

INDIANA POLICY

Review

'A future that works'



When Politics Gets Nasty

*A Hoosier's guide to conservatives,
progressives, liberals, et al.*

*In Congress, July 4, 1776,
the unanimous declaration of the thirteen United
States of America:*

When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes: and accordingly all experience hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security.

INDIANAPOLICY *Review*

Vol. 25, No. 2, Spring 2014

A FUTURE THAT WORKS

Our mission is to marshal the best thought on governmental, economic and educational issues at the state and municipal levels. We seek to accomplish this in ways that:

- Exalt the truths of the Declaration of Independence, especially as they apply to the interrelated freedoms of religion, property and speech.
- Emphasize the primacy of the individual in addressing public concerns.
- Recognize that equality of opportunity is sacrificed in pursuit of equality of results.

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NO CHEERS FOR THE INDIANA GOP?

OK then, but they're not as bad as Democrats . . . right?

When the foundation was challenged at the end of this session to identify the intellectual bearings of the Indiana GOP, we were told it would be a slippery task — slippery as a greased pig is slippery. The party has become largely one of slogans, not ideas, with leaders who can't distinguish between the public good and their own good. A friend, a founder of the conservative movement here, gave us fair warning:

In pursuit of such good as may seem to them convenient, they recognize no restraint as a matter of constitutional law, sound judgment or good taste. They are clueless as to how the policies they often embrace are indistinguishable in theory from those they frequently oppose. They are at heart meddlers who are compelled to impose their personal dispositions on people whose lives they rarely understand. Their saving grace is that they aren't Democrats.

But we proceed nonetheless. Tom Charles Huston, an Indianapolis blogger and combat veteran of both the Statehouse and White House, provides a list of tendencies at work here under the cover of "conservatism."

Neoconservatism, which Mr. Huston addresses in one of our cover articles, is the most dynamic but only because it is the loudest, with the most aggressive and articulate spokesmen. Silent is a Whig or countryman tendency, perhaps because there are not enough small farmers and small merchants left in the state to put up a shout. Others tendencies on the list:

- Tory (George Will, Jeffrey Hart)
- Classical Liberal (Cato, Reason)
- Old Right (Pat Buchanan, The American Conservative)
- Traditionalist (Intercollegiate Studies Institute, scattered students of Russell Kirk)
- Straussian (the Claremont Institute, James Ceaser, Hadley Arkes, Hillsdale, Ashbrook Center)
- Populist (Tea Party, Religious Right)
- Republicanist (*National Review*, *Fox News*, most Hoosier Republicans)

We learn that the Indiana party has always been less conservative ideologically than most assume. In many ways, the GOP in 2014 still is the party of Robert Dunkerson Orr.

The Vanderburgh County organization, liberal by the state's historical standards, was an outlier when Orr took



Former Sen. Richard Lugar receives the Medal of Freedom in part for his work convincing the Ukrainian government to disarm.

control in 1951. He would ride it to the governor's office on a simple trick, one that chairmen in GOP strongholds rarely risk — he slated candidates, building enthusiasm and influence when he won even as he would have garnered ignominy had he lost.

And yet, as a young editor sitting down with Orr, even I could see that he was an unreconstructed Mercantilist, a

nice way of saying crony capitalist. He believed government was our chief wealth creator. It will tell you something about the man's focus that he issued a press release during his second term commanding reporters to thereafter refer to him as "Robert" rather than "Bob."

Orr left the party moribund, but it was not always that way. From 1934 to 1964 the debate was spirited. It split between the Halleck and the Jenner factions, which corresponded to the Eisenhower-Taft split at the national level.

The two groups rallied around Goldwater in 1964 although they bitterly fought over the gubernatorial nomination. Later, Nixon was strong here but pockets of Rockefeller enthusiasm sustained an organized campaign in the 1968 primary.

Again, our modern Republican governors have been moderates or moderate-conservatives, with Ralph Gates, George Craig, Otis Bowen, Orr and the much-lauded Mitch Daniels on the decidedly moderate side.

The assumption that this is the "reasonable" side, the "right" side of history, salts the dinner-party conversation of the current Indianapolis bunch. But mention Harold Handley or Edgar Whitcomb, the only hardcore conservatives produced by Indiana Republicans in six decades, and watch the forks drop and the eyes roll. For it is difficult to find a GOP politician anywhere in Indiana who does not profess to be the model of a true blue "conservative."

Those claims, as Richard Lugar's career was testimony, generally lack sufficient elaboration to detect what is meant other than a "good Republican in the Reagan tradition." Such vapid lip service to intelligible political philosophy now is the hallmark of Hoosier Republicanists.

Even so, elections still matter, along with events — economic, social and, ultimately, military. The pig is slippery but not infinitely so. — *tcl*

A Brief Cultural Genealogy and Apologia

We are all “stinkers,” it turns out.

by TIM SHUTT

All cultures I have ever heard of are to varying degrees chauvinistic, if not always racist (sometimes, in more or less ethnically homogeneous regions, that is not really an option). Indeed, I have read that, according to comparative linguists, the most common word for “others,” the most common word for those who are not “Hellenes” or “human beings” or whatever, when one considers the whole array of known languages, reduces not, as we might expect, to “barbarians” or “enemies,” but rather—viscerally and dismissively enough—to “the stinkers.” A revealing construction, if not, on reflection, entirely surprising. All cultures think they’re the best. Or all cultures I’ve ever heard of. Including our own — even in its most recent, most progressive incarnations.

Likewise, I’ve heard of very few cultures that, given the chance to expand at the expense of their neighbors, failed to do so. The list is long and diverse, and most emphatically intercontinental — Sumerians, Assyrians, Persians, Huns, Mongols, Arabs, Aztecs, Incas, Iroquois, Athenians, Romans, Spaniards, the English and the French, Russians and Germans, Bantu and Zulu, even Maori. Take your choice. Some were more murderous and exploitative, others less so. None, to the best of my knowledge, were entirely selfless and benign. The large majority, anything but.

And once we pass what some have argued was the original Fall and find ourselves in an agricultural or urban society rather than a hunter-gatherer group — well, class and gender distinctions and inequities of one sort or another are universal. Indeed, I am not convinced that even hunter-gather groups were quite so innocent in that regard as we have been led to believe, though having to carry what you own admittedly puts a significant limit on wealth.

In the most celebrated commencement address I have ever heard of, David Foster Wallace eight years ago, right here at Kenyon, spoke a good deal about water — beginning his remarks with a joke suggesting that, to at least young fish, water is effectively invisible precisely because in their lives it is all-pervasive, the medium in which they live and move and have their being. I would propose that the impact of Western culture on our own lives is, in some ways, similar. In many respects it shapes and conditions our views, even, perhaps, when we may least recognize the fact.

For example. Many, many cultures have practiced slavery. Some still do, or so one reads. But to the best of my knowledge, only one first abolished the slave trade and then — on moral grounds — did all that it could to assure that slavery simply vanished as an institution. In at least one well-known instance, it was at vast, bloody cost.

And again, many, many cultures have fostered wars of imperial conquest. But I know of only one that, in substantial measure, decided at last to free its colonies on the ground

that imperialism itself was immoral. The Romans did not apologetically greet the Ostrogoths and Visigoths with ruminations about how they had illegitimately usurped their Gothic cultural hegemony. They did not decide to return Gaul to the Celts or North Africa to the Numidians, Carthaginians and Egyptians because it had been wrong to take North Africa in the first place. The Mongols and Avars and Huns and the rest did not suddenly decide that their conquests were simply unsustainable on ethical grounds — and thereafter decorously withdraw, restoring the infrastructure where appropriate, and offering medical and technological assistance where possible. Nor did the Moghuls. Or the Iroquois. Or to my knowledge, anyone else.

It is the same with class and gender relations. The idea of equality, to the best of my knowledge — class equality and gender equality alike — is to this day very sharply culture-bound. And again — and please forgive my ignorance if err I here — both notions arose in a culturally decisive way in a single, and, dare I say, a Western context.

To the best of my knowledge, even to this day, other cultures do not, on anything resembling a wide-spread basis, foster and espouse the detailed and sympathetic examination of other religious and cultural traditions in the hope of expanding their awareness, cultivating empathetic fellow-feeling, and correcting their own long-standing blindnesses and misdeeds. The one exception to this pattern that I can see is the near-universal desire to adopt Western science and technology, and perhaps, forgive me, weapons technology in particular. Otherwise, so far as I can tell, most cultures are content and always have been to leave well enough alone.

All of which is to suggest that the critique of Western culture which has animated so much contemporary Western intellectual and academic life — and upon which we, often enough, so congratulate ourselves — is itself, paradoxically enough, something very close to a unique artifact of Western culture. To abandon Western culture is therefore to abandon the very willingness to undergo self-criticism, the very commitment to freedom of thought, which are salient hallmarks of that critique. Sympathetic study, let alone advocacy, of cultures other than one’s own is very nearly a Western monopoly. There is a vast asymmetry here.

And if — as I fear and regret that I may — I should to some at least give offense in saying as much, you are at perfect liberty to denounce and argue against me with whatever level of vigor seems appropriate. Thanks, again, to those paradoxical Western values. Not all cultures, to put the matter gently, are so forgiving of dissent or apostasy.

But enough on defense. More than enough. Tolerance and curiosity, a willingness to look critically both within and without — those are indeed Western values, but not, perhaps, the keynote Western values and not, fine as they are, the most

far-reaching and important Western values. For those we must, I think, look elsewhere. Nor are they, in the end, the values most important to me and, so I hope, to my students.

The academic year customarily begins with an intellectual smorgasbord for incoming students which we officially term the “departmental fair,” or some such, and unofficially often designate as the “dog-and-pony show.” During the course of these festivities, each department or program has the opportunity to present to potential students what it sees as its most compelling attractions and merits — the opportunity, in short, to sell itself. During the course of our own presentations — our own sales pitch, if you will — I have for 20 years now, give or take, proposed for our prospective students what I take to be a fair sample of the sort of questions which we address, and, in particular, a question which, over the years, I have come increasingly to feel cuts close to the heart of whatever it may be that sets Western culture apart, that gives it its own distinctive flavor.

The question is this: “What’s a good person like?” Or to phrase the matter a little differently, “what makes a person good, what attributes do good people possess or exemplify?” As you might imagine, so early on in the year, there is usually silence for a moment. But these are college students, after all, and soon enough the answers come.

One that comes early on, year after year, is “a good person is honest.” Which is true, of course, but perhaps incomplete. As I reply, year after year, “So amateur, part-time cannibals, serial murderers, and committed neo-Nazis are good provided that they are suitably upfront about their game?” Well, no, as things turn out. It seems that there might be more to it than that.

And sooner or later, as things continue, we begin to cluster around the same range of qualities — kindness, fellow-feeling, compassion, concern for others, generosity and the like. And here, I must confess, I think that we are addressing real, unadulterated virtues — virtues of the first importance.

At this point I generally tell the prospective students that despite what they may gather — and, indeed, very much should gather — from at least the putative, and, in large measure, the actual importance of such values in our culture, they are by no means cultural universals, save within the most narrow familial or tribal bounds. Many great cultures — in their, to that extent, grim way — have flourished without them, and the overwhelming majority of cultures withhold them from “others,” however defined. The great exception, at least insofar as the historical record shows, is Hebrew culture, from the time of Deuteronomy onwards (late

seventh century BCE), if not, indeed, before, despite the many failures which the Hebrews — like everyone else — evinced in living up to their noblest ideals. Concern for the weak, concern for the widow and orphan, concern for the slave and the “resident alien,” the “stranger in a strange land,” concern for the “other,” for the “stinkers,” in short, is anything but a cultural universal. In prioritized, explicit, and traceable, unmistakable form, it begins here. And it continues — as the jewel in the crown of Western culture.

The Hebrew name for this value, to the limit of my ability to ascertain such matters, is *hesed*, most often translated — and well translated, in my view — as “loving-kindness.” If you embody that, you can’t and won’t go very far wrong. But the Hebrews contributed something else to the mix as well, something which, perhaps, doesn’t loom so large for us as it once did, but something very important all the same. The gods and goddesses of ancient Greece and Rome — and pretty much everyone else, to my knowledge — were not much concerned with good behavior as such. They were concerned with good, respectful behavior to themselves. So too the God of the Hebrews. So too, indeed, very much. But with a difference. The God of the Hebrews was concerned — and ever more so as time passed, according to the Scriptural records — with good behavior as such, good behavior with regard to everybody, even, in the end, with regard to the stinkers. He was concerned, in short, with what the ancient Hebrews termed *tsaddikah*, or, as it is often translated, “righteousness.” This is a concept for which neither the Greeks nor the Romans really had a word at all, though *dikaiois*, or “just” or “justice-loving” in the Greek, and “pius,” in one sense “pious,” but more broadly “respectful of things deserving respect” for the Romans come relatively close from differing angles. But there is, in the Hebrew, a different and deeper set of overtones, as if in exemplifying *tsaddikah* one not only honored God, but in some sense participated in His nature, and, indeed, helped in some small way to fulfill His ends, on earth

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PREPARATORY READING

Compassion and kindness are intrinsically other-directed. The pursuit of excellence, not so much, and, certainly, not so intrinsically. Achilles, Homer tells us, was “by far the best,” the most *arête*-filled “of the Achaeans.” That did not make him the kindest.

and beyond. I think of the later tradition that this world is upheld, indeed, held in being, by the righteousness of a small number of tsaddikim who do not, even themselves, know who they are. There is, again, really nothing much like this ideal in Greek or Roman culture. For the Greeks and Romans, by and large, agreed with contemporary secularist thought in believing that, for the most part, the cosmos was morally neutral — that morals were, in effect, something we ourselves brought to the party. The world of the Hebrews was profoundly different. Righteousness mattered — all the way up and all the way down.

But though, as I would argue, these Hebrew notions lie at the heart of our moral vision — of the Western moral vision, if you will — we adhere as well, and, at times, perhaps, even more deeply to another set of moral imperatives, and these stem in very large part from Greek and Hellenic culture. As I argue to our prospective students at our annual presentation, we value not only compassion and kindness; we also value achievement and success. We want, insofar as we can, to be competent, capable, respected and prosperous. We want to be well-informed and perceptive. We value intelligence, strength and vigor. We value, indeed, good looks and skill in athletics and the various arts. We value, in short, what the Greeks termed *arête*, or excellence, as well we should, and, indeed, like the Greeks — and not so much, in fact, like most others — we value excellence so much that we set up and celebrate public contests in which excellence of one sort or another can be revealed and honored. The Olympics are one such example, of course, revived explicitly on the ancient Greek model. But there are many others. And clearly, much, if not, indeed, most of our work at the college is devoted to the pursuit and cultivation of excellence in a wide variety of contexts — and, in fact, or so one might hope, in all we do.

But notice, there is a certain tension here — *hesed* and *arête*, both valuable, do not work toward precisely the same end. Compassion and kindness are intrinsically other-directed. The pursuit of excellence, not so much, and, certainly, not so intrinsically. Achilles, Homer tells us, was “by far the best,” the most *arête*-filled “of the Achaeans.” That did not make him the kindest.

Nevertheless, the tension here between two moral imperatives or polarities — between self and other, between giving and doing, between excellence and equity, and more than equity — has been far more constructive and fructifying in Western culture than destructive. “What does Athens have to do with Jerusalem?” was

the question of some of the more truculent early Church Fathers (preeminent among them the ferocious Tertullian, if memory serves). The answer, in this regard, is “a great deal.” Indeed, you could argue that the force field generated by the interaction of these two moral polarities in many ways gives rise to what is distinctive in Western culture. Hybrid vigor, so to speak.

The Greeks, however, contributed more than just the notion of *arête* — much, much more — and of that much clusters around one of the most potent and evocative words in any language, the Greek word *logos*. Most people, most times and places, have for obvious reasons not assumed that the world made any final or coherent sense. Most of the time, from many vantage points at least, it doesn’t. As one of my favorite bumper stickers puts it “stuff happens,” then you die.” Well, yes. And often enough that’s about the size of it, or so it seems.

But the Greeks, to their everlasting and, indeed, world-changing credit, came to see things differently. Starting, so far as we can tell, in Ionia, the western shore and immediately offshore islands of what is now Turkey, in the sixth or seventh century BCE, some among them made the amazing — and amazingly fruitful — assumption that the world exemplifies and is governed by some sort of underlying rational structure. And not only that — this structure is in large part, and maybe in its entirety, accessible to human thought, to some sort of rational, as opposed to mythological or narrative, explanation.

This assumption, of course, lies at the root of what we now know as philosophy and science, and, in methodological terms, as an over-arching habit of mind and mode of procedure, of many, if not, indeed, most other disciplines as well. *Logos* means, in the first instance, “word” or “speech,” but beyond that, the underlying structures of things to which words and speech, as concepts, refer, and which give them meaning. Their underlying “logos-hood” or logic, if you will. As in “biology,” “psychology,” “epistemology,” “sociology,” “herpetology,” “neurology,” “topology,” “etiology,” “archaeology,” and even “theology,” even, indeed, “technology,” the logic of how to do things — at which we are unprecedentedly good (at least in a technological sense) to the emulation and envy of all the human world.

“*Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος*,” begins the Gospel of John. “In the beginning was the Word” — or, perhaps more precisely, or at least with different emphasis, “At the (fundamental) origin of things was (the underlying) structure.” A Greek-tinged reinlection of Hebrew thought. And as true of our intellectual life as anything else.

But the Greeks had their problems as well as their virtues, intellectual and otherwise, and even after the conquests of Alexander and the profound cultural cross-fertilization initiated by Hellenic domination of the Near East and the ensuing rise of Hellenistic culture, chronic mutual infighting politically weakened the Greek-speaking world.

Which leads us, in turn, to the Graeco-Roman world. When, as a fifth-grader or so, I first encountered the term, it irritated me. A Greek was a Greek, a Roman a Roman, but what was a “Graeco-Roman”? The answer is, “a resident of the Roman Empire,” Greek-speaking (by and large) in the wealthy and sophisticated East, Latin-speaking (by and large) in the ruder and less prosperous West, and to greater or lesser degree cosmopolitan and cross-cultural throughout, at least in the upper reaches of society and, to a surprising degree, below. Under Roman rule. Which brings up another question: what, if anything save military might and discipline — and they most assuredly brought that — did the Romans bring to the party? Nothing quite so dazzling as the notions of *logos* or *arête*, as the Romans themselves were well aware, and nothing much like the deep humanity exemplified by *hesed*. But their contribution was important and long-lasting all the same, and years ago, in a talk to alumni, I sought to suggest its character in two alliterating catch-words: “contracts and concrete.” There is nothing particularly romantic about either — few find their pulses racing at the prospect of either torts or cinder-blocks. And yet both are immensely valuable. The Roman genius was, above all, a genius for practicality — good laws, good roads, and, most times and places, most of the time, social stability, particularly in comparison to what came before and afterward. Peace and prosperity, if you will, or what passed for peace and prosperity in the ancient world and long after. You don’t have look far to see their heirs.

But we are still missing a piece or two of the cultural puzzle. When the Western Empire finally fell, it was not to Rome’s well-organized imperial rival, Sassanid Persia, though threats on that front weakened the Empire as a whole. It was to the barbarians of the Northlands, brave, drunken, ill-organized, and rowdy as they were from a Roman perspective. And big — often blond or red-headed. And big, the women just about as big as the men, their men wearing moustaches and trousers, sure signs of barbarism both. They too made contributions.

The obverse of their disorganization was a love of freedom, and previous ages made much of that — of the “moots,” and proto-parliaments and consultative meetings said in some way to lead to our own corresponding institutions. More important, perhaps, in our own time was their treatment of these women, which the Graeco-Roman world found astounding. Their women moved freely, unhousebound and unconfined. They could own property. At times they even spoke in mixed company. At times the men even listened. Indeed, some among them even led. It was unseemly and shocking from a Graeco-Roman point of view, but in time, where they themselves dominated, the barbarian views prevailed. Though even still, or so it seems, more in the barbarian homelands and those places settled by their descendants than elsewhere.

So, to conclude, what then? Well, all of these values, all of these intellectual currents, find expression in late medieval and early Renaissance culture, and prominently so in the work and author to which (and to whom), over the years, I have, with delight, devoted most time and attention.

In the Divine Comedy, Dante celebrates and exemplifies both *arête* and *hesed*; he celebrates the cosmos as from point to point, in all times and places, an ongoing expression of divine order, of the divine Logos, if you will. And his guide in the higher regions of his journey, to his final vision of God himself, and his ongoing inspiration throughout is Beatrice — the “bringer of blessings” — who represents for him at once his own personal mode of access to the divine, “revelation for him,” revelation as made real and efficacious for him — and the real Beatrice or “Bice” Portinari, who died at age 25 and whom, so Dante tells us, he loved from his own ninth year.

Revelation for Dante came in the guise of Beatrice, and he followed his vision, wavering a bit right after she died, as long he lived, to his final vision in the empyrean, beyond space and time, in the mind of God. And Dante was a theological optimist. He believed that everyone was granted a Beatrice — grace and revelation sufficient to save them — and the choice to follow was their own. No predestination in that sense. The door was open, and open to all.

That thought in mind, one of my students years ago once asked me a pointed, and poignant, question. “Is it possible to lose your Beatrice? Is it possible to mistake her?” “Not by accident,” I answered then.

And “not by accident,” I answer still. Follow your Beatrice. I can’t know what or who she is. But you do. She will not fail you. I promise. Q

The obverse of their (the northern barbarians) disorganization was a love of freedom, and previous ages made much of that — of the “moots,” and proto-parliaments and consultative meetings said in some way to lead to our own corresponding institutions. More important, perhaps, in our own time was their treatment of women, which the Graeco-Roman world found astounding.

WHEN POLITICS GETS NASTY

by CECIL BOHANON

As the season of “peace on earth — good will toward men” fades in memory and yet another legislative and political year ends, it seems appropriate to begin an examination of why contemporary political discourse has become so divisive and shrill.

Of course, when has political discussion been unifying and open-minded? Fair enough, but it certainly seems that political discussion has become more mean-spirited today than it was in previous decades. Although I offer no solution beyond a general saccharine resolution that we should all be nicer to one another, I think there are at least three sources of today’s extreme acrimony.

First, there has been a glacial but important change in the proper role of passion in public discourse. James Madison, Adam Smith and Jane Austen all thought “passions” — or in modern parlance, emotions — were an essential part of human nature. They also believed public displays of passions ought to be restrained. Self-command was a cardinal virtue. It obliged individuals to mute their own feelings in public.

By the 1960s, these traditional restraints on displays of public emotions seemed excessive and repressive. To be genuine in the expression of one’s feelings became a virtue. Today, being “passionate” about a cause is something we admire — especially if we agree with the cause. Is it any surprise that we prefer political commentators who are strident compared with those who are more circumspect?

Second, the communications revolution of the past 20 years has led to increased segmentation in the media. The old media monopoly has been replaced with more diversity in news sources. This revolution can’t be turned back, and it has many positive attributes. A by-product of media segmentation, however, is that we live in a media “bubble” of our own making. Progressives get their news from MSNBC and the Huffington Post while conservatives get theirs from FOX and the Drudge Report, and never the twain meet. We pick news sources that re-enforce and inflame our own ideological biases. This goes well with the modern desire to be entertained: it is so much more fun to be entertained than to have to think through a serious argument.

Finally, the narcissism of my generation — the baby boomers — has become a permanent feature of our culture. An “it’s all about me” attitude extends beyond materialistic selfishness. It also fuels intellectual and moral arrogance. The “I’m always right, I never lie, and I am a morally superior creature” posture comes naturally to the self-absorbed person. A logical extension of this view is that those who disagree with me must be liars as well as my intellectual and moral inferiors.



Graphics: Lisa Barnum

I confess I have sinned on all three margins. More important, however, both sides of the political divide are guilty of these sins in equal proportion. Both left and right generally applaud their own purveyors of vitriol as heroic and thought-provoking commentators while condemning the other side’s as hateful demagogues. Both left

and right stay in their own media bubble. Both left and right are convinced of their own intrinsic intellectual and moral superiority while impugning the motives of their political opponents.

The Klingian Camps

There is no obvious remedy to the above. American political discourse has degenerated over the last few decades to little more than vicious juvenile banter. A small but helpful step in restoring civility, however, is to work to understand why those we disagree with believe what they believe.

An economic blogger and scholar, Arnold Kling, suggests American politics can be parsed into three camps. Conservatives see politics as a conflict between barbarism and civilization. Progressives see politics as a conflict between oppressors and the oppressed. Classical Liberals or Libertarians see politics as a conflict between coercion and freedom. The terms of conflict largely reflect each camp’s worldview.

Conservatives note that Western civilization has been remarkably successful. It has generated a high living standard for its citizens and safeguarded their political and legal rights. Conservatives see the role of government to ensure this order is maintained. This implies a strong national defense, strict punishment of wrongdoers, the fair enforcement of justice and the protection of private property. Conservatives see traditional values, such as a work ethic, a commitment to family life, a widespread belief in God (or at least Providence) as crucial to maintaining civilization.

Progressives appreciate the success of Western civilization but note that many groups have been excluded from its benefits. Women and minorities have been shut out from its political, cultural and economic life or relegated to second-class status. The poor are systematically excluded from the economic mainstream. Of course, government must provide national defense and run prisons but it also has an obligation to right the wrongs that prevail in the larger civilization. Progressive values emphasize inclusion, fair outcomes and equal access to all.

Classical Liberals or Libertarians appreciate both the success and critique of Western civilization. According to their view its success has been attributable to the freedom the

civilization has allowed its citizens to enjoy. Moreover, most all of its shortcomings are the result of government policies that thwart individual freedom and responsibility. Government is itself a major threat to freedom. Its proper role is to enforce the rules of game but not to try to engineer any particular constellation of values — traditional or progressive.

All three viewpoints appeal to high ideals. All three are held by intelligent and good people. None of the three views can be dismissed out of hand. To make the point, consider the premiere policy success of the previous century: the United States winning the Second World War. Conservatives see WWII as a conflict between Axis barbarism and Christian civilization; progressives see it as a conflict between Axis oppressors and oppressed peoples; classical liberals see it as a conflict between Axis coercion and Allied freedom. All three seem apt descriptions of the WWII and it is not obvious which is “best.”

But few issues are as uncontroversial. When more controversial issues are at hand the framework provides a way of understanding one’s political opponent that gets beyond “they disagree with me because they are stupid and evil.”

Consider decriminalization of marijuana. Classical Liberals or Libertarians see the issue as a conflict between coercion and freedom, while conservatives see it as an issue of degenerating social values: barbarism versus civilization. Progressives generally sympathize with the Libertarians because they see drug criminalization as oppressing poor and minority groups.

The point here is not so much what view one holds. Rather, it is to understand that those with different views hold their view for reasons that are legitimate.

Your opponents may be wrong, they may be misled, they may hold values that you do not hold in highest esteem but they are neither insincere nor deluded, neither feeble-minded nor malicious. If you saw the world their way you would think what they thought.

I think this is a first step to a more civil political discourse. I hope you find it useful too.

Civil Politicians

My father was actively involved in two congressional campaigns. He supported the Republican candidates for Congress in the 2nd Congressional district in Oklahoma in 1964 and 1966. He’d give me a dime for every bumper sticker I could persuade a neighbor to put on their car for the GOP standard bearer. I recall the 1964 candidate George Lange being in our home when I came home from school for lunch. My best friend Phil Taylor was impressed: “is Barry Goldwater coming to your house tomorrow?” I remember attending rallies for the 1966 candidate Denzel Garrison. Neither candidate was successful; both lost to incumbent Democratic Congressman Ed Edmondson.

One day in 1966, I was at my grandparent’s house down the street and was rummaging through the scrapbook Grandma had put together for my dad. I noticed two postcards with cordial and friendly notes from none other than Ed Edmondson.

I was puzzled and ask my dad if he and Congressman Edmondson knew one another. Yes, he replied — they were friends in high school and junior college; he still considered Ed to be his friend. “But why do you want him out of office?” I asked. Dad replied, “Because we disagree on the proper role of government.” Ed was an FDR-LBJ Democrat, and Dad was a Bob Taft-Barry Goldwater Republican: nothing personal, just a difference in philosophy.

In 1969, I recall attending a support-the-troops pro-Vietnam War rally with my dad. The speaker was Ed Edmondson, who warmly greeted my father; they were on the same side on that issue. In 1972, I interviewed Mr. Edmondson for my high school newspaper. He was running for U.S. Senate. He had nothing but kind words for my father; they genuinely admired and respected each other despite their differences in political philosophy.

Fast forward to today. I am a member of a local civic club. Fellow members include both the Republican and Democrat for candidate for 2012 for a local elected position. Both express and exhibit active affection and respect for one another. I am faculty adviser at Ball State University for the student-led Economics Club. The outgoing student president of the Econ Club was also president of the College Republicans; the current president is an officer in University Democrats. They were both in my immersive film class and worked famously together in both settings.

Political differences do not have to degenerate into ugly behaviors. Folks can disagree without being disagreeable. I have seen it throughout my life and know it is possible. What is common to all three stories? A common purpose that transcends politics. Dad and Congressman Edmondson had been in high school and college debates together; my two Rotary colleagues have worked on projects together, and my two students coordinated and arranged Econ Club activities together. When you are cooking eggs and bacon with someone at the homeless shelter, it doesn’t matter much what their political or religious views are. You are yoked by a common purpose that transcends all that.

So this is a modest proposal. Let’s require that all 535 members of Congress live together in a comfortable apartment complex in D.C. Let the apartments be randomly assigned so there are no radical-chic or tea-party ghettos. Require them to arrange for all the complex’s community services, set the community rules and require their children to attend a common school.

I bet we’d get better government.

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THE SHARPTON PROBLEM

“If navel-gazing, hand-wringing or self-dramatization helped with racial issues, we would have achieved Utopia long ago.” — *Thomas Sowell*

by TOM HUSTON

In the years prior to the Political Correctness era, a bigot was an individual who was contemptuous toward a class of persons solely on account of their race or religion. It was the unseemliness of the contemptuous behavior that distinguished a bona fide bigot from someone who was merely prejudiced. Racial or religious prejudice, while offensive *per se* to those who did not share it, was more likely to be expressed in a manner that engendered a sense of disappointment in the frailty of the human condition than a sense of outrage at the coarseness of the ill-bred and the ill-mannered. The distinction was manifest in the widely recognized difference between the genteel prejudice of Miss Daisy and the obnoxious racism of Cotton Ed Smith.

This distinction had both moral and practical consequences. Racial or religious prejudice as we knew it in this country in the 20th century was largely a product of the culture in which it thrived. It was assumed, not rationalized. It was a way of living, not an ideological statement. As a social fact, it was subject to social pressure. It was not an idea at the heart of a political ideology or the self-identifier for a people shorn of self-respect and lacking in self-confidence.

Racial discrimination was a legacy of shame as old as the Republic itself and inseparable from it. The stain of slavery had been washed out of the Constitution, but it had not been cleansed from the American landscape. The boundaries of the terrain in which it flourished were constantly being pushed back by the moral imperative implicit in American doctrine, but there were large pockets of resistance, and not all of them were south of Mason and Dixon's line.

Martin Luther King recognized that the final push to victory was possible by appealing to an implied promise of the Founding and the innate sense of decency of the American people. That is, he believed that while racial equality might be at odds with much of the American experience, it was mandated by the original American idea, an idea whose force had been blunted by conditions inherited as an unwelcome but unavoidable bequest from a different time. The modes and manner of thought that gave rise to gentility were implicitly open to an appeal to the heart and to the conscience. He



Graphics: Lisa Barnum

launched a moral offensive against a way of thinking and a way of acting for which there was no rational defense. The promise of racial equality, while not self-fulfilling, was self-propelling, for it was inextricably linked to the promise of America itself.

It was, however, a fierce struggle in the course of which those brave souls in the vanguard paid a high price. An embedded way of life

does not give way to a light breeze. It unfortunately took gale-like winds to effect the necessary social adjustment, and as unlamented landmarks fell, so too did some that may honestly and legitimately be mourned — collateral damage in the course of a struggle that was just, but not without cost.

Those under age 60 do not seem to understand just how much was accomplished in the course of the civil-rights struggle that was waged during the third quarter of the last century — how formidable the barriers, how determined the defenders of the old order, how brave the workers for a new one, how overwhelming the ultimate victory. This ignorance is in some measure simply a reflection of the general unawareness of facts historical that characterizes the American public, but largely it is a result of the refusal of contemporary black political leaders to claim the victory. For these professional soldiers, the campaign is not, and never will be, over. They won't fade away. They have too much invested in the accouterments of struggle. Their rank depends on perpetual mobilization against a perpetual enemy. There will not be peace in their time.

To assert that a great victory was won is not to assert that racial prejudice was vanquished. Just as the clergy will never be unemployed in a world in which sin is endemic, fighters for racial equality will always be able to find a battlefield upon which irreconcilables remain entrenched. While a color-blind society may be our goal, we have a ways yet to go, as any fair-minded person will readily admit. This concession to the reality of the human condition in an imperfect world may give cheer to those who are armed, mounted and thrive on the march, but their campaign amounts to little more than a mopping-up operation against stragglers. The great battles have been fought and won. The institutional base of racism has been dismantled, and the dominant culture has

unequivocally affirmed the implied promise of the Declaration. The remarkable thing is not that there are some hearts yet indifferent to the claim of racial equality, but that so many hearts have been changed so decisively in so short a time.

And yet, we know that all is not quiet on the racial front. The reverends Jackson and Sharpton have not decamped, Congresspersons Rangel and Waters have not stacked arms and Julian Bond is no less angry than he was 50 years ago. By every objective measure, black Americans have made remarkable progress since *Brown v. Board of Education*: in educational achievement, in job opportunities, in income, in housing, in participation in civic life. As substantial as these advances have been, it is nonetheless true that blacks do not today share proportionately with whites the benefits of our abundant society. Thus, there is plausible cause to keep Jackson and Sharpton mounted and on the march.

For progressives of every hue, the distance that blacks have come does not appear as impressive as the distance they have yet to go, and, as the historian Alexis de Tocqueville would have predicted, resentment of the vestiges of racial discrimination has increased exponentially in proportion to the decrease in the equality gap. Thus, there is no armistice, no peace, only escalating conflict on an expanded front. In this new struggle, which is about equalitarianism, not equality, long-time alliances have been severed, old positions have been abandoned, the appeal to conscience has yielded to the claim of victimhood, and intimidation has been substituted for persuasion. Positions have hardened, rhetoric has become shrill and argument has given way to assertion. It has gotten ugly, and anyone who says so is dismissed as a bigot.

The nominal issue is affirmative action, a process that has as its objective leveling the playing field or adjusting the starting line to compensate for past impediments to a fair chance in life. There is a certain rough justice in this idea, for it is undeniable that for hundreds of years black men and women who could have done well were denied the opportunity to do so simply because they were black. While it is true that the sins of the father should not be visited on the son, it is equally true that neither the sin nor its consequences can justly be ignored. Indeed, the promise of a helping hand was implicit in the Civil War Amendments to the Constitution, a promise that went unfulfilled for nearly a century.

Catching up is hard to do when you start way behind the line, and you start there not from any lack of ambition but as a present consequence of a long-ago decision to rig the

race. There is no dishonor in pointing out the inequity of such a circumstance and there is no honor in denying it.

In a perfect world there would be an obvious, cost-free remedy for every demonstrable wrong, but we don't live in a perfect world, and every plausible remedy has a price. No one has yet suggested how to adjust the starting line to equalize opportunity without putting some of the runners at a competitive disadvantage, and no one has yet demonstrated that the right to adjust the line doesn't carry with it the power to determine the winner.

If, as is so often said, our national objective is a color-blind society, it is self-evident that there are problems in advancing toward that objective by pursuing a race-based policy of preference for lining up at the starting gate. That being said, it is difficult to argue that remedial action was inappropriate to compensate for a history of discrimination, the effect of which was borne by Reverend King's generation. Without giving disproportionate preference to blacks, it would have been impossible to integrate critical public service institutions (police and fire departments, school faculties, etc.) where fair representation was most imperative within the shortest feasible time if our commitment to racial equity was to be made manifest. This could not be achieved without "reverse discrimination," that is, some equal, or perhaps better, qualified whites had to be passed over in order to integrate these critical institutions. On an individual basis, perfectly good and decent people were disadvantaged, but on a communal basis, a necessary result was achieved. Although it would be scant comfort to those who bore the brunt, a recognition that "affirmative" action was a necessary one-time event — a catching-up — would mitigate the inequity of overtly picking winners on the basis of race if it weren't for the fact that only a fool believes that those who can win the game when the deck is stacked are going to volunteer to give up the advantage of being the dealer.

A recognition that "affirmative action" was a necessary one-time event — a catching-up — would mitigate the inequity of overtly picking winners on the basis of race if it weren't for the fact that only a fool believes that those who can win the game when the deck is stacked are going to volunteer to give up the advantage of being the dealer.



TOM CHARLES HUSTON, A.B., J.D., an adjunct scholar of the foundation residing in Indianapolis, served as an officer in the United States Army assigned to the Defense Intelligence Agency and as associate counsel to the president of the United States. A member of the American College of Real Estate Lawyers, Huston has written and lectured extensively on real estate law and practice. He has been prominent in the historic preservation movement, serving as an officer and director of Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana and Historic Indianapolis, Inc.; a director of Preservation Action; and a member of the Board of Advisors of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

While the South had institutional defenses against the advance of the belief that Americanism and racial segregation were incompatible, those defenses were vulnerable — were not, that is, in any way as impregnable as many of those who sought to overcome them or those who sought to shore them up thought they were. Time was the enemy of institutionalized racism.

The most successfully integrated institution in America is the military. In a foxhole, the only thing that matters is the skill and courage of the person next to you. No soldier in his right mind is going to promote an incompetent on account of race when his life and those of his comrades would be put at risk as a consequence. It took fewer than 20 years to desegregate the military services and to establish a culture of mutual respect based on demonstrated competence. No other American institution has fared so well. While progressives would seize on the failure of civilian institutions to come up to snuff and pass lightly over the achievement of our armed forces, the real story here is in the reasons why this one institution has been so successful in its mission while the others have had a difficult time of it.

The armed services had several advantages in dealing with the legacy of racism. First, the military is trained to define a mission and map out a strategy for achieving that mission. Second, the military is not a democracy; the general staff decides and it orders. There is no vote, no compromise and no appeal. Third, the military is a closed society. There are no competing *loci* of power, no “special interests” to be accommodated, no unsanctioned “ideas” that can demand to be heard. Its purpose is to achieve the mission that has been established and all its social force is devoted to that purpose. Finally, those who constitute the military elite (the officers and noncoms) are self-selected. They serve because they want to serve, because they believe in the order that is military life and in the society for whose defense the military exists. They have disciplined their minds to the requisites of military service and their souls to the sacrifices necessary for military success.

Sparta may purge racism by edict. Athens, however, must do so by persuasion. Or so conservatives believe, and here is the rub.

If we shift our focus in time back to the beginning of Reverend King’s movement and from that perspective look forward, we will find that the generality of conservatives lined up in opposition to the civil-rights movement at exactly that hour at which the movement became self-consciously a “revolution,” and they did so for constitutional and prudential reasons.

It is not, however, a good idea when you see a train running at 80 miles an hour to stand in front of it with the intention of calling to the engineer’s attention that he is traveling through a 30-mile-an-hour zone. In effect, this is the approach most conservatives took to the civil-rights “revolution.” They stood up, boldly shouted “slow down,” and got rolled over.

The concerns that conservatives expressed when confronted with a movement that was willing to invite and accept the consequences of the savagery of a Bull Connor were not frivolous, and, as events have subsequently demonstrated, were not unwarranted. Yet, most conservatives did not understand (perhaps being conservatives they could not be expected to understand) that in history there are moments when change, radical change, is in the process of being effected that can neither be deflected by reason nor accommodated by tinkering. For a long time I thought that what we lived through during this period was a manifestation of institutional failure, but now I have come to believe that our institutions responded much better than we appreciated at the time.

Willmoore Kendall put great store in the “virtuous” people, and by his definition the virtuous people are above all “patient” because patience is the precondition to the discussion, deliberation and consensus that is the hallmark of a responsible, self-governing people. This is as it should be, but it presupposes that those who are expected to be patient see themselves as part of the discussion, believe their views will be fairly considered in the course of deliberation. It presupposes that they have confidence that a consensus that accommodates their most basic grievances is within the realm of possibility within a time-frame that is reasonable — reasonable not in the abstract, but in the context of the length of time their grievances have been known. In sum, they must believe that their grievances have been “up” for discussion.

I believe that a consensus that the legal structure of racial segregation common in the American South was un-American and that it must be dismantled had been largely formed outside the South by the time *Brown v. Board of Education* was decided. Moreover, this consensus was formed in large measure as an inevitable consequence of the logic of, and rationale for, World War II and the Cold War and the changes that had been effected in American life and thinking as a result of these momentous events — events that had ideological overtones that gave rise to serious thinking about what it meant to “be” an American. I also believe that the South could not have stood outside this emergent consensus for long because the same considerations that encouraged the formation of this consensus north of the Mason-Dixon Line were latent in the South, and while the South had institutional defenses against the advance of the belief that Americanism and racial segregation were incompatible, those defenses were vulnerable.

They were not, that is, in any way as impregnable as many of those who sought to overcome them or those who sought to shore them up thought they were. Time was the enemy of institutionalized racism.

The fierceness of the resistance in the South after *Brown* may be thought to argue against my thesis, but it does not. Time works silently, covertly. It does not announce its objective. It does not require those whom it has targeted to announce their surrender. The *Brown* decision, however, worked otherwise. It issued a public demand for surrender. It required the South to show up at Appomattox a second time. Human nature being what it is, the reaction was predictable. People got their backs up, adopted positions more extreme than events would logically require, drew lines that forced everyone to pick a side, and opened the public forum to demagogues.

Under these circumstances it was inevitable that there was going to be a showdown, and it wasn't going to be in a deliberative assembly. Theoretically, of course, a way could have been found to resolve the immediate crisis through Congress, but our federal structure and the rules of the Senate invested the spokesmen for an aroused South with the means to block action in Washington that could have mapped a middle way. Indeed, if Congress had not been immobilized by these institutional impediments, perhaps the Court would not have, in the first instance, pulled the trigger that launched a revolution.

In any event, by the time of Birmingham and Selma we had moved well beyond the point at which violent confrontation could be avoided, but we had not moved beyond the capacity of our political system to head off a rush to catastrophe.

With the adoption of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965, the steam came out of the revolutionary engine that was driving the civil-rights struggle. Congress moved in on the most basic demands of the movement — voting rights and access to public accommodations, jobs and education — and structured a settlement that had the overt support of those outside the South who were determined to see justice done, and the tacit acceptance of those in the South who knew the game was up. They knew deep in their hearts that it was only right to give up the game.

We reached a consensus of sorts, a consensus arising directly out of deliberation of a rather unruly sort and, most importantly, a consensus arising out of necessity — the necessity to meet just demands and the necessity to keep the country together.

What made this consensus ultimately possible were three things. First, as I have

previously indicated, the consensus-formation had been underway since VE Day and continued to move forward with the ruthless logic of its own imperative. Second, with the exception of a small minority of diehard racists, the southern heart was never as closed to the appeal to justice as the public posturing seemed to indicate. And third, our republican institutions were flexible enough to figure out how to accommodate justice with order.

With laws in place, with rules set out for all to see and all to play by, the violence dissipated, institutions adapted and people adjusted to new ways of conducting public and private business. I don't want to paint too rosy a picture. It was difficult, it was messy, and it was not without pain. Yet, in the perspective of history, the civil rights "revolution" will be remarked upon with wonder, for so much was achieved in so short a time with so little damage to the basic structures of the society that underwent this revolution.

Which brings us back to the Reverend Sharpton and his nightriders.

The disagreement over the effect to be given to the "latent promise" of the Declaration in the context of race, the argument over the application and the reach of the "all men are created equal" clause to blacks, has for all intents and purposes been settled. "We, the people" have concluded that race is not a legitimate factor to take into account in the relations among men or in the relationship of man to government. "We, the people" have decided that ours is, or should be, a color-blind society.

And yet, "We, the people" do not appear to have decided two related questions, which are these:

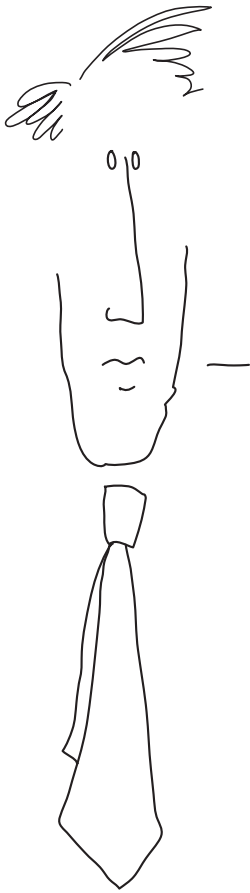
1. Is the equality of the Declaration, an equality that is linked to man in his capacity as man (as in, "all men are created equal"), indistinguishable from an equality that is linked to conduct?
2. Is equalitarianism the inevitable and mandated result of giving effect to the equality of the Declaration?

It is these unanswered questions that keep Reverend Sharpton and his ilk in the saddle.

I don't want to linger long pondering the first question, but it is a question that goes to the heart of the claim by homosexuals that denial of their right to engage in historically proscribed conduct with the blessing of their neighbors is legally and morally indistinguishable from the denial to blacks of their basic human rights on account of their race. That is, we are asked to accept the notion that a concept of equality that recognizes no legitimate moral or legal

We are asked to accept the notion that a concept of equality that recognizes no legitimate moral or legal distinction between men based on their race by its internal logic precludes recognition of a moral or legal distinction between men based on their sexual conduct. For many, that's a tough piece of bark to chew.

Those who have chosen as their life's work making people equal don't have to worry about ever being unemployed.



distinction between men based on their race by its internal logic precludes recognition of a moral or legal distinction between men based on their sexual conduct. For many, that's a tough piece of bark to chew.

Put this way, as I think it appropriate to do given the frequency with which gay-rights advocates link their cause to the cause championed by Reverend King, it should suggest to a fair-minded person that those who make this argument have a heavy burden to carry, which is that there is no evidence whatsoever that Thomas Jefferson and other Enlightenment thinkers had any such notion in mind or, if they had had it in mind, they would have concluded that that which is immutable, universal and grounded in nature may not logically be distinguished from that which is not necessarily any of these things.

Those who have chosen as their life's work making people equal don't have to worry about ever being unemployed. Most of those engaged in this line of work concede that "perfect" equality is beyond the reach of even the most high-minded since the tool necessary to achieve this ultimate objective has not yet been teased out of the technological workshop of the well-meaning.

While regrettable, this fact is not deterring because there are two objectives that workers for equality believe to be achievable: 1) making folks "more equal"; and 2) creating conditions that equalize "opportunity."

When progressives talk about making folks "more equal," what they normally have in mind is taking cash out of your pocket and putting it in the pocket of some guy or gal you've never met. This process, which from your perspective is indistinguishable from grand larceny, is described by the professional equalizers as "income redistribution." Now, from their perspective, the good thing about redistributing your income to their designated beneficiaries is that not only are you and the gal who now has your money "more equal," but in the process of achieving this desirable result the people who have expedited the transaction (the government bureaucrats) have had the opportunity to take a cut, and this token of your appreciation for being fleeced helps succor the bureaucracy that does the fleecing. It is, as they say, a twofer.

The means for making people "more equal" are, you see, pretty simple: Take from John and

give to Mary after Jennifer has taken her cut. Where the going gets tough is when the time arises to decide, "How equal is more equal?"

There is no obvious answer to this question. That is good, because flexibility in deciding whom to fleece and how much to fleece them is the work of politicians and the reformers, preachers and college professors who do the heavy thinking for politicians. If there weren't such decisions to be made, there wouldn't be much demand for politicians and their heavy thinkers, in which event unemployment would be higher than it should be and this would make society even more unequal.

The "make 'em equal" crowd aren't a bunch of pickers who just fell off the back of a turnip truck as it passed through town. These folks have been around long enough to know that if you're going to pick a fella's pocket only after you've told him of your intention, then you darned well better come up with some plausible justification for doing so. Which is to say, if you're in the "make 'em equal" business, you need to undertake a major marketing effort to establish the "brand" of equal-opportunity pickpocketing.

Among the problems the equalizers have is that most people know intuitively a few fairly important things, such as: 1) There ain't no free lunch; 2) some people are smarter than others; 3) some people work harder than others; 4) some people are more frugal than others; 5) some people are physically more attractive than others; 6) a lunch that ain't free has to be paid for by someone; 7) some people are better athletes than others; 8) better athletes get paid more than those who aren't so good; 9) paying a guy who isn't a very good athlete the same amount as a guy who is a very good athlete isn't "fair"; and 10) a good athlete may be the nicest fellow in the world, but he doesn't want to play for free or for less than the market says he is worth, and he doesn't want the beer-guzzlers in the stands as his financial partners (acting through the agency of the IRS).

Neutralizing this "folk wisdom" is the business of the marketing team engaged by the equalizers, and the best this team has been able to come up with is the brand tag line, "equality of opportunity," which hints at the ultimate goal of "equality of results".

Okay, say the marketing gurus, maybe our clients can't "make" people equal by fleecing the producing class, but what they can do is create conditions that will give everyone an "equal chance" in the game of life. If we invest government with the power to establish the rules for lining up at the starting line, we can ensure that the race will truly be one of "equals"

"Abstract liberty, like other mere abstractions, is not to be found."
(Edmund Burke)

so that the winners have moral legitimacy, so that they “deserve” to be winners.

Only a progressive could buy into this con game. Let’s leave aside for a moment a point I made earlier about the implications of having the power to determine the order in which the runners line up at the starting gate and focus on the premises underlying the claim that government can invest all the runners with an equal chance of winning.

Again, all persons are not endowed with equal intelligence, motor skills, physical beauty or personality traits conducive to success in a competitive world — and short of cloning, no one has figured out how to equalize these characteristics in people. Moreover, not everyone is born into an equally nurturing home environment. Some are born into wealth and some into penury. Some are born into a two-parent family that values education and instills self-discipline and others are born into a single-parent household in which education is disparaged and discipline of any sort is unknown. These “environmental” facts are so obvious as to hardly justify the effort of calling attention to them.

You can launch as many wars on poverty as suit your fancy, endow all the Head Start programs your heart desires and flood the country with food stamps and housing vouchers, yet at the end of the day the people who show up at life’s starting gate are going to bring with them the full range of assets and liabilities that are randomly distributed by the lottery of life. Under such circumstances, how can anyone say with a straight face that every person has been afforded an “equal opportunity?” It is hokum, and anyone who is not a fool or a knave knows it is hokum.

Affording “equal opportunity” is about picking winners. The unequal cannot compete equally, and if you can’t overcome the basic inequalities that are a result of nature and culture, then you can’t expect the less talented to beat the more talented in a fair race. It is impossible to predict the winner in a fair race — there are too many imponderables, too many variables, too many contingencies. Moreover, the race of life is not a single event. It is a series of sprints and cross-country jogs, and the runners win some and lose others. People are not machines, and they cannot be programmed to win.

But, argue the progressives, if we can’t give every person an “equal” opportunity, we can at least give them an opportunity that is “more equal”; we can at least reduce the disadvantages with which they start the race. This, of course, brings us right back to the fleecing game with

which we commenced our discussion. The problem of undertaking to make opportunity “more equal” is identical to the problem of making life “more fair.” “More” is not subject to objective determination. It is inherently subjective and, thus, open to argument.

Arguing about what policies or programs might give people a better chance of being successful in the race of life, that might reduce or ameliorate the disadvantages that accrue to some among us as a consequence of circumstances over which they have no control and that could conceivably make life “more fair” as we understand fairness after giving the matter some serious thought is the legitimate business of a self-governing people. It is part of the discussion that needs to go forward, a discussion that takes account of the real world, of human beings as they are — their weaknesses and their foibles as well as their strengths and their potentialities. It is not a discussion about “rights” but a discussion about doing right by our neighbors. It is not a quixotic crusade to retool the nature of man, to make him something that neither God nor nature intended him to be. And it most certainly is not a discussion about the applicability of the “all men are created equal” clause of the Declaration to an inequality that results from the luck of the draw for the simple reason that once all men have been invested with an equal right to participate in the discussion and to have an equal voice in the decision, the requirements of the equality clause have been satisfied.

The Reverend Sharptons of this world don’t want to participate in a discussion of the type I have just described. In fact, what they want is to preclude any such discussion because they know that it is highly unlikely they can convince rational people to buy the toxic mixture of class hatred and race baiting that they are peddling. They are in the extortion business and that is a strong-arm enterprise. Under their marketing plan, they do the talking and you do the paying.

There is a lot of fuzzy thinking on the Supreme Court and in our lesser institutions of authority about the appropriateness of picking winners based on race. When that was the norm in the South and only whites were permitted to win, the result was called racism. When Sharpton, Jackson and company likewise stack the deck and deal the cards in a game rigged to assure that preferred persons win based on race, gender or sexual preference, it is called affirmative action. One is said to be bad, the other good.

To an honest man, it looks very much like the same game, just different card sharps. Q

The problem of undertaking to make opportunity “more equal” is identical to the problem of making life “more fair.” “More” is not subject to objective determination. It is inherently subjective and, thus, open to argument.

INVASION OF THE NEOCONS

“It’s hard to imagine any of the most prominent among them understanding in his gut what it means to be a Hoosier or a Tar Heel or a Sooner.”

by TOM HUSTON

Wendell Willkie was born in Elwood and went to Indiana University. He packed up and skedaddled out of state not long after graduation, ultimately ending up on Wall Street running a giant utility company. His folks were socialists and he was a New Deal Democrat until FDR decided to break up the utilities. In one of those weird confluences of events that no one could predict and no one could convincingly explain, “the barefoot boy from Wall Street” (as Harold Ickes characterized him) ended up with the 1940 Republican presidential nomination.

During the course of the convention in Philadelphia at which he was nominated, Willkie walked into the lobby of the Bellevue-Stratford Hotel where he saw “Big Jim” Watson, who had served sixteen years in the United States Senate, four as majority leader. Defeated for re-election in the 1932 Roosevelt landslide, Watson was entirely “old school,” which in Indiana politics meant you were respectful of your elders, you paid your dues, and you waited your turn.

As Willkie approached Watson, he said, “Jim, I understand you are not supporting me.” “No, I’m not,” the ex-Senator replied. “Well,” said Willkie, “since we’re both from Indiana, I had hoped you would.” Looking him square in the eye, Watson said: “Let me tell you why. You’ve been a Democrat all your life. I don’t mind the church converting a whore, but I don’t like her to lead the choir the first night.”

I believe in the forgiveness of sins and the redemption of sinners, but there must be something in the Hoosier blood stream that naturally causes us to get our back up at the idea that the convert ought immediately to commandeer the pulpit to instruct the congregation in the rudiments of the faith or, even more aggravating, undertake to hector the congregation on the error of their ways, the inadequacy of their mission work and the idiocy of their catechism.

I have in mind, of course, the neoconservatives whose determination to distinguish themselves from movement conservatives reminds me of a quip by an old Scot Presbyterian: “Episcopalians are Catholics who don’t want to pray in the same pew with their maids.”

I don’t have trouble doing business with the neoconservatives. I admire their most articulate spokesmen, I read their journals with great profit, and I acknowledge their contribution



Graphics: Lisa Barnum

to American conservatism. I just don’t like their elitism, their standoffishness, their insistence on being hyphenated conservatives. I don’t know that they intend to do so, but they give the impression of relishing the role of outsider. They have about them the smell of the cloister. It’s hard to imagine any of the most prominent among them understanding in his gut what it means to be a Hoosier or a Tar

Heel or a Sooner. That is, they seem to be more enamored of the idea of this country than they are of the life of this country, life as it has actually been lived by Americans over the course of centuries as opposed to life as metaphor limned by some foreign aristocrat or down-on-his-luck novelist. Drummers working the New York-Washington territory, they make their living peddling ideas, most particularly the idea that the United States is an ideological nation: a territory of the mind shorn of tradition, experience and long-tended graves, what Irving Kristol dismissed as “Tory nostalgia.”

Although I was tutored in the Jim Watson school of politics, I have disciplined myself to be welcoming to newcomers, at least to those who show up at the door and knock rather than simply beat it down. Most veterans of the movement I know didn’t come into the ranks with a general officer’s commission. They weren’t ideological bluebloods. When they took their seats in the command tent, they had dirt under their fingernails. I accept the notion that if a guy shows up with a battle-ready battalion that he recruited and trained, he ought to have a seat at the table. The question is whether the last guy in ought to sit at the head.

Kristol’s Conservative ‘Persuasion’

Neoconservatism is, Irving Kristol instructs us, not a movement but a “persuasion” whose mission it is “to convert the Republican Party, and American conservatism in general, against their respective wills, into a new kind of conservative politics suitable to governing a modern democracy.” This persuasion is “the first variant of American conservatism in the past century that is in the ‘American grain.’” Its 20th-century heroes are T.R., FDR and Ronald Reagan. It has no business to conduct with Coolidge, Hoover, Eisenhower or Goldwater. It is pro-growth and unworried by deficits; it is impatient with “the Hayekian notion that we are on ‘the road

to serfdom”; that is, neoconservatives “do not feel that kind of alarm or anxiety about the growth of the state in the past century, seeing it as natural, indeed, inevitable.” Neoconservatives “feel at home in today’s America to a degree that more traditional conservatives do not,” but they share the uneasiness of traditionalists about the “steady decline in our democratic culture”; they believe “patriotism is a natural and healthy sentiment and should be encouraged by both private and public institutions”; they are deeply suspicious of the movement toward world government; and they believe that the United States, “whose identity is ideological,” has “ideological interests” that require an interventionist foreign policy, “no complicated geopolitical calculations of national interest” being necessary. The “older, traditional elements in the Republican Party have difficulty coming to terms” with these “new realities.”

Conservatives who haven’t lived in a cave on some isolated Japanese island since WWII understand that these “new realities” aren’t new at all and, more importantly, that much of what is indeed new is brought off with mirrors. For example:

- Back when the neoconservatives were unhyphenated liberals, the “older, traditional elements” in the Republican Party (who I take to be the movement conservatives) were discussing among themselves the relative importance of growth versus deficits; Willmoore Kendall was warning conservatives away from the “antipower mystique;” Russell Kirk, Richard Weaver and Barry Goldwater were expressing alarm about the “decline of our democratic culture;” and every conservative who suited up to get on the field was convinced that the United States had an obligation to resist Communist expansionism because they recognized that our national interest involved more than “our material interests.”
- These “mugged liberals” left the Democratic Party because they had no influence on policy as articulated by that party. When it kept blowing back in their face they finally concluded that they were facing into the wind. They could have abandoned the Upper East Side, gone off to Walden Pond and continued talking to each other, but they wanted to change the way things were being done in this country, and effecting change — at least political change — is the business of a political party. They were looking for a place of political business where they would have some reasonable prospect for success and, if successful, some likelihood that their

ideas would be translated into public policy. They needed the Republican Party every bit as much as they believed the Republican Party needed them.

- The only reason the Republican Party represented an opportunity for intellectuals in the persuasion business is because the “traditional elements” had taken over the party in 1964, held on through the bleak Watergate years and were welcoming when the neoconservatives came knocking on the door. Not only were these folks late to put a stake on the table, there wouldn’t have been an open seat at the table if the movement conservatives had not, thanks to Barry Goldwater, bounced the card sharps and seized control of the gaming parlor.
- I must be missing something, but I’ll be darned if I can figure out how a conservative of any variety can simultaneously claim as “heroes” Teddy Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan. I can certainly find something in each to admire, but they are primarily (with the exception of Reagan) personality traits. If you’re voting for homecoming king, personality might be determinative, but if you’re looking to establish a model for presidential leadership — what the fellow does (substance) as opposed to how well he does or explains it (style) — then I think you’ve taken a wrong turn onto a dead-end street when your vision is so faulty that you can’t recognize the fundamental difference in attitude toward the role of government of Ronald Reagan on the one hand and the Roosevelt cousins on the other.

The foregoing observations may seem churlish, so let me get to the heart of the matter: Any man who has made his peace with big government may be any number of wonderful things, but he is not an American conservative, not in the sense that the term “American conservative” has been used in political discourse since 1945. If he is “at home” with the growth of the state, if he believes it is inevitable and natural, that the American constitutional order was designed to accommodate it, that the “steady decline in our democratic culture” is unrelated to government crowding out of the voluntary sectors of our society and that what appears to be a voracious appetite for spoils and an inherent tendency to serve as feeding trough for special interests is in reality the tool by which the assault upon our culture may be repelled, then the man who believes such things ought to call himself a “Hamiltonian,” a “compassionate moderate,” a “sober liberal,” or such other

Neoconservatives aren’t greatly concerned about individual liberty, as in that liberty rooted in the common law that was readily recognizable to the founding generation as the historic rights of Englishmen, a liberty that links rights to duties.

COVER ESSAY

moniker as will avoid giving just cause for the filing against him of a consumer fraud complaint. When all the philosophical juice is poured into “neo,” the word “conservative” is drained of any continuing significance.

In the ‘American’ Grain?

There have always been differences of opinion among conservatives about the appropriate role of government, but those arguments have taken place within the context of an agreed premise: our federal government is a government of limited powers. With Willmoore Kendall, Charles Hyneman and George Carey, I believe that within the legitimate scope of its delegated powers, the federal government ought to act with “energy,” it ought to be effective. Many libertarians, on the other hand, argue that whatever the scope of the delegated powers, the reach of the federal government ought to be cut back. There may even be some garden-variety conservatives who believe that to the extent the federal government has successfully exercised over some extended period textually suspect powers, conservatives ought to acquiesce in what has the appearance of usurpation. I would call these the “just-move-on” conservatives. I don’t know any conservatives of this variety, although there are a number (of whom I count myself one) who are prepared to accept the “idea” that certain government-erected “safety nets” serve conservative ends and that the appropriate conservative attitude is to accept the fact, tinker with the administration and the funding and, as opportunity affords itself, attempt to persuade the people that their interests would be better served if government abandoned its monopoly on the safety-net business. This is, I suppose, a variety of the Disraeli Toryism that Pat Moynihan tried to peddle to Richard Nixon. It is, however, in the hands of unhyphenated conservatives a concession to political realities, not an invitation to open the floodgates to more and bigger government.

There are two other striking differences between neoconservatives and the traditional variety.

First, neoconservatives aren’t greatly concerned about individual liberty, by which I don’t mean the license that is the fetish of the Left or the obsessive individualism of true-blue libertarians, but rather that liberty rooted in the common law that was readily recognizable to the founding generation as the historic rights of Englishmen, a liberty that links rights to duties. I don’t say they are hostile to liberty thus understood, only that in their order of priorities it plays second fiddle to the claims of government.

Second, neoconservatives don’t attach much importance to the architecture of the American constitutional order, to the structures, systems and processes established by the Philadelphia Constitution. They are ends-oriented, not process-oriented. Separation of powers and checks and balances are just so many roadblocks to getting the state to do the sorts of things neoconservatives believe ought to be done. In this respect, they are indistinguishable from liberals of the Lionel Trilling variety.

Where the neoconservatives really roll out the mirrors is in their claim that neoconservatism is the “first variant of American conservatism” that is “in the American grain.” This is an interesting choice of words. To be in the “American grain”

one must, Kristol argued, be “hopeful,” “forward-looking” and “cheerful.” That is, one must possess certain personality traits. The traits that he identifies are greatly to be admired. They may even be personality traits that one may ascribe to most Americans throughout most of American history. They are, however, slim pickings when it comes to trying to explain what America is and why it is different from most places in the world.

Neoconservatism as a persuasion may have a distinctive American attitude, but it is not grounded in a distinctive American experience. It is unapologetically catholic. Aggressively in the export business, it is always seeking to penetrate new markets. There is no armed camp, kingdom or provingground that is unfertile ground for conversion against its will. Neoconservatism is universalist in its ambitions in the manner of the Church at Rome. The neoconservative liturgy is adaptable to the vernacular of any land. Neoconservatism’s appeal is to Man. It has no American roots, only an American personality. It is not constrained by indigenous institutions or traditions. It is an Idea. You don’t have to feel it in your bones. It is enough if you can think it.

Conservatism by Liberal Means

Fred Barnes certainly passes Irving Kristol’s test of being “in the American grain.” Hopeful, forward-looking and cheerful, he talks a mile-a-minute and more often than not makes sense. His tactical political instincts are acute, which is a good thing for a man who is a political journalist and not a public intellectual. He exemplifies neoconservatism’s smiley face and he peddles its most pernicious heresy.

Barnes has been pushing the “big-government conservatism” line longer than most and does so with a straight face. This may be because he thinks that the American political tradition dates from the inauguration of Franklin D. Roosevelt. On the other hand, it may simply be that he thinks a political party ought to do what seems to work, and if the Democrats (and the Eisenhower neo-Democrats masquerading as “Modern Republicans”) got an uninterrupted 48-year run pushing big government, then the Republicans ought to give it a try.

According to Barnes, big-government conservatives “believe in using what would normally be seen as liberal means — activist government — for conservative ends. And they’re willing to spend more and increase the size of government in the process.” Ronald Reagan and Newt Gingrich tried small government conservatism and it didn’t work, and it didn’t work because “people like big government as long as it’s not a huge drag on the economy” and small-government conservatives are “against” things when the natural instinct of political men “is to be in favor of things because that puts them on the political offensive.” Small-government conservatism — that is, the philosophy that motivated conservatives to seize control of the Republican Party and that propelled Ronald Reagan into the White House — doesn’t work.

What does work, what prior to 2006 was said to be working for George W. Bush, is big-government conservatism. How do we know? Because Teddy Kennedy and other liberals weren’t happy. They got a lot from Mr. Bush, but “they expected even more.” Liberals have a thing about half a loaf. They complain about it, but they never refuse to take it. And they always refuse to give it. That is why they like to do business with

big-government conservatives. They know that all they will get from small-government conservatives is a poke in the eye.

Out here in the heartland it takes a lot of powerful argument to overcome the presumption that what is “normally seen as” is so seen for good reason, and if you’re supposed to see it differently than you normally would, it must be because of a fundamental change in what it is you’re looking at. If “activist government” is “normally seen as” the tool of liberals and now we’re supposed to see it as the tool of conservatives, it must be for one of two reasons: 1) The tool is intrinsically different than what we thought it was; or 2) the tool has a utility that heretofore escaped our notice.

The reason that people who work with their hands “normally” see “activist government” as a threat rather than as an opportunity is because they have learned two things from experience. First, when government gets active, the odds are the cost of government is going to increase and they are going to be asked to pay for it. Second, an activist government is inclined to restrict their liberty at the same time it is picking their pockets. These folks aren’t anarchists, but they are skeptics. And, admittedly, they are often schizophrenic. What I perceive as a dole, the recipients regard as their just desserts, and it is in this regard that the notion arises that people “like” big government. It’s hard not to like what you think you need and deserve, and self-abnegation is not a frequently remarked upon quality of a democratic polity. The delegates at Philadelphia spent a lot of time addressing this problem and concluded that the public interest would be best served by reducing the temptations, not by making a virtue out of them.

No self-respecting conservative believes that “activist” government is fundamentally different than what we have “normally” seen it to be whether it is presided over by big-government conservatives or big-government liberals. Activist government is necessarily intrusive (although Kristol would quibble about whether it is “overly” so), it is inevitably expensive and it is always subject to capture by Madisonian “factions” (our “special interests”). The beast is what we have always known it to be, the repository of monopolized legal force available to be deployed for purposes good or ill.

Homeland Incompetence

If activist government, as I have argued, is not something different from what we “normally” think it is, the question is this: Does it have a utility that we have previously neglected to consider?

There are certain programmatic objectives that conservatives embrace that could be realized by an activist federal government, there’s no arguing about that. There is, however, plenty of room for argument about what those objectives might be. They could be to scale back the reach of government as opposed to expanding the reach of government, for the truth is that a truly counter-revolutionary program to undo the excesses of eight decades of escalating government would require an activist federal administration determined to reclaim the territory lost to the Liberal Revolution. Of course, this is not the sort of activism that neoconservatives have in mind. They might be willing to cut here and tuck there, but they’re not in the mood “to turn the clock back” (as they would put it). The “conservative ends” that big-government conservatives have in mind are likely to require more government, not less.

If you accept as permanently lost the territory seized by liberals (a domestic Brezhnev Doctrine for neoconservatives) and restrict maneuvering to border clashes along the frontier — straighten the line here, close a gap there — then what you’re really about is trading land that has less tactical importance for land that has more. Establish a prescription drug benefit for Medicare in exchange for moving some old folks off government insurance and on to private insurance. Impose on the states a requirement that they periodically test their public-school students in exchange for throwing a few more billion dollars down the public-education rat hole. Increase the subsidies for ethanol in exchange for . . . (I don’t remember what trade-off justified that boondoggle). These sorts of trade-offs are the sorts of things politicians have been doing since time immemorial. They are tactical decisions, and it is a loser’s game when the only result is that the enemy has strengthened his hold on the strategically critical territory that you once occupied.

The establishment of the Department of Homeland Security is cited by Fred Barnes as a meritorious example of big-government conservatism. Actually, all President Bush did was rearrange the deck chairs on the Titanic. He took a large number of incompetent bureaus, agencies and services and consolidated them into a single incompetent department. Of course, given the nature of bureaucracies, the number of people employed by the department continues to grow as Congress decides that the best way to overcome incompetence is to hire more incompetents. This is big-government conservatism at work, and I don’t see what distinguishes it from big-government liberalism.

“Activist government” as understood by neoconservatives is a tool designed to move political power from the people and the states to the federal government without the inconvenience of obtaining the required authorization contemplated by Article V of the Constitution.

Irving Kristol hinted that activist government can play a positive role in reducing the decline in our democratic culture by “addressing” such problems as “the quality of education, the relations of church and state, the regulation of pornography, and the like.” Putting aside public education in which Congress could presumably offset some of the problems it has caused by requiring the introduction of competition into the field of public education as a price for continuing to receive federal monies (and amend the labor laws to bring the teachers unions to heel), the only “activism” that is likely to deal effectively with the other problems is the impeachment of five members of the United States Supreme Court, whose “activism” caused most of the problems to start with.

“Activist government” as understood by neoconservatives does not have a utility unrecognized by the pitch-fork crowd out in the country because by its design it can only be used to extend the reach of the federal government beyond the limits imposed by an honest reading of our Constitution. It is a tool designed to move political power from the people and the states to the federal government without the inconvenience of obtaining the required authorization contemplated by Article V of the Constitution. In the hands of a Kristol, father or son, this tool would be used in ways that most conservatives would find laudatory, but whatever gains might be achieved by a Kristol-administered activist government would be short-lived. In the fullness of time, the big-government liberals would be back in possession of the tool, and we would be off on another round of public-policy mayhem. The only safe course is to keep this tool locked away.

The ‘Library on a Hill’

I am struck by Irving Kristol’s argument that the growth of the state is “natural” and “inevitable.” This deterministic view of history is Marxist in tone if not in intent. Conservatives have traditionally believed that history is the result of choices made or not made by men, and while the consequences of decision or indecision may be inevitable (in the sense that once flung, the ball will inevitably fall to earth), there is nothing inevitable about the substance of the decision made or avoided. Were the New Deal and the Great Society inevitable in the sense that no other response to domestic disquietude was possible? What if Al Smith had won the Democratic presidential nomination in 1932? Would he have carried the New Deal into effect? If John Kennedy had lived to defeat Barry Goldwater in a closely contested election in which the Republicans gained seats in Congress (or, at least, held on to most of their seats), would the New Frontier have morphed into the Great Society?

Expansion of the state in the course of the 20th century was a matter of volition, and while historical circumstance stacked the deck in favor of expansion (two world wars, a world-wide depression, the Cold War), the extent of the expansion was the result of political decisions made by men within the context of a political culture influenced by the ideas of other men. Going forward, different circumstances, different men and different ideas can result in a reduction of the scope of government if you assume, as I do, that while our society is complex, our problems serious and our resources limited, government (or at least the federal government) is not the only instrumentality within the mind of man that is available for addressing the

legitimate needs of our citizenry. Leviathan is inevitable only if you continue to confuse government with society.

The neoconservatives have floated a lot of watered stock in their various ideological ventures. One issue which was delisted soon after opening on *the Weekly Standard* bourse was a conglomerate of failed political enterprises (Timothy Pickering Federalism, Henry Adams Peevishness, TR New Nationalism, Walter Lippman Public Philosophizing) rolled up into “National Greatness Conservatism.”

Struck by the grandeur of the original Library of Congress (now known as the Jefferson Building), the magazine’s David Brooks was inspired to dream great dreams about an America worthy of a structure which “embodies the optimism and brassy aspirations of Americans in the Gilded Age, their faith in the power of beauty to elevate, their confidence in America, their brash assertion that America was emerging as a world-historical force.” Dazed but not blinded by the vision of a “Library on a Hill,” he undertook to do justice to our library builders by appealing boldly to our latent patriotism, urging us to break free of our malaise, tank our cynicism, lift ourselves “above the petty concerns of *bourgeois* life,” put ourselves “in touch with aristocratic virtues and transcendent truth,” “take the grandeur of past civilizations, modernize it and democratize it” and thereby find unity in “a great national purpose.” *Quo vadis?* The road to “national greatness” leads to such “high aspirations” and “spirit of historical purpose” as Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points, the New Deal and John F. Kennedy’s New Frontier — efforts which “aim high” and “accomplish some grand national endeavor.”

I was tickled pink by Mr. Brooks’ discovery of the esoteric teaching of the Jefferson Building because for more than half a century I had been under the illusion that the venerable Indiana Sen. Daniel Voorhees (the “the Tall Sycamore of the Wabash”), who chaired the congressional library committee which oversaw the design and construction of that wonderful building, simply had it in mind to get the books out of boxes in the basement of the Capitol and onto shelves where he and his colleagues would have more convenient access to them. Such mundane thinking demonstrates once again how inclined we Hoosiers are to sell our kinsmen short.

I don’t have anything against greatness, although I do have some hesitation about the notion of investing “the nation” with heroic qualities, acting on the premise that the United States has a “special role as the vanguard of civilization,” or envisioning this piece of real estate we occupy together (at least until we are pushed out by the new arrivals) as a “New Jerusalem.” I am, however, downright skeptical of a public philosophy that embraces not merely a “preference” for, but a “belief” in, “effort, cultivation and mastery,” “cities and urbanity” and “capitals, monuments and grandeur.” I am skeptical because I don’t think most Americans most of the time during our history as a people embraced these beliefs, and they did not embrace them because they were incompatible with life as most Americans lived it south and west of the Potomac.

Disinclined as I am to invest in a conjured up conservatism of national greatness, I nonetheless concur with Brooks’ judgment that conservatives ought to be more concerned about the health of the public realm, that we ought to think more clearly about what “issues” are appropriately in the

public realm and what virtues need to be nurtured among a people whose commitment to self-government requires them to engage in discussion that must necessarily take place in the public realm. And Brooks won't get any quarrel from me over the assertion that we need to embrace our heroes, cherish our myths and claim as patrimony our history as a people engaged in a joint enterprise. America needs more civic awareness, it needs to replenish its civic capital and it needs to reestablish ground rules for civic engagement, but it needs to do these things with more modesty and less pretense than Brooks' concept of "national greatness conservatism" would allow.

The Schismatic Tendency

Among the baggage the neoconservatives toted with them on their forced march from the Manhattan camps of the Left was the schismatic tendency.

Movement conservatives in the 1960s were quick to pounce on what they perceived to be backsliding on matters of doctrine, but while they delighted in identifying the heresy, they were generally reluctant to excommunicate the heretic. Frank Meyer, an ex-Communist whose column in *National Review* was titled "Principles and Heresies," was more prone than he should have been to see himself as an ideological commissar, but under Bill Buckley's tutelage he mellowed over the years accepting, however reluctantly, the reality that within conservative, if not Stalinist, rank heresy will always be with us. While the presence of heretics may have made Frank uncomfortable, they served an indispensable purpose: they assured that there would be fodder for his column and reason for his nocturnal phone calls.

On the Left, ideological deviancy is a capital crime and the purge a time-honored response to dissent. It is impossible for any except the specialist to make sense or keep track of the splintering of the socialist camp over the course of its existence as an organized political movement. That's the bad news. The good news is that the schismatic tendency of the Left (aided by the disposition of a Stalin every few years to clean out the ideological stables with a revolver) did more to weaken the Left than any offensive launched by the forces of the Right.

Left liberals have been more civil in resolving disputes within their own ranks and quashing dissent from without. Their preferred method is silencing: Books are not reviewed, promotions are not offered, professional recognition is not afforded, grants are not made. The dissident is turned into a non-person. It seems that for many

on the Left the only religious practice they have adopted is that of shunning.

If their course of conduct is any indication, the neoconservatives failed to shake this nasty habit when they decamped. The most egregious example is their shameful treatment of M. E. Bradford, the brilliant Southern conservative who made the mistake of criticizing Abraham Lincoln. When word leaked that Bradford was being considered by the Reagan administration for appointment as chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the neoconservative hate machine went to work "borking" him. In the end, Bradford was passed over in favor of one of their own — William Bennett. By neoconservative lights justice was done: A manager of research assistants who held "correct" opinions was substituted for a scholar of extraordinary achievement who had the audacity to give voice to the conservative tradition of the American South.

In the lead up to the Iraq invasion, neoconservative hit squads targeted those conservatives who did not agree with George W. Bush that Saddam Hussein had to go. While the anti-war conservatives were, in my judgment, often intemperate in their opposition to the Iraq War and there was good reason to believe they were wrong (although events cast serious doubt on that judgment), it was simply outrageous to claim that their opposition constituted disloyalty to their country. David Frum's *ukase* in *National Review* purporting to excommunicate from the conservative movement Pat Buchanan, Bob Novak, the editors of *Chronicles* and other right-wing opponents of the war was mendacious, mean-spirited and presumptuous.

It is difficult for me to understand how the neoconservatives believe they are going to overcome the battlements of the Left if they demobilize the forces that have had those positions under siege for 60 years. Their contempt for the South and Southerners, their dismissal of Burkean traditionalists, their discomfort with the Religious Right and their refusal to do business with the heirs of Coolidge and Goldwater and the followers of Hayek pretty well exhausts the roster of the American Right as it existed before these folks elbowed their way into the game. The neoconservative strategy of either decommissioning traditional conservative forces or strong-arming them into the lower ranks of the neoconservative army on the march is unlikely to result in the victory of traditional conservative ideas. A rebalancing of conservative forces is the necessary work of this day, and we need leaders who understand how to go about this work and succeed at it.

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Conclusion

The neoconservative position most disruptive of unity on the Right is its foreign policy: Wilsonian idealism pursued with Sherman-like ruthlessness.

The neoconservatives have an enthusiasm for war which few men who have served in combat share. They have ambitious war aims, fervid war cries and limitless enthusiasm for sending youngsters into harm's way. They believe in active duty: "active" as in combat operations and "duty" as in extending democracy to every desert kingdom and rock outcrop which has thus far eluded the handiwork of John Locke. They have no use for diplomacy, containment, or looking the other way. The conservative traits of patience, discretion, prudence and "let 'em be" are, for them, signs of weakness.

A self-selected warrior class, neoconservatives are on a crusade to bestow the blessings of the Declaration of Independence on the heathen wherever they may be hiding. The defense of Israel at any cost and the extension of democracy at any price are, in their judgment, not merely consistent with American interests and American ideals, but are the indispensable means to a credible homeland defense in a world threatened by international terrorism. It is a policy prescription for disaster. That such a policy is the result of honest conviction by thoughtful men and women who love their country and not, as some critics imply, a product of secret Straussian hand signals or un-American dual-loyalty does not make it any less wrong-headed. Neoconservative adventurism is at odds with any traditional conservative idea of the appropriate role of the United States in the world, and the neoconservative commitment to perpetual democratic revolution on a global scale is a Jacobin heresy that must be opposed firmly, candidly and civilly.

Not content with two wars in which American lives have been sacrificed without strategic result beyond the ouster of al Qaeda and the Taliban from Afghanistan (which was accomplished within weeks of our invasion of that unforgiving graveyard of empires), Bill Kristol, Jennifer Rubin, John Podhoretz and the

other neoconservative war chiefs have let loose with full throated war cries for new military campaigns from Tripoli to Tehran. While they donned their war paint at the prospect of intervention in revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia and civil wars in Libya and Syria, they have beat their drums the hardest whooping it up for war with Iran.

Neoconservatives dismiss as outside the mainstream of post-World War II American foreign policy those who oppose their prescription of perpetual war for illusive peace. Although no other American president has ever embraced the Utopian Jacobinism advocated by George W. Bush in his second inaugural address, neoconservatives insist that anyone who doesn't share their enthusiasm for expanding democracy at the point of a bayonet is Charles Lindbergh in drag.

Neoconservatives would have us forget that there was a time within the memory of living men when conservatives did not see it as America's obligation to set things right in Timbuktu and other cultural capitals of the Third World. Minding our own business and respecting the right of other nations to tend to theirs was the predominant conservative view in the Taft-Vanderberger era before the Cold War convinced conservatives that it was necessary to engage the Soviets globally. The Cold War is over, and we need to rethink the continuation of Cold War policies.

The world is a dangerous place and the United States has legitimate interests that need to be defended from forward military positions. The choice is not between war-mongering and sticking our heads in the sand. Where there are demonstrable strategic interests of the United States at stake and where the proposed means are proportionate to the stated objective, we should exert our diplomatic influence, exercise our economic power and, if necessary, resort to such military force as may be necessary and appropriate. We should, however, avoid like the plague "nation building" and "democracy extension" that risk stumbling into wars without articulable objectives the realization of which will result in an unambiguous victory. We should stand by our friends and resist those who are or may be our enemies. We should be predictable and steady in our relations with foreign states.

Our principal role, however, should be that of exemplar. Ronald Reagan used to talk about the United States as "a shining city on a hill." He did not talk about the United States building a mythic city on a foreign hill at the expense of American lives and treasure. Conservatives should keep this distinction in mind. Q

So bitter was the politics of the time that they had to undergo the suspicion of being disloyal to their country because they did not vote the Republican ticket. My grandfather and father were notified by the Methodist preacher whose church they attended that he would have to strike their names off the roll if they continued to vote the Democratic ticket. My grandfather, as a fiery Virginian, announced that he was willing to take his chance on Hell but never on the Republican Party. My father compromised by joining my mother's church." —from the memoirs of Thomas Marshall on his life in northeast Indiana during the Civil War

WITHOUT HISTORY WE HAVE ONLY MISOLOGY

“We are raising children in America today who are by and large historically illiterate.” — David McCullough on *60 Minutes*

by ANDREA NEAL

It's little wonder that today's political discourse is polarized. The folks doing most of the arguing know so little about the past that they cannot justify their views with historical evidence or data. So they appeal to emotion, name calling, stereotypes and hyperbole.

A few recent examples: MSNBC's Melissa Harris-Perry described the word ObamaCare as a racist label “conceived of by a group of wealthy white men who needed a way to put themselves above and apart from a black man.” Did she offer proof to support her accusation? Of course not.

Closer to home, State Sen. Mike Delph used his Twitter account to debate HJR3, a proposed constitutional amendment to define marriage as between a man and woman. He was immediately attacked by fellow Tweepers as a hater, a bigot and “delusional.” If he'd been hoping for a healthy exchange of views about the history of marriage or the effects of family structure on child well-being, he was surely disappointed.

Name-calling isn't new. Look at accounts of the election of 1800, and you'll find nasty rhetoric from supporters of both John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. Andrew Jackson and John Quincy Adams weren't very nice in 1828 either. What's new is the complete lack of historic perspective on the part of the name-callers.

In a speech last year, the historian Gary W. Gallagher said, “Ignorance about the American past gets in the way of fruitful public debate about current issues of surpassing importance. This ignorance affects what passes for discussion of politics and other issues on the 24-hour news channels, on the Internet and in newspapers. A shrill tone often dominates in all of these settings, frequently set up by ‘analysis’ that is strikingly uninformed.”

The immigration debate is one such example, he said. On one side, opponents argue that illegal immigrants are an economic drain, on the other side that they are an economic contributor. One side says they



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Graphics: Lisa Barnum

take jobs no one else wants; the other side says that they take jobs away from U.S. citizens.

The issue is typically painted as a crisis — “the immigration crisis” — but history suggests it is not.

“Often lost is awareness that percentages of foreign-born residents are not remarkably high right now,” Gallagher said. During the 1890s, about 15 percent of the U.S. population was born outside the United

States. Today the percentage is 12.9. Throughout American history, there have been periods of heavy immigration (the early 1900s, 1910s and 1990s), but, over time, numbers rise and fall somewhat cyclically.

This is the kind of knowledge that makes for informed and scholarly debate, but few Americans can claim anything close to historic or civic literacy.

In 2011, when *Newsweek* magazine asked 1,000 adult citizens to take America's official citizenship test, 29 percent couldn't name the vice president, 73 percent couldn't explain the Cold War and 44 percent were unable to define the Bill of Rights.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress tests student knowledge in various subjects every few years. In 2010, only 20 percent of fourth-graders, 17 percent of eighth graders and 12 percent of high school seniors were considered grade-level proficient in American history.

Sad to say, both American history and civics education are losing ground in our nation's schools because neither subject is considered essential by policymakers. Math and language arts increasingly dominate curricula because those are the subjects on which schools are graded and teachers are evaluated. A few states have instituted statewide, high-stakes tests in civics and history, but Indiana is not one of them.

The historian David McCullough made headlines in 2012 when he said in a *60 Minutes* interview, “We are raising children in America today who are by and large historically illiterate.”

An informed public is the best antidote to polarized and uncivil discourse, yet, as McCullough, Gallagher and so many others have warned, we are moving in the wrong direction. Q

THE TYRANNY OF COMMUNITY; THE DECLINE OF RACISM

Where Do We Go From Here?

by LARRY MERINO

Community is an overused term nowadays. It seems as if everything you read is about this thing called “community.” The funny thing is that you only hear the word used in individualistic cultures like ours. People in collective cultures rarely use it. In my Roma or Gypsy community, for example, it is said to be easy to make friends and be community-minded. But they only use that approach for themselves. And the the collective, communal, togetherness only works until someone short-circuits the happy community by saying something like this:

I’d like to try something different; not that our way is bad, necessarily, I would just like to try something a little different. Maybe try it on my own . . .

That’s when everything changes. Collectivity becomes tyranny. Suddenly the group is suspicious of everything. He’s treated as a social deviant and suspected of destroying the community’s way of life.

And that, in fact, is exactly what he’s doing. The naive deviant, however, only wanted to try something different. He didn’t say it was better; he just wanted to try.

But what he didn’t realize is that he is tearing apart the social, political, economic and sacred components of the collective culture. If he persists, the community will finally have no choice but to ostracize him.

And who could blame them? For it is in the name of community that collective cultures ostracize their social deviants. What they learn too late, however, is that they have gotten rid of their collective future. Ironically, it was the liberty-loving deviant they got rid of, the one who possessed what the community needed.

The Irony of Community

In my college classes, every time I talk about the collective nature, the togetherness and communal approach to living as a Roma Gypsy, my students jump right in. They talk about how they wish they could have had my experience growing up. Their faces look wistful. I feel sad for them.

I try to explain that growing up in a collective culture isn’t that great, that it has a dark side. I relate to them the first of two ironies. It is that when I was young I longed for the kind of individualistic and liberated lifestyle of the gadje (non-Roma). I tell them that they — right now — are living the dream I wanted when I was young.



Graphics: Lisa Barnum

The students don’t buy it. This is a time in their lives when they feel cut off and disconnected from their immediate families and extended families. They have an aggravated desire for community.

Nor do they yet appreciate a second, greater irony: Community only happens when individuals are free to make their own unique contributions. And until they understand that, they will fail in their efforts to build their own strong, healthy community.

But my students continue to long for a more collective culture even as I at their age longed for a more individualistic one. And even though there are years between us, we want the same thing: to participate in a culture that is committed to something bigger than ourselves — one that honors individual liberty, i.e., freedom of personal property, body and soul.

We Americans have a leg up here, but first a note on an aspect of our nature that destroys both communities and individuals — racism.

The Decline of Racism

A recent article by Dan Hannan, author of the best-selling “How We Invented Freedom,” suggests that racism is in decline. I agree but wonder with what shall we replace it?

A friend, a behavioral cognitive specialist, says the only way to break a bad habit is to replace it with a healthy one. Indeed, he says that people who simply try to stop a bad habit usually return to it. We need to work on that in regard to racism.

In the past, the philosophies considered cures or alternatives to racism were postmodernism and multiculturalism. Neither made good on its promise. Multiculturalism couldn’t figure out who it wanted to be when it grew up; it suffers a perpetual identity crisis. And postmodernism couldn’t sail the high seas of real social issues because it had no anchor.

Both were too self-involved to face the problem of racism. What we need now is a way to not only understand where we are and where we need to go, but how we got to where we are. “Stage Development Theory” offers a perspective that is helpful.

Stage Development has been around since before the enlightenment and has a wide array of theorists. And while the theorists don’t agree on everything, they do agree that the stages of a society’s development cannot be skipped.

Most recently, Ken Wilber and some other philosophers of note have offered the concept of worldcentrism as the next stage for us. They believe that we have resolved through the

stages of egocentrism (my way or the highway) to ethnocentrism (my group's way or the highway) and are ready to move to worldcentrism (everybody matters, no highway needed).

Wilber tells us that resolution through each stage requires an experience of extreme trauma. And that, you may be surprised to know, is what gives me hope, a hope that I will now attempt to justify.

First of all, if racism is in decline, it means that many people from many different cultures around the world have faced up to at least one traumatic fact, i.e., that their way may not be the best after all. That is great news; it means we are moving to the next stage.

Dealing with human beings, though, is always dicey — especially if they are not from our group. We can't deal with them on our own terms, and we refuse to deal with them on their terms. We resort, instead, to methods by which we are able to relate to one another.

I call these methods "mediating handles." Here is an example: There is a pejorative that all cultures have used in all times for "strangers," "foreigners" or just plain "others." It is "smelly people," a mediating handle noted by Dr. Tim Shutt elsewhere in this journal.

If an irrational fear of "smelly people" is in decline, we can be happy about it, and we should be happy about it. As a society we picked up a most dangerous issue, racism, and addressed it successfully.

But again, with what shall we replace it? Will we rest on this achievement, or will we continue to push through the painful trauma of growth that we humans always try so hard to avoid? Will we move through to the next stage of becoming a self-reflective human race?

This is not a philosophical question. It is an ethical one.

Excellence or Kindness? Or Both?

Another rationale for hope requires us to shift to another of Dr. Shutt's points — that the drive for excellence we inherited from the Greeks and Romans and that attribute of loving kindness or mercy we got from the Israelites have been until now mutually exclusive.

I think he's right. But what if our generation in its next stage tries something new, tries to be excellent and loving? Yes, there is a creative tension between the two: Do we search for excellence or loving kindness? Which is better?

My answer is that it depends on the situation — and precisely to the point here, it depends on situations for which we can train our habits in advance in order to make the appropriate ethical choice.

If I want someone to sell my widgets, she had better be excellent. If I want her to be my

community's social worker, she had better be loving. If I want her to teach my children or cure my disease, she might have to be both.

America has driven for excellence from the beginning; excellence is a big part of its history and identity. But lately it has wanted to be loving and kind as well. Can it do both?

Not unless we admit there is a creative tension, the risk of pain that Stage Development theorists tell us is the price of growth.

Excellence, as the saying goes, brings out the best in products but the worst in men. It tends to make us hard. And conversely, if we abandon excellence to become a more relaxed culture — which I am generally for — we may grow sappy.

Here we have a great advantage. We are one of the few societies, perhaps the only successful one, that encourages self-examination. It can help to partially negate the ethnocentrism that all cultures suffer, the belief that one's own life-ways and customs are best.

We believe in cultural equality. But as we examine ourselves and our ethnocentrisms, we may recognize that some cultures are more equal than others.

Cultural Truth, Individual Liberty

Our Roma mother taught us about life and our place in it through the lens of her world view. Our mother didn't lie to us, she taught the truth — as she knew it. Particularly, she told us that because the Gypsies stole a nail from the Crucifixion, our thefts would be forgiven. And I wanted that to be true. But it wasn't.

Human beings in every culture and in every time have a strong and natural desire to be free as individuals, free of cultural truths that aren't true. Individual liberty of property, body and soul transcends collectivism, individualism or any otherism you can find. It trumps everything.

Have you ever noticed that it is the American poets and writers who always seem

Will we continue to push through the painful trauma of growth that we humans always try so hard to avoid? Will we move through to the next stage of becoming a self-reflective human race? This is not a philosophical question. It is an ethical one.



LARRY MERINO, Ph. D., a cultural anthropologist, grew up in California in a traditional Gypsy family. Dropping school after the seventh grade, Merino embarked on the traditional Gypsy life of drinking, gambling, fortune-telling and scamming. At 22, he married Linda in a prearranged marriage where their first date was their wedding night. At age 30, Merino decided to pursue a career in music and academia, a decision that led to his being ostracized from his Gypsy community. Without ever attending high school, Merino earned a doctorate in cultural anthropology. He is an adjunct professor at Ivy Tech State College in Northeast Indiana. He and Linda continue to travel the U.S. and Europe encouraging Gypsies to preserve their traditions and family values but to abandon the attitudes and practices that keep them in the bondage of poverty and marginalized lives. His latest book, *No Word for Love: Gypsy Sense, Gypsy Nonsense*, will be released later this year.

COVER ESSAY

“The feeling of personal freedom is lacking (in the) Russian authors . . . they neither have the independence nor manliness to write as they like, and therefore, there is no creativeness.”

—ANTON CHEKHOV

to be the ones who promote this kind of liberty? For they live in a community that allows them to experience it. They know its power. They understand what makes me hopeful.

Carol Bly, the American political activist and short-story writer, said, “You must want the new truth more than you wish things had stayed the way you thought they were.”

And this, too, is our great advantage: If anyone looks through our lens of individual liberty, they cannot pretend they didn’t see what they just saw. They can never go back to the old vision.

That may be why some in other cultures dare not peek at what we hold so precious here. For as the 20th-century American poet E.E. Cummings said, no one else can give you an identity, no one else can define you, no one can be alive for you.

That is the essence of individual responsibility and freedom. It is always inside of you, and always your responsibility. My own experience has taught me that once you take a peek through the lens of individual liberty, you can never go back.

Conclusion

In 1996, I lived and taught for some months in Slovakia. It was shortly after the Velvet Revolution threw out the Communists. One thing struck me during that time: The Slovaks were not sitting in rooms having discussions about how best to communicate and respect the customs of Americans or any other group.

That was not because they were a particularly hard-hearted people. They did all they could to make my family feel welcome. But learning about other cultures for the purpose of interacting with them and respecting the cultural life-ways of others is not something most Slovaks do.

That may be distinctive to Americans. We can be sincerely curious about others, about ourselves. Our culture in that regard may be more equal. We can for that reason make that transition to new, healthy habits; we can survive the traumatic realization that ethnocentrism doesn’t fit us anymore.

If we can find the courage to take the lead, to go to the next stage, to build that world community, we would have the field to ourselves.

Collectivists have said for ages that they know best when it comes to building community. They like to speak about the joys and warmth of collectivism.

It indeed is warm and it indeed is joyful. I grew up in a collectivist Roma tribe that came to America from Serbia about a hundred years ago and settled in San Francisco. And there is a togetherness about it that I’ve not known elsewhere.

But again, collective cultures force people to give up individual liberties. That is what all collective cultures, finally, to remain collective, must do. They must quash any idea that might promote individual freedom.

The best community-builders, however, have a powerful desire for liberty. Healthy, strong communities are filled with people who tenaciously guard their individual freedoms for themselves and everyone else.

I emphasize it because this is what makes me most hopeful of all. For in the community in which I currently live and move and have my being, the unique and special contributions of everyone are valued.

And yet, there is always the sense that we are all here for something bigger than us, something that will outlast us.

I try to prepare my students to build on that sense, to aspire to be members of a healthy, strong community of their own. They are already better equipped than they know. Q

The Late, Great American WASP

Doing the right thing, especially in the face of temptations to do otherwise, was the WASP (White, Anglo-Saxon Protestant) test par excellence. Most of our meritocrats, by contrast, seem to be in business for themselves. Trust, honor, character: The elements that have departed U.S. public life with the departure from prominence of WASP culture have not been taken up by the meritocrats. Many meritocrats who enter politics, when retired by the electorate from public life, proceed to careers in lobbying or other special-interest advocacy. University presidents no longer speak to the great issues in education but instead devote themselves to fundraising and public relations, and look to move on to the next, more prestigious university presidency. . . . Thus far in their history, meritocrats, those earnest good students, appear to be about little more than getting on, getting ahead and (above all) getting their own. The WASP leadership, for all that may be said in criticism of it, was better than that. The WASPs’ day is done. Such leadership as it provided isn’t likely to be revived. Recalling it at its best is a reminder that the meritocracy that has followed it marks something less than clear progress. Rather the reverse. — *Joseph Epstein, the Wall Street Journal, Dec. 20, 2013*

BEWARE THOSE WHO CRAVE POWER

They Have Their Reasons

by JOHN GASKI

Maybe you've noticed it. In recent years there have been some notorious, though thankfully rare, cases of 911 emergency operators whose irresponsible, dilatory behavior in response to desperate calls has directly led to tragic and unnecessary fatalities. There was a case of this type in my neighboring LaPorte County a few years ago that received national attention.

But there has been something else noteworthy about these instances, discernible when the call recordings are publicly aired: While dragging their feet in an exasperating way as the poor victim callers are pleading for help, the operators clearly seem to relish the moment, don't they? Why?

That is it exactly. What they are savoring is the power — the life and death power they suddenly wield. That kind of power is such a novel experience for those particular 911 personnel that they apparently revel in it and are intoxicated by it.

A readily hypothesized reason for this unwholesome tendency is straightforward: The average person has little real power in his or her life, little capability to influence one's social surroundings. When such an occasion arises, it is perceived as something of rare and great value, a special opportunity to be seized. Again, this does not afflict all 911 operators, but we have witnessed a segment succumb to it.

One detail the less-sophisticated person sometimes does not realize is that power need not be exercised or applied. Unfortunately, those few 911 operators, given truly mortal power for probably the first time in their experience, cannot resist using and abusing it. In some cases it becomes socio-pathological in volitionally, if subconsciously, allowing unwitting callers to die. The perpetrators likely could never have imagined doing something so callous if not given far more power than they could handle. Power is dangerous.

An example of how power corrupts, is it not? Google some of those pathetic 911 calls, now armed with this understanding, and observe the process. The operators in selected cases were virtually "getting off" on their unfamiliar power.

To confirm the same phenomenon in a less-mortal realm, consider all those baseball umpires with idiosyncratic, personalized strike zones, much at variance with the rules of the game. Do you suppose this type of nullification behavior might be an expression of power, a "power trip" in the vernacular — and about the only chance the poor blue-coated guys have



Graphics: Lisa Barnum

to exercise real power? They just can't help perverting it.

'Absolute Kathleen'

Now, fast-forward to the recent case of the 10-year-old girl in need of the lung transplant, and the cruel, inhumane reaction displayed by our so-called Health and Human Services (HHS) secretary, Kathleen Sebelius. As mentioned, the

unsophisticated may find it hard to resist the lure of power and its exercise, because of its novelty, but sometimes the upscale types, such as high government officials, lose their heads through power intoxication as well. Sebelius' blindness to normal human compassion in favor of cherished bureaucratic rigidity was a stark manifestation of how "absolute power corrupts absolutely." (Yes, Lord Acton explicitly warned us about Kathleen Sebelius.) In this case, the absolute was, and is, no less than power over the life and death of others.

As in the cases of the 911 operators whose sadistic gratification from the cruelty they were inflicting shone dramatically through the audiotapes, did you get the same impression that our Nurse Ratchet-clone HHS secretary could barely suppress her self-satisfaction during the little girl's lung queue episode? Our efforts to measure Sebelius' inner thoughts via remote observation are hardly the most reliable approach, but the Nurse Sebelius sentiments in this instance were not exactly so "inner." "Some live, some die," she declaimed so arrogantly. And regardless of the true motivations, the Sebelius behavior was objectively monstrous — as a federal judge discerned and corrected — irrespective of the final medical outcome.



JOHN F. GASKI, Ph.D., associate professor of business at Notre Dame, is a long-time registered Democrat and also a long-time registered Republican — intermittently, not sequentially, which should dispel the reflexive labeling of partisanship. His primary research field is the study of social and political power and conflict. Recent books include *Frugal Cool* (Corby 2009) and *The Language of Branding* (Nova Science 2011).

Today's Democrats are not your father's Democratic Party. They are remnants of the rabid left-wing radicals of the 1960s and 1970s, grown older if not grown up.

At the least, if you did not already believe that the administration of Barack Obama is really capable of death panels, you now should know for certain.

Repubs and Dems: The Difference

On the subject of measuring unobservable motivations, overt behavior can indeed serve as an indirect but fair indicant. One's totality of conduct can reveal psychological traits that would otherwise remain opaque to standard measurement methods of social science. Raising the ante by an order of magnitude, the totality of behavior of the Obama government and its political apparatus becomes germane at this point.

Have you ever noticed that there tend to be basic attitudinal differences between liberal Democrats and conservative Republicans? What a surprise, right? It is not just a caricature that liberals favor big government and conservatives are on the side of small government, for instance. Those are the two camps' respective ideologies by definition, by self-declared choice and by empirical observation. Liberal Democrats, far more than Republicans, support not only larger government expenditures (on all but national defense, because of a different attitude toward risk), but greater governmental control over the economy, via regulation, and over citizens' lives (in most ways) — as demonstrated by Barack Obama's recent serial assaults against the First Amendment. Research in behavioral science does confirm basic personality differences between liberals (Dems) and conservatives (Repubs), in general. One example: Conservative Republicans give much more to charity than liberal Democrats do (revealing more of the hypocrisy characteristic on the part of lib Dems). Conservatives are also more patriotic. Really, the scientific evidence supports that.

Because liberals are the side of big government, they are also the group for whom politics is everything. Therefore, political power is also paramount for them. It is their lifeblood and oxygen. Perhaps this helps explain why Democrats are so much better at politics than Republicans are. As it is something more important to them in the full spectrum of life, Democrats work at politics more and play at it harder. It is bloodsport for them. So we see how perfectly natural it is that the faction in U.S. polity known as liberal Democrats would also be the ones who most covet the acquisition and exercise of political power.

Moreover, today's Democrats are not your father's Democratic Party. Who are they? They are remnants of the rabid left-wing radicals of

the 1960s and 1970s, grown older if not grown up. And who were they then? Fellow travelers of the international leftist movement they were, and that means socialists and Marxists. They rooted for the North during the Vietnam War, and more recently did everything they could to undermine the Iraq War. (Harry Reid: "This war is lost.") Sorry to break the news to anyone.

Yes, liberal Democrats are, and always have been, sympathetic to the most ruthless political force the world has ever known, the far-left amalgam of dictators who impose and exert the total power of autocratic or totalitarian states. (To verify the "most" assertion, compare the Stalin–Mao–Pol Pot body count with Hitler's.) Fortunately for our time, nearly all of those regimes have been flushed from the world scene since the collapse of international socialism/communism — unfortunately, though, just as a new one is rising in the United States.

You don't believe? Reflect on the revelations about the Obama administration's full-court press against the basic institutions of individual liberty. Then ponder ObamaCare. When the (Democrat) government gains genuine life-and-death power over all citizens, where are we? What is left of individual freedom in the face of that leverage? Now it is apparent why this form of socialized medicine has been the No. 1 priority of the power-mad radical left—which now includes the president of the United States, the whole executive branch and a large fraction of the other two branches of our country's government.

The death panels are real. Not the end-of-life counseling sessions of Sarah Palin's concern, but the bureaucrats empowered to bestow or withhold life-saving treatment. (See the HHS secretary's latitude under Section 3403 of the Affordable Care Act.) Do you think an Obama-appointed panel might consider party affiliation in that decision? Did you think an Obama IRS would consider party affiliation in targeting Americans for persecution?

Proto-Stalinism

So the Obama Democrats are like the 911 operators craving power because they've never had any? No, that motive may apply to low-end, alienated rank-and-file Democrat voters and operatives who strive for political empowerment, but their national leaders must have a very different agenda and a different basis for power obsession. It all begins with an elliptical syllogism:

Premise 1. Nearly every ultra-leftist ruler in world history has become an authoritarian or totalitarian despot. (What of half-socialist

Western Europe? Give them time. When President Obama was elected, Europe was further along on the erosion-of-freedom garden path than was the U.S. Now we've raced ahead.)

Premise 2. Barack Obama, by far the most left-wing president in American history, easily qualifies as an ultra-leftist. (FDR further left? Hardly; at least FDR tried to win the wars he was fighting. Roosevelt also did not try to disarm the U.S. versus Germany and Japan, as Obama does versus Russia and China.) And Obama leads a throng of the true-believer like-minded.

Q.E.D? Get it? Even now, we see President Obama operating as dictator through unconstitutional executive orders. Almost all of organized human life has been lived under brutal tyranny. There have been only a few exceptions in all of history, notably the last couple of centuries in much of the West. It simply has taken slightly over two centuries for that type of ruling group, the autocratic dictatorship cadre, to take control in the United States.

So there is nothing extreme about believing that some political factions lust for total tyrannical power and are scheming to get it. This behavior is not only natural among certain human types, but it is nearly universal throughout world history among government officials and political actors. (Give credit to Western conservatives for eschewing it.) We in the U.S. seem to be witnessing this effort in progress. Based on the totality of the Obama administration's conduct, we appear to be experiencing the long-dreaded, and long-promised, takeover of the United States.

Evidence or proof for that summary assertion? Barack Obama, his party, and his government are visibly doing all they can to amass unprecedented political and social power, even through non-traditional means. Observe the proto-Stalinist litany: organized political intimidation, contempt for the rule of law, intolerance of opposition to the point of demonizing and criminalizing those who disagree, domestic spying, use of government institutions and powers (*e.g.*, the IRS) for partisan reasons including retribution against the innocent, and structural manipulation to establish a permanent, one-party state, *i.e.*, not only chronic, massive election fraud as a way of life but virtual gerrymandering of the U.S. border to create eleven million (or is it 30 million?) new Democrat voters whose votes are already counted, Chicago-style. And do not think of the IRS bullies and stonewallers as public servants. Think of them as covert Obama infiltrators insinuated into a formerly honorable government function.

Mr. Obama has not seized the "means of production" through government ownership;

he has done so more efficiently through the control born of force and fear. The (nominal) leaders of every American business and industry now know that the Obama government will not hesitate to take over or destroy any who stand in the way. See: appropriation of auto manufacturing from the rightful owners, which was a big nail in the coffin of the rule of U.S. contract law; practical nationalization of the medical services industry, along with student and mortgage loans, to increase personal and financial dependency on government; dictatorship via regulation over banking, health insurance and other industries; and outright war on coal and petroleum (not to mention religion). This form of macroeconomic organization has a name, doesn't it? Can we now see the forest through the trees?

This delineates the present and previews our future. Why not? Power tends to corrupt people at all levels, and total power is what our new ruling party has always sought above all, demonstrably so. They now happen to be aggregating more of it than ever before seen in this country, and it is only the beginning, literally. This is the way things always go in a one-party nation under a leftist, outlaw regime.

Sinclair Lewis and "It Can't Happen Here"? Tom Clancy and "Clear and Present Danger"? Barry McGuire and "Eve of Destruction"? Case closed. Pleasant dreams, comrades. Q

There is nothing extreme about believing that some political factions lust for total tyrannical power and are scheming to get it. This behavior is not only natural among certain human types, but it is nearly universal throughout world history among government officials and political actors.

Corruption: The Default State

When we ask why corruption is bad we miss the point. Corruption is the normal condition of human society. Ever since the first farms, the first villages, people have found ways to loot their neighbors. At first, marauding bands rustled livestock and pillaged crops, but it didn't take long for such theft to be systematized through protection rackets, tithes, tolls and taxes. Social organization, from the beginning, was based around the use of force to seize assets — what the 19th-century French theorist Frédéric Bastiat called 'legal plunder.' Oligarchy and oppression, caste and status, slavery and serfdom: These were the lot of our species for thousands of years. A medieval European monarchy, in political terms, would closely have resembled a modern African kleptocracy. Although, as the centuries passed, laws were developed, they served to reinforce rather than to constrain the elites. Inca priest-kings, Soviet apparatchiks, Roman patricians, Saudi princelings: all enjoyed, in practical terms, arbitrary power. Only in one place was the pattern broken. The Anglosphere miracle, which gave birth to modern capitalism, can be summed up in one phrase: It elevated production over predation. We live in an exceptional society — one that has evolved mechanisms to hold its rulers to account; where the state is the servant of the citizen; and where the law is more than an expression of the government's wishes. . . . Their maintenance depends on a number of factors: a functioning democracy, which must in turn rest on a conscious community of identity; an independent magistracy; secure property rights; uncensored media. — Dan Hannan writing in the *London Telegraph*, Feb. 4, 2014

ENTER THE MILLENNIALS

An End to Self-Destructive Political Division?

by STEPHEN M. KING
and CHARLES RICHERT

The American people are not enthralled with the political division rampant in politics today. According to Gallup, only 9 percent of Americans approve of the job that Congress is doing — the lowest figure in the 39 years that Gallup has asked the question. It is not that Americans are unhappy with the way Congress is doing its job; they simply do not trust them. In a 2013 survey, Gallup found that only 10 percent of the American public has confidence in Congress; it is ranked 16th out of 16 institutions surveyed. The military is first once again. Even Barack Obama is experiencing on average much lower job approval and job satisfaction numbers than at any time in his two terms in office.

The Heart of Disapproval

Political division, or governmental gridlock, is not a new phenomenon in American politics, but it has reached critical levels in the last two presidential election cycles. The 2012 presidential race was one of the most confrontational in U.S. history; it serves as a good example of the gridlock and partisan bickering that has ensnared the nation. We contend that the near lethal political division that taints the American political culture is a result of several factors. They include: deteriorating political parties; the loss of professionalism in the media, which results in partisan and ideologically biased reporting; and an increased saturation of social media and other mediums of non-traditional communication technology. All of these are contributing to a hyper-pluralistic demand on government, making it nearly impossible for government officials to address the pressing issues of the day appropriately and adequately, much less formulate well-thought out and evenly constructed policy proposals.

A pall of doubt, discontent and division hangs over the nation, emanating in large part from the political warfare engaged in by strictly partisan political parties. Like any battle, the outcome is bloody and the casualties mount. In this case, the dead and dying constitute the heart and soul of the American republic: political trust and confidence in political institutions and officials. The fallout, such as the acerbic nature of political language revolving around numerous issues, including Obamacare and its botched roll-out in October 2013 and the uncivil daggers thrown back and forth between the Tea Party and everyone else, including establishment Republicans, leads us to speculate that traditional political compromise may



Graphics: Lisa Barnum

never be achieved except in the dire cases of catastrophic events.

Politicians today, instead of simply wanting to defeat political opponents, whether incumbent or challenger, are trying to humiliate and destroy them. Witness the bruising battle in the Texas governor's race between Gregg Abbot, Republican, and Wendy Davis, Democrat. Or witness the war drums sounding in Kentucky's senate race between the Republican incumbent, Mitch McConnell, and a previously unknown Democratic challenger, Alison Lundergan Grimes. It seems that elected officials don't seek to fight the good legislative fight; they are interested in manipulating the system to serve their own political and, perhaps, personal goals. This is, of course, not new; this is politics. What is missing is a strong moderate, perhaps even compromising, voice both on the Left and Right. Gone from the Republican ranks are Howard Baker, Alan Simpson, Bob Dole and Richard Lugar. Absent, too, from the Democratic center are Mark Hatfield, Tip O'Neill and Evan Bayh. Recent 2012 Pew polling data suggests that even as the moderate voice wanes on the right, the left is not only becoming more liberal but liberal self-identification has edged to its highest levels in decades. Therefore, we contend that it is imperative, for the sake of the survival of U.S. republicanism, that politically divisive government and politics be taken seriously.

The Erosion of Institutional Faith

What does a highly divisive and thus disunited government system mean? First, an extremely polarized government leads to the erosion of institutional faith. The perception is that politicians of all ilk continue to manipulate and exploit the weaknesses of the system for their own gain. Examples abound, including the Senate Republicans perceived abuse of the filibuster; the Tea Party's purported stranglehold over moderate House Republicans, particularly an issue in the forced government shutdown in October 2013; or Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and his sarcastic questioning of the veracity of dozens of American horror stories regarding Obamacare. These practices and policies overload an already weakened system; the institutions are wobbling under the weight of extreme partisan practice.

Even during the frequent and contentious debates during the Constitutional Convention in 1787, it was the moderate

voices of James Madison, George Washington, Robert Morris and Rufus King, among others, that kept the proceedings from derailing. Even Alexander Hamilton, the staunchly active proponent of a strong chief executive, laid aside his belief in a “benevolent monarch” in favor of defending the new Constitution as one of three to write *The Federalist Papers*. Attention to construction of institutional and procedural mechanisms, such as checks and balances, separation of powers and the other great compromises, distinguishes the intent of the Founders to protect common law and create a document that would lay the foundation for U.S. political governance for centuries to come. Today, such a spirit of cooperation and compromise is nearly non-existent.

The consequences of divided government are tangible. The more political polarization, including political stunts such as the constant Senate bickering and cajoling over the filibuster and its reactive “nuclear option,” plus the use of parliamentary practices aimed solely at political emaciation rather than pursuit of the public interest, the more unstable is not only the political system but the economic and financial systems as well. With over 26 presidential interferences with the implementation of Obamacare, Barack Obama has effectively end-run the Congress and the Constitution. The continued uncertainty causes angst among investors and fear among small- to moderate-sized business owners. An anemic 2.5 percent increase in Gross Domestic Product over the last several months renders a healthy economy a distant dream.

If members of Congress and the president are unable to work together to make these tough economic and policy decisions, whether on the Keystone pipeline, the national debt, immigration reform, climate change, job growth and a host of other issues, then what does America’s political future hold? These and other issues need to be addressed now in order to prevent economic and political implosion for future generations.

The Millennials’ Prospects

What will happen if the leaders of today are unable to make the important decisions for tomorrow? Who will make these decisions? Enter the Millennials. This group of 80 million Americans, ages 18-30, has been routinely criticized as spoiled, lazy, uninterested in serving anyone but themselves and filled with self-aggrandizement and hubris. We argue that these characterizations are not entirely true. According to recent polling data and the

authors own interactions, Millennials may hold the solutions for American politics.

Are Millennials up to the challenge? In his book, *Our Divided Political Heart*, E.J. Dionne Jr. suggests that they are. Dionne describes a Millennial generation ready to embrace the future problems of the nation, saying that Millennials are appreciative of the “balances, promises and demands” placed upon them. Furthermore, Millennials are “passionately individualistic and more passionately communitarian” than recent generations. Millennials seem to embrace community service. In fact, Millennials out-serve Baby Boomers in this regard 43 percent to 35 percent, according to a 2009 poll by the National Conference of Citizenship. Nearly one-third of Millennials have served in some community capacity in the last year.

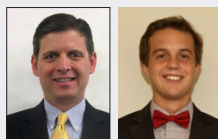
Millennials view themselves as “socially tolerant,” a trait that Dionne compares to the Greatest Generation. Millennials are less tied to ideological labels and are more willing to embrace ideas independent of political or ideological camp. And despite a relative ignorance of civics and a general disdain for government, Millennials believe that government can be more efficient and better serve a constituent community.

Additional polling data is revealing here. According to a 2013 Harvard poll, “Survey of Young Americans’ Attitudes Toward Politics and Public Service,” nearly half of Millennials agreed that politics has become “too partisan”; one-third agreed that political involvement “rarely has any tangible results,” and, perhaps most telling, 47 percent agree that “politics today are no longer able to meet the challenges the country is facing today.”

These attitudes toward the failures of government and politics, combined with a personality and behavioral disposition that is highly active, entrepreneurial, innovative and energetic, suggest that Millennials will provide fertile soil for civic leadership — one with a committed purpose of reinventing U.S. politics.

Here, though, lies a paradox: Millennials want to take their energy and purpose to blaze trails elsewhere. According to Ron Fournier, writing for *The Atlantic*, Millennials are more interested in pursuing change through non-

Nearly half of Millennials agreed that politics has become “too partisan”; one-third agreed that political involvement “rarely has any tangible results,” and, perhaps most telling, 47 percent agree that “politics today are no longer able to meet the challenges the country is facing today.”



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COVER ESSAY

Fifty-one percent of Millennials believe that when government tries to fix something or run a program, it is wasteful and inefficient. This is up from 31 percent in 2003 and 42 percent in 2009.

profit, faith-based initiatives and the private sector. Up to now, Millennials have avoided government and politics. According to the 2011 National Association for Colleges and Employers Student Survey in 2008, only 8.4 percent of students had plans to work for local, state or federal governments after graduation. This number reached 10.2 percent in 2009 but now only 6 percent of students plan on working for government after graduation with only 2.3 percent planning to serve at the federal level. This is alarming given that federal government retirements have been on the upswing since 2009. What is both interesting and concerning is that the current problem of hyper-polarized government is the very thing pushing the Millennials away. Continued erosion of public trust in government is having a direct and negative impact upon a generation's approach to serving in government. Turning a generation away from government and political service is not the answer to the problem.

We suggest certain changes. First, government needs to provide a more robust and effective recruiting program on college campuses. Emphasizing service in a variety of capacities at all three levels could appeal to this generation. Money is not the prime motivator for Millennials. Fournier reports that Millennials are less interested in higher incomes than a sense of "belonging and importance."

Second, government agencies could create a more welcoming environment, including flexible and enhanced work space and time schedules, while providing greater opportunities for Millennials to use high-technology as a direct part of their job description.

Yes, Millennials are less civically educated and engaged as compared with previous generations; few desire to serve in government positions. However, we contend that future government reorganization and reinvention efforts must focus less on work functions and outputs, and more on socially-defined aspects, such as community-driven and public-interest

focused initiatives. Millennials will seek change, even when others see no need for change. Granted, Millennials must seek to become

better civically informed and engaged, but so must a world be prepared to receive the change they bring.

There are many examples of Millennials who are politically active.

In Indiana, Sen. Jim

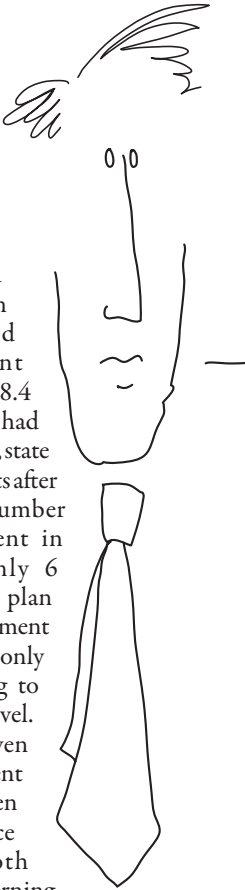
Banks, a speaker at this year's Conservative Political Action Conference, is 35. State Rep. David Ober, at 25, is the youngest Hoosier lawmaker. Millennial legislators also can be found in Texas, where two 30-year-olds, Democrat Mary Gonzalez and Republican Jonathan Strickland, took office in 2013. In Congress, 29-year-old Rep. Patrick Murphy, a Democrat from Florida, and 39-year-old Senator Chris Murphy, a Democrat from Connecticut, have taken their seats.

A New Generation of Policy

It is one thing to be elected to office; it is something else to influence public policy. What would a millennial-generated and motivated public policy agenda look like?

Predicting policy implications of a Congress of Millennials is difficult, but what the generation thinks about government provides hints as to whether or not they will govern in a less-divisive way and address long-term issues. Michelle Diggles, senior policy advisor for Third Way, reports that 51 percent of Millennials believe that when government tries to fix something or run a program, it is wasteful and inefficient. This is up from 31 percent in 2003 and 42 percent in 2009. It is encouraging how unified Millennials are on perennial issues such as Social Security, Medicare, trade and affirmative action. For instance: 86 percent of Millennials support private Social Security accounts, 74 percent want to change Medicare so people can buy private insurance, 63 percent believe that trade is a good thing, and only 38 percent support affirmative action. In terms of the Affordable Care Act, 44 percent of Millennials believe that the law will make a situation worse and fully half believe that costs will increase as opposed to only 10 percent who believe costs will decrease.

We believe that these numbers portend an improved political culture. With 45 percent



Honor, justice, and humanity, forbid us tamely to surrender that freedom which we received from our gallant ancestors, and which our innocent posterity have a right to receive from us.

(Jefferson)

of Millennials identifying themselves as independent, the future partisan divide may take a turn for the middle. With a generation that is more community oriented, decisions might be made in a more communal rather than a linear, hierarchical or autocratic way.

Indeed, some contend that Millennials are on the threshold of changing America. Two sociologists, Morley Winograd and Michael Hais, compare young Americans today to other great “civic generations” that have endured troubling economic, political and social times throughout American history and went on to change society, usually for the better. The Greatest Generation was victorious during World War II, the Baby Boomers survived Vietnam and Watergate, and the Millennials witnessed 9-11, two Middle Eastern wars and the recession of 2008.

Most immediately, Millennials can be encouraged to step into civic roles. With so many different opportunities to make change, government no longer has a monopoly on public service. Millennials will participate in non-governmental organizations, non-profits, faith-based initiatives and other avenues that avoid the bureaucratic red tape they believe prevents them from affecting needed change.

Competition with all of these outlets for community service may force government to reinvent itself, especially if it wishes to attract talent and energy.

Gridlocked congresses, obtuse and obdurate politicians, and an autocratic-leaning executive might soon see that his is not the center of the political universe. For if hyper-partisanship continues, the institutions and governance structures that the Founders instituted will wither and erode and eventually become obsolete. Millennials do not — or at least they should not — want to revolutionize government as much as reform society.

Millennials can be expected to reach out to serve, commune and organize. Nationally, a community-oriented generation, with the passion and drive to succeed individually, can provide a fresh take on “politics as usual” in Washington. A generation committed to something larger than itself has the opportunity to reform the political and policy environment.

The mindset of this generation could be a match for its times. For not only can Millennials make tough decisions, they can make them in a united way with long-term interests in mind. The future, therefore, is as bright as it is challenging.

A generation committed to something larger than itself has the opportunity to reform the political and policy environment.

The War on the Young

What do young Americans want? Something different from what they’ve been getting from the president they voted for by such large margins. Evidence comes in from various polls. Voters under 30, the millennial generation, produced numbers for Barack Obama 13 percentage points above the national average in 2008 and 9 points above in 2012. But in recent polls, Obama approval among those under 30 has been higher than the national average by only 1 percentage point (Quinnipiac), 2 points (ABC/Washington Post) and 3 points (YouGov/Economist). Those differences are statistically significant. And that’s politically significant, since a higher percentage of millennials than of the general population are Hispanic or black. The reasons for Millennials’ decreased approval of Obama become clear from a Harvard Institute of Politics poll of 18- to 29-year-olds conducted in November. That poll shows Obama’s job approval dipping to 41 percent, down from 52 percent in April 2013 and the lowest rating in any HIOP survey. One reason for the decline is Obamacare. Only 38 percent approved of Obamacare (39 percent approved of “the Affordable Care Act”). Only 29 percent of those who were uninsured said they would definitely or probably enroll in the health insurance exchanges. Those results were registered five to nine weeks after the Oct. 1 healthcare.gov rollout. Tech-savvy millennials must have been astonished that government produced a website that didn’t work. They also perceived, accurately, that Obamacare health insurance would cost them a lot. The law passed by Democrats elected in large part with millennial votes was designed to have people under 30 subsidize the insurance premiums of those older, less healthy people over 50. The old tend to have significant net worth, and the young — with credit card and student loan debt — tend to owe more than they own. Evidently, the Obama Democrats think it’s progressive for the young to subsidize the working-age old. That, after all, is the essence of Social Security, whose benefits some left-wing Democrats want to increase. But millennials, whose penchant for volunteering is admirably high, are not being simply selfish. The Harvard survey also finds that they tend to believe, by a 44- to 17-percent margin, that the quality of their healthcare will get worse under Obamacare. That’s speculation, of course. But it suggests a healthy skepticism about the ability of a government, a government that lied about whether you could keep your insurance and your doctor, and couldn’t construct a workable website, to produce a system that will improve service delivery. That skepticism may owe something to young Americans’ experience with student loans. Some 57 percent of the Harvard study millennials say that student loan debt is a major problem for young people. The responses don’t vary much by political party identification.

— Michael Barone in the Jan. 21, 2014, *Washington Examiner*

SPECIAL REPORT

WHO IS FINDING WORK

Characteristics of Young Adults Participating Full-Time in the U.S. Labor Force

by BARRY KEATING AND MARYANN O. KEATING

At the restaurant checkout counter, a young cashier is overheard apologizing to a friend for not being in contact. “Ya know, this job gets in the way of having a life.” “Yeah,” replies the friend, “But ya can’t have a life without a job.”

Labor supply, household production and social decisions are linked. Academic studies as well as the restaurant checkout conversation confirm the results of a study we engaged in during the past year. We attempted to statistically evaluate characteristics associated with an individual’s labor force participation. Our initial goal was to determine the likelihood of full-time employment for an individual in his/her late 20s based on his or her educational and wage characteristics. What we learned is that at the heart of labor supply are sociological factors such as having children, co-habitation, marriage and time usage.

The situation warrants some attention because the participation rate in the U.S. labor force declined one-fifth of a percentage point to 62.8 percent in December, which was the lowest since 1978. This rate is not much different from that in other industrialized countries, but the U.S. decline is disturbing because the rate for those in their 50s, 60s and even 70s is increasing while it is declining for younger age groups. BLS time-use surveys from 2003 to 2010 find that 19- to 24-year-olds reduced both their average working hours and hours per day in school or school-related activities. Neither changes in real minimum wage nor a drop in earnings relative to older workers explains the increased time spent on personal care and other non-work activities (Fallick and Pingle, p.29).

The focus of our study is on ages 26 to 31, traditionally a time of peak labor-force attachment. We compare the characteristics of young adults engaged in full-time employment with those who work part-time or opt out altogether. Our economic analysis hinges on actual wages offered to these individuals and a reservation or expected wage of someone with similar educational credentials. In addition, we find that certain socio-cultural attributes delay or permanently reduce this cohort’s work participation.

Considering the Personal Decision To Work Full-time

Economists often speak of individuals as trading off wage income/consumption for leisure, a misleading term because “leisure” is used to represent the benefits of home production (cleaning, doing laundry, home repairs, etc.), caring for others, as well as “free time.” Actually, individuals substitute both “leisure” and consumption in furthering their formal education for wage income. For example, those enrolled in school are less likely to work full-time, as are those engaging in home care for dependents. We suggest, therefore, that the probability of full labor-force participation [$P(\text{FLP})$] increases to the extent that an individual can earn an actual/offered wage (W_a) exceeding an expected/projected wage (W_p), and decreases as an individual values and substitutes additional education (E) or leisure (L).

Most of us have some preconceived notion of what we could earn in the marketplace. Acting on incomplete information, we form a subjective perception of an acceptable wage based on the reported earning of someone with credentials similar to our own. If the actual wages offered us equal or exceed this rate, then we are more inclined to accept a position. Our analysis focuses on the decision to either work full-time or not rather than the specific number of hours worked.

Declining youth labor-force participation, associated with the slow recovery from the 2008 recession and the leveling off of



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economic regulation and not-for-profit organizations. Recent research has examined data mining and its use. Keating has written or co-written 15 books, including a best-selling forecasting and data-mining textbook used in colleges and universities. MARYANN O. KEATING, Ph.D., an adjunct scholar of the foundation and a regular commentator on economic issues, is the co-author with her husband of “Microeconomics for Public Managers,” Wiley/Blackwell, 2009.

female participation rates, concerns policymakers attempting to fund Social Security, Medicaid and other programs that are dependent on payroll and income taxes. Obviously, economists need to be concerned with weak labor demand that is insufficient to absorb willing workers. In contrast to studying labor demand, however, our study looks at the characteristics of those who hold full-time positions. Although most of us need wage income to survive, individuals have the option of subsidizing or supplementing income through accumulated wealth, debt, family income, scholarships, unemployment insurance and other forms of government transfer programs. The primary focus, however, of this study is neither public finance nor unemployment. Rather, we explore and quantify the relative strength of characteristics, such as marriage, children, health, use of free time and social attachment, that are associated with personal fulfillment and exercising one's vocation through active participation in the labor force.

The likelihood that an individual participates full-time in the labor force is assumed prior to estimation to be associated with the trade-off between wages, further education and free time. In addition, we hypothesize that it is associated with

marriage, having children, health, religion and alienation from/attachment to society.

Estimation

The data used in this study are based on the responses of more than 5,000 men and women born between 1980 and 1984 who are participating in the U.S. Department of Labor's National Longitudinal Study of Youth (NLSY97). Round 14 of the survey was fielded from October 2010 to June 2011, at which time respondents ranged from 25 to 31 years of age. Work and wage-related data generally refer to 2009.

The variable of interest in our study, therefore, is Full Labor Force Participation. Full Labor Force Participation is modestly defined as someone whose work history exceeded 20 hours a week for 26 or more weeks during the past year. A survey participant was assigned a "1" if he or she met this criterion. All others were assigned a "0."

We compared each respondent's reported actual hourly wage with a proxy for his or her expected wage. The proxy for expected wage is the average wage earned by those sharing the

Table 1. Logistic Fit for Full-time Labor Force Participation for Men and Women, Ages 25-30, in the U.S. Labor Force

Term	Estimate (Std Error)	Estimate (Std Error)	Estimate (Std Error)
Intercept	.6654* (0.1398)	-1.089* (0.0752)	-1.1420* (0.0774)
Projected Wage Based on Final Ed. Degree by Sex	-.0017* (0.0002)		
Actual/Offered Wage Exceeds Projected Wage		.4946* (0.0498)	.4965* (0.0498)
Enrollment Status	-.3570* (0.0452)	-.3287* (0.0449)	-.3360* (0.0449)
Children- Biological Living In or Out of Household	.2963* (0.0301)	.4078* (0.0288)	.4025* (0.0288)
Self-Perception of One's Health	.1734* (0.0331)	.2368* (0.0326)	.2323* (0.0326)
Importance of Religion	(0.0027) (0.0360)	0.0172 (0.0359)	0.0247 (0.0359)
Marriage/Cohabitation as a Social Measure	.1724* (0.0250)	.1750* (0.0336)	
Marriage as an Institution			.1506* (0.0355)
Hours of Television Viewing Per Week	-.2742* (0.0277)	-.2731* (0.0473)	-.2662* (0.0355)
Number of Observations	5072	5072	5072
Generalized R Square	0.1458	0.1414	0.1391
Misclassification Rate	0.2877	0.2869	0.2847
Whole Model ChiSquare (DF =7)	553.3413*	335.526*	526.417*

*Prob > ChiSq- less than 1%

SPECIAL REPORT

same educational attainment and gender as the respondent. If the reported actual hourly wage-rate earned exceeds the expected/projected wage, the participant is assigned a "1" for the explanatory variable "Actual Wage Exceeds Projected." The actual/offered hourly rate of pay, compared with the expected wage, is the reported hourly rate for ongoing jobs or the stop rate for a long-term position; otherwise, it is the start pay for positions the respondent held lasting fewer than 13 weeks.

The National Longitudinal Study does not include questions directly related to friendship and voluntary associations that we could use to measure alienation from society. Therefore, we interpret the variable "Marriage/Cohabitation" as a social measure assigning a "1" to those married or cohabitating in mid-2010, and an "0" to those who have never married or cohabitated and those separated, widowed or divorced. To test the strength of the state of marriage, apart from cohabitation, the variable "Marriage as an Institution" assigns a "1" to those actually married and an "0" to those who are not. "Enrollment Status" refers to whether a respondent is currently enrolled in any formal schooling ("1") or not enrolled ("0").

The "Biological Children" explanatory variable represents the total number of children, residing in or out of the household, listed by the respondent as of the survey date. The "Self-Perception of Health" variable is a dummy variable ("1" = very good or excellent and "0" = good, fair, or poor) in response to the question "In general, how is your health?" "TV Viewing," a proxy for free/leisure time, represents respondents' reply to the question, "In a typical week, how many hours do you watch television? Twenty or fewer hours is coded as "0" and 21 or more as "1."

A preferred way of determining the relevance/irrelevance of religious practice on labor-force participation would be attendance at or hours engaged in such activities. However, we relied on our NLSY respondents' replies in a previous year to "How important or unimportant is religious faith in shaping how you live your daily life?". The "Importance of Religion" explanatory variable is coded "1" for not important at all or not very important and "0" for somewhat important, very important and extremely important.

A logistic regression is used to estimate the odds of a particular individual working full-time. We cannot

Table 2. Logistic Fit for Full-time Labor Participation for Men, Ages 25-30, in the U.S. Labor Force

Term	Estimate (Std Error)	Estimate (Std Error)	Estimate (Std Error)
Intercept	.7382* (0.2044)	-1.100* (0.1121)	-1.2649* (0.1170)
Projected Wage Based on Final Ed. Degree by Sex	-.0016* (0.0002)		
Actual/Offered Wage Exceeds Projected Wage		.5195* (0.0787)	.5153* (0.0787)
Enrollment Status	-.4961* (0.0683)	-.4216* (0.0672)	-.4457* (0.0675)
Children, Biological- Living In or Out of Household	.1824* (0.0483)	.2968* (0.0472)	.2970* (0.0471)
Self-Perception of One's Health	.2164* (0.0481)	.2759* (0.0474)	.2554* (0.0475)
Importance of Religion	-0.0801 (0.0488)	-0.0765 (0.0487)	-0.0587 (0.0488)
Marriage/Cohabitation as a Social Measure	.3578* (0.0508)	.3676* (0.0508)	
Marriage as an Institution			.4294* (0.0584)
Hours of Television Viewing Per Week	-.2186* (0.0641)	-.2210* (0.0640)	-.2062* (0.0640)
Number of Observations	2551	2551	2551
Generalized R Square	0.1323	0.1262	0.1285
Misclassification Rate	0.2552	0.2560	0.2572
Whole Model ChiSquare (DF = 7)	242.8688*	231.1904*	238.5438*

*Prob > ChiSq- less than 1%

overemphasize that log regressions make no attempt to determine those characteristics that cause an individual to participate in the labor force; it is a tool for measuring the likelihood of participation given certain characteristics.

Interpreting the equations, presented in Tables 1, 2 and 3, you will see the sign (plus or minus) of the logit coefficients and their statistical and/or practical significance. The value of logit analysis is in measuring direction and relative strength of social and economic characteristics in increasing (decreasing) the probability of an individual participating full-time in the labor force. For example, in the first column in Table 1, a coefficient of $-.3570^*$ is given for Enrollment Status and $.2963^*$ for Biological Children. This means that if a survey participant is enrolled in any educational program, he or she is significantly less likely to work full-time. However, if the participant reported having biological children, then he or she is significantly more likely to work full-time.

Empirical Results

For the 25-31 aged cohort surveyed in 2010, 60 percent reported very good or excellent health, and 13 percent were

enrolled full- or part-time in education. Thirty-six percent were married as of mid-year and 53 percent were either married or cohabiting. Each respondent had an average of .92 biological children. Sixty-nine percent were working full-time as minimally defined in this study, and 19 percent reported wages equal to or exceeding projected wages based on average earning for those of the same gender with identical terminal educational credentials.

The log odds for full labor participation given the personal characteristics of respondents are presented in Table 1 for the whole sample ($n = 5072$), in Table 2 for males ($n = 2551$) and in Table 3 for females ($n = 2521$). Log odds for each characteristic can be translated first into the sports' odds with which we are more familiar and then converted into probabilities.

Based solely on characteristics specified in our model, 70 and 74 percent of respondents are correctly classified. In other words, the variables we have selected are actually associated with full-time employment. For all respondents as well as for men and women tested separately, the model is significant at the .01 level.

Certain personal characteristics associated with labor-force participation are obvious. For example, enrollment, full- or

Table 3. Logistic Fit for Full-time Labor Participation for Women, Ages 25-30, in the U.S. Labor Force

Term	Estimate (Std Error)	Estimate (Std Error)	Estimate (Std Error)
Intercept	0.6041 (0.2063)	-1.0541* (0.1075)	-1.0302* (0.1096)
Projected Wage Based on Final Ed. Degree by Sex	-.0019* (0.0003)		
Actual/Offered Wage Exceeds Projected Wage		.4613* (0.0655)	.4648* (0.0655)
Enrollment Status	-.2661* (0.0615)	-.2500* (0.0614)	-.2527* (0.0614)
Children, Biological (Living In or Out of Household)	.3809* (0.0405)	.4667* (0.0385)	.4590* (0.0386)
Self-Perception of One's Health	.1237* (0.0467)	.1916* (0.0458)	.1965* (0.0459)
Importance of Religion	0.0979 (0.0554)	.1088** (0.0553)	0.1066 (0.0553)
Marriage/Cohabitation as a Social Measure	-0.0180 (0.0468)	-0.0073 (0.0467)	
Marriage as an Institution			-0.0522 (0.0470)
Hours of Television Viewing Per Week	-.3704* (0.0417)	-.3927* (0.0734)	-.3969* (0.0735)
Number of Observations	2521	2521	2521
Generalized R Square	0.1810	0.1808	0.1814
Misclassification Rate	0.3015	0.2991	0.2991
Whole Model ChiSquare (DF=7)	354.6828*	354.3057*	355.5064*

*Prob > ChiSq- less than 1%

** Prob > ChiSq- less than 5%

part-time in education, reduces the likelihood of full-time work for the combined cohort by approximately 59 percent for females and by approximately 62 percent for males. Also, time engaged in viewing television, used here as a preference for leisure versus industriously pursuing wage income, is consistently and significantly associated with decreased odds for full-time employment, here defined as 20 hours a week or more for six months or more. The odds of a female working full-time are significantly reduced if she watches 21 or more hours of television weekly.

The negative association of full-time work and expected wage based on educational attainment, a proxy for projected wage, was unexpected. Provisionally, we thought that prior investment in education would increase the likelihood of full-time work by reaching age 26, but, as shown in Tables 1, 2 and 3, educational attainment does not seem to translate into full-time work.

As expected, however, if the current actual wage reported by a respondent exceeds the projected (expected) wage, the odds of full-time work do increase significantly; this is particularly the case for males.

Now, consider characteristics of a social nature. As expected, better health is positively and significantly associated with full labor-force participation. Initially, we wondered if the presence of children would distract individuals from work. Apparently, having one or more children consistently increases the probability of full-time labor force participation. That is somewhat surprising. This effect is stronger for women than men. This is even more surprising. Having one's own children is not merely a substitute but may create a strong incentive to earn wage income. It appears that both males and females are willing to work in order to provide increased consumption for their own children.

For women, the state of being married, as compared with being single, separated, divorced or cohabitating, lowers the odds of full participation, but the effect is not significant. On the other hand, marriage as an institution greatly and significantly increases the odds of male full-time work.

The self-reported importance of religion in a respondent's life does not appear to be consistently associated with full-time work, at least for males. Declining labor-force participation for males, aside from wage and job opportunities, is sometimes perceived as a byproduct of social isolation. Our study confirms the positive, consistent and significant association between a male's labor-force participation and having children and being married. For respondents in general, either marriage or cohabitation, assumed to be inversely related to social isolation, increases the odds of labor-force participation. For males, the state of marriage as an institution has a stronger effect than marriage/cohabitation. Conversely, for females, marriage and marriage/cohabitation is negative but insignificantly associated with full-time employment.

Conclusion

The authors caution against specific policy prescriptions based on the results of this study. The decline in youth labor-force participation is multifaceted; there is no one single factor that has caused U.S. labor-force participation and participation of younger ages to decline precipitously. Our study describes

but does not determine the fundamental cause of youths' attachment to or disattachment from full-time employment. One can infer, however, that there is an amalgam of economic and social factors that affect an individual's decision to engage full-time in paid employment.

Policymakers have focused on providing young adults with healthcare, subsidized housing, cell service, internet connections, day care, etc. However, for some individuals, the present hodgepodge of rules, regulations and incentives may be thwarting the basic human desire to earn a living through wage income. Our study does not deal with the issue of whether or not a person has the opportunity of working full-time; it merely highlights the characteristics of younger U.S. residents who persist in full-time engagement in the labor force. There may be a national interest in avoiding policies — such as those reducing take-home pay — that discourage young adults from launching their careers.

It appears that, presently, for those between the ages of 26 to 31, higher educational attainment may raise income expectations but actually decreases the odds of full-time labor participation. This study confirms that the supply curve for labor remains upward sloping; in other words, higher actual/offered wages increase the likelihood of full-time versus limited or no labor-force participation.

However, take-home pay only partially explains the overall odds that a particular individual works full-time. Health, marriage, providing for one's own children, social connectedness and industriousness increase the odds that a U.S. resident ages 25-31 will approximate full-time employment.

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THE YOUTH MARKET: A HEALTH POLICY MISFIT?

Charlie's insurance costs, absent government coercion, don't line up with his healthcare needs.

Central to the success of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), aka Obamacare, are 20- to 30-year-olds buying government-approved health-insurance policies. The administration, its friends and allies are running a full-court public-relations drive touting the advantages of health insurance to these young folks. Advertising may facilitate some to sign up, but economists generally believe that incentives are more important. How, then, does the ACA change economic incentives so that the young and uninsured will buy health insurance?

Consider the health-insurance market before the ACA was in place. Charlie is a 27-year-old single male who freelances in Anytown, Ind. He earns \$45,000 a year and is not currently buying health insurance. Economists surmise his choice not to buy is the by-product of a cost-benefit calculation.

The costs of health insurance are the premiums that Charlie has to pay. The benefits of buying health insurance are twofold. If Charlie has a catastrophic medical event — such as contracting a rare form of cancer — most of his health bills will be paid for by his insurance carrier. Second, by purchasing health insurance before such an awful disease develops, he has continued access to coverage. In a pre-ACA world, there is a strong incentive for a healthy young person to buy insurance to insure against the risk of becoming uninsurable. But apparently Charlie finds the costs of being insured exceed its benefits.

So how does the ACA impact this calculation? According to the Kaiser Foundation Healthcare website,* a bronze-level ACA plan for Charlie will cost him \$2,542 a year. This is almost certainly more than what Charlie would pay for equivalent coverage pre-ACA. The ACA mandates the young to overpay for health insurance so that the older folks can be allowed to underpay. The premium in the above-quoted figure reflects this intention. If Charlie doesn't

want health insurance at lower pre-ACA premiums, why would he want it at higher post-ACA premiums? Intergenerational cost-shifting, a central component of the ACA, gives Charlie less of an incentive to buy insurance.

There is a second reason why the structure of the ACA actually reduces Charlie's incentive to buy: He can sign up for health insurance after the fact. The ACA forbids insurance companies from discriminating based on pre-existing conditions.

The designers of the ACA knew these two facts, and incorporated a tax for not buying health insurance into the ACA, a tax that clearly generates an incentive to buy insurance. But is it enough?

For Charlie, the tax for not buying insurance will be \$350 in 2014, rise to \$700 in 2015 and then to \$875 in 2016. The ACA premium is 5.6 percent of his income, the tax for not buying is .8 — 1.9 percent of his income. Charlie saves \$1,667-\$2,192 or around 3.7 percent (4.8 percent of his gross income) if he does not buy health insurance under the ACA. Moreover, he can continue to accrue these savings and then sign up for insurance if and when his health deteriorates.

One is hard-pressed to give a plausible economic reason why Charlie would change his mind and buy insurance under the ACA. Granted, if Charlie's income is a lot more, say six figures, the tax he owes for not buying insurance will be greater, making it more likely that he buys. If his income is a lot less, say \$20,000, available government subsidies make him more likely to opt for an insurance purchase. But we suspect the richer Charlies are already buying insurance and the poorer Charlies are a net fiscal drain to the ACA.

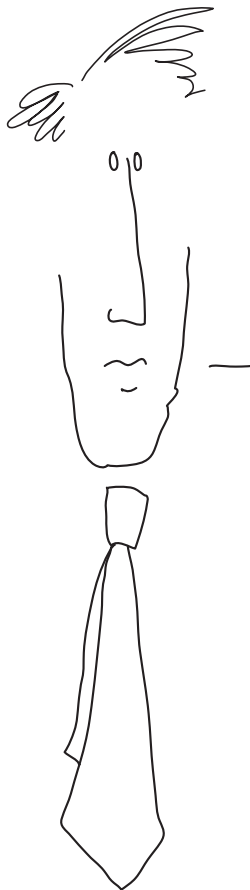
So this seems clear: The ACA reduces the incentive to buy insurance for many of the very folks who are needed to make it work. — *Cecil Bohanon* (Dec. 9)

“The Affordable Care Act mandates the young to overpay for health insurance so that the older folks can be allowed to underpay. But if they didn't want health insurance at lower pre-Obamacare premiums, why would they want it at higher post-Obamacare premiums?”

— *Bohanon*

I would add to that discussion the fact that half of the 216,000 inmates incarcerated in our federal prisons are there for drug-related crimes. This is a system operating at 30 percent over capacity and spending \$6.5 billion annually.

— Teevan



Discretion in Sentencing

Barack Obama's powerful pen is now at work in the penal system — seeking to grant clemency to a number of federal prisoners imprisoned for low-level drug offenses.

Why? Because they received prison terms based on mandatory sentencing. With the proposed Smarter Sentencing Act, Sen. Dick Durbin of Illinois and Sen. Mike Lee of Utah also seek to restore discretion in non-violent and non-gang-related low-quantity drug crimes.

Some will see drugs as always violent; others will see a slippery slope in the newly legal marijuana use. Still others will recall the judicial inconsistencies bordering on abuse that led to mandatory sentencing in the 1980s.

I would add to that discussion the fact that half of the 216,000 inmates incarcerated in our federal prisons are there for drug-related crimes. This is a system operating at 30 percent over capacity and spending \$6.5 billion annually. Indiana is experiencing growing levels of incarceration and facing the expense of constructing additional prisons. The "Three Strikes and You're Out" laws allow no discretion. And it is hardly discretionary to dump prisoners on the streets as they have done recently in California.

"A judiciary independent of a king or executive alone is a good thing, but independence of the will of the nation is a solecism."
(Jefferson)

The issue, then, is not about the acknowledged harm of drugs but whether we can restore discretion in sentencing and judgments. There would be little need for judges if every case were mandatory, and everyone can name someone who could have a prison record if it had not been for some discretion.

Maybe you can see one in the mirror. — John Teevan (Feb. 12)

Regulating Pharmaceuticals

The effort is now under way in the Indiana Legislature to further restrict the sale of products containingephedrine/pseudoephedrine (PSE). That is a key meth ingredient found in the most effective over-the-counter decongestants that afford relief to Hoosiers who suffer from asthma, sinus and other nasal disorders.

Meth is a growing problem in Indiana and a major source of concern to local governments. Mayors and their police chiefs are frustrated by the manpower and dollars they devote to coping with the problem. They want the Legislature to

impose a requirement that PSE products may be purchased only with a doctor's prescription.

PSE products are designed to treat a medical condition that afflicts tens of thousands of Hoosiers and are the most effective product for such treatment. While the meth problem is real, so too is the pain and suffering of those who depend on these medical products.

Advocates argue that a prescription requirement would be no more than an "inconvenience" for users of PSE products. That may be true for those who have a family doctor and can obtain a prescription over the phone. That is not true for the low- or no-income segment of the minority population, and it is not true for a large number of working people who do not have family doctors. For these people, a prescription requirement would be a significant burden and expense: find a doctor, get off work to see the doctor, pay the doctor and get your pay docked for missing a half day of work.

Punishing the law-abiding citizen to inconvenience the criminal is beyond the pale. Imposing a prescription requirement for a safe, effective, non-addictive medical product is unnecessary and unwise. The Legislature should just say no. — Tom Charles Huston (Feb. 4)

The Star Fails Cursive

The Indianapolis Star editorial board has dismissed as a "misplaced legislative priority" Sen. Jean Leising's effort to require cursive writing instruction in Indiana schools. The Star wondered why time would be spent on such a trivial matter "in a state where the workforce ranks 42nd in the nation in educational attainment."

Perhaps if the Star were more familiar with the latest neuroscience, it would endorse Sen. Leising's initiative instead of ridicule it.

Cursive writing makes students smarter. That is the conclusion of numerous studies and the work of William Klemm, professor of Neuroscience at the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences at Texas A&M University. Klemm explains that learning cursive is an important tool for cognitive development, "particularly in training the brain to learn functional specialization, that is capacity for optimal efficiency." (March 14, 2013, Psychology Today).

When children learn cursive writing, their brains develop the ability to integrate sensation, movement control and thinking. "There is spillover benefit for thinking skills used in reading and writing. To write legible cursive, fine motor control is needed over the fingers," Klemm writes.

Indiana's current academic standards do not require the teaching of cursive writing, but it should be part of every elementary language arts curriculum for the reasons Klemm cites. Sen. Leising is addressing the gap in our standards in a responsible way with wide public support. — *Andrea Neal (Feb. 2)*

Minimum Wage: A Few Better Ideas

Here are some ways to separate people by motive, knowledge and creativity on the issue of the minimum wage:

- Offer to reduce or eliminate the 15.3 percent FICA taxes on every dollar of income earned by the working poor (no exemptions/no deductions like the "income tax" gets);
- Offer wage subsidies for low-paid heads of household instead;
- Offer to raise the Earned Income Tax Credit instead;
- Offer to raise the minimum wage for those who aren't teenagers.

All of these do a better job of helping the targeted group, while lessening or eliminating the costs and damage of a higher minimum wage.

If they don't go for these policy suggestions — or come up with really good reasons to avoid these policies — then you can know that: a) their motives are something other (e.g. to help unions or to harm business); b) their knowledge is lacking (although you've just helped them there, so . . .); or c) their policy creativity is woeful (see also ability to assimilate knowledge).

The latter two remind me of Brian Regan on the kid who keeps using the same solar system for his science project: "The big yellow one is the sun. The big yellow one is the sun!" — *Eric Schansberg (Jan. 30)*

How We Measure 'Poverty'

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the "war on poverty." That is true, at least in terms of its enacting legislation, with spending expanded a bit under Lyndon Johnson and especially under Richard Nixon.

One of the first observations to make is that progress against measured poverty stopped once the war on poverty began. (The poverty rate has fluctuated between 11 and 15 percent over the last 50 years.) With economic growth, poverty was decreasing rapidly post 1945. A rising tide was, not surprisingly, lifting most boats. Once the war on poverty began, however, progress stopped. Why?

If we use lame statistics and analysis, the war on poverty stands easily condemned. Poverty falls; the war begins; poverty quits falling;

thus the war is a failure. If we move to more sophisticated analysis, though, the answers are more complex, interesting — and realistic.

Why did measured poverty quit falling when the war began? These are the primary reasons:

Paying people to be in a state (and removing the payments if they move away from that state) will generally encourage them to remain in that state. The more you pay them — and the longer you make the payments available — the greater the problem. (See also: other welfare programs such as "unemployment insurance.") So on the basis of this point, the war on poverty will increase poverty. This is the favored argument of those on the right, and it is clearly true to some extent, but how much?

It could be that government started the war at the moment when most of the curable poverty had been handled by the market. Perhaps the market grabbed the low-hanging fruit, and the government happened to get involved just when the high fruit was still on the tree. In a most unfortunate coincidence (at least for those who prefer a more active government), it looks as if government was getting in the way of progress, when it was mostly treading water. This is not a particularly flattering view of government policy (especially at the federal level), but it takes some of the blame or heat off of its seeming ineptness.

The measurement of poverty is profoundly flawed. Against its poverty lines (adjusted for family size and inflation), the government compares measured, annual, cash income for each household. The poverty lines are a proxy or standard set by the government — adjusted by inflation (a proxy for the economy's increase in prices). All in all, one can certainly quibble, but, at least by government standards, these lines were calculated with a reasonable methodology in the 1960s and have been reasonably well-adjusted since then.

The bigger issues are with the government's measurement of income. First, the government is only picking up reported "income" by each "household." Unreported income is likely — when one is engaged in illegal activity or getting paid under the table to avoid taxes or welfare-benefit reduction. And if people are shacking up, they might live like a household with a bigger income, but be measured as if they're in two separate households with smaller incomes.

Second, the government is only measuring "cash" income. So, cash benefits paid by the government are counted (e.g., Social Security) while non-cash and in-kind benefits are ignored. We could give every poor household \$50,000 in food stamps, and they would still

"When children learn cursive writing, their brains develop the ability to integrate sensation, movement control and thinking."

— Neal

"We could give every poor household \$50,000 in food stamps, and they would still be counted as poor by the government."

— Schansberg

“Schools are not talent agencies that prepare children for the labor market, though many in the business community view them this way.”

— Neal

be counted as poor by the government. In this, the poverty rate is much more of a measure of dependence on government than a measure of those living in poverty. Putting it more bluntly, unless they're refusing assistance, no one lives in material poverty in the U.S. as measured by the government's poverty standards.

Third, the government ignores wealth, focusing exclusively on annual income. One might have considerable wealth but modest income and be measured as poor. This explains the impressive data about the poor in terms of home ownership and other consumer goods.

Similarly and finally, the government's measure of income is only a snapshot — the statistics of one year rather than the dynamics of many years. Thus, it says nothing about the larger question of how “poor people” are doing five and 10 years into the future. As an example, I had a number of colleagues in grad school who were “poor.” Likewise, the country's highest poverty rates are found in college towns.

Is there poverty? Sure. Using static analysis, has government increased the living standards of many poor people? Sure. Using dynamic analysis, has government increased poverty by subsidizing it? Sure. The first two questions are obvious and not all that interesting. The third question is complex and difficult to measure. But any layman concerned about poverty should know the basic point — that the statistics used to measure poverty are lousy. — *Schansberg (Jan. 13)*

What Is the Purpose Of Education, Really?

The State Board of Education is knee-deep in a strategic-planning process intended to better define the state's vision for Indiana schools. It should come as no surprise that board members disagree on the most basic of questions: What is the purpose of K-12 education?

It is an essential question that must be answered before, not after, we make decisions on standards, curriculum, assessment and accountability.

Why?

If you believe the purpose of education is to impart knowledge — as I do — then the academic standards, curriculum and assessment must be content-knowledge based. For example, a sixth-grade student should be able to solve for x in a simple equation, diagram a sentence or fill in a blank outline map of the 50 states.

If you believe the purpose of education is something else — to build social skills or prepare children for careers — then you likely will believe that standards, curriculum and

assessment should be behavior-based. The sixth-grade student should be able to explain the steps needed to perform a mathematical calculation, work collaboratively in groups, and draw a picture generally showing the course of westward expansion.

While the two purposes are not mutually exclusive, the area of emphasis is critical. Without content knowledge, there can be no meaningful skills acquisition. How can a student intelligently debate the merits of immigration reform if he does not understand the history of immigration in the United States? How can a class debate healthcare if the students do not understand the workings of our federal system, and the delicate balance between state and national authority?

Schools are not talent agencies that prepare children for the labor market, though many in the business community view them this way. Our children deserve knowledge, which the dictionary defines as “facts, information and skills.” If we can agree that the purpose of K-12 education is to impart knowledge, we can be assured that, over time, students will be ready for jobs and civic responsibilities in the wider world. — *Neal (Jan. 28)*

Bridgegate: The Failed Management of Transportation

New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie's “Bridgegate” at the Fort Lee entrance lanes to the George Washington Bridge serves notice of the dysfunction in the administration of our surface-transportation system. The political gamesmanship revealed by emails between Christie appointees is astounding and shameful. Before categorizing it as just another made-for-television political scandal, however, we need to understand how this sort of incident could occur anywhere in the nation.

What we are witnessing in New Jersey has been in the works for decades. It is not merely the fall from grace of one state executive, his name besmirched by staffers whose actions more resemble Shakespearean villains than trusted appointees. It is representative of the failures, manipulations and outright fraud characterizing the realm of surface transportation, specifically the network of urban roads, transit and bridges governed by public bodies and financed by tax dollars.

Among these failures were the enormous cost overruns of Boston's “Big Dig” tunnel, a project maneuvered from the start by consultants and government officials. Similarly, this same consultant-government cabal is attempting to manipulate expensive high-speed

rail projects in several states, most notably in California.

And that's not all. Cities across the nation pursue high-cost transit projects that offer remarkably low productivity but whose "cool" factor lures voter approval, especially among the young and impressionable.

It should be no surprise that government has come to dominate transportation policy, a segment so crucially important to the efficient function of our people and our economy. And with government's deep and entangling intrusion comes a sense of entitlement and unaccountability among those occupying influential transportation offices — the bureaucratic rabbit warrens to which political appointees gravitate and breed in sinecure with enough time to hatch petty political plots like those in New Jersey.

Government's near-complete corruption of surface-transportation infrastructure includes shadow groups known as Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) now controlling the flow of state and federal transportation dollars into those U.S. metropolitan areas that serve populations more than 50,000. These organizations are advised by staff and contracted consultants — all unelected but nonetheless who prepare plans, approve projects and spend your tax dollars as they see fit.

A few years back, even the MPO in my small Indiana town received almost a million federal stimulus dollars, lavished on a transit center for a four-bus system so inefficient it consumes over six tax dollars to transport every rider.

Your town probably has a similar example. Will Rogers cogently observed that fraud is the inevitable result when two people get together to decide how to spend another person's money. So, too, it is the inevitable outcome of government-erected mechanisms such as MPOs.

Meanwhile, the same consultants who were party to the financial fiasco that was Boston's Big Dig are pitching a billion-dollar transit program in Indianapolis, flashing their history of being big players promoting expensive transit projects as the credentials that supposedly qualify them for any big-dollar, big-dream project anywhere.

Bridgegate should be our warning. I fear it won't be. Instead, an army of professional political spinners whose investment horizon extends only to the next election will misdirect our attention. The incident, in the end, may only divide the nation further while failing to alert us to the crisis at hand, the ongoing, systemic failure of a vital segment of our economy — transportation. — *Tom Heller (Jan. 11)*

This Council Veteran Is Skeptical of Tax-Cut Grief

Business Personal Property Tax (BPPT) represents more than 70 percent of all abatement supported, signed and implemented by a typical mayor and city council. The rationale is that these abatements create jobs at the selected tax-advantaged company. And mayors and council members have argued for years that these abatements do not shift the tax burden to others.

Recently, though, one Indiana mayor stated that elimination of BPPT would, in fact, shift the tax burden to others. Since these two actions — abatement of BPPT and elimination of BPPT — are the same thing, which position is true? Does it shift the burden or doesn't it?

It does, of course, and that is a mathematical fact. It begs the question of why mayors and council members are okay with shifting the tax by abatement but not by elimination of the BPPT itself.

Here, then, are questions to ask any elected official who maintains that your city cannot get along without the BPPT revenue:

- Are property-tax subsidies to golf a basic service? If so, why don't we subsidize shooting ranges, paintball or horseback riding? Should we send tax dollars to the privately owned golf courses as well?

- Are bus rides to Walmart a basic service? If we subsidize the purchase of transportation, should we also subsidize the purchase of shoes, electricity or furnaces, all of which are necessities?

- Is operating cemeteries a basic service? If so, do privately owned cemeteries have a claim on property-tax dollars?

- Is a swimming pool or skate park a basic service that must be provided by government? Bowling alleys, fitness centers and health spas are all nice activities that add to quality of life; why don't we pour property tax dollars into these?

- Are charitable donations made with tax dollars a basic service of government? And is charity still charity when it is funded with mandatory tax payments?

To capsuleize, the mayor of my city recently claimed there would be a loss of \$1 million to the sewer utility from elimination of BPPT. Our city government, however, has been taking more than \$2 million out of the sewer utility each year for several years and putting it into the general fund. (This is called PILOT or payment in lieu of taxes, a roundabout way of imposing additional taxes.) Why doesn't the city just stop taking half of this money out of the sewer utility? And if the sewer utility has

"Government's near-complete corruption of surface-transportation infrastructure includes shadow groups known as Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) now controlling the flow of state and federal transportation dollars into those U.S. metropolitan areas that serve populations more than 50,000."

— Heller

"The suggestion that local taxpayers must make up revenue lost from the Business Personal Property Tax is predicated on the belief that the money belongs to the government first, then the citizen."

— Cummins

“Like too many others, my community and its associated agencies, plus the county’s redevelopment commission, continue to borrow money to pay off previously borrowed money in an attempt to stay ahead of default, a richly deserved default.”

— Penticuff

been able to function with \$2 million per year being skimmed away, what’s another million?

The suggestion that local taxpayers must make up revenue lost from the Business Personal Property Tax is predicated on the belief that the money belongs to the government first, then the citizen. So the ultimate question for elected officials this next year is just this: “Do you favor increasing the burden of local income taxes before you cut dollars from a local government budget?”

A simple “yes” or “no” answer should be on the record for every mayor, commissioner and council member in Indiana. — *Ryan Cummins (Dec. 31)*

This Redevelopment Plan Made a Poor Christmas Gift

Like too many others, my community and its associated agencies, plus the county’s redevelopment commission, continue to borrow money to pay off previously borrowed money in an attempt to stay ahead of default, a richly deserved default.

It is beyond parody. Fiction writers would have such a story rejected on the face of its incredulity. Someone, someplace in local government surely must have the fortitude to say we are wrecking ourselves financially — to the point that taxes will be absorbingly high for our grandchildren, who, in the middle of the century, will still be paying off misspent bond issues that never created the projects that they were imposed on taxpayers to create.

In fiction — at least the believable kind — someone gets fired, demoted or in trouble with the law for actions such as this. The citizens who expose officials seeking self gain through the malpractice of their public service are vindicated.

Well, this is the real world. Instead, the redevelopment commission votes unanimously to pledge public funds to repay two new sets of bonds, whose proceeds will pay off three Bond Anticipation Notes (BAN).

These are a type of short-term loan intended to be repaid through the proceeds of development. My county took out a total of

more than \$9 million in such notes in 2009, 2010 and 2011 to jump-start various projects, many of which failed to launch.

Because they failed to get off the ground, tax revenue from those projects never materialized and the money to pay off the BANs doesn’t exist. So, holding our nose and borrowing long-term was likely the only viable choice to avoid default — though a modicum of good government would have prevented such a breakdown.

Exactly how much of the money was spent remains an open question since the records for many expenditures are unavailable at this writing. We do know that a politically connected relative got at least some of the money to help create a park downtown and the contract for work on refurbishing an old YMCA there into a boutique hotel, a project never finished.

And because the transaction has not been completed, details on the two long-term bond issues, including their amount, the interest rates or the repayment schedule, have not yet been released. A city consultant anticipates a mid-December closing date. Our city development director says each of the three bond anticipation notes will come due in January or February.

To summarize, at the end of 2012, my county’s outstanding debts totaled \$31.3 million, with the three bond anticipation notes comprising \$9.2 million, or about 30 percent, according to the latest state audit.

To repay this, our redevelopment commission members approved a resolution that pledges tax increment financing (TIF) revenue to pay “all principal and interest” on two new revenue bonds. TIF revenue is a type of property-tax revenue that can be diverted from local governments — in this case, my county — to fund development.

That’s yet more money going to keep my city out of the poorhouse rather than to create economic growth.

Merry Christmas taxpayers. At least a lump of coal would have kept us warm for a time. — *David Penticuff (Dec. 23)*

“When individual rights are abrogated, there is no way to determine who is entitled to what; there is no way to determine the justice of anyone’s claims, desires or interests. The criterion, therefore, reverts to the tribal concept of: One’s wishes are limited only by the power of one’s gang.” — *Ayn Rand*



INDIANA AT 200

ANDREA
NEAL

For the past 10 years, the foundation has distributed Andrea Neal's biweekly essays on Indiana public-policy issues. Twenty-five Indiana newspapers have routinely published her column, making her one of the most widely read opinion writers in the state. Beginning with the spring 2013 journal her essays began focusing on another passion — Indiana history. Neal will produce 100 columns before December 2016 that describe Indiana's most significant historical events, generally in chronological order, tying each to a place or current event in Indiana that continues to tell the story of our state.



Indiana's Framers Met Under an Elm Tree

(Feb. 24) — James Madison, Benjamin Franklin and colleagues spent almost four months debating, writing and editing the document that would become the U.S. Constitution. It took James Brownlee, Benjamin Parke and associates only 18 days to write Indiana's.

The framing of our first constitution represented the final step in a lengthy and sometimes controversial process that advanced Indiana from frontier territory to full-fledged state. Territorial leaders had hoped Indiana would be admitted to the Union earlier, following a process laid out in the Northwest Ordinance, but financial difficulties and the War of 1812 intervened. By 1816, Indiana was back at bat.

Congress passed an enabling act on April 19, 1816, providing for a May election of delegates to a state constitutional convention. The representatives were to meet the next month in the territorial capital of Corydon. They gathered on June 10, 1816.

"As a group, they were men of high quality," according to an account by the Indiana Historical Bureau.

Patrick Henry Shields was one of them. Educated at Hampton-Sydney College and William and Mary's law school in Virginia, Shields moved to Indiana around 1804 and served as a judge. He was a private under William Henry Harrison at the Battle of Tippecanoe.

John Boone of Harrison County was Daniel Boone's brother. Jeremiah Cox of Wayne County was a blacksmith. William Eads of Franklin County was a banker and postmaster.

Two future governors were selected to lead the convention: Jonathan Jennings as president and William Hendricks as secretary.

Historian John Dillon said the delegates were "clear-minded, unpretending men of common sense, whose patriotism was unquestionable and whose morals were fair."

Their first task, as required by the enabling act, was to determine whether to proceed immediately toward statehood. On June 11, after considerable discussion, the delegates voted 34-8 for Ezra Ferris' resolution declaring it "expedient, at this time, to proceed to form a Constitution and State Government."

Unlike the Philadelphia delegates, who parsed every clause of the U.S. Constitution, the Corydon convention worked quickly. Most of Indiana's constitution was copied from the constitutions of Ohio, Kentucky, Virginia and Pennsylvania.

The convention cost taxpayers \$3,076, with \$200 spent on printing and stitching the Constitution and journals, \$41.50 on books and stationery and \$27.50 for tables and benches.

When they weren't sitting on benches, the delegates could be found under an elm tree. Construction of the state capitol building was not quite finished, and the log cabin that served as territorial headquarters was miserably hot, so the delegates took their discussions outdoors.

The tree, with leafy branches spanning 130 feet, was dubbed the Constitution Elm and became a symbol of Indiana's founding.

In 1925, despite efforts to save it, the tree died from Dutch elm disease. The branches were cut into souvenirs. The trunk was coated in black creosote and preserved inside a sandstone monument. Jo Ann Schoen, a lifelong Corydon resident and descendant of Patrick Shields, owns two items made from the tree, one of them a paperweight.

"When I have guests in town, we always have to go by the elm," Schoen says, "You can't drive anywhere in Harrison County without seeing history."

Years Here Shaped Abe Lincoln

(Feb. 10) — Three states claim Abraham Lincoln as a favorite son, but only Indiana can take credit for his formative years. As he moved

The Indiana constitutional convention cost taxpayers \$3,076, including \$200 spent on printing and stitching the Constitution and journals, \$41.50 on books and stationery and \$27.50 for tables and benches.

“Many of the character traits and moral values that made Abraham one of the world’s most respected leaders were formed and nurtured here,” according to National Park Service historians at the Lincoln Boyhood Home Memorial.

through adolescence to adulthood, Lincoln worked, studied and dealt with adversity on the Indiana frontier.

During this period, Lincoln handled an ax “almost constantly,” as he himself recalled. He read voraciously. He practiced carpentry, even helping his father build a coffin for his mother. He took a ferry to New Orleans on business and witnessed a slave auction that troubled his soul. He listened and learned from political debates at the local general store.

“Many of the character traits and moral values that made Abraham one of the world’s most respected leaders were formed and nurtured here,” according to National Park Service historians at the Lincoln Boyhood Home Memorial.

The site is Indiana’s most significant tribute to the 16th president, preserving some of the original acreage where Lincoln lived from age 7 to 21. A working pioneer homestead recreates what life might have been like for the Lincolns with log cabin, outbuildings, split-rail fences, livestock, gardens and crops. Memorial Court features five sculpted panels marking significant phases in Lincoln’s life, including his Indiana years.

Those began in late 1816, just as Indiana became a state, when Thomas and Nancy Lincoln moved with their son and daughter from Kentucky to Spencer County, which was still a forested wilderness. The Lincolns built the first of several cabins on a knoll in the midst of a 160-acre claim near Little Pigeon Creek, and Abe and his father set about clearing land to ready it for planting. “It was a wild region, with many bears and other wild animals still in the woods,” Lincoln wrote.

The family had been in Indiana two years when Lincoln’s mother contracted a fatal case of milk sickness. The illness is caused by drinking milk or eating meat from a cow that has ingested a toxic plant called white snakeroot.

In 1819, Thomas Lincoln went back to Kentucky to marry a widow, Sarah Bush Johnston, and the two returned to Indiana with her three children in tow. She also brought a small library, including “Aesop’s Fables,” “Robinson Crusoe,” “Pilgrim’s Progress” and “Sinbad the Sailor.”

Those stories inspired Lincoln, as did Parson Weems’ “The Life of Washington” and Benjamin Franklin’s autobiography, which demonstrated the sacrifices the founding fathers had made to create the United States. Lincoln received only a year or two of formal schooling. His stepmother encouraged him in his attempts to better himself, which he did by studying books and practicing oratory.

In 1830, Thomas Lincoln moved his family again, this time to Illinois in pursuit of more productive farmland. Abe struck out on his own, settling first in New Salem and later Springfield, where he enjoyed a successful law practice. In 1834, he launched a political career that would take him from the Illinois legislature to the White House.

A strong work ethic. A love of learning. A clear sense of right and wrong. A gift for gab and the intellect to back it up. Lincoln’s formative years prepared him well for the Civil War that would consume his presidency.

The Harmonists near Evansville

(Jan. 27) — For one shining moment in the early 19th century, a group called the Harmonists achieved utopia on the Wabash River. Two hundred years later, their experiment continues to inspire visitors to New Harmony, Indiana.

Founded in 1814 by 800 German Pietists and carefully ordered by their leader George Rapp, the town of New Harmony was an exercise in both religious freedom and economic innovation.

Residents believed they were God’s chosen people and devoted themselves to preparation for the Second Coming of Christ. They renounced private property and practiced celibacy.

Unlike other millennialists, who abandoned worldly activities and took to the rooftops to wait for Jesus, the Rappites felt called to create a good and just society on earth.

“That is still the lesson of New Harmony,” says Connie A. Weinzapfel, director of Historic New Harmony. “How do people come together for the success of the town where they live?”

By modern standards, the Harmonists were successful indeed. In the course of a decade, they built more than 180 log, frame and brick structures, including community centers, a granary, a tavern and a church. At its peak, the Harmonie Society had close to 900 members.

The Harmonists grew crops and raised merino sheep, planted vineyards and orchards, established a library and school and started businesses that made pottery, shoes, cloth and rope.

“Their economy was balanced and nearly self-sufficient, and it was very profitable,” writes the historian James Madison in *The Indiana Way*.

The architecture was especially notable at a time when 70 percent of their frontier neighbors lived in one-room log cabins. A typical Harmonist family dwelling was a two-

story frame and brick home modeled after the traditional German hall-kitchen design known as flurkuchenhaus.

Rapp and his followers immigrated to the United States in 1803 after being persecuted in Germany for their pietist and pacifist views. The group initially settled in Pennsylvania, but they outgrew that property and wanted better shipping access, so they moved west and acquired 20,000 acres on the Wabash River in what was still the Indiana Territory.

Citing scriptural reasons, Rapp decided to move the community back east to the Pittsburgh area in 1824. He sold the town for \$135,000 to Robert Owen, a wealthy industrialist of Welsh descent, and William Maclure, a Scottish philanthropist.

The two were seeking a ready-made location to launch their own utopian experiment — this one secular and socialist. It lasted only two years, likely because there was little incentive for people to work and no religious commitment to bind them together.

Owen's children remained in Indiana and helped create a culturally and scientifically vibrant community that thrived until the 1850s. Many years later, the wife of Owen descendant Kenneth Dale Owen was influential in restoring landmarks from both utopian experiments.

Today, New Harmony is a living museum town that features more than a dozen historic sites and a modern visitors center designed by internationally acclaimed architect Richard Meier.

Frontier Violence at Pigeon Roost

(Jan. 13) — On Sept. 3, 1812, a Native American war party killed more than 20 settlers living in a wooded outpost near present-day Scottsburg. Motivated by bounties offered by the British, the perpetrators scalped women and children, torched their log cabins and left the village in ashes.

The Massacre at Pigeon Roost is the most notorious example of frontier violence in Indiana history. To this day, it is shrouded in mystery. As the Indiana Historical Bureau notes, "There are many accounts of this tragedy in which the actions and specific numbers killed vary."

This much is clear: The massacre left settlers on guard as the War of 1812 raged in their own backyard.

The United States had declared war on Great Britain in June 1812 in response to British harassment of American ships, occupation of forts and alleged incitement of Native Americans in the Old Northwest, including

Indiana. Indians generally sided with the British, and they were encouraged after the fall of Detroit to conduct raids on pioneer settlements throughout the Midwest.

Pigeon Roost was one such place, named after passenger pigeons that used the area as a roosting site where they fertilized the soil and provided a plentiful poultry supply. The village was founded in 1809 by Revolutionary War soldier William E. Collings, who had moved north from Kentucky with family and friends.

Early histories of the episode seem culturally biased if not inflammatory — by 2014 sensibilities. Lizzie Coleman's 1904 "History of the Pigeon Roost Massacre" referred to "bands of savage redskins." George Cottman's 1915 "Centennial History and Handbook of Indiana" described the massacre as "the most diabolical event in our Indian history."

Some believe Pigeon Roost was a random but easy target because most men were away in the military service of General William Henry Harrison, which left remaining residents vulnerable to attack. Some say Pigeon Roost was specifically chosen by the war party of mostly Shawnees.

A 1909 "History of Clark County" by Lewis Baird claimed bad blood existed between the Collings family and local Indians because "the Collins (sic) boys had stolen a fawn from the Indians and refused to give it up." The elder Collings was home at the time of the massacre and provided the only armed resistance to the Native Americans, killing at least two of them.

In 1888, the Indiana Historical Society published an account of the incident by Judge Isaac Naylor, a member of the Indiana Territory militia, who had arrived at the site the following day.

"Oh, what a mournful scene of desolation, carnage and death met our vision as we beheld the smoking ruins of log cabins and the mangled bodies of men and women and children," Naylor wrote.

A monument commemorating the victims was dedicated in 1904 and became a state historic site in 1929.

Following the massacre, settlers in the areas of Clark, Scott, Jefferson, Harrison and Knox counties lived in a state of fear until the Treaty of Ghent ended war with England on December 24, 1814. For frontier men and women, the treaty symbolized the defeat of the Indians and the barrier they posed to westward expansion.

The Battle of Tippecanoe

(Dec. 30) — In the drizzling pre-dawn rain of Nov. 7, 1811, on high ground near modern-day Lafayette, Gen. William Henry

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In 1795, after a decisive U.S. victory over Native Americans at the Battle of Fallen Timbers, Tecumseh refused to sign a treaty he considered outright theft of Indian lands in the Ohio region. The treaty opened up the Midwest to a flood of settlers and relegated Native Americans to a shrinking corridor of land north of the Ohio River.

Harrison squashed Tecumseh's dream of an Indian confederacy that could resist the white man's westward advances.

The Battle of Tippecanoe was a defining moment in U.S.-Native American relations. "It was on this spot the Native Americans lost their grip on the fertile Midwestern lands they had roamed for thousands of years," according to interpreters at the Tippecanoe Battlefield national historic landmark.

Tecumseh and his brother, Tenskwatawa, are familiar figures in Indiana history – Shawnee brothers who tried to unite 50 tribes into a coalition to oppose the U.S. government. Their base of operation was Prophet's Town along the Wabash River, so named in honor of the younger brother's role as a prophet or spiritual leader of his people.

Tecumseh wasn't present for the showdown. He was in the South recruiting other tribal nations to join his confederacy. Harrison was aware of Tecumseh's absence when he marched 1,000 troops north from the territorial capital of Vincennes. His army set up camp where the Wabash River meets Tippecanoe Creek, about a mile west of the Indian settlement.

Most histories say Tenskwatawa was directed in a vision to conduct a sneak attack on Harrison's camp, ignoring his brother's warnings to avoid hostilities until his return. A more recent account suggests U.S. sentinels accidentally engaged warriors on night patrol. Regardless of who fired first, full-scale fighting broke out around the encampment.

By sunup, Americans claimed victory. The Indians "quit the battle and melted away into nothingness," said historian Richard J. Reid. Harrison lost 37 men; Native American casualties were not recorded but deemed comparable.

Although the battle lasted a mere two hours, it had been brewing for two decades.

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In 1808, Tecumseh and his brother moved their headquarters from Ohio to Tippecanoe County (Keth-Tip-Pe-Can-Nunk) at the invitation of the Delaware and Potawatomi tribes living there.

In 1809, Harrison, governor of the Indiana Territory, negotiated the Treaty of Fort Wayne that purchased 3 million acres from Delaware, Shawnee, Potawatomi and other tribes. This infuriated Tecumseh, who took a delegation

of warriors to Vincennes in 1810 to meet with Harrison and demand that the treaty be rescinded. He argued that the self-appointed chiefs who signed the treaty did not have the right to act on behalf of all, and he urged Native Americans not to give up any more land. That meeting, and another in 1811, convinced Harrison of the threat posed by Tecumseh.

Tippecanoe became known as the opening salvo in the War of 1812, which pitted Great Britain against the infant United States. Tecumseh and most Native American groups fought with the British.

Harrison and Tecumseh met again in that war. On Oct. 5, 1813, Harrison led U.S. troops against British and Native American fighters along the Thames River in Ontario, Canada. Tecumseh was killed on the battlefield, his vision of an effective Indian resistance movement dying with him.

The Swiss Created Our First Commercial Winery

(Dec. 16) — In 1796, John James Dufour left his native Switzerland to seek a new life and opportunity in the United States. Less than a decade later, he opened the country's first successful winemaking business — in southeastern Indiana.

It was still the Indiana Territory at that time, but the settlement would soon become the town of Vevay in Switzerland County. It was briefly a popular destination for Swiss immigrants fleeing revolutionary Europe.

Dufour had done his homework. As a teen, he studied viticulture and worked the family vineyards in Canton de Vaud, Switzerland. Upon his arrival in America, he visited private vineyards, including Thomas Jefferson's at Monticello, to study grape types, soil and climate.

In an 1826 book that details his experiences as a vintner, Dufour recalled the time he resolved to come to America.

"I was but 14; and I came to this determination by reading the newspapers, which were full of the American Revolutionary War and contained many letters from the officers of the French army aiding the republicans, which complained of the scarcity of the wine among them, in the midst of the greatest abundance of everything else . . . By inspection of the maps, I saw that America was in the parallel of the best wine countries in the world — like Spain, south of France, Italy and Greece."

Dufour initially settled near Lexington, Ky., and was joined by extended family members. There they planted 35 grape varieties, most

of which fell victim to disease because they were European species not suited to American growing conditions.

Uncomfortable with legal slavery in Kentucky, the family moved to Indiana and tried again, dubbing the area “New Switzerland,” and this time focusing on the two grape varieties that had flourished in Kentucky: Cape and Madeira.

In 1802, Congress granted 2,500 acres to Dufour on credit, and he later bought 1,200 more for the community’s expanding vineyards. He resold parcels to other French-speaking Swiss, including Louis Gex Oboussier, who purchased a tract of 319 acres along Indian Creek, which was renamed Venoge by the Swiss after a river in their native land. The first wine was produced in 1806 or 1807 and sold in frontier cities that included Cincinnati, Louisville and St. Louis.

In the end, the wine business did not prove economically viable. It was eclipsed by hay, which was in high demand as livestock feed and easy to load onto riverboats passing through Vevay on their way down the Ohio River.

Today the Musée de Venoge stands as a testament to southern Indiana’s once-thriving grape culture. The farmhouse dates to about 1805 and is a rare example of French colonial architecture that would have been favored by the Swiss immigrants.

“It was slated to be burned down” in the mid 1990s, when local preservationists stepped in to save it. “We realized it was an important piece of architecture in Switzerland County,” says Donna Weaver.

The home is open Sundays 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. spring through fall and by appointment; call 812-593-5726. Although the grape vines are gone, the landscape is unchanged from the days of Dufour, Oboussier and their fellow Swiss vine growers.

Lewis and Clark Joined Forces Here

(Dec. 2) — In 1803, President Thomas Jefferson asked Meriwether Lewis to lead an exploration of the Louisiana Territory in search of a Northwest Passage. Lewis invited William Clark to join him. It would become one of the most famous partnerships in history, and it started in Indiana.

“When they shook hands, the Lewis and Clark expedition began,” wrote Stephen Ambrose in “Undaunted Courage,” the best-selling account of the trans-continental journey. Lewis was working at that time as Jefferson’s private secretary in Washington, D.C. Clark was living with his brother, George Rogers Clark, in Clarksville in the Indiana Territory.

The two met up in Clarksville on Oct. 14, 1803, and used the Clark cabin that overlooked the Falls of the Ohio River as base camp while they made final preparations. On Oct. 26, the duo and their initial crew members pushed off down the Ohio River in a keelboat and red canoe and headed west to St. Charles, Mo., the expedition’s official starting point.

“In practical terms, the partnership of Lewis and Clark may be said to have begun during a 13-day interlude before they set out on Oct. 26,” says Stephenie Ambrose Tubbs, author of “The Lewis and Clark Companion.”

Clark recruited the nucleus of the Corps of Discovery from the area around Clarksville and Louisville after being directed by Lewis “to find out and engage some good hunters, stout, healthy, unmarried men, accustomed to the woods, and capable of bearing bodily fatigue in a pretty considerable degree.”

One of those recruits was Sgt. Charles Floyd, after whom Floyd County is named. Floyd lived in Clarksville and was the first constable of Clarksville Township. His death on Aug. 20, 1804, near Sioux City, Iowa, likely from a ruptured appendix, was the only fatality among the 33 members in the permanent party of the 1804-06 expedition.

Two others had Indiana connections. Pfc. John Shields was the oldest enlisted man at 34 and a friend of Daniel Boone. His skills as a blacksmith and gunsmith were considered critical to the trip’s success. Afterward, he settled near Corydon. He died in 1809 and was buried in Little Flock Cemetery in Harrison County.

William Bratton was a skilled hunter who moved to Indiana after the expedition and became active in military and government affairs. By 1822, Bratton and his wife lived in Waynetown and had 10 children. In 1824, he was appointed justice of the peace in Wayne Township and served as a local school superintendent. He died in 1841 and was buried in the Old Pioneer Cemetery in Montgomery County.

Indiana’s role in the expedition is often overlooked by historians, though Clark’s cabin and the crew’s departure site are popular attractions for Lewis and Clark enthusiasts. The Falls of the Ohio State Park in Clarksville has an interpretive center in which visitors can learn not only about Lewis and Clark but also about the Devonian fossil beds exposed at the riverbank.

The park entry features 10-foot bronze figures of Lewis and Clark mounted on a 16½-ton slab of Indiana limestone. The sculpture depicts the moment when Lewis and Clark greeted each other in Clarksville to begin their 8,000-mile trek.

Uncomfortable with legal slavery in Kentucky, the Dufour family moved to Indiana and tried again, dubbing the area “New Switzerland,” and this time focusing on the two grape varieties that had flourished in Kentucky: Cape and Madeira.

Racial Journalism

What if being morally or even viscerally uncomfortable with any of the 50 self-identified “genders” now recognized by Facebook is something different than treating others as subhuman solely because of the arbitrary shading of their skin?

Feb. 14 — What if the featured columnist for the *Indianapolis Star* is wrong that Western Civilization can be explicated through the historical lens of Selma, Ala., circa 1965? What if there is a difference between behavior and skin pigment?

The columnist was so outraged that a group of black ministers would speak out against same-sex marriage that she interrupted her vacation to write a column labeling them “hypocrites.” Here is her reasoning, which in effect carried the day in the Indiana Senate this week:

1. Racists opposed black-white marriages during the civil-rights struggle.
2. Blacks (and politicians) who don’t want to be called names by big-city columnists would be smart to support same-sex marriages today.

But what if being morally or even viscerally uncomfortable with any of the 50 self-identified “genders” now recognized by Facebook is something different than treating others as subhuman solely because of the arbitrary shading of their skin? That would mean Clarence Thomas, Thomas Sowell and other eminent black thinkers are right that we have become a society dangerously myopic on the issue of race.

It is a position addressed by Tom Huston, an Indianapolis attorney, elsewhere in this issue. An excerpt:

For progressives of every hue, the distance that blacks have come does not appear as impressive as the distance they have yet to go, and, as the historian Alexis de Tocqueville would have predicted, resentment of the vestiges of racial discrimination has increased exponentially in proportion to the decrease in the equality gap. Thus, there is no armistice, no peace, only escalating conflict on an expanded front. In this new struggle, which is about equalitarianism, not equality, long-time alliances have been severed, old positions have been abandoned, the appeal to conscience has yielded to the claim of victimhood, and intimidation has been substituted for persuasion. Positions have hardened, rhetoric has become shrill and argument has given way to assertion. It has gotten ugly, and anyone who says so is dismissed as a bigot.

The argument of another contributor, Dr. Timothy Shutt, suggests that the viewpoint the *Star* discovers as “outrageous” is hardly new and certainly didn’t emanate solely from either Selma, Alabama, or from the same-sex marriage debate in the Indiana Legislature:

I have read that, according to comparative linguists, the most common word for ‘others,’ the most common word for those who are not ‘Hellenes’ or ‘human beings’ or whatever, when one considers the whole array of known languages, reduces not, as we might expect, to ‘barbarians’ or ‘enemies,’ but rather — viscerally and dismissively enough — to ‘the stinkers.’ A revealing construction, if not, on reflection, entirely surprising. All cultures think they’re the best. Or all cultures I’ve ever heard of. Including our own — even in its most recent, most progressive incarnations.

That sorry and ancient inclination, the assumption that only other people stink, can be found in a contemporary culture — the fading journalistic one on display recently in our state’s largest newspaper.

Super Bowl Exposes Boosterish Media

Feb. 3 — Generally, the hype and extravagance of a modern Super Bowl is approaching levels that only an Albert Speer could fully appreciate. The game, the sport, is decidedly secondary, if that. Two specific takeaways from the Feb. 2 spectacle:

First, the super promises of mass transportation were shown to be super false. The ride to and from the game, billed as the first “Mass Transit” Super Bowl, were by all accounts miserable and dangerous ordeals. The governmental mass-transit systems, unhindered by weather, despite two years notice of the date and time of the game, plus an exact count of tickets sold and virtually all other information any planner might want, could not manage to come even close to estimating the number of transit users (underestimating by almost half), let alone manage the resulting chaos. We will now be told they were underfunded.

Second, the pain, anguish and shock of Bronco fans were representative of the price we pay for a modern mass media staffed by journalists who fancy themselves advocates rather than reporters. Bronco fans were given no clue as to the speed and strength of the Seahawk corners and backs. Here is the Indianapolis *Star*’s man:

Sunday will be a coronation. Manning has faced good defenses all year, defenses nearly as good as Seattle and its Legion of Boom, and he has eviscerated all of them. Nobody has really slowed the Broncos, and Seattle won’t be able to do it Sunday in the Super Bowl at the Meadowlands.

If big-shot sports columnists had trouble sorting out the possibilities, the bookies and oddsmakers did not. They had the Seahawks by what turned out to be extremely comfortable margins. (Thank goodness we were only unprepared for a game and not the Chinese navy or a tyrannical president.)

Someday the owners of our media will discover — rediscover, actually — that customers of information systems, be they print or digital, don’t pay to have someone tell them what they are supposed to believe, however noble and generous of spirit that belief might be. They certainly don’t pay a sports columnist to boost his personal access to players and managers with flattering “forecasts.”

What they pay for is accurate prediction — of the day’s weather, of the week’s business cycles, of the coming season’s

hemline, of the next government intrusion into their lives and, yes, of who will win the big game.

We've Forgotten What Exercised Mr. Revere

Jan. 29 — The American War of Independence was fought “by British Americans against a German King for British ideals.” — Lady Astor

Other than the fact that the first American settlements wouldn't have survived had they not abandoned that picture-perfect “sharing” Thanksgiving for a less dramatic year-round market-based economy, America's defining historical moment may be Paul Revere's Ride. Yes, it was actually a ride, but he wasn't shouting “The British are coming!”

Dan Hannan argues in his new book that it would have made no sense to yell such a thing to a population that at the time would have never thought of itself as anything but British:

What Paul Revere shouted was, “The regulars are out” (or, according to one source, “The redcoats are out”). In America, as elsewhere in the Anglosphere, people had an ingrained distrust of standing armies, seeing them as instruments of internal repression.

The larger point is that the American Revolution wasn't about expelling a foreign power — at least not initially. Rather, it was about restoring well-established individual rights of British subjects (the colonists) being usurped by an arrogant King George (a centralized governmental power) and his redcoats (seminal versions of Homeland Security, FBI, IRS, etc.) — the instruments of that usurpation.

And those rights, as both the King and Paul Revere would have known, were not invented self-serving on the spot. They dated back to 1642 and the English Civil War fought over the very same principle, *i.e.*, that historically exceptional relationship between a free people and their limited government that is both the United States and the United Kingdom.

Finally, Hannan reminds us that the 18th-century meaning of the word “revolution” did not imply so much the changing of things but the restoration of things: “When they (the colonists) used the word ‘revolution,’ they meant it in the sense of a full turn of the wheel, a restoration of that which had been placed the wrong way up.”

If there is a difference between that situation and ours, it escapes this writer.

Preschool, a Cynical View

Cynic n. A blackguard whose faulty vision sees things as they are not as they ought to be.

— *The Devil's Dictionary* of Ambrose Bierce

Jan. 16 — The governor didn't need to throw data at us this week in his State of the State address. We all agree that Hoosier families are overwhelmed. Our political leaders should be commended for dedicating this session to considering the most vulnerable in those families — preschool children.

Let us hope, though, that we don't wake up one day to find that this profound issue was treated carelessly, even politically. The weak rationale behind the pertinent legislation troubles that thought.

For starters, the politicians misidentify the problem. They tell us that state involvement in preschool is needed to assist academically disadvantaged four-year-olds. The scholarly research, though, is mixed. Indeed, the two sides of the issue are asking different questions. Jason Richwine, writing in *National Review*, frames the debate this way:

The relevant public policy question — the one with which skeptics concern themselves — is not whether early education in general has value, but whether government preschool provides any additional value. For the clearest illustration, imagine a new government-funded preschool in which all the children who attend have simply switched over from a private preschool of equal quality. In that case, the supposed public benefit of government preschool — fostering a more educated citizenry — would be non-existent.

The most extensively studied preschool experiment, the 1960s Perry Program in Ypsilanti, Mich., finds no increase in Intelligent Quotient. The observable benefit in the Perry study, interestingly, is more important than scoring well on a standardized test: Preschool apparently teaches self-management, self-control and how to effectively apply not only intelligence but all other faculties.

The thing about preschool is this: It fills a unique niche in all of education. The first day children enter that classroom is the day when they are introduced to society itself, a wondrous but odd place for “students” who just a few months before were being treated as toddlers if not babies. That can be exhilarating for one, terrifying for another. In either case, the coming days are critical.

The experts, including those who study brain development, tell us that this is the time in life — perhaps the optimum time — when 4-year-olds can be taught self-control, something they notoriously lack. It is where they can begin to develop a healthy, constrained

The experts tell us that preschool is the time in life — perhaps the optimum time — when 4-year-olds can be taught self-control, something they notoriously lack. It is where they can begin to develop a healthy, constrained vision of their place in a free society.

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— Eric Schansberg

vision of their place in a free society. They need this and need it quickly if they are going to do what they want to do most in the world — play with the children on the other side of that room.

But socializing isn't easy when you're 4; you need help. Ideally, that help comes from a loving mother. In a pinch, though, it comes from a trusted and carefully chosen surrogate — in this context, an experienced preschool teacher.

So why can't government be a preschool “shareholder,” as they like to say — at least to the degree it helps the most financially hard-pressed afford that surrogate, maybe even provide a couple of thousand iPads?

The answer is that proactive government is an idiot at creating freestanding, well-rounded citizens. It is a genius, though, at forging dependent, myopic subjects, a product for which there is no popular demand in a constitutional republic.

So is this a bait-and-switch? Dr. Cecil Bohanon addresses the dichotomy elsewhere in this journal:

Self-control may be one of the virtues necessary for a free society. Nevertheless, it seems ironic to use the coercive mechanism of government (yes, taxes are coercion) to set up programs to teach self-control to groups that social scientists tell us lack self-control.

The tip-off that this may be headed in the wrong direction is that statehouse support for the governor's preschool plans has coalesced around a voucher system, with its accompanying actual or implied regulatory intrusion. Tax credits, at least for the working poor who pay taxes, would be the more straightforward, disencumbering way to help preschool children and their families.

That is the goal, right? Helping preschool children? Not padding political resumes, building new regulatory platforms, bolstering public-sector unions or propping up marginal schools?

Only a cynic would think otherwise.

The Unintended Consequences Of Careless Public Policy

“The irony is that Gov. Mitch Daniels’ 2008 property-tax reform is in part responsible for what the Chamber is calling a skewed tax burden.”

— Scott Smith in the Dec. 23 Kokomo Tribune

Jan. 2, 2014 — It didn't make any of the New Year's Day lists, but it has changed our lives nonetheless. It is the acceptance of “unintended consequences” as a workable excuse for catastrophic public policy.

Sure, we all make mistakes. Indeed, the economic philosophies favored by this foundation are grounded on the assumption that

no matter how smart the humans gathered in a room are, they would lack sufficient information to make flawless decisions.

Those who now plead unintended consequences, however, do not concede such fallibility. They guarantee effectivity, if not perfection. All they require is official license, unlimited money and, of course, the power of fiat.

Pulitzer Prize winner Saul Bellow famously referred to this in aggregate as “The Good Intentions Paving Company,” with the road to hell being what is paved.

We have come to expect this from Washington. What is dismaying is that we are seeing this same thinking at the city, county and state level.

On our desk is an excellent analysis by Scott Smith of the *Kokomo Tribune* under the headline, “2008 Property Tax Reform Had Unintended Consequences.” Smith casts a reporter's eye on an inference by the state Chamber of Commerce that it was blindsided by former Gov. Mitch Daniels' property-tax reform.

It seems that the signature achievement of the Daniels administration contained anti-business elements that in 2008 apparently slipped past the Chamber, which supported the enabling legislation. The result was a \$3-billion shift from residential homesteads onto industrial and commercial property.

This, dagnabbit, skewed the tax burden away from job creation at the very moment Indiana entered a historic recession and just as falling revenues put small-town budgets under stress. Who knew?

Dr. Eric Schansberg, for one. Schansberg, an economist and adjunct scholar with this foundation pointed out what should have been obvious: Unless someone finds the courage to eliminate unneeded programs, it does no good to cap one set of taxes if you are only going to raise rates on another. Schansberg, writing in the January 2008 issue of the foundation's quarterly journal, offered this warning regarding Daniels' politically crafted approach:

For those Hoosiers who want a large government, there are no easy ways to raise the money to finance it. There are no efficient ways to raise it, either. And of course, finding an equitable way to raise so much money is particularly difficult — at least in the eyes of those being taxed.

Schansberg explained that property taxes were only a symptom of larger problems that, it turns out, were only deferred by the tax cap, all of them left unsolved and unalleviated. Those problems, Schansberg noted, are the predictable

rather than unintended consequence of “trying to fund large-scale government, and fund it through the activity of politicians, interest groups and a public that hasn’t the time or energy to pay much attention to the inequities and inefficiencies of political behavior.”

A knowledgeable observer who spends many hours in the halls of the Legislature sat me down one day for this overview:

Look, mercantilism is the best game in town. Patronage pays even when free-market signals are clouded — or are just wrong. Indeed, the false flags that are our economic ‘recovery’ treat as a sucker the honest business operator who tries to use his or her wits to succeed. So, from a pure economic sense, it is the right economic decision to play the game and ingratiate one’s self with power rather than go down swinging in a rigged fight.

And he was talking about those thought to be the most conservative of Indiana’s political players. That understood, careless tax policy may be only a symptom of Indiana’s troubles; the real problem is an excuse-prone leadership that places the interests of a government regime over those of its citizenry.

Strapped Local Government? Try Setting Some Priorities

Dec. 6 — Did you hear the howls of pain throughout Indiana from local officials on announcement that the Pence administration would phase out their golden goose, the business personal-property tax? The governor thinks it will level the playing field, attract investment and create jobs.

The anguish is genuine. The amount of revenue to be lost — about a billion a year statewide — means that county and city officeholders won’t be able to finesse this. They may have to set priorities; they may have to decide what local government should and should not be doing — and then explain their determination to a constituency.

If you trust that your representative is doing this already, you may want to double-check. In my county, public officials have reduced responsibility to a scheme: 1) a budget crisis is spotted on the horizon; 2) the political and fiscal costs are carefully tallied; then 3) everybody sits tight until the only option remaining is to raise taxes.

Legislators, alas, are in on it. Even the Republicans operate on a “revenue-neutral” basis, meaning government must be compensated for every lost tax dollar.

Even before the governor could make his announcement, Sen. Brandt Hershman, R-Buck Creek, the chairman of the Senate Tax and Fiscal Policy committee, issued a warning:

“Absent finding a replacement revenue source that mitigates the impact (of cutting the tax), we have to be cautious.”

Instead of guarding his revenue stream, Mr. Hershman might introduce “core functions” legislation. It is being considered in several states as a way to organize the discussion around a critical question, “What, exactly, is the job of local government?”

Oregon state Rep. Kim Thatcher began a campaign to identify core functions there with nothing more than loose bipartisan agreement that government “can’t and shouldn’t do everything.”

“Our system of budgeting wasn’t working,” she told the American Legislative Exchange Council. “Instead of agencies pestering lawmakers for more and more money, we first needed to establish what the core functions of government were and then decide how to divvy up the available funds.”

Ryan Cummins, an adjunct of this foundation, already has a list of core functions for Indiana. As a former Terre Haute councilman and finance chairman, Cummins travels the state asking citizens if they truly want their government to own cemeteries, swimming pools, parks and golf courses. And do they care whether the emergency personnel who answer their 911 calls are municipal union firefighters, or comparably trained and equipped private contractors?

Finally, Indiana needs a new model of public official, one who does not reflexively seek to enlarge government and test budgets to the breaking point. A nominee would be Judge Dan Heath of the Allen County Superior Court.

About the same time the governor was proofreading his press release, Judge Heath was going over details of a contract to privatize food service at his county’s juvenile center. Heath and his staff spent months negotiating the price points on the contract as well as squaring it with a stack of federal and state regulations.

In the end, he expects to see savings for his county’s taxpayers in excess of \$50,000 a year. And that figure does not include the fact that they will no longer pay related taxpayer-funded pensions years into the future.

These are at least a few ways that Republicans can help their governor make good on his pledge that his tax cut need not “unduly harm local government’s abilities to meet obligations.”

Democrats will have to set their own priorities, of course, if they can find any. — *tcl*

“Our system of budgeting wasn’t working. Instead of agencies pestering lawmakers for more and more money, we first needed to establish what the core functions of government were and then decide how to divvy up the available funds.”

— Kim Thatcher

Q. With the Civil Rights Movement entering its eighth decade, have we achieved a color-blind society?

18% — Yes

82% — No

Comments

• “Government has joined those against a color-blind society by assuring that any policy with disparate impact on ethnic or sexual minorities is evidence of invidious discrimination. Color-blind once was a liberal concept, eschewing racial bias, but now it is left to conservatives to espouse.”

• “When it is beneficial to those in power, minorities can achieve as much as they want and are accepted by all. However, there is an element of our society that has amassed power and wealth by fanning the flames of divisive race issues for the sole purpose of accumulating more wealth and power. They use the ‘divide and conquer’ technique to accomplish this to perfection — and unfortunately American society falls victim to this technique every time.”

• “My ‘no’ is conditional. Great improvements have been made from where we were 50 years ago. We may now be at an inflection point where our culture is catching up to our laws and ideals. We have a ways yet to go.”

• “There has never been more focus on race by the Main Street Media. It is shocking that it is OK to criticize some groups and not others.”

• “Except — of course — for the people who benefit financially from prolonging the message that we aren’t color-blind, and except for the people who scream ‘racism’ every time something doesn’t go their way.”

• “Maybe 80 to 90 percent.”

• “Almost, but the most racist people are the ones continuing the racism. For example, we have tickets to a local playhouse. Every year the major theme of the plays is the blight of the minorities. Enough. We all have our challenges these days.”

• “Most conservative whites and blacks whom I know are paying no attention to color. Liberal whites and blacks, on the other hand, are expending massive amounts of effort keeping color an issue. The greatest irony in all of this is that scientists have already dropped race as a construct. The reason is that evidence suggests we all came from common stock; we are all blurring back into an indistinct melting pot. Why then is the U.S. government putting so much money and effort into carefully classifying all its citizens?”

• “I think this is a function of your upbringing, age and personal beliefs. A color-blind society would never mention race, religion or ethnicity. I think that race, religion and ethnicity are frequently used as excuses.”

• “Violence and lawlessness of young black men perpetuate the difference.”

• “We seem to be more polarized than ever. The government continues to paint the minority communities as victims and the majority as oppressors, especially since Barack Obama became president. The media is a culprit in this as well. Notice how it covers stories when there are issues between minorities and whites. This one-size-fits-all for whites being prejudiced and minorities being victims and the media being without prejudice creates resentment. If this country is to survive as a nation we need to put this behind us and focus on the true problems that lie in front of us.”

• “Conservatives have achieved a color-blind society, but the Left not so much.”

• Your question is not the right one. It should be, ‘Do we want to be a colorblind society?’ All colors are proud to be ‘their’ color. We want each color to be beyond color and love the inner person, no matter what the color. HE did make all of us.”

• “I believe that is an unachievable expectation. There is no society that has reached that level. Our society has reached a reasonable level.”

• “The more government attempts to legislate equality the greater the inequality becomes.”

• “Human nature is such that every person will choose their associations regardless of the laws of the state. Every human being should be equal in the eyes of the law and treatment under such law. Beyond that, it is the choice of the individual. This is as it should be. Every human being will answer for their choices, whatever they were, when they stand before God in judgment.”

• “Reverse discrimination is invidious by definition and racism in concept.”

• “Has America moved well down the path of eliminating race-based prejudices? Yes, but a virulent race-based prejudice flourishes from within the midst of those who decry race-based prejudice.”

• “Color-blindness is now tantamount to racism.”

• “We’ve begun a shift towards an economically based society, but, since race is still linked to economic prosperity, we aren’t instinctively blind to race.”

• “I doubt we ever will, but there are undoubtedly more options for all of us, especially black Americans, than there were 50 or 100 years ago.”

• “We are more than ever dividing ourselves into abstract and arbitrary tribes. Gender, sexuality, economic, racial, occupation, political — we have ever new ways to define ‘us’ versus ‘them.’”

Thirty-three of the 141 correspondents contacted completed this quarter's poll Feb. 18-20 for a response rate of 23 percent.

People who know about opinion surveys don't think much of ours. The sample is inherently biased and so small as to be little more than a focus group. The questions, sometimes confusing, are casually worded and transparently drive at one point or another. That said, we have learned to trust our members and eagerly await their thoughts on this and that.

THE DESTINIES OF THOSE WHO SIGNED

*From an essay on the signers of the Declaration of Independence
by Rush H. Limbaugh Jr., distributed by the Federalist Magazine*

• **Francis Lewis** — A New York delegate saw his home plundered and his estates, in what is now Harlem, completely destroyed by British soldiers. Mrs. Lewis was captured and treated with great brutality. She died from the effects of her abuse. • **William Floyd** — Another New York delegate, he was able to escape with his wife and children across Long Island Sound to Connecticut, where they lived as refugees without income for seven years. When they came home, they found a devastated ruin. • **Phillips Livingstone** — Had all his great holdings in New York confiscated and his family driven out of their home. Livingstone died in 1778 still working in Congress for the cause. • **Louis Morris** — The fourth New York delegate saw all his timber, crops and livestock taken. For seven years he was barred from his home and family. • **John Hart** — From New Jersey, he risked his life to return home to see his dying wife. Hessian soldiers rode after him, and he escaped in the woods. While his wife lay on her deathbed, the soldiers ruined his farm and wrecked his homestead. Hart, 65, slept in caves and woods as he was hunted across the countryside. • **Dr. John Witherspoon** — He was president of the College of New Jersey, later called Princeton. The British occupied the town of Princeton, and billeted troops in the college. They trampled and burned the finest college library in the country. • **Judge Richard Stockton** — Another New Jersey delegate signer, he had rushed back to his estate in an effort to evacuate his wife and children. The family found refuge with friends, but a sympathizer betrayed them. Judge Stockton was pulled from bed in the night and brutally beaten by the arresting soldiers. Thrown into a common jail, he was deliberately starved. • **Robert Morris** — A merchant prince of Philadelphia, delegate and signer, raised arms and provisions which made it possible for Washington to cross the Delaware at Trenton. In the process he lost 150 ships at sea, bleeding his own fortune and credit dry. • **George Clymer** — A Pennsylvania signer, he escaped with his family from their home, but their property was completely destroyed by the British in the Germantown and Brandywine campaigns. • **Dr. Benjamin Rush** — Also from Pennsylvania, he was forced to flee to Maryland. As a heroic surgeon with the army, Rush had several narrow escapes. • **William Ellery** — A Rhode Island delegate, he saw his property and home burned to the ground. • **Edward Rutledge** • **Arthur Middleton** • **Thomas Heyward Jr.** — These three South Carolina signers were taken by the British in the siege of Charleston and carried as prisoners of war to St. Augustine, Fla. • **Thomas Nelson** — A signer of Virginia, he was at the front in command of the Virginia military forces. With British General Charles Cornwallis in Yorktown, fire from 70 heavy American guns began to destroy Yorktown piece by piece. Lord Cornwallis and his staff moved their headquarters into Nelson's palatial home. While American cannonballs were making a shambles of the town, the house of Governor Nelson remained untouched. Nelson turned in rage to the American gunners and asked, "Why do you spare my home?" They replied, "Sir, out of respect to you." Nelson cried, "Give me the cannon," and fired on his magnificent home himself, smashing it to bits. But Nelson's sacrifice was not quite over. He had raised \$2 million for the Revolutionary cause by pledging his own estates. When the loans came due, a newer peacetime Congress refused to honor them, and Nelson's property was forfeited. He was never reimbursed. He died, impoverished, a few years later at the age of 50. • **Abraham Clark** — He gave two sons to the officer corps in the Revolutionary Army. They were captured and sent to the infamous British prison hulk afloat in New York harbor known as the hell ship "Jersey," where 11,000 American captives were to die. The younger Clarks were treated with a special brutality because of their father. One was put in solitary and given no food. With the end almost in sight, with the war almost won, no one could have blamed Abraham Clark for acceding to the British request when they offered him his sons' lives if he would recant and come out for the king and parliament. The utter despair in this man's heart, the anguish in his soul, must reach out to each one of us down through 200 years with his answer: "No."



Emanuel Gottlieb Leutze, oil on canvas, 1851



Thomas Hoepker, photograph, Sept. 11, 2001

Please Join Us

In these trying times, those states with local governments in command of the broadest range of policy options will be the states that prosper. We owe it to coming generations to make sure that Indiana is one of them. Because the foundation does not employ professional fundraisers, we need your help in these ways:

• **ANNUAL DONATIONS** are fully tax deductible: individuals (\$50) or corporations (\$250) or the amount you consider appropriate to the mission and the immediate tasks ahead. Our mailing address is PO Box 5166, Fort Wayne, IN 46895 (your envelope and stamp are appreciated). You also can join at the website, <http://www.inpolicy.org>, using your credit card or the PayPal system. Be sure to include your e-mail address as the journal and newsletters are delivered in digital format.

• **BEQUESTS** are free of estate tax and can substantially reduce the amount of your assets claimed by the government. You can give future support by including the following words in your will: "I give, devise and bequeath to the Indiana Policy Review Foundation (*insert our address and amount being given here*) to be used to support its mission." A bequest can be a specific dollar amount, a specific piece of property, a percentage of an estate or all or part of the residue of an estate. You also can name the foundation as a contingency beneficiary in the event someone named in your will no longer is living.



"The Battle of Cowpens," painted by William Ranney in 1845, shows an unnamed patriot (far left) firing his pistol and saving the life of Col. William Washington.

INDIANAPOLICY

Review

An Indiana Journal of Classical Liberal Enquiry
Observing its 25th Year