Senator Everett Dirksen wrote and enacted landmark civil rights bills. Today, a biracial Democratic presidential candidate and Senate Republicans like John Warner and John McCain are championing Jim Crow energy and climate policies that trample on economic opportunities and civil rights.

These policies are criminal – far more so than anything Mark Twain ever dreamed possible.

Paul Driessen is senior policy advisor for the Congress of Racial Equality and author of Eco-Imperialism: Green power · Black Death.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Obama 'Change' on Ethanol?

by Tim Carney

Issue 111 - July 9, 2008

Barack Obama has a reputation as a reformer and a champion of the downtrodden, but on the most damaging federal boondoggle today, he's on the side of the status quo and the entrenched interests.

Obama is a devoted champion of ethanol subsidies and mandates, but, with food prices soaring and biofuels' negative consequences increasingly coming to the fore, will Obama revise his position?

Corn-based ethanol enjoys a plethora of subsidies in the [United States](#), from both state and federal government tax breaks, subsidies and mandates. Government incentives have created an ethanol boom that helps agricultural communities such as [Illinois](#) and the crucial electoral state of [Iowa](#), but with millions of acres of farm now dedicated to fuel production instead of food production, the ethanol programs are contributing the spike in food prices — which are now at record levels.

Because corn requires more irrigation and more fertilizer than most crops, the environmental effect of ethanol — touted as a green fuel because it burns more cleanly than petroleum — might be a net negative.

[John McCain](#) wants to suspend or abolish the federal mandates that require gas companies to purchase ethanol; and he opposes the other ethanol subsidies, too. Ethanol subsidies, he says, have “contributed to pain at the cash register, at the dining room table, and a devastating food crisis throughout the world.”

Until recently, at least, Obama has been a fierce champion of existing federal ethanol subsidies and mandates. Indeed, he wants more ethanol subsidies.

In March 2005, Obama visited the [Pekin](#), Ill., distillery of the Illinois Biodiesel, the nation's second-largest ethanol producer. The Pekin Daily Times reported, “Obama said boosting the nation's ethanol output is a ‘no-brainer.’ ...”

In the 2005 energy bill, Obama helped save the first federal ethanol mandate while McCain supported an amendment to kill the mandate.

Protecting and expanding ethanol favoritism is a part of Obama's presidential campaign. His energy plan calls for “expanding federal tax credit programs” for ethanol. His plan also proposes, “an additional subsidy per gallon of ethanol” for locally funded ethanol plants.

Obama also touts his special tax credit for gas stations that install pumps to dispense E85, a blend of 85 percent ethanol and 15 percent gasoline. Most cars today cannot run on E85, but Obama proposes to outlaw the manufacture of current vehicles, though he puts it in nicer terms: “Obama will work with Congress and auto companies to ensure that all new vehicles have [flex-fuel] capability by the end of his first term in office.”

Where is he on the ethanol mandate that has contributed to the spike in food prices? Obama wants to double-down on the policy, calling for expanding the mandate. He supports preserving the tariff that keeps out foreign ethanol, too.



Tim Carney

This ethanol enthusiasm certainly helped him beat [Hillary Clinton](#) — a late and unconvincing convert to the ethanol faith — in the Iowa caucuses, a win which catapulted him to the nomination. Iowa is a swing state in November, and the state's Democratic senator, [Tom Harkin](#), has cited Obama's ethanol boosterism — and McCain's opposition — as a reason Obama should carry the state in November.

But recently, he's had a slightly different tone on the issue. Much of Obama's ethanol rhetoric of late has focused on "next-generation ethanol," from sources like switch-grass and wood chips -- still theoretical fuels for which Obama proposes generous research and development subsidies.

On "Meet the Press," Obama indicated some flexibility on corn ethanol: "If it turns out that we've got to make changes in our ethanol policy to help people get something to eat, then that's got to be the step we take."

How brave a politician is Obama? How open-minded is he? Will he take superficial steps such as tweaking his ethanol plan or creating new subsidies for food production? Or will he risk the ridiculous "flip-flop" label and risk angering Iowans by calling for an end to harmful mandate?

I called Obama's campaign about ethanol mandates twice recently, and the campaign neither gave me an answer nor simply directed me to his previous statements. Expecting a liberal corn-belt politician to abandon corn ethanol is pretty audacious, but a guy can hope, can't he?

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

**E-mail the
Editor**

Jindal The Best?

by Jeff Crouere

Issue 111 - July 9, 2008

"I think Governor Jindal would be far and away the best candidate for Vice President in the country." Former U.S. House Speaker Newt Gingrich

Bobby Jindal is the "next Ronald Reagan." Rush Limbaugh

In the Hans Christen Andersen classic, the emperor pranced around town in what was supposedly a beautiful wardrobe; however, in reality, he was naked. Similarly, Governor Bobby Jindal has been parading around the country pretending to be a strong conservative. Sadly, here in Louisiana, we know the reality does not match the image.



Jeff Crouere

Conservative leaders in the media and the Republican Party, such as Gingrich and Limbaugh, claim that Jindal represents the future of the GOP, a rising star. He is treated as a rock star and many desperate Republicans even believe that Jindal can save the party from defeat this fall.

Jindal is a frequent guest on national television and radio programs. For example, last weekend, he was featured on the CBS show "Face the Nation."

While he is a friend to Fox News and CNN, Jindal studiously avoids appearing on Louisiana media programs, especially those that are critical of his position on the legislative pay raise.

On the national programs, Jindal knows he will receive easy questions about his potential vice presidential nomination on the GOP ticket. In contrast, here in Louisiana, Jindal will have to answer questions about why he will not veto the legislative pay raise.

He studiously avoids conflicts in dealing with Louisiana legislators, crumbling when they demanded a huge increase in pay. The obscene bill to double legislative pay will reach Jindal's desk soon. Although he claims he is opposed to the pay raise, Jindal will not veto the measure, saying he does not want to interfere with an internal legislative issue. This stance is incredibly weak and is not going over well with the public, which is exceptionally angry over the raises. As a result of his handling of this crisis, Jindal's popularity in Louisiana has declined.

Republican leaders should take a closer look at what is happening here. On the major planks of fiscal conservatism, less government spending and lower taxes, Jindal has not governed as a conservative. The initial budget he submitted to the Legislature was larger than his liberal predecessor. Even though the state budget is surging, fueled by rising oil and gas royalties and a large surplus, Jindal had to be dragged "kicking and screaming" to the bargaining table to give taxpayers a minimal income tax reduction. While the small tax cut will not take effect until 2009, the legislative pay raise will begin July 1, 2008.

If he cannot stand down Louisiana legislators, how can he serve as Vice-President, one heartbeat away from the presidency? A Vice President may be called upon to deal with terrorists and enemies of the United States. Americans need a leader who could step in as President and deal with numerous threats from abroad. Unfortunately, Jindal has failed the leadership test.

Before Jindal is considered for a national ticket, he needs more seasoning and experience. He also needs to grow a backbone and learn how to deal with conflict in a direct manner. Most importantly, Jindal needs to establish a true conservative record as Governor.

The reality is that this Governor has no conservative clothes. His admirers from afar can tout his conservative credentials all they want, but the citizens of Louisiana who have witnessed his fumbling of the pay raise issue know the truth.

The truth is that his conservative accomplishments are really not there, just like the emperor's clothes. So, John McCain needs to keep looking for a potential Vice-President because Bobby Jindal is not ready.

Jeff Crouere is a native of New Orleans, LA and he is the host of a Louisiana based program, "Ringside Politics," which airs at 7:30 p.m. Fri. and 10:00 p.m. Sun. on WLAE-TV 32, a PBS station, and 7 till 11 a.m. weekdays on WGSO 990 AM in New Orleans and the Northshore. For more information, visit his web site at www.ringsidepolitics.com.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Democrats Vote Race and Gender

by Matt Varvaro

Issue 111 - July 9, 2008

Amidst the tenacious crusade by the liberal elite against the horrors of racial and gender prejudice, one can easily appreciate the irony in having observed possibly the most blatant example in this country's history of bloc voting along the lines of race and gender: the 2008 Democratic Primary.

The issue of race in the race for the White House heated up in South Carolina in late January, when former President Bill Clinton noted that "Jesse Jackson won South Carolina twice, in '84 and '88. And he ran a good campaign and Senator [Barack] Obama's run a good campaign here." Many who heard this comment interpreted it as an attempt to downplay Senator Obama's success in South Carolina by portraying him as the "black candidate" and suggesting that the only reason he would win the state was with the overwhelming support from African American voters. Whether or not these were actually Mr. Clinton's malicious intentions is a different issue entirely, but what is certain is that this assessment proved to be spot-on.



According to MSNBC's exit polls, Senator Obama finished with only twenty-four percent of the white vote in South Carolina, significantly less than Senator John Edwards' forty percent and Senator Hillary Clinton's thirty-six percent. Typically, this distant third place finish among white voters would guarantee any candidate a loss--except, miraculously, Senator Obama won South Carolina with more than double the amount of votes of the runner-up, Senator Clinton. The reason: Senator Obama carried an astonishing seventy-eight percent of African American voters. As the former president implied, Senator Obama indeed had the black vote to thank for his victory in South Carolina.

This unusual occurrence actually became a trend for the Illinois senator and became a driving force toward his nomination. After South Carolina, Senator Obama continued to win states like Missouri, Georgia, Delaware, Connecticut, Alabama, Louisiana, Maryland, and Mississippi, while losing the majority of the states' white voters. This had been made possible by the senator's absolutely dominating command of the black vote. In the states just mentioned, Senator Obama's support among black voters was, respectively, eighty-four percent, eighty-eight percent, eighty-six percent, seventy-four percent, eighty-four percent, eighty-six percent, eighty-four percent, and ninety-two percent. On top of that, Senator Obama won the majority of both black men and black women in literally every single contest.

At the same time, Senator Clinton enjoyed similar, though not quite as eye-opening, support among white women. She won the majority of this voting constituency in all but a handful of states, two of which were Utah (in which she and Senator Obama were even) and Illinois, Senator Obama's home state. Even in the Potomac Primary, consisting of Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia, which Senator Obama swept in one of the most crucial moments of his campaign, Senator Clinton finished with about sixty percent of the white female vote.

Although white males did not throw their support behind a white male candidate (evidenced by the flare-out of the Edwards campaign), a very curious voting pattern developed within the Democratic Party: white women supported the white woman candidate and African Americans supported the African American candidate. Moreover, the rumored "black/brown" tensions appear also to be confirmed by Senator Obama's inability to attract Hispanic voters, in whom Senator Clinton found reliable support in states like California and Texas, in which she beat her rival by a two-to-one margin among this voting group. The statistics point to some pretty serious implications.

Predictably, this kind of talk hits a nerve among liberals in the media, who seem almost indignant at the mention of Democrats voting along the lines of race or gender, despite the overwhelming

statistical evidence that proves it. For example, on the March 12th edition of Dan Abrams' show on MSNBC, analyst Keli Goff responded to Pat Buchanan's assertion that Senator Obama's race may have something to do with his enormous popularity among African Americans with this: "To just make this blatant assumption, this generalization that he was just winning all the black vote on the strength of being black is ludicrous."

I suppose that Ms. Goff attributes Senator Obama's success among this particular voting constituency to the senator and the black community's shared opposition to health care mandates. Unfortunately for Ms. Goff, this just doesn't seem to be the case.

It is clear that, when analyzing these primary results without any ideological impediments obstructing rational judgment, the numbers pretty much speak for themselves--and they clearly indicate that a disproportional number of Democratic voters voted their race, gender, or both. We can pretend otherwise and ruthlessly lambaste those who simply point to the ever-telling exit polls, but let us never forget the timeless truism of our nation's second president: "Whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passions, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence."

Matt Varvaro is a high school student in Port Washington, New York.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Conservative Fusionism: A Discussion

by Charles Mills

At the time of the founding of the first modern conservative political organization, Young Americans for Freedom, traditionalists and libertarians had three great common goals: the defeat of Communism, the shrinking of the Federal government, and the restoration of the Constitution. (Perhaps the libertarians were not completely in favor of the restoration of the Constitution since they were opposed to state power at all levels, but my statement is essentially correct.)

Traditionalists operated from a variety of reasons: Divine revelation, love of beauty, belief in stability, common sense, reason, and a desire not to be subject to arbitrary power. Libertarians operated from a neat set of interlocking principles, frequently utilitarian and simplistic, but generally reached the same conclusions as traditionalists.

This can easily be illustrated with two examples: 1) the seven day week, and 2) the necessity of a judicial system.

The seven day week is not found in nature like months and years are but it is Divinely revealed. Every attempt by revolutionaries to change it has failed. The U.S. Supreme Court has used tortured reasoning to uphold it. Catholics, other Eastern Christians, Fundamentalists and Evangelicals, Sabatarian Christians, Orthodox Jews, and Moslems have made it clear beyond doubt that they will never give it up. The seven day week is something almost everybody accepts, but it has no libertarian philosophical justification. It is simply revealed. Libertarians do accept the seven day week, probably instinctively.

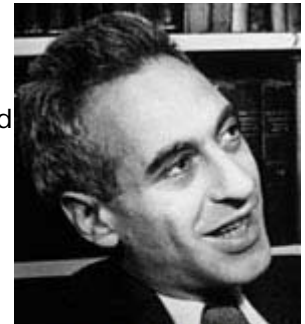
Jewish tradition teaches that God gave Noah seven commandments, one of which was to establish a judiciary. This is not revealed truth and Christians are not required to believe it. Interestingly, though, it is a rarity in Jewish law, a commandment binding on all the peoples of the World. This is because God gave us enough reason to discover, unaided by revelation, the need for a judicial system. Libertarians, therefore, have no trouble making it a cornerstone of their beliefs, and traditionalists

by Jared Lobdell

Yes and no, Charles, at least as I see it.

Tradition, along with utility and personal revelation (immediate or inherited), may be seen as an inductive starting point or basic principle, while libertarian (or "individualist") conclusions are among those that may be deduced from that starting point as well as from others.

Frank Meyer, I would say, deduced libertarian conclusions from traditionalist (some once said "conservative") first principles. Those, like Bill Buckley, who got to more or less libertarian conclusions from an inherited revelatory point of induction, sometimes appeared less consistent than Frank was. My old Yale room-mate Dick Posner, a sometime Marxist, deduces libertarian conclusions (generally) from utilitarian first principles (or if you like a utilitarian answer to the question of induction).



Frank Meyer:
Philosopher of modern conservatism

To be a libertarian is to draw certain conclusions; to be a traditionalist is to have a particular answer to the problem of induction. It is of course a good thing if one's logical processes are self-consistent--indeed, if they are logical. It is also a good thing to be skeptical of immediate personal revelation as an answer to the problem of induction. It is very hard, evidence suggests, to draw individualist/libertarian conclusions from a (believed) direct personal revelation.

So far as I am concerned, a conservative is generally one who draws individualist (libertarian) conclusions from either traditionalist or (their closest cousin) inherited revelatory bases or some combination thereof.

So--in the question that was asked me in Madison ca 1962, "Are you a libertarian or a conservative?" or later "Are you a libertarian or a traditionalist?" the answer is "No, not 'or' but 'and'"--but the answer for some calling themselves conservatives is simply "No"--not either. I'm not, as some of my

believe it both because of common-sense/stability concerns, and also because it is part of that portion of Divine law that God has equipped us to discover outside of revelation.

The conclusions of libertarians and traditionalists converge, probably not as much as in 1960, but the starting points are quite different.

friends will tell you, a philosopher, but when I tried this schema out on Bill Buckley some years ago, he had me write it up as a brief piece in National Review, so it may have some value.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Reader Comments

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**CONSERVATIVE
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Editor: Another excellent analysis in "Judges Ignore Real Constitution." The judicial assault on Federalism as was initially envisioned began in earnest under Chief Justice John Marshall who imperiously declared that the Supreme Court was the final arbiter in interpreting the Constitution. The longest serving Chief Justice, he constantly eroded States' Rights. He believed the Federal government was much wiser than the rabble in the various states and that above all, he and his black-robed colleagues knew more than anyone. It's a pity that Congress has not, to my knowledge, ever exercised its right under Article III, Section 2 wherein they could limit or even deny Federal courts the authority for jurisdiction – something that should be done in the case of the enemy combatants held in Guantanamo. The Founders saw a Federal government that would have three equal branches. The Supremes were never intended to reign supreme and nowhere in the Constitution does it give them the authority to make law. They are simply to preside over charges of treason by high officials and settle disputes that arise under the constitution between states, citizens of different states, and citizens vs foreigners (not vice versa). In addition, they may preside where state law contravenes constitutional provisions – not Federal laws or previous opinions and certainly not foreign legal documents. That's it. James C. McAlister, Tampa, Fla

Editor: Way to go with "Judges Ignore Real Constitution." Cool, calm, reasoned arguments always win the day. Dan Calabria

Editor: Thanks for printing this insightful article, "Judges Ignore Real Constitution." During the past 50 years I have see such erosion of the authority of the Constitution that I doubt that the United States can survive another 50 years. Philip Allen ([Killing The Living Constitution](#)), Port Hueneme, CA

Editor: Why aren't the conservatives in the Congress screaming at the top of their lungs about these judges????? I hope and pray that SOME lobby out there has the guts to go to Capital Hill and get something done about this! This is taxation WITHOUT representation and according to my copy of the Constitution that is unconstitutional! Sincerely, Connie Hester

Editor: Regarding Dennis Avery's "Drive Coal, Not Gas," great article. Have you done any research regarding coal gasification? I believe I remember hearing the owner of Jet Blue Airlines a few months ago and he stated that when oil reached \$40.00 a barrel it became economical to produce gas from coal. How many U.S. states now have accessible coal deposits that could be used for this purpose? Thanks. Don Brunken

Editor: A lot of folks can't understand how we came to have an oil shortage here in our country. Well, there's a very simple answer. Nobody bothered to check the oil. We just didn't know we were getting low. The reason for that is purely geographical. Our OIL is located in: Alaska, California,

Coastal Florida, Coastal Louisiana, Wyoming, Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania and Texas. Our dipsticks are located in D.C. Any Questions? NO? Didn't think so. Ron S

Editor: I enjoyed the article: "School Nightmare" by Alan Caruba, especially since it reflected my thoughts exactly about our failing national education system. The book on this subject by Dr. Renato Nicolai should be mandatory reading for every parent and taxpayer to be used at all the "school board meetings throughout this nation. Yes, we have been "hoodwinked by a left leaning education system." But the average, naive taxpayer is perhaps too busy or too lazy to search out the true facts on our troubled education system. For this failure we can blame our education leaders, administrators, etc. for the deception they have conveyed on the American taxpayer. For this they should be held justly accountable. A moratorium is needed for our entire education system--just as is needed for "illegal immigration" to this nation. We don't need "diversity! We need "Loyalty" to this Country. Thanks for your time. G. L. Mossberger

Editor: Regarding Alan Caruba's "School Nightmare," the REAL problem is that PUBLIC education keeps getting noticed but private and especially CHRISTIAN schools fall under the radar. My son went to THREE private schools before I started home-schooling him. The first school, I admit I probably over reacted to the fact that less than 10% of the students were non-Arabic. It scared me the first time a group of dads walked into to pick up their children. This wasn't the reason for withdrawing my child. He was withdrawn because his teacher from one of those countries that used to be part of the USSR didn't understand him referring to tomatoes as Lycopene and therefore referred him for Special Ed. evaluation. The second and third schools, neither one could get him to demonstrate what he really knew. One, example is that at the second school his teacher was convinced that he could not count beyond ten. He and I, one afternoon were walking out the room and he counted to 100 before we were out the door...I do not exaggerate when I say we heard his teacher collapse on the floor. There was a voice message waiting for me when we got home to inform me there was a meeting scheduled for the following morning. Discipline issues, appeared in the third school; up to this point I had a sweet, honest, fun to be around child. He lost this for some reason at the third school. It is sad to think that a 3rd grader can already be so angry and upset about school. The radar is up about how many public schooled 3rd graders are already burnt out on school. He has more days of being his former happy go lucky but he isn't that child anymore. The therapist he saw for over a year felt that he displayed having been abused but couldn't find any abuse. It is obvious something happened and trying to put him back together isn't, wasn't, shouldn't have been part of his education. He instead is an 8 year-old going on 50. The WHOLE educational system needs to be looked at. The virtual school he attends at home has given him back some of his self confidence. He knows he is bright and that is up to him what he does with it. Yes, he is learning more his way than mine, or any of the teachers he had but he is learning and growing. He still attempts to act like he doesn't know things but the computer is programmed to "trick" him into showing what he really knows. M. Manera, Phoenix, AZ

Editor: What a wonderful description of one of my favorite actors in Spencer Warren's "Jimmy Stewart, American." He personified integrity, trustworthiness, honesty--in other words: a true Boy Scout. Thank you for this biography. You did a great job. Nancy M. Haglund, Anchorage, Alaska

Editor: I have a question. Is there a vendetta against Chuck Baldwin and the Constitution Party? I have not seen one word about him in the media. There seems to be a degree of censorship that is totally controlling what they are allowed to publish. Are the American people nothing but pawns in

the hands of a few? Are we only allowed to be informed of news (and lies) that are being fed to us? I do not expect a reply, or for you to publish this because you are undoubtedly in their control, and would be punished if you did! Carl Markmiller, McAlpin, FL.

Editor: God Bless you for ConservativeBattleline and keep up the good work. From a retired Grandfather, Robert Peterson

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Editor**