

**A TALE
OF TWO BUDGETS**
YUVAL LEVIN

the weekly

Standard

APRIL 2, 2012 • \$4.95

CAR WARS

FRED BARNES
ON THE GM BAILOUT



AMERICA'S WATERWAYS KEEP HARDWORKING AMERICANS HARD AT WORK



Our nation's rivers transport agricultural exports around the world, and help support the U.S. agriculture sector's positive trade balance.

They turn the lights on, and keep the car running.
They provide and protect American jobs.

But the waterways' infrastructure is aging.
Let's rebuild our locks and dams by American workers, to keep
American products moving at a lower cost to everyone.

Let's Keep America
and its Products
Moving!



**WATERWAYS
COUNCIL, INC.**
www.waterwayscouncil.org

Waterways Council, Inc. is the national public policy organization advocating a modern and well-maintained national system of ports and inland waterways. The group is supported by waterways carriers, shippers, port authorities, shipping associations, and waterways advocacy groups from all regions of the country.

Does anyone consult “how to” books to learn to walk, run, or ride a bicycle? Do children know they are conforming to natural laws, as they perform those feats? No, of course not! Whoever or whatever created those laws waited untold centuries for people to identify the laws of physics.

There is a natural law of behavior that was not identified until the past century by Richard W. Wetherill. It calls for people’s thinking and behavior to be rational and honest, according to the dictates of a self-enforcing natural law.

Wetherill spent decades trying to explain that the social, health, and economic woes of mankind were being caused by people’s contradiction of a natural law: a law he called the *law of absolute right*.

In general, people resent being told what they can and cannot think, say, and do. Their reason seems to be that it is “their business”: a mistake made by those who overlook where the gift of life originates.

Introduction to the law of absolute right and its influence on behavior is vital information urgently needed by every member of society.

Strange as it might seem, it could be said, the only choice people have is whether they will live in accord with the dictates of natural laws or be penalized for ignoring them.

Researchers diligently sought to learn of natural laws and how they functioned in order to avoid penalties for ignoring them. So people surrender to laws of physics, telling them what they can and cannot do.

But to date, those researchers’ failure to acknowledge nature’s law of absolute right and its impact on human life is perpetuating countless human miseries.

We suggest that the behavioral law is nature’s way to create a group of survivors that have resolved their former problems and trouble. Having adjusted their decisions to be rational and honest, a common comment heard from those persons is, “It works.”

For example, one person reported that he had made friendly overtures to a long-time estranged, close relative and introduced him to the law of absolute right. Later this person reported a phone call from his formerly estranged relative who agreed with others and said, “It works.”

We invite readers to face all future situations with a decision to respond rationally and honestly despite any past reactions. In that moment you will have yielded to yet another of nature’s laws. And you will discover that it works.

By conforming to nature’s law of absolute right, you join other people already enthusiastically benefiting from having changed their former motivation. All it takes is to be rational and honest in all your thoughts, words, and deeds.



FREE On-Line eBooks

**Read, download, print!
www.alphapub.com**

Natural-law Essays and Books describe the function of nature’s law of absolute right. Read, download, print books and essays FREE.

If you lack access to the Website, our books are also available in print at low cost. For an order form, write to The Alpha Publishing House, PO Box 255, Royersford, PA 19468.

This public-service message is from a self-financed, nonprofit group of former students of Mr. Wetherill.

Unfair Wireless Taxes and Fees

WIRELESS TAX MADNESS

Consumers

Consumers

S. 543

Tiebreaker

A BRACKET WE CAN ALL AGREE ON!

Picking a winner here is a layup.

Wireless consumers are being hit with a full-court press of taxes and fees, paying on average more than 16% every month.

The bipartisan Wyden-Snowe **'Wireless Tax Fairness Act' (S. 543)** would place a five-year moratorium on all new, discriminatory state and local wireless taxes and fees.

The House has already passed a companion bill (H.R. 1002) with a slam dunk voice vote.

Senators, get in the game and give consumers a time-out from unfair wireless taxes and fees.

Co-sponsor and pass the **'Wireless Tax Fairness Act,' S. 543.**

Give consumers a time-out from unfair wireless taxes and fees.

Pass the **'Wireless Tax Fairness Act,' S. 543.**

PAID FOR BY MYWIRELESS.ORG

 mywireless.org®
america's wireless voice

Contents

April 2, 2012 • Volume 17, Number 28



- 2 The Scrapbook *Biden the boastful, gray eminence & more*
- 5 Casual *Joseph Epstein, anxious author*
- 7 Editorials
- Etch A Sketch Politics* **BY WILLIAM KRISTOL**
- Anti-Energy in the Executive* **BY MARK HEMINGWAY**
- A Path to Security* **BY THOMAS DONNELLY & GARY SCHMITT**

Articles

- 10 Bureaucratic Gas **BY STEVEN F. HAYWARD**
To lower prices at the pump, abolish the boutique fuel regime
- 12 The 'Clean Energy' Stalking Horse **BY ROBERT BRYCE**
A carbon tax by any other name . . .
- 16 A Model Intervention **BY TOD LINDBERG**
Has the Libya precedent paralyzed the Obama administration on Syria?
- 20 Risk-Averse Romney **BY STEPHEN F. HAYES**
The candidate attempts to reassure conservatives
- 22 Al Qaeda's Network in Iran **BY THOMAS JOSCELYN & BENJAMIN WEINTHAL**
Revelations from a German courtroom

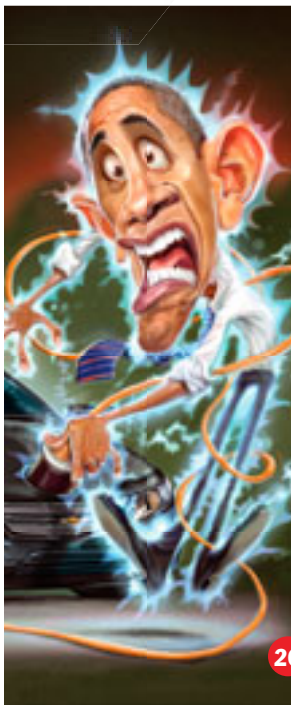
Features

- 26 Car Wars **BY FRED BARNES**
General Motors is no longer Government Motors. Why won't the administration sell its stock?
- 30 A Tale of Two Budgets **BY YUVAL LEVIN**
Paul Ryan draws the contrast Republicans will need this fall
- 34 What's Left, Who's Right **BY ROSS TERRILL**
Why did the Chinese Communists purge Bo Xilai?

Books & Arts

- 38 A Movement Explained **BY MATTHEW CONTINETTI**
What does the Tea Party mean?
- 41 Natural Philosopher **BY LAWRENCE KLEPP**
The skeptical mind, and sympathetic character, of David Hume
- 43 Out of This World **BY CATHY YOUNG**
George R.R. Martin and his fantastic universe
- 44 Journey to Clubland **BY SARA LODGE**
A place where people can go to escape, but still belong'
- 47 The Children's Hour **BY JOHN PODHORETZ**
A modern comedy of manners just misses the mark
- 48 Parody *Shaking up the primary with a few games*

COVER BY GARY LOCKE



Biden the Boastful

The incomparable Sir Patrick Leigh Fermor died last June at 96 after an astonishing life, remembered both for his amazingly erudite travel writing and feats of almost superhuman heroism as a leader of the resistance to the Nazi occupation of Crete. It was in the latter connection that THE SCRAPBOOK thought of Leigh Fermor last week, for reasons we will get to in a bit.

But first, let us consult the obituary that appeared last June in the *Telegraph*, as it provides an admirably concise account of Leigh Fermor's most famous contribution to the war effort. Having acquired fluency in Greek and great familiarity with the terrain in the years before the war, he was infiltrated onto the island after it fell to the Nazis in 1941, to lead the guerrilla activities of the Cretan partisans. As the *Telegraph* recounted:

His occasional bouts of leave were spent in Cairo, at Tara, the rowdy household presided over by a Polish countess, Sophie Tarnowska. It was on a steamy bathroom window in the house that Leigh Fermor and another of Tara's residents, Bill Stanley Moss, conceived a remarkable operation that they subsequently executed with great dash on Crete in April 1944.

Dressed as German police corporals, the pair stopped the car belonging to General Karl Kreipe, the island's commander, while he was returning one evening to his villa near Knossos. The chauffeur disposed of, Leigh Fermor donned the general's hat and, with Moss driving the car, they bluffed their way

through the centre of Heraklion and a further 22 [German] checkpoints. Kreipe, meanwhile, was hidden under the back seat and sat on by three hefty *andartes*, or Cretan partisans.

For three weeks the group evaded German search parties, finally marching the general over the top of Mount Ida, the mythical birthplace of Zeus. It was here that occurred one of the most celebrated incidents in the Leigh Fermor legend.

Gazing up at the snowy peak, Kreipe recited the first line of Horace's ode *Ad Thaliarchum*—"Vides ut alta stet nive candidum Soracte" (See how Soracte stands white with snow on high). Leigh Fermor immediately continued the poem to its end. The two men realised that they had "drunk at the same fountains" before the war, as Leigh Fermor put it, and things between them were very different from then on.

Kreipe was eventually taken off Crete by motorboat to Cairo. The exploit was later filmed (in the Alps) as *Ill Met by Moonlight* (1956), with Dirk Bogarde implausibly cast as Leigh Fermor, who was awarded the [Distinguished Service Order] for his part in the mission.

Christopher Hitchens added an important nuance to this story in his own remembrance of Leigh Fermor. That moment between Leigh Fermor and General Kreipe, Hitchens noted,

did not result in some sickly reconciliation. Several of Kreipe's colleagues were executed at the end of the war for the atrocious reprisals they took against Cretan civilians. One of Leigh Fermor's colleagues, another distinguished classicist named Montague Woodhouse, once told me that Greek

villagers urged him to strike the hardest possible blows against the Nazis, so as to make the inevitable reprisals worthwhile.

THE SCRAPBOOK thought of Leigh Fermor's exploits last week when it read of Joe Biden's over-the-top remarks at a Democratic fundraiser in New Jersey. Congratulating his boss for the raid on Osama bin Laden, Biden said, "You can go back 500 years. You cannot find a more audacious plan. Never knowing for certain. We never had more than a 48 percent probability that he was there. . . . Do any one of you have a doubt that if that raid failed that this guy would be a one-term president?"

Perhaps you can see why we thought of Leigh Fermor, of his tracing a design on steamy glass, driving through 22 Nazi checkpoints disguised as a kidnapped German commander, and subsequently evading capture behind enemy lines—with a bit of Horace thrown in as lagniappe. We offer the story because it is picturesque, not because it is unique in the annals of audacity. Five hundred years is a long time. Taking away nothing from the bin Laden raid, which stands as the finest achievement of the current administration and was a famous demonstration of American military and intelligence prowess, we're certain every reader, like us, can think of feats which outrank it on a scale measured across the centuries.

On the other hand, when it comes to exploits of vainglory and boastfulness, Joe Biden may still rank high on the list 500 years from now. ♦

Johnny, We Know Ye All Too Well

When we left the saga of former senator, vice presidential candidate, and presidential candidate John Edwards, he was being prosecuted in *U.S.A. v. Johnny Reid Edwards* for using campaign funds to cover up his affair

and subsequent love child with bit actress and game show contestant Rielle Hunter. Edwards was aided in this effort by centenarian heiress Rachel "Bunny" Lowe Lambert Lloyd Mellon—who had given him \$725,000 that was used to help take care of Hunter and hide her away. The now deceased and notoriously shady trial lawyer Fred

"King of Torts" Baron also helped funnel funds to Andrew Young, the former Edwards aide who was taking care of the Hunter situation. Oh, and let's not forget that Edwards's wife and the mother of his children was dying of cancer while Edwards was carrying on this affair and trying to hush it up.

At the time Edwards was charged

with campaign finance violations last year, *THE SCRAPBOOK* observed, “The moral depravity of John Edwards is seemingly boundless, so expect a few more surprises as the trial gets underway.” Well, betting on Edwards’s moral depravity isn’t exactly going out on a limb. In February we were treated to the headline “John Edwards Sex Tape’ To Be Destroyed As Part Of Court Settlement” (*Huffington Post*). It might seem hard to top that, but last week we learned that “John Edwards Denies Reported Link to Soccer Mom Madame’s Service” (*Daily Beast*).

If the mainstream media once erected a *cordon sanitaire* around candidate Edwards while the *National Enquirer* was left to expose the truth, they sure haven’t been pulling any punches of late. (Of course, that may be only because Edwards’s brazen lies made them look like fools.)

Rielle Hunter was once involved with novelist Jay McInerney, who wrote a roman à clef about their relationship, *Story of My Life*. The book’s jacket copy described the lead female character as a “postmodern Holly Golightly.” Given last week’s revelations that Edwards may have been patronizing prostitutes, his relationship with Hunter now looks comparatively wholesome.

In the end this is a tragedy, if for no other reason than that Edwards’s children have to live in the shadow of their father’s legacy. But Edwards was right about one thing—there are two Americas. There are those willing to do anything in pursuit of power, and then there are those (more numerous, we hope) who believe that the moral character of leaders does matter. ♦

Gray Eminence

THE SCRAPBOOK is always on guard at the intersection of fashion and politics, and often our vigilance pays off. Case in point: The news that ex-governor Rod Blagojevich of Illinois, now resident in federal prison in Colorado, dyes his hair. And because hair coloring is not an option at that prison, “His hair will turn gray,” says his longtime barber, “like Jay Leno’s.”



Well, we may not recognize the governor when he finally emerges from stir, but at least we’ll like what we see. Truth be told, *THE SCRAPBOOK* was not shocked to learn that Blagojevich’s lustrous locks had been artificially enhanced: He is, after all, 55 years old. And there is a point beyond which heads of hair without a hint of gray are, shall we say, implausible.

Nor, should we add, was *THE SCRAPBOOK* ever particularly offended by the luxuriant squirrel’s nest atop the governor’s skull; if Nature has been kind to you, there’s no harm in flaunting your good fortune. Blagojevich always looked to us like a quiz show host, circa 1980, which is not a bad thing.

We do draw the line, however,

somewhere in the precincts of male vanity, and so officially deplore the practice of dyeing hair. Not for actors, necessarily, or magicians, or gigolos; but certainly among public servants. *THE SCRAPBOOK* acknowledges that life is unfair when it comes to hair—why should Dwight D. Eisenhower have been bald while Jimmy Carter is not?—but there is no particular reason to believe that gray hair is a political liability. Some of our most respected statesmen of recent vintage—John McCain, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Robert Gates—have sported gray/white/silver locks, while all the dye in the world never quite rescued Richard M. Nixon from Tricky Dick status.

Indeed, you could argue that grace-

fully accepting Nature's verdict makes a certain political sense. Does the 88-year-old Bob Dole really think that his pitch-black locks give him a youthful flair? Does the 77-year-old Carl Levin believe that, if he parts his hair somewhere around his left earlobe, his comb-over will seem less ludicrous? Say what you will about Newt Gingrich, his unashamedly white mane could furnish a room of shag carpeting for a needy family. And anyone who questions Mitt Romney's authenticity has not observed the tell-tale spread of gray from his temples upward.

Ronald Reagan, upon whom fortune smiled in many respects, seems to have been one of those rare creatures who didn't go totally gray with age. But as *THE SCRAPBOOK* is often reminded, there was only one Ronald Reagan. And for every eternally salt-and-peppered Gipper there are Steve Martin and Justice Holmes and Anderson Cooper and Henry Hyde and William Faulkner and Cary Grant to remind us that undyed hair is not inconsistent with retaining one's mojo.

Especially when you're serving your country in federal prison. ♦

Civility for Thee . . .

Comedian Bill Maher last week proposed in the *New York Times*: "Let's have an amnesty—from the left and the right—on every made-up, fake, totally insincere, playacted hurt, insult, slight and affront. Let's make this Sunday the National Day of No Outrage. One day a year when you will not find some tiny thing someone did or said and pretend you can barely continue functioning until they apologize."

This proposal was more than a bit self-serving. Ever since Rush Limbaugh called Georgetown law student Sandra Fluke a "slut" for demanding that people pay for her contraception and abortifacients, we've been engaged in a tortured national dialogue over slurs. Maher was dragged into this debate because in defending Limbaugh, more than a few people pointed out that the HBO host has called Sarah Palin the C-word and said a torrent of vicious things that go far beyond

anything Limbaugh said about Fluke. And he ostentatiously donated \$1 million to a super-PAC dedicated to re-electing the president.

Moreover, after a very public Democratic campaign banging on Limbaugh's statement, it was pointed out that DNC head Debbie Wasserman Schultz had appeared on Maher's frequently distasteful show. It seems that Democrats have no problem with profaning women, so long as they dislike the women being insulted.

To Maher's credit, he's defended Limbaugh's right to mouth off and denounced the campaign to pressure his advertisers. However, Maher's proposal seems unworkable without addressing the root cause. Does he really expect that public figures should be able to say nasty and personal things about other public figures without cavil?

Naturally, a guy whose brand of humor depends on saying things that are more insulting than witty would conclude that we're apologizing too much. But the human condition being what it is, our real problem is that we're forever seeking ways to avoid owning up to the things we've done wrong and correcting our behavior. At the very least, personal insults, even with the fig leaf of being said in jest, erode the public discourse.

But don't take our word for it. By the standards of America's prolific founding fathers, George Washington was not an especially literary man. He's known for one slender volume, *Rules of Civility*—so we take it to mean that he viewed respectful discourse to be a civic virtue of importance. We refer Maher especially to the section that starts, "Speak not injurious Words neither in Jest nor Earnest Scoff at none although they give Occasion."

Here's our modest proposal for Maher: Don't shy away from your opinions—but try and keep the personal assaults to a minimum. We suspect that if he showed a modicum of self-control, much of America would suddenly discover that although not always agreeable, he's at least a lot funnier when his rage-filled, childish id is kept on a leash. ♦

the weekly Standard

www.weeklystandard.com

William Kristol, *Editor*

Fred Barnes, *Executive Editor*

Richard Starr, *Deputy Editor*

Claudia Anderson, *Managing Editor*

Christopher Caldwell, Andrew Ferguson,
Victorino Matus, Lee Smith, *Senior Editors*

Philip Terzian, *Literary Editor*

Stephen F. Hayes, Mark Hemingway,
Matt Labash, Jonathan V. Last, *Senior Writers*

Jay Cost, John McCormack, *Staff Writers*

Daniel Halper, *Online Editor*

Kelly Jane Torrance, *Assistant Managing Editor*

Julianne Dudley, *Assistant Editor*

Michael Warren, *Reporter*

Theresa Civantos, Zack Munson,
Editorial Assistants

Philip Chalk, *Design Director*

Barbara Kytte, *Design Assistant*

Carolyn Wimmer, *Executive Assistant*

Max Boot, Joseph Bottum,

Tucker Carlson, Matthew Continetti,

Noemie Emery, Joseph Epstein, David Frum,

David Gelernter, Reuel Marc Gerecht,

Michael Goldfarb, Mary Katharine Ham,

Brit Hume, Frederick W. Kagan,

Robert Kagan, Charles Krauthammer,

Yuval Levin, Tod Lindberg,

Robert Messenger, P.J. O'Rourke,

John Podhoretz, Irwin M. Stelzer,
Contributing Editors

Terry Eastland, *Publisher*

Nicholas H.B. Swezey, *Advertising Director*

Catherine Lowe, *Digital Business Director*

Richard Trocchia, *Fulfillment Manager*

T. Barry Davis, Todd A. Miller,
Senior Advertising Managers

Kathy Schaffhauser, *Finance Director*

Taylor Morris, *Office Manager*

Andrew Kaumeier, *Advertising Operations Manager*

Advertising inquiries:

202-293-4900

The Weekly Standard (ISSN 1083-3013), a division of Clarity Media Group, is published weekly (except the first week in January, third week in April, second week in July, and fourth week in August) at 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington D.C. 20036. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 421203, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1203. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-283-2014. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders and changes of address to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 421203, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1203. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-850-682-7644 for subscription inquiries. American Express, Visa/MasterCard payments accepted. Cover price, \$4.95. Back issues, \$4.95 (includes postage and handling). Send letters to the editor to The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617. For a copy of The Weekly Standard Privacy Policy, visit www.weeklystandard.com or write to Customer Service, The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington, D.C. 20036. Copyright 2009, Clarity Media Group. All rights reserved. No material in The Weekly Standard may be reprinted without permission of the copyright owner. The Weekly Standard is a registered trademark of Clarity Media Group.



Down the AmaZone

No greater fantasists exist than writers, who are able to bring an extra dollop or two of imagination to their unreality. About no subject are they more fantastic than the potential commercial success of their books. When I publish a book with the least chance of popular appeal, I am unable, even after all these years, to suppress dreams of shekels raining down upon me. (“I can stand a lot of gold,” said Henry James, who was himself subject to these fantasies.) I imagine villas in Tuscany, apartments in Paris, a nicely understated Bentley in my garage. Not, let me hasten to add, that I am in the least need or want of these items—ownership of any one of them would make me even nuttier than I now am. But a boy—quite an old boy, as it turns out—can dream, can’t he?

I once came close to achieving serious commercial success with a book. David Brooks, who reviewed it in the *Wall Street Journal*, declared it would be the book every intelligent person would be reading on the beach that summer. A full hour was devoted to the book by the NPR show *Talk of the Nation*. Presto, I found my book on bestseller lists: seventh on the *New York Times*, second for several weeks on that of the *Los Angeles Times*, and on other bestseller lists in Chicago and San Francisco.

Thrice the editor at my publishing house called to announce that they were going back to print another ten thousand copies. Radio shows and newspapers sought interviews with me. Someone told me that my book was number 11 on Amazon.com. I didn’t hitherto know about Amazon.com ratings. Nor did I know about the brief reviews from readers who

fancied themselves critics, of which my book received quite a few, the majority pleasing, a few suggesting, in effect, that perhaps I would do better to quit writing and get a job at Jiffy Lube. One has only to have one’s book slammed on Amazon to appreciate the journalist Lars-Erik Nelson’s remark that the Internet is “a vanity press for the demented.”



The success of my book didn’t sustain itself long enough to get me out of the financial wars with an honorable discharge. To be the eleventh-best-selling book at Amazon.com was lovely. The problem is that the position of one’s book on Amazon.com is always changing, inevitably heading downward. After one flogs (the wonderful publishing word for promoting) a book on one NPR station or another, the book’s Amazon standing can radically improve—by ten or twenty thousand places—but this gain, too, is soon lost as the book continues its inevitable plunge.

Of all that might be said about the Internet, the invention of the age, the one undeniably true thing is that it is

a momentous distraction. With a book freshly out in the world, a writer awaits Google alerts bringing fresh news of reviews, or mentions in the press, or on blogs and Twitter. He checks Amazon numbers hourly. He dreams of a dazzlingly approving review that will jolt one’s Amazon.com number to two digits. The approving review appears, yet the Amazon rating scarcely changes.

Henry James wrote of the “benefit of the *friction with the market* which is so true a one for solitary artists too much steeped in their mere personal dreams.” James was himself savvy about marketing his writing, but all his savvy brought him insufficient commercial success. He wanted, as most writers do, artistic and commercial success both, but had to content himself with achieving, sublimely, only the former.

As one’s book’s Amazon.com ratings fall, slowly at first, precipitously a bit later—going from the hundreds to the thousands, to the tens, then hundreds of thousands—one realizes what a dope one has been, and what a mug’s game is hoping for huge commercial success with a book. In the current day, new books have roughly the shelf life of yogurt; the shelf life of books may be shorter. With the world offering so many distractions—smartphones, iPads, cable television, social media—the book itself is beginning to take on the feel of a specialty, or niche, product. As someone a good part of whose life is devoted to writing books, I have begun to feel as a blacksmith must have done in the first decades of the twentieth century when the automobiles were beginning to crowd the streets.

As my own most recent book sinks into the west—it is at this moment number 188,812 on Amazon—I feel I can relax and let go of my fantasy of a great commercial score. What a relief to be out of the AmaZone! Now I can concentrate on the prospect of immortality for this and all my other books.

JOSEPH EPSTEIN

**THE FORECAST CALLS FOR WARM SUNSHINE,
COOL MOUNTAIN AIR,
AND FREQUENT BRAINSTORMS
OVER THE ROCKIES.**

Ideas just blossom when you're in the right place. That's why groups of all sizes and missions gather at The Broadmoor to ideate. To innovate. To be inspired. We offer meeting experiences that go beyond unique venues and adventurous menus to challenge and delight your group. Call us today. And let's brainstorm.

BROADMOOR.COM • 800.633.7711

THE
BROADMOOR
COLORADO SPRINGS

IF YOU'VE BEEN HERE, YOU KNOW®

Etch A Sketch Politics

Last week, Mitt Romney's communications director, Eric Fehrnstrom, made a terrible gaffe: He told the truth, as he saw it, on national TV. Asked, "Is there a concern that Santorum and Gingrich might force the governor to tack so far to the right it would hurt him with moderate voters in the general election?" Fehrnstrom answered, "Well, I think you hit a reset button for the fall campaign. Everything changes. It's almost like an Etch A Sketch. You can kind of shake it up and we start all over again."

Fehrnstrom said in public what much of the political class was saying in private. And what he said shouldn't be shocking. Guess what? Candidates adjust their message in the course of political campaigns, and especially when moving from one stage of the campaign to another, from the nominating contest to the general election. Fehrnstrom may be overly confident about the ability of a campaign to "start all over again," as if your opponents won't be there to remind you of past statements, and as if the voters' minds can simply be wiped clean. Even for gifted campaigns and silver-tongued politicians, resets and restarts aren't easy.

But Fehrnstrom's comment is interesting in a broader way. It captures a certain disposition to politics, a certain understanding of public affairs, that goes beyond campaigns. It expresses the view of the political class, in both parties, that governing *is* politics, that politics is a kind of perpetual campaign, that a campaign is mostly talk, and that talk is both cheap and changeable. The modern American political class tends to have an Etch A Sketch view of political life as a series of rhetorical resets and opportunistic restarts.

There's some truth to this view. Politics always has something of sophistry about it. But a healthy politics in a serious country—a healthy political class and a healthy citizenry in a great country—has to realize the limits of mere talk, and especially the limits of cheap and changeable talk.

Our politics isn't entirely healthy. Our political class in particular is more sophistic than ever—believing in the predominance of talk, the centrality of "messaging," the

power of spin, the possibility of a tricky game change. But politics isn't simply a game. And even to the degree that it is, the political class overestimates its ability to affect the outcome by clever words and tactical maneuvers.

The American public, like most publics, is both susceptible and resistant to sophistry. But in general the public has a sounder view of politics than the political class, if only because, living in a world of real consequences, the public tends to know that reality can't be willfully reset and easily restarted. The real world can't be Etch A Sketched. It requires and responds to facts and deeds, not mere talk.

Talk matters. But a healthy politics understands the limits of rhetoric. If you accumulate \$15 trillion of debt, and are adding another \$1 trillion a year, you can't talk that away or shake that up rhetorically and restart all over again. You can't Etch A Sketch that reality away—as President Obama has tried to do in a series of budget documents that don't deserve to be called budgets. You need to make real choices, embodied in real budgets, that change the course we're on.

A healthy politics also knows that if the mullahs in Iran get nuclear weapons, there will be actual consequences, and it knows that preventing the Iranian regime from getting nuclear weapons will require action, not talk. Such deeds will be difficult and risky. But the public knows that not to act is a choice as well. And it knows that once the Iranian regime goes nuclear, you don't get to hit a reset button and start all over again.

A healthy politics grasps that our enemies can't be sweet-talked, and that troop levels can't just be reset or commitments revised for political convenience, without anyone paying a real price.

A healthy politics realizes that calling an expensive piece of legislation the "Affordable Care Act" doesn't make it affordable, that promising you can keep your doctor doesn't mean you'll be able to, and that calling an Independent Payment Advisory Board independent and advisory doesn't make it so.

The American public tends to appreciate these realities. Many in the political class—indeed many of our elites,



Campaign Romney's Eric Fehrnstrom

especially those of us who etch and sketch for a living—tend to want to show our cleverness by arguing realities away. Sophistry is the fatal conceit of the political class in our time. For reasons having to do with the very nature of modern liberalism, the left is more expert at sophistry than the right. That’s why Republicans will have difficulty winning an Etch A Sketch election. Obama is the master of transient talk and vanishing promises. The Republican nominee won’t beat him at his own game. But the Republican nominee can elevate our politics and prevail by putting before the public a reality-based choice.

—William Kristol

Anti-Energy in the Executive

After weeks of high gas prices, President Obama is on the defensive about his energy policy. On March 15, he justified his administration’s high-profile green energy failures by invoking a predecessor’s alleged skepticism of innovations: “Rutherford B. Hayes reportedly said



about the telephone: ‘It’s a great invention but who would ever want to use one?’” Obama went on to demonize Republican opposition to his renewable energy plans. “If some of these folks were around when Columbus set sail, they must have been founding members of the ‘Flat Earth Society.’ They would not have believed that the world was round.”

As it turns out, Rutherford B. Hayes never said that about telephones and was quite impressed by the invention. (Though “It’s a great invention but who would ever want to use one?” would apply pretty well to the Chevy Volt.) Also,

the Flat Earth Society was started by a 20th-century eccentric, and no reasonably knowledgeable person at the time of Columbus believed you could sail off the edge of the earth. Rumor has it that Obama has already arranged a special White House screening of the much-anticipated political documentary *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter*.

Undeterred by the president’s making a fool of himself, White House press secretary Jay Carney lashed out last week when House Budget Committee chairman Paul Ryan’s proposed budget zeroed out a number of the administration’s renewable energy programs. “You have to be aggressively and deliberately ignorant of the world economy not to know and understand that clean energy technologies are going to play a huge role in the 21st century,” Carney said.

Actually, you have to be aggressively and deliberately ignorant of the Obama administration’s own projections to think renewables are the key to energy policy. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration’s projections, as late as 2035 just 16 percent of America’s energy will come from renewables—even with aggressive government investment. And that estimate is probably optimistic.

With gas hovering around \$4 a gallon and a series of high-profile “green jobs” scandals, the president is vulnerable on energy policy, and he knows it. Regarding the collapse of Solyndra, Obama recently had the gall to tell the media, “This was not our program per se.” It was just a coincidence that the now-bankrupt company with \$500 million in loan guarantees from Washington was largely funded by a bundler for Obama’s presidential campaign.

It’s not enough, however, to oppose the White House. Republicans need to present a compelling alternative vision for meeting our energy needs. It shouldn’t be hard, considering the president’s policy consists of tossing expensive bouquets to campaign donors and giving disingenuous speeches.

Unlike Obama, the GOP has already proposed a comprehensive energy plan that would do wonders for green energy. The legislation, A Roadmap for America’s Energy Future, was authored by Rep. Devin Nunes, from the Central Valley of California, and introduced early last year.

Where the administration has done its level best to halt energy extraction on public lands, the GOP legislation would open up to drilling the Outer Continental Shelf, estimated to contain enough oil and natural gas to meet America’s energy needs for about 60 years. It would also open up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and encourage domestic energy production elsewhere.

Under the roadmap, new federal revenue from increased domestic energy production would go into a trust fund for renewables. Money from the trust fund would be handed out in “reverse auctions,” where private companies would compete for government contracts based on who can produce the most energy for the least amount of money. To hear the president tell it, the belief that renewable-energy companies should be rewarded for demonstrable success makes the GOP a bunch of flat-earththers.

NEWS.COM

Some parts of Nunes's roadmap may need updating. The bill calls for the construction of 200 nuclear power plants, and those ambitions may have to be scaled down in light of last year's Fukushima disaster. Any new plan should also put the screws to Obama over his transparently political decision to halt the Keystone XL pipeline. Last week, the president announced he would fast-track the southern portion of the pipeline, but until he actually green-lights the part that connects us to Canada—where the oil is—he's not doing anything meaningful.

Regardless, Nunes's plan contains more than enough good ideas to be a starting point for a congressional Republican counteroffensive on energy. It's also become increasingly obvious that, to the extent we've seen a jobs recovery, it's being fueled by the domestic energy industry, especially traditional sources such as oil and natural gas.

Voters may be paying at the pump now, but if Republicans can show how shortsighted and expensive the Obama administration's energy policy is, it's the president who will pay in November.

—Mark Hemingway

A Path to Security

Rep. Paul Ryan calls his budget plan the “Path to Prosperity,” but it could be termed as well a “Path to Security.” In reclaiming more than \$200 billion of the nearly \$500 billion in military cuts made in last year's Budget Control Act (BCA), the House Budget Committee chairman takes national security more seriously than does our commander in chief.

To be sure, these are only first steps toward undoing the damage of the Obama years. In 2009, President Obama's first year in office—and while ramming an \$800 billion “stimulus” bill through Congress—the White House directed \$330 billion in defense cuts. The next year, Defense Secretary Robert Gates went looking for “efficiencies” to reinvest in priority programs; thank you, said the president, I'll take another \$100 billion from your budget. And under the 2011 BCA, Obama harvested \$487 billion from the Pentagon, charging it with the full bill for cuts needed from all “security” accounts, as the law described them. So Barack Obama has racked up about \$920 billion in defense cuts to date.

But the president wants more. Because the congressional “supercommittee” could not agree to the larger savings mandated in the budget control law, the president's 2013 budget does nothing to keep the sequestration guillotine

from coming down on October 1, chopping an automatic \$55 billion per year out of defense budgets, allocated across each and every program. That would push the administration's defense-cut total past \$1.4 trillion. Though he commands troops involved in an ongoing war, Obama won't lift a finger to avoid what his defense secretary has described as a catastrophe, unless taxes are raised. The net effect, as Gen. Martin Dempsey, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has said, is that the United States will no longer be a global power.

Gen. Dempsey is being optimistic. Under the president's new “guidance,” the U.S. military will only be prepared to fight a single major campaign of 21 days while conducting an ongoing irregular campaign limited to 50,000 troops; in other words, the bar has been lowered to Lake Wobegon levels. And if sequestration occurs, the U.S. military won't even meet that test.

The chairman of the House Budget Committee cannot fulfill the responsibilities of the executive, of the commander in chief. Yet Ryan (along with House Armed Services Committee chairman “Buck” McKeon and Senators Kyl, McCain, Ayotte, Graham, and Rubio) is among a handful of major political figures in either party to take the crisis of declining American military power seriously—at least seriously enough to begin efforts to make up for the savage cuts of previous years.

Just as the Ryan path will take a long time to bring the federal budget into balance, it will take a long time to restore the military strength needed in a dangerous world. And, indeed, Ryan's plan only reverses the mandated cuts for this coming year—leaving future Congresses to deal with the cuts required by the Budget Control Act in the years ahead.

But let's be clear: Right now Ryan's proposal is the only one pointed in the right direction. And it represents a dramatic change from just a year ago, when conservatives, especially those just elected to Congress, were bound and determined to address the problem of government spending by cutting anything and everything they could, regardless of whether the monies being spent were for core federal government responsibilities—such as national security—or not. But to their credit, Ryan and his colleagues, having seen what those cuts entail—a smaller and less capable Army, Navy, and Air Force and a global strategy that leaves our allies in doubt and our competitors emboldened—have taken the first step toward reversing course.

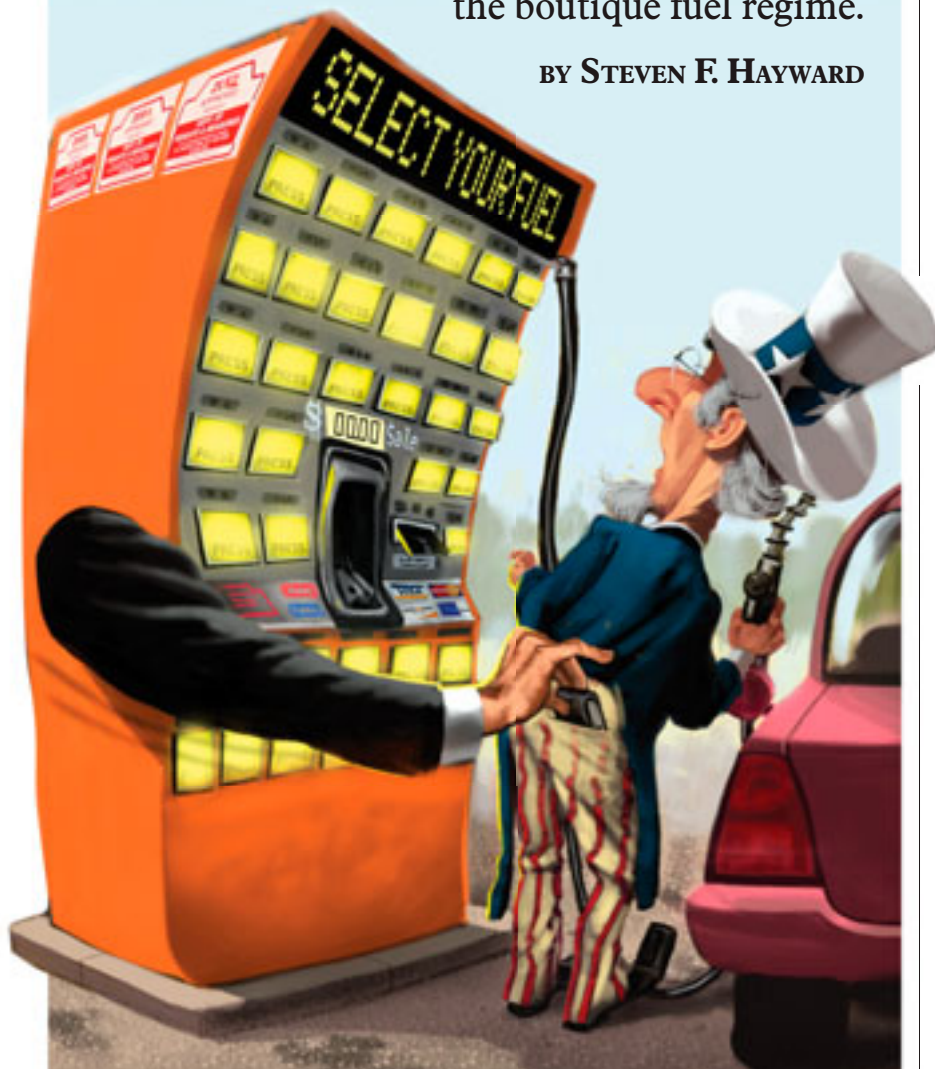
With control of the Senate in the hands of Harry Reid and company and the White House occupied by a president who cares more about funding solar energy and pet domestic projects, it may well be that Paul Ryan's plan will have to wait until after November's election to be enacted. In the meantime, it's a sound alternative platform around which conservatives and the GOP can rally, one that will serve to remind voters that, when it comes to national security and America's role in the world, they are the party to be trusted.

—Thomas Donnelly & Gary Schmitt

Bureaucratic Gas

To lower prices at the pump, abolish the boutique fuel regime.

BY STEVEN F. HAYWARD



Quick: How many kinds of gasoline do we use in America? Most people would say three or six: regular unleaded, mid-grade, and premium, along with the ethanol blends of the same that have become nearly universal. The actual number is somewhere above 45, though hard to

Steven F. Hayward is the F.K. Weyerhaeuser fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and author, most recently, of The Politically Incorrect Guide to the Presidents: From Wilson to Obama (Regnery).

pin down exactly, according to the Government Accountability Office (GAO). It might even be closer to 70. Thirty-four states use specially blended gasoline, usually during the summer, which is one reason gasoline prices always rise during the “driving season.”

If you want a good idea of why this makes no sense, meet me in St. Louis. St. Louis, Missouri, uses one kind of gasoline; East St. Louis, Illinois, right across the Mississippi River, uses a different blend. Meanwhile, the surrounding suburbs use a third kind.

Same metropolitan area, different gasolines, and they can't be sold across jurisdictional lines, so refiners and distributors must maintain three separate systems for the three parts of the St. Louis metro area.

Is this a conspiracy of the evil oil companies to fatten their margins? Mostly no: It's the product of EPA bureaucrats and the Clean Air Act, stubbornly maintained even though boutique fuels now deliver only marginal reductions in air pollution from cars, if any at all. And it's a regulation President Obama could clear away if he wanted to. It wouldn't deliver a large reduction in gasoline pump prices, but even 10 to 15 cents a gallon—a plausible figure for California's market—would help.

The bizarre world of boutique gasoline owes its origin to the usual suspects: California (of course) and the congressional sausage-rolling involved in the writing of the Clean Air Act of 1990. When it comes to air pollution, there's always been the country as a whole and then California, which because of its unique geography and climate has always had the nation's worst air pollution levels by a considerable margin. Congress has always given California special leeway in crafting air pollution regulations that go beyond what the EPA requires of the other 49 states. But this frequently wreaks havoc with national industries, especially autos, since any auto mandate passed in California essentially is imposed on the entire country. Carmakers don't want to make one kind of car for California and another for everywhere else. But oil refiners are a different matter: They could readily make a different kind of gasoline for California—one that would help the auto industry solve some of its compliance problems.

As California was ramping up its plans to fight smog in the late 1980s, there was talk of imposing very stringent tailpipe emissions standards on California cars, and perhaps even higher fuel economy standards to suppress fuel use. That's when the oil refining industry stepped in with the idea to produce reformulated gasoline (RFG) for the California

THOMAS FLUHARTY

market that would deliver near-term environmental benefits by reducing emissions of unburned hydrocarbons from the auto fleet.

A few basics about ozone explain why this made some sense in 1990. Ground-level ozone is the trickiest air pollution problem. Unlike other forms of air pollution, like sulfur dioxide, where there is basically a straightforward relation between what comes out of a smokestack and what's in the air you breathe, ozone is not directly emitted from cars or factories. It's a combination of several chemicals that have to "cook" in sunlight. The amount produced depends on temperature, humidity, and geography. Different parts of the country can thus have wildly different ozone levels even with identical emissions, and the same metropolitan area can have wildly different ozone levels from day to day. Ozone tends to be much worse in hot summer weather than in winter, though there are exceptions, such as mile-high Denver and Minnesota. (Some areas of California actually experience higher ozone levels on *weekends*, when there is much less driving and industrial activity. This counterintuitive "weekend effect" is driving air quality specialists slightly crazy right now.)

A major component chemical for ozone is unburned hydrocarbons—essentially, gasoline that evaporates from car engines, gas pumps, and so forth. That's one reason we started sealing car gas tanks with intake flaps, and redesigned gas pumps with those annoying sleeves to prevent evaporation of gasoline (called "fugitive emissions" in the trade). Reformulated gasolines aim to lower vapor pressure so there's less evaporation, and use "oxygenates" to increase combustion in the engine so fewer unburned hydrocarbons go out the tailpipe. Back around 1990 it was calculated that reformulated gasoline could reduce hydrocarbon emissions from autos by as much as 20 percent.

When Congress took up the Clean Air Act of 1990, it decided to take reformulated gasoline national. This is where the mischief starts. The infant ethanol industry saw an opening to

juice up the market for its uncompetitive product if oxygenates were mandated for the entire national gasoline market, even though there is strong evidence that ethanol, though an oxygenate, actually *increases* ozone. No matter: The mania to promote "alternative fuels" was shoehorned into the Clean Air Act as an adjunct, and while environmentalists generally like mandates, one other party really liked this particular one: the refining industry.

There was nowhere near enough ethanol to satisfy the new oxygenate requirement, so most areas decided to use methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE). It ended up being one of the great environmental disasters of modern times, and a textbook example of the law of unintended consequences. MTBE is a potent water pollutant, and leakage of MTBE from underground tanks began showing up on a large scale. The resulting uproar—and wave of lawsuits against oil companies—meant a swift end to MTBE, leaving mostly ethanol as the replacement, and sure enough, ethanol use in gasoline has grown almost twenty-fold since 1990.

The other key aspect of the story is a feature that ironically most conservatives favor: state flexibility. Because of the variability of ozone conditions around the country, the Clean Air Act allowed the states flexibility in choosing whether to adopt reformulated gasoline, and what kind they might use. St. Louis has two kinds of gasoline because Missouri applied to the EPA for one kind of gasoline, while Illinois applied for another, even though they share the same airshed, which would seemingly call for the same blend.

Despite the complications this presents for refiners and the petroleum product supply chain, the industry loves it: Why make just three or four kinds of gasoline when you can make a dozen and charge higher margins? A 2001 EPA review of the issue dryly notes,

A state-specific program generally leads to the secondary effect of limiting competition for the gasoline supplied

to the affected market since the market for a state fuel is often small compared to the market for federal RFG. As a result, the number of refiners likely to devote production to this small state fuel market is often limited. This has been perceived as a benefit to the refiners that produce the gasoline for a state fuel market.

Translation: The proliferation of boutique gasoline suppresses competition and drives up prices.

The Government Accountability Office looked into the matter in a 2005 report, noting that the adoption of boutique blends meant that in one East Coast area the number of gasoline suppliers dropped from a dozen to three. Southeast Michigan has just two refineries and one pipeline supplying its boutique blend. After studying gasoline markets in 100 cities, the GAO concluded: "The proliferation of special gasoline blends has made it more complicated to supply gasoline and has raised costs. . . . Of the 100 cities we examined, most of the 20 cities with the highest prices used special blends of gasoline." The Dallas Federal Reserve noted another anticompetitive effect of the mandate: It bars gasoline imports from other countries, which don't produce any of our special blends.

But hey, it's all worth it if our children can breathe cleaner air, isn't it? This is where boutique gasoline becomes a perfect case study in bureaucratic inertia and industry rent-seeking. The case for reformulated gasoline is largely obsolete, delivering only marginal air quality benefits today, if any. The 1990 Clean Air Act also phased in very tight automobile tailpipe standards that have reduced emissions from new cars and trucks by as much as 95 percent from the 1990 models, most of which have long since left the roads. Hydrocarbon emissions from autos have been falling at a sustained rate of about 8 percent a year for the last decade, as the auto and truck fleet turns over to newer models. This trend is going to continue for a decade or more. The EPA still claims reformulated gasoline delivers 20 to 25 percent emissions

reductions, but this is based on data from the older car fleet. The EPA hasn't bothered to update its emission models, as the GAO noted: "The extent of reductions remains unclear, however, because these estimates are based, in part, on data regarding how special gasoline blends affect emissions from older vehicles, and these data have not been comprehensively validated through testing on current vehicle types with newer emissions controls. . . . [I]mprovements in automobile technology . . . may have negated many of the benefits of adding oxygenates to gasoline."

Here's an opportunity for President Obama to "do something" about gasoline prices, even if it's only by a dime per gallon. (And the difference between \$4.95 gas and \$5.05 gas might be the difference between reelection and defeat.) The Clean Air Act allows the EPA to waive the boutique gasoline requirements in the event of supply disruptions or shortages. Indeed, the boutique gasoline requirements were waived in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, when more than half the Gulf Coast refineries were knocked out of commission for several weeks. During the waiver, we imported gasoline from overseas to fill the gap, and prices were kept stable. There was no noticeable uptick in ozone levels in the EPA data. While high-priced gasoline might not meet the precise definition of a disruption or shortage, it shouldn't be a problem for the clever lawyers of the Obama administration to come up with a plausible legal rationale for suspending the regulations.

Failing that, the House should pass a quick amendment to the Clean Air Act abolishing the boutique gasoline regime, and then dare the Senate or the president to block a measure that would offer relief at the pump this summer. The ethanol lobby would scream, along with environmentalists who never met a regulation they didn't like, while refiners would quietly rue the loss of an artificial market-segmenting system that expands their profit margins. Sounds like a win-win all the way around. ♦

The 'Clean Energy' Stalking Horse

A carbon tax by any other name . . .

BY ROBERT BRYCE

They're not calling it a carbon tax or cap and trade. But make no mistake, the national "clean energy" mandate introduced earlier this month by Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-N.M.) and eight cosponsors entails both a tax and a trading measure.

Bingaman's legislation has the



Tax? Cap? Trade? Perish the thought.

apparent support of the White House. A day after the bill was introduced, Nat Keohane, a special assistant to the president for energy and the environment, called it "an important step towards the president's goal of doubling clean energy by 2035." He added, "we look forward to working with Congress as the bill moves forward."

Robert Bryce, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, is the author of Power Hungry: The Myths of 'Green' Energy and the Real Fuels of the Future. His report on renewable mandates can be found at www.manhattan-institute.org/html/eper_10.htm.

The bill is bad legislation in search of a problem. The United States doesn't need a mandate in order to cut carbon dioxide emissions. Those emissions are already falling. Innovation and market forces, not regulation, are making that happen. Furthermore, pricing data and analysis from the Energy Information Administration show that a national mandate will saddle consumers with higher electricity bills. More on those issues in a moment.

First, a look at the heart of Bingaman's bill, which requires the establishment of a "clean energy trading program" that will create a "national market for the sale or trade of clean energy credits." Those credits will be based on the carbon intensity of each form of electricity generation. The legislation puts a limit on the amount of carbon dioxide that can be emitted per megawatt-hour of electricity generated: 0.82 metric tons. That limit spells doom for coal, which emits about 1 metric ton of carbon dioxide per megawatt-hour produced.

By 2035, the bill requires that at least 84 percent of all electricity in the United States be produced from "clean energy" sources. Put another way, coal will be limited to no more than 16 percent of domestic electricity generation. That's a drastic reduction given that coal-fired generators now provide about 40 percent of our electricity.

Last year, Suedeen Kelly, a former commissioner of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, said that renewable energy mandates are a "back-end way to put a price on carbon." Kelly's point applies directly to Bingaman's bill. By nearly outlawing

NEWS.COM

"Why do all the Politicians, Pundits & Talking Heads come to Palm Beach... The Island?"



At The Colony, you get to score our Best 'Off-Season' Value of the year, with warm Atlantic Beaches, Great Food and some of New York's best Cabaret Entertainment. Book before November 7, 2012 to receive our bipartisan 'Weekly Standard Stimulus': 'Royal Room Dinner & Show for Two with a 2 Night Stay' Found only on this extraordinary Island, called Palm Beach.

THE COLONY HOTEL Luxury Rooms, Suites & Villas
155 Hammon Avenue, Palm Beach, Florida 33480
561-655-5430 • www.thecolonypalmbeach.com

The Colony

P A L M • B E A C H

coal, a fuel which continues to be among the cheapest options for many generators, Bingaman's bill is a back end way to put a tax on coal.

To be clear, the definition of "clean energy" in Bingaman's bill is capacious enough to include natural gas and nuclear, as well as renewables. But its point is to evade an honest debate about the merits—and drawbacks—of a carbon tax and a carbon-trading system, and how those measures would affect consumers. Instead, it would impose those regimes by stealth, under the "clean energy" label.

What makes the "clean energy" rhetoric even more deceptive is this: According to the International Energy Agency, the United States is reducing its carbon dioxide emissions more rapidly than Europe is, even though the European Union has, for years, been relying on a carbon-trading scheme. And that scheme isn't working. Over the last nine months or so, the price of carbon allowances under the EU's Emissions Trading Scheme has fallen by more than half. That price collapse was predicted last November in a report issued by Swiss banking giant UBS. The same report estimated that the EU's trading scheme will cost about \$275 billion while having "almost zero impact" on carbon emissions. Had the EU instead targeted the region's dirtiest electricity plants for replacement, UBS said, emissions would likely have been reduced by 43 percent.

Nevertheless, Bingaman and the White House are touting—what else?—a trading scheme. And they are doing so despite the fact that between 2007 and 2011, U.S. carbon dioxide emissions fell by 7 percent. What's driving carbon emissions downward? The struggling economy is certainly part of it. But the larger reason is an abundance of cheap natural gas.

The shale revolution, which began about four years ago, has resulted in a tsunami of natural gas production. And that gas is displacing lots of coal in the domestic electricity generation sector. Last year, the United States produced about 23 trillion cubic feet

of gas, an amount that easily eclipsed the previous record of 21.7 trillion, back in 1973. And last year's record production is likely to be surpassed this year. That surfeit of natural gas is making it the fuel of choice for electricity generation, so much so that coal's share of the domestic electricity generation market is now at its lowest level since 1979.

By pushing legislation aimed at reduced carbon dioxide emissions, the Democrats and the president are clearly trying to appeal to the environmental lobby and the left. But for the vast majority of consumers, the key energy issue isn't carbon

What makes the 'clean energy' rhetoric even more deceptive is this: According to the International Energy Agency, the United States is reducing its carbon dioxide emissions more rapidly than Europe is, even though the European Union has, for years, been relying on a carbon-trading scheme. And that scheme isn't working. The price of carbon allowances has collapsed.

content, it's price. And the Energy Information Administration has made it clear that a national "clean energy" mandate will mean higher electricity costs.

Last October, the agency released a report on the likely impact of such a measure. The agency predicted that by 2035, the average price would exceed what it calls the "reference case average"—i.e., the status quo—by 29 percent. But the average numbers do not tell the entire story. The EIA analysis found that by 2035, the mandate would result in price hikes of at least 40 percent in 7 regions, with the biggest impact seen in coal-dependent areas. By 2035, electricity prices would rise by 42 percent in Texas, 46 percent

in Oklahoma, 47 percent in Tennessee and Kentucky, 48 percent in Colorado, 50 percent in eastern Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey, 51 percent on Long Island, and by 61 percent in southern Illinois and eastern Missouri.

Furthermore, EIA pricing data show that renewable-electricity mandates—which are now in place in 29 states as well as the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico—are already driving electricity rates upward. I recently completed a study for the Manhattan Institute on these mandates. In 2010, residential electricity prices in states with renewable-electricity mandates were 31.9 percent higher than in non-mandate states. Commercial electricity rates were 27.4 percent higher, and industrial rates were 30.7 percent higher. Of the 10 states with the highest electricity prices, 8 have renewable mandates. Of the 10 states with the lowest electricity prices, only 2 have such mandates.

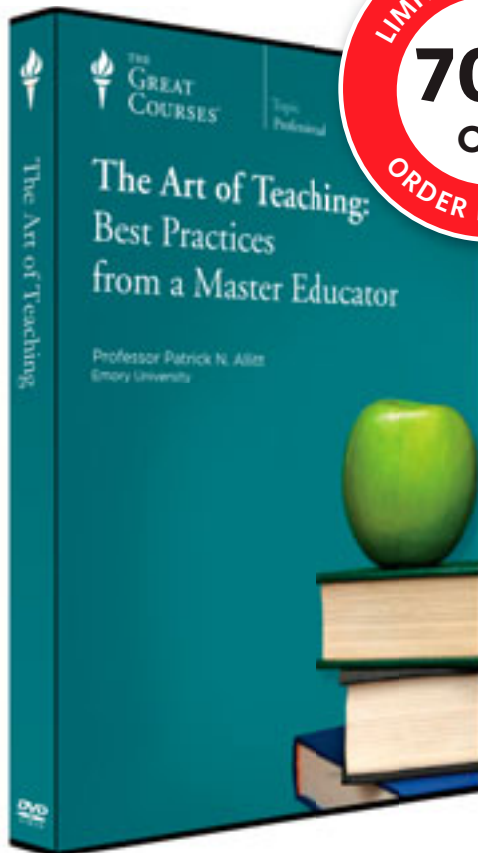
In an effort to compare states with similar profiles, I looked at seven coal-dependent states with renewable mandates and seven coal-dependent states without mandates. Between 2001 and 2010, electricity rates in the coal-dependent states with mandates increased by an average of 54.2 percent, more than twice the increase seen in the coal-dependent states that don't have mandates.

Those numbers, along with the EIA's analysis of the costs of a national mandate, should convince policymakers that these types of regulations are bad policy. Indeed, they are particularly onerous now, when nearly 19 million American households are so financially strapped that they are relying on federal food stamps.

Nevertheless, the Democrats—who like to claim that they represent the poor and the working class—are pushing a tax-and-trade, anti-carbon-dioxide agenda that will inevitably hurt those very same people. If the Democrats (or the Republicans) were truly interested in pro-growth, pro-consumer energy policies, they would be promoting a simple agenda: Make energy cheap, abundant, and reliable. ♦



THE
GREAT
COURSES®



Discover the Secrets of Great Teaching

Teaching is one of the greatest responsibilities in society. It's also an art form that requires craft, creativity, and intelligence. **The Art of Teaching: Best Practices from a Master Educator** is designed to help you achieve lasting success as a teacher.

Award-winning Professor Patrick N. Allitt, a celebrated teacher with decades of classroom experience, will help you develop and enhance your teaching style; provide you with tools and advice for handling all manner of teaching scenarios; and open your eyes to how other teachers approach this life-changing profession. The insights in these 24 lectures, useful to a variety of teachers and people in leadership positions, will serve as a source of guidance and inspiration to last your entire career.

Offer expires 04/12/12

1-800-832-2412

WWW.THEGREATCOURSES.COM/2WKS

The Art of Teaching: Best Practices from a Master Educator

Taught by Professor Patrick N. Allitt
EMORY UNIVERSITY

LECTURE TITLES

1. Successful Teaching
2. The Broad Range of Learners
3. Starting Out Right
4. The Teacher's Persona
5. Planning the Work
6. The Teacher-Student Relationship
7. Dynamic Lecturing
8. Teaching with PowerPoint
9. Demonstrations, Old and New
10. Teaching the Critical Skills
11. Engaging with Discussion, Part 1
12. Engaging with Discussion, Part 2
13. Cogent Thinking and Effective Writing
14. Teaching Revision and Editing
15. Coaching Students on Presentation Skills
16. One-on-One Teaching
17. The Learner's Perspective
18. Exams, Evaluation, and Feedback
19. Maintaining Your Enthusiasm
20. Managing the Challenges of Teaching
21. Creativity and Innovation
22. Myths, Lies, and Half-Truths
23. The Anatomy of a Great Teacher
24. Teaching and Civilization

The Art of Teaching: Best Practices from a Master Educator
Course no. 2044 | 24 lectures (30 minutes/lecture)

SAVE \$185

DVD ~~\$254.95~~ **NOW \$69.95**

+\$10 Shipping, Processing, and Lifetime Satisfaction Guarantee
Priority Code: 65378

Designed to meet the demand for lifelong learning, The Great Courses is a highly popular series of audio and video lectures led by top professors and experts. Each of our more than 350 courses is an intellectually engaging experience that will change how you think about the world. Since 1990, over 10 million courses have been sold.

A Model Intervention

Has the Libya precedent paralyzed the Obama administration on Syria? **BY TOD LINDBERG**

The U.S. ambassador to NATO, Ivo Daalder, and NATO's top military commander, U.S. Admiral James Stavridis, took to the pages of the latest *Foreign Affairs* for an unusual but deserved victory lap over the campaign that led to the fall of Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi. It was, the two argued, "a model intervention."

They are right, it was. But with the carnage continuing in Homs and elsewhere as the Bashar al-Assad regime tries to crush the popular uprising threatening his hold on Syria, it seems that U.S. policy toward Syria has become a prisoner of our "model intervention" in Libya. If the purpose of U.S. policy in Syria is to prevent more slaughter of civilians, to give Assad a push out the door, and incidentally to deal Iran a major strategic setback, it's time to put aside the Libya "model." The political and diplomatic conditions under which the Libya intervention unfolded were all but uniquely favorable—the only other contender for the title would be that in which George H.W. Bush organized the intervention to eject Saddam Hussein from Kuwait in 1990-91. If we insist on duplicating the Libya model for intervention in Syria, Assad will have all the time he needs to wipe out the rebellion, at who knows what human cost.

Tod Lindberg, a research fellow at the Hoover Institution and editor of Policy Review, is a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

From the standpoint of international law and legitimacy, Libya had it all. First came U.N. Security Council Resolution 1970, unanimously adopted in February 2011 as Qaddafi's repression against the nascent Libyan opposition began to intensify. It deplored Qaddafi's "gross



Meanwhile in Homs, they line up their dead.

and systematic violation of human rights" and demanded an end to the violence; imposed an arms embargo on the regime and a travel ban and asset freeze on Qaddafi and his closest cronies; and referred the situation to the International Criminal Court for investigation into atrocity crimes. It's likely that many hoped Resolution 1970 by itself would persuade Qaddafi to head for an exit. That hope was misplaced if not naïve, but the unanimous resolution paved the way for follow-up action once Qaddafi chose defiance.

The Arab League, the regional organization whose secretary general had already announced the

suspension of Libya's membership, in March took the unprecedented further step of calling on the Security Council to impose a no-fly zone. Though stopping well short of a call for international military action to aid in Qaddafi's overthrow, the Arab League request was a diplomatic milestone in establishing regional support for outside intervention against an Arab state.

Meanwhile, France and Great Britain took the lead in calling for military action to save the imperiled Libyan opposition. Although the position of U.S. allies on point led one anonymous Obama administration official notoriously to dub the administration's posture "leading from behind," there likely were diplomatic advantages in having someone besides the United States as chief proponent of a new round of military intervention in the greater Middle East.

Galvanized in part by the Arab League request, in part by the advance of Qaddafi's forces on the rebel stronghold in Benghazi and Qaddafi's rhetoric promising to destroy the resistance there, and in the last analysis by the Obama administration's eleventh-hour determination to press at the U.N. for a new resolution authorizing military action to protect the Libyan opposition from slaughter, the Security Council on March 17 passed Resolution 1973, citing the "need to protect" civilians from Qaddafi's forces and authorizing "all necessary measures." The Russians were skeptical and the Chinese wary, but neither chose to exercise their veto, instead abstaining.

The prosecutor at the ICC, meanwhile, moving at record speed, on June 27 obtained a warrant for the arrest of Qaddafi, his son Saif, and his secret police chief on charges of crimes against humanity. In diplomatic circles in Washington and among allies,

REUTERS



The retreat of choice for a discerning few.

For more than half a century, leaders from the Washington DC and New York areas have appreciated the Tides Inn's secluded tranquility...on a very private peninsula. Treat yourself to a relaxing getaway at the essence of Virginia hospitality. Play championship golf, unwind with marine-inspired spa treatments, or enjoy a sailing lesson. Savor waterfront views, tour the Virginia Chesapeake Wine Trail, and let the children play & explore with Crab Net Kids.

the Tides

Inn • Golf • Spa • Marina 480 King Carter Drive | Irvington, VA 22480 | 804.438.5000 | 800.843.3746 | tidesinn.com

 LEADING HOTELS

For Weekly Standard readers only, use code **WSRC12** while booking and enjoy a \$125 resort credit* toward golf, spa or dining...any Sunday-Thursday with two-night stay.

*Subject to limited availability through June 25, 2012. Not combinable with other offers. Not available for group bookings.

the ICC warrant served as a proxy delegitimizing for the Qaddafi regime overall, bridging the gap between the Security Council resolution authorizing civilian protection and the avowed goal of the United States, France, and Great Britain, namely, that Qaddafi must go.

Then came the decision of NATO, the world's most powerful military alliance, to take charge of the operation. The result was a successful campaign in which France and Britain, among other allies, participated at a level some might have believed beyond their capabilities. It ended with Qaddafi dead and zero NATO casualties.

One can certainly fault the Obama administration's decision to avoid obtaining congressional approval for the Libyan adventure, as well as the high-handed legal sophistry the administration employed to deny that its "limited military action" amounted to engagement in "hostilities." One could fairly say that the administration was more scrupulous about

dotting the i's and crossing the t's on international law and legitimacy than it was domestically. But from the point of view of effective international action, "model intervention" seems more than mere hubris.

Alas, poor Syria. Many commentators have hastened to point out that Assad's Syria and Qaddafi's Libya have nothing in common. They are right—except for their brutally repressive rulers willing to massacre their own people.

A Security Council resolution tightening sanctions on Syria was impossible thanks to Russian and Chinese vetoes. The International Criminal Court prosecutor cannot begin an investigation of the Assad regime's atrocities in the absence of a Security Council resolution because Syria is not a member of the court. The Arab League, said to be wary after the transmogrification of its request for protection for the Libyan rebels into a mandate for using

NATO to hunt Qaddafi down, has been dithering over the extent of its opposition to Assad.

NATO's political decision-making body, the North Atlantic Council, has apparently been unable to agree even to discuss Syria. The NATO secretary general, speaking for whom it is impossible to say, has averred that he doesn't "envision . . . a role for the alliance" in Syria and is punting back to the Arab League, in a classic exercise in responsibility avoidance. NATO defense ministers agreed last March that the criteria for NATO intervention (assuming the means are available) are demonstrable need, a sound legal basis, and regional support. Point one has undeniably been met, but the second criterion is a major hurdle without a U.N. resolution.

As matters stand, intervention in Syria would be anything but a "model." The real question for the Obama administration, however, is whether Libya has set a standard for intervention so pristine as to render the United States incapable of action in the absence of perfect conditions. Time is running out for the administration to demonstrate otherwise.

By all means, the United States should press (and presumably is pressing) to alter the conditions creating the current blockage. The Syrian opposition should formally ask NATO for help. So should the Arab League. Washington should gather a coalition of the willing around protective military action by CENTCOM, the U.S. command in the Middle East. The prosecutor at the International Criminal Court should step forward to formally ask the Security Council for a resolution granting the court jurisdiction over Assad's crimes. More and varied pressure needs to be applied to the Arab League. Russia may have a price.

These and other potential game-changers are well worth pursuing. But if the game doesn't change, or the change falls short of "model intervention," that doesn't mean the United States should do nothing. It means we'll have to lead from the front. ♦

Paul Fredrick
YOUR FIT. YOUR STYLE.®

Crisp, comfortable white 100% cotton pinpoint oxford dress shirts in **Regular, Big & Tall or Trim Fit** at a

SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY PRICE...

\$19.95
Reg. \$49.50-\$54.50

Plus, FREE monogramming!
(a \$9.75 value)

Add this Silk Herringbone Tie for only \$19.95!
Item #TMG1540 (Regularly \$49.50)

More options than you'll find anywhere else!

Your Collar Style: Six Collar Choices.
Your Cuff: Button or French Cuff.
Your Fit: Regular, Big & Tall or Trim.
Your Size: 14½" x 32" to 20" x 37".

Specify promotional code **TXMSWK**
New customer offer. Limit four shirts per customer.
Shipping charges extra. Cannot be combined with other offers.
Free exchanges. Expires 5/31/12.

Order Today! Call **800-309-6000** or visit **paulfredrick.com/special**

Limited
to the first
2500 respondents

Spectacular Treasure from Mount St. Helens

The Beauty in the Beast

For almost a hundred years it lay dormant. Silently building strength. At 10,000 feet high, it was truly a sleeping giant, a vision of peaceful power. Until everything changed in one cataclysmic moment. On May 18, 1980, the once-slumbering beast awoke with violent force and revealed its greatest secret.

It was one of nature's most impressive displays of power. Mount St. Helens erupted, sending a column of ash and smoke 80,000 feet into the atmosphere. From that chaos, something beautiful emerged... our spectacular *Helenite Necklace*. Produced from the heated volcanic rock dust of Mount St. Helens, this brilliant green creation has captured the attention of jewelry designers worldwide. Today you can wear this 6½-carat stunner for the exclusive price of only \$129!

Your satisfaction is guaranteed. Our *Helenite Necklace* puts the gorgeous green stone center stage, with a faceted pear-cut set in gold-layered .925 sterling silver. The explosive origins of the stone are echoed in the flashes of light that radiate as the piece swings gracefully from its 18" gold-plated sterling silver chain. Today the volcano sits quiet, but this unique piece of natural history continues to erupt with gorgeous green fire.

Your satisfaction is guaranteed. Bring home the Helenite Necklace and see for yourself. If you are not completely blown away by the rare beauty of this exceptional stone, simply return the necklace within 30 days for a full refund of your purchase price.



Add the 3-carat earrings!

Helenite Necklace (6 ½ ctw)—~~\$249~~ **\$129**

Helenite Earrings (3 ctw)—~~\$249~~ **\$129**

Helenite Set (necklace & earrings)—~~\$498~~ **\$199** Save \$299

Call now to take advantage of this extremely limited offer.

1-800-859-1979

Promotional Code HEL167-01

Please mention this code when you call.

Stauer® 14101 Southcross Drive W., Dept. HEL167-01,
Burnsville, Minnesota 55337 www.stauer.com



"When it comes to color and sparkle, this gorgeous green stone gives the world's finest emeralds a run for their money!"

— James Fent
Certified Gem Guru

JEWELRY SPECS:

- 6 ½ ctw Helenite in gold over sterling silver setting
- 18" gold-fused chain

Smart Luxuries—Surprising Prices

Risk-Averse Romney

The candidate attempts to reassure conservatives.

BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

Mitt Romney wants to eliminate government programs and shutter cabinet agencies. Doing so, he says, is “the critical thing” that needs to be done in order to bring government books back into balance and to begin restoring the promise of America. “Actually eliminating programs is the most important way to keep Congress from stuffing the money back into them,” he told me in a 30-minute interview on March 21. It’s a smart answer and a deeply conservative one.

But Romney, ever cautious, is reluctant to get specific about the programs he would like to kill. He did this in his bid for the Senate 18 years ago and remembers the political ramifications.

“One of the things I found in a short campaign against Ted Kennedy was that when I said, for instance, that I wanted to eliminate the Department of Education, that was used to suggest I don’t care about education,” Romney recalled. “So I think it’s important for me to point out that I anticipate that there will be departments and agencies that will either be eliminated or combined with other agencies. So for instance, I anticipate that housing vouchers will be turned over to the states rather than be administered at the federal level, and so at this point I think of the programs to be eliminated or to be returned to the states, and we’ll see what consolidation opportunities exist as a result of those program eliminations. So will there be some that get eliminated or combined? The answer is yes, but I’m not going to give you a list right now.”

Stephen F. Hayes is a senior writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

Romney’s answer goes a long way to explain why some conservatives have been reluctant to embrace his candidacy. They want a list. They want it to be long, they want it to be detailed, and they want a candidate who is not only willing to provide one but eager to campaign on it. This is especially true after the historic success of the unapologetic, aggressive strain of conservatism that triumphed in the 2010 midterm elections.

That’s not Mitt Romney. It never will be.

In a conversation with him, you can feel him thinking about his words, trying to make sure he doesn’t say anything that could become the latest in a string of gaffes—some real, some manufactured—that have dogged his campaign. His inveterate risk-aversion often comes off as a lack of commitment to conservative policies and goals, a perception that confounds his advisers, who say that Romney, in the spirit of the turnaround campaigns that marked his career in the private sector, is dedicated to profound, even radical, changes in what the federal government does and how it operates.

Thus far, their assurances haven’t been enough. Exit polls in primaries show Romney has difficulty earning support from voters who identify themselves as “very conservative,” usually winning just one out of three voters in that group. If he’d been able to win a majority of those voters, he would have been the de facto nominee weeks ago. But their resistance continues. Even in his decisive victory in Illinois, he won just 36 percent of self-identified “very conservative” voters. I asked him why.

“You know, I don’t know that I’m the pundit that can make that analysis

for you,” he says with the laugh that often accompanies his answers to difficult questions. “I describe what my positions are on issues and lay out my policy and people will either warm to it or not, depending upon how they connect with it. So as to all of the factors that are associated with those that support me and those that support me less—well, I’m going to let you do that work.”

After I told him that I wasn’t sure I’d done that analysis well, he offered something of an answer.

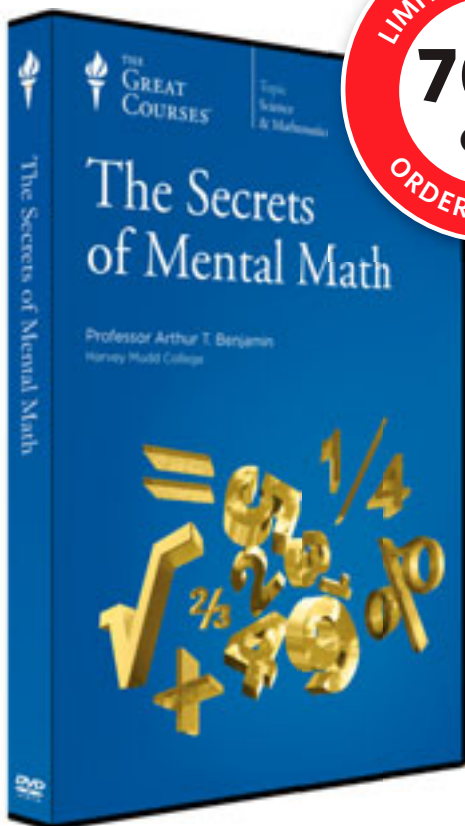
“Obviously there are some for whom coming from Massachusetts is an issue,” he theorizes. “There are some—the health care plan in Massachusetts they can’t get over. There are others for whom religion is an issue. You’ll have to do the cross-tabs on a lot of things to figure out where that is, but one thing I can assure you is that the one group that will certainly be with me in the general election if I’m the nominee will be conservatives and very conservatives. Because they’re certainly not going to vote for Barack Obama.”

Romney had given a similar answer to Megyn Kelly in an interview on Fox News. Conservatives grumbled that his answer suggested his campaign was taking them for granted. Even in a Romney-Obama general election contest, the choice for potential voters isn’t binary. Republicans unenthusiastic about the nominee could stay home. According to exit polls, some 4 million fewer Republicans voted in 2008 than had turned out four years earlier. And polls suggest that enthusiasm for the Republican frontrunner this time is lower than it was at a similar point in the 2008 contest.

Nonetheless, a repeat of those turnout woes seems unlikely, in part because the Barack Obama on the ballot won’t be an abstraction—a candidate who ran as a post-partisan leader vowing to end the wars and economic uncertainty that seemed to exhaust Americans at the end of the Bush administration. He is, instead, a president with a record, a man who has added more debt in three years than his predecessor added in eight and whose two signature domestic policy achievements—the stimulus



THE
GREAT
COURSES®



Discover the Secrets of Mental Math

One key to expanding your math potential—whether you're a corporate executive or a high-school student—lies in the power to perform mental math calculations. Solving basic math problems in your head offers lifelong benefits including a competitive edge at work, a more active and sharper mind, and improved performance on standardized tests.

In the 12 rewarding lectures of **The Secrets of Mental Math**, discover all the essential skills, tips, and tricks for improving and enhancing your ability to solve a range of basic math problems right in your head. Professor Arthur T. Benjamin, winner of numerous awards from the Mathematical Association of America, has designed this engaging course to be accessible to anyone looking to tap into his or her hidden mental calculating skills.

Offer expires 04/12/12

1-800-832-2412

WWW.THEGREATCOURSES.COM/3WKS

The Secrets of Mental Math

Taught by Professor Arthur T. Benjamin
HARVEY MUDD COLLEGE

LECTURE TITLES

1. Math in Your Head!
2. Mental Addition and Subtraction
3. Go Forth and Multiply
4. Divide and Conquer
5. The Art of Guesstimation
6. Mental Math and Paper
7. Intermediate Multiplication
8. The Speed of Vedic Division
9. Memorizing Numbers
10. Calendar Calculating
11. Advanced Multiplication
12. Masters of Mental Math

The Secrets of Mental Math

Course no. 1406 | 12 lectures (30 minutes/lecture)

SAVE \$160

DVD ~~\$199.95~~ **NOW \$39.95**

+ \$5 Shipping, Processing, and Lifetime Satisfaction Guarantee
Priority Code: 65380

Designed to meet the demand for lifelong learning, The Great Courses is a highly popular series of audio and video lectures led by top professors and experts. Each of our more than 350 courses is an intellectually engaging experience that will change how you think about the world. Since 1990, over 10 million courses have been sold.

and Obamacare—are so unpopular that Democrats avoid using the terms. The list of his foreign policy and national security accomplishments doesn't go far beyond authorizing the operation that killed Osama bin Laden.

Still, for Romney to take conservatives for granted would be “political malpractice,” according to a highly regarded Republican strategist not affiliated with any presidential campaign. “An animating feature of the explosive growth of the Tea Party was due to their being dismissed (even before they were dissed and demeaned) as an insignificant voice.”

Romney hasn't ignored this part of the Republican base. He has appeared at Tea Party events, he is a regular on conservative talk radio, and he has courted their leaders.

Last Thursday Romney reached out to the de facto leader of that group on a trip to Washington. Senator Jim DeMint, who vowed not to endorse in the Republican presidential primary, came awfully close in comments to reporters after that meeting.

“I can tell conservatives from my perspective that, I'm not only comfortable with Romney, I'm excited about the possibility of him possibly being our nominee,” he said.

The following day, Senator Pat Toomey, a DeMint ally and former head of the Club for Growth, also praised Romney. “I think Mitt Romney is a conservative, and I think if elected he'll govern as a conservative.” That, of course, is the big question. To have a movement conservative like Toomey offer that kind of backing is no small thing.

Toomey added: “I think Governor Romney is absolutely committed to the principles of limited government. I think he knows the free enterprise system is a source of prosperity, and opportunity, and personal fulfillment, and elevating people out of poverty.”

Toomey will not endorse, but his words echo those Romney uses on his own behalf. “I have a number of liberal folks I've met with, and I listen to them and I think, ‘How can you be so clueless? How do you not understand that free enterprise is the only economic

strategy which has ever lifted people out of poverty and provided long-term prosperity? And you continue to try and find ways to attack free enterprise?’ I simply don't understand it.”

The president is one of those liberals. Romney's critique of Obama is often focused on competence more than ideology. “He's a nice guy, but he's

in over his head,” Romney often says.

Why not say more about ideology? Romney says the two critiques are mutually reinforcing.

Obama, he says, has an “agenda which is contrary to the interests of the economy and the nation. And I think a lot of people who have that agenda are clueless.” ♦

Al Qaeda's Network in Iran

Revelations from a German courtroom.

BY THOMAS JOSCELYN & BENJAMIN WEINTHAL

Koblenz, Germany

An al Qaeda cell slated to take part in one of the final plots ordered by Osama bin Laden made use of an Iran-based terror network that, according to the Obama administration, operates “under an agreement between al Qaeda and the Iranian government.” That revelation has emerged from legal proceedings in Germany, including the trial of Ahmad Wali Siddiqui, an al Qaeda recruit who took the stand for the first time last week in Koblenz.

We observed two days of Siddiqui's testimony. Thus far, prosecutors have allowed the gregarious defendant to do most of the talking. Cleanshaven, he has sought to present a sharply different demeanor than the one he displayed as a bearded jihadist in propaganda films shown to the court. Still, his disturbing narrative provided an extraordinary window into the inner workings of al Qaeda and allied organizations.

The alleged terror recruit, with dual German and Afghan citizenship, has discussed the time he and his fellow plotters spent at the same

mosque attended by al Qaeda's 9/11 Hamburg cell, as well as his own transformation into a violent jihadist. “We wanted to fight . . . against Americans,” Siddiqui told the court. Wiretapped conversations played by prosecutors have provided additional insight into Siddiqui's extremist worldview. During one telephone call to his mother he explained the difference between living in the West and living, as he was then, among the believers: “Life in Germany is not good. You live with gays, lesbians, and Jews. Islam rules here.”

Siddiqui initially joined the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), a terrorist organization closely allied with al Qaeda, in northern Pakistan. He quickly migrated to al Qaeda itself.

According to the indictment, senior terrorists decided to send Siddiqui back to Germany to take part in a potentially devastating attack intended “to weaken Europe's economy.” In the fall of 2010, Western intelligence officials learned that Osama bin Laden had ordered attacks in several cities that were supposed to mirror the November 2008 siege of Mumbai. After Siddiqui was captured in Afghanistan, he revealed the nascent plot.

In testimony before the court,

Thomas Joscelyn and Benjamin Weintal are fellows at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies.



SPECIAL MARKET OPPORTUNITY

Your Expert Guide to the World's Finest Coins

Nicholas J. Bruyer, CEO, First Federal Coin Corp.
ANA Life Member Since 1974

How can two \$5 Gold Eagles have a 470% difference in value?

If you're not interested in the answer, give this to your best friend.

We can't tell you how many times we're approached by very successful, very sophisticated business people who are interested in the collectible gold coin market, but don't have the first notion of where to begin.

Here's what we tell them: We think the \$5 Gold American Eagle MS70 First Strike is the ideal coin to own. Why?

There are few gold coins that collectors want more than the American Gold Eagle, especially when they find the absolutely finest quality specimens. Because for coins, value is driven by quality. The higher a coin's grade, the higher its value. It's that simple.

The highest grade possible is the exalted, absolutely flawless grade of MS70 (MS stands for "Mint State") First Releases. It's referred to as the perfect coin.

This is the pinnacle of a gold coin's state of quality. These gold coins are in demand. They've earned the highest grade possible, and for gold coin collectors, it just doesn't get any better.

Consider this example: a 1995 \$5 Gold Eagle in average ungraded condition is worth about \$200 today. But that same 1995 coin in perfect MS70 grade is valued at \$940. That's a 470% difference!

Of course, the population of these MS70 coins is smaller, because they're examples of the finest coins.

What can make a perfect coin even better? A "First Releases" pedigree!

Only a very small percentage of the first 2012 coins struck qualify for the additional First Releases certification from highly-respected independent grading service Numismatic Guaranty Corporation (NGC).

The 2012 \$5 Gold American Eagle MS70 First Releases coin is an absolutely perfect example of the gold coin that's been an American icon for 25 years.

You'd expect to pay a premium for such a unique combination of quality factors. But we have a limited opportunity for you:

You can now own what gold collectors compete over for only \$249

No one can predict the future value of this coin, of course. Markets and prices go up and down. But the 2012 \$5 Gold American Eagle MS70 First Releases is at the top of the gold coin collector's "Most Wanted" list.

Hurry! This is a first come, first served offer!

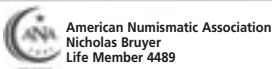
Call 1-888-201-7119. And find out how you can qualify for free shipping by mention the offer code below.

Call First Federal Toll-FREE today 1-888-201-7119 to Reserve Your 2012 MS70 NGC First Release \$5 Gold Eagles for only \$249 each (plus s/h)

Offer Code FDE121
Please mention this code when you call.



Past performance is not an indicator of future performance. Prices subject to change without notice.
Note: First Federal Coin Corp. is a private distributor of government and private coin and medallion issues and is not affiliated with the United States government. Facts and figures were deemed accurate as of March, 2012.



1-888-201-7119



Siddiqui described how he and his co-conspirators planned different travel routes in order to avoid suspicion beginning in early 2009. But their travels had a common theme: Iran was their principal gateway to jihad.

According to Siddiqui, two of his co-conspirators—Rami Makanesi and Naamen Meziche—traveled from Vienna to Tehran in order “to not get caught.” Their trip was booked in a Hamburg travel office by an unknown Iranian. Siddiqui explained that the pair could not travel directly to Pakistan because they are Arabs. Pakistani authorities would have questioned the duo’s intentions and perhaps detained them, but by traveling through Iran they avoided such scrutiny.

When Makanesi and Meziche arrived in Tehran, Siddiqui explained, they called a facilitator known as “Dr. Mamoud,” who works for the IMU. The two were ushered to Zahedan, a city on the eastern border of Iran, close to both Afghanistan and Pakistan. There, Siddiqui says, Dr. Mamoud “welcomed them.”

Zahedan is a well-known hub of al Qaeda and IMU activity. The IMU has repeatedly used the city’s Makki mosque, the largest Sunni mosque in Iran, to shuttle fighters into Afghanistan and Pakistan. Al Qaeda has an established presence there, too. For instance, before his May 2011 suicide at Guantánamo, an Afghan detainee named Inayatullah admitted to authorities that he was al Qaeda’s emir of Zahedan, from where he delivered recruits to senior al Qaeda leaders in Pakistan. Even since Inayatullah’s capture, al Qaeda fighters have continued to travel through Zahedan, as Makanesi and Meziche did.

Meziche has long been known to European counterterrorism officials. His father-in-law, Mohamed al-Fazazi, was a radical preacher whose sermons and spiritual advice guided al Qaeda’s 9/11 Hamburg cell. Meziche was reportedly close to Mohamed Atta, the lead hijacker in the 9/11 attacks, and Ramzi bin al-Shibh, al Qaeda’s point man for the 9/11 operation. Bin al-Shibh reportedly tried to call Meziche just days

before the 9/11 attacks. Meziche was later implicated in Al Qaeda in Iraq’s operations after European officials found that he had been recruiting fighters for the organization.

According to *Der Spiegel*, senior al Qaeda terrorists instructed Meziche and another member of the cell, an Iranian national named Shahab Dashti, to travel to Iran where “they would be told where in Europe they were to be deployed to begin building structures for bin Laden’s organization.” Once in Iran, Dashti “was to undergo facial plastic surgery” because he had already appeared in a propaganda video and was therefore recognizable to European authorities. However, Dashti did not get a chance to fool Western intelligence officials, because he was killed in a drone strike in northern Pakistan in early October 2010, after the Mumbai-style plot was uncovered.

Initial reports indicated that Meziche was killed in the same drone strike, but he survived it and is now being sheltered by the Iranians. The *New York Times* reported in January that Meziche and several other members of the cell are “waiting in Iran, trying to return to Europe.” European authorities are not eager to see them come back, as they pose obvious security risks.

Anonymous U.S. officials interviewed by the *Times* described Meziche and one of his Iran-based compatriots as “lower midlevel” al Qaeda operatives. “These two have been involved in al Qaeda external operations activities for some time now,” one official said. Citing multiple intelligence sources, the *New York Times* explained that “Iran appears to be harboring them in hopes that, when and if they leave, they will cause trouble in the West.”

Rami Makanesi, who set off for Tehran with Meziche, was not as fortunate. He was arrested in Pakistan in 2010 and sentenced to nearly five years in prison last year by a Frankfurt court.

Makanesi has his own ties to Iran-based al Qaeda operatives. According to Guido Steinberg, a researcher

in the Middle East and North Africa division of the German Institute for International Security Affairs, Makanesi met a top al Qaeda operative known as Yassin al-Suri in February 2010. Steinberg, in his analysis brief for IHS Jane’s, a military and intelligence consulting group, explains that Suri asked Makanesi to “accompany him to Iran.” Makanesi said that Suri “was responsible for funneling money and recruits via Iran and that he was known to cooperate with the Iranian government.”

Indeed, in July 2011, the U.S. Treasury Department revealed that Suri operates in Iran as part of a “secret deal” between the Iranian government and al Qaeda. Treasury contends that Suri’s Iranian network serves as “a critical transit point for funding to support al Qaeda’s activities.” In December 2011, the U.S. government offered a \$10 million reward, one of the highest ever, for information leading to Suri’s capture.

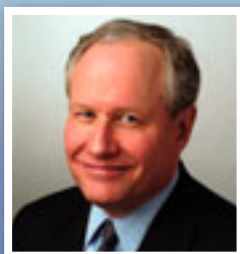
When the Treasury Department designated Suri in 2011, it also designated several other members of al Qaeda who utilize the Iran-based network. One of them was Atiyah Abd al-Rahman, who was subsequently killed in a drone strike in northern Pakistan. The Treasury Department explained: “Rahman was previously appointed by Osama bin Laden to serve as al Qaeda’s emissary in Iran, a position which allowed him to travel in and out of Iran with the permission of Iranian officials.” Makanesi seems to have at least known Rahman. According to Steinberg, Makanesi has explained that Rahman “was known to have lived in Iran for many years.”

When exposing al Qaeda’s Iran-based network in 2011, the Obama administration highlighted its role in the Iraq and Afghan wars. But this same network has delivered recruits to al Qaeda who were slated to take part in attacks in the West. Iranian officials may or may not have known the specific details of Osama bin Laden’s 2010 plot. But we do know this: Al Qaeda’s Iranian network has a global reach, capable of delivering trained terrorists to Europe’s doorstep. ♦

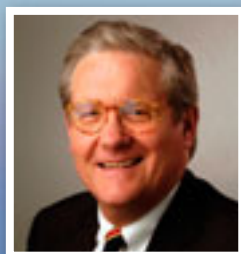
ALL ABOARD!

Join us on Holland America's sleek and luxurious ms Veendam, sailing to Bermuda from New York July 22-29, 2012

SPEAKERS:



Bill Kristol
Editor



Fred Barnes
Executive Editor



Stephen Hayes
Senior Writer



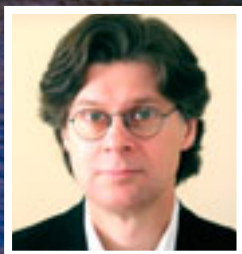
Terry Eastland
Publisher



Andrew Ferguson
Senior Editor



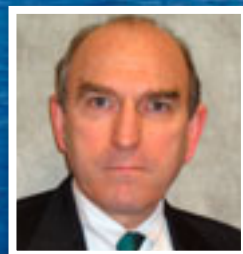
Brit Hume
Fox News
Senior Political Analyst



Byron York
Chief Political Correspondent
for The Washington Examiner



Mike Murphy
Political Analyst



Elliott Abrams
Former Deputy
National Security Adviser

PLUS: The Weekly Standard's Deputy Editor Richard Starr, Managing Editor Claudia Anderson, Literary Editor Philip Terzian, and Staff Writer Jay Cost

To reserve your cabin today, call **1-800-707-1634**
or visit us online at ***twscruise.com***



Holland America Line

In order to participate in The Weekly Standard's events, this cruise must be booked only via The Cruise Authority.

Car Wars

*General Motors is no longer ‘Government Motors,’ if it ever was.
So why won’t the Obama administration sell its GM stock?*

BY FRED BARNES

The folks at General Motors are blessed with more foresight than you might have suspected. They were prepared when Vice President Joe Biden wanted to address a United Auto Workers rally at the GM plant in Toledo, Ohio, that manufactures transmissions. Sorry, they informed the vice president’s office, but we have a corporate policy that prohibits campaign events at any GM facility. So on March 15, Biden spoke to union members in Toledo at the main hall of UAW Local 12.

The policy is a product of post-bankruptcy General Motors, the company that wants to build cars and trucks and stay as far away from campaign politics as possible, especially presidential politics. The rule was instituted out of fear that President Obama, Biden, and administration officials would seek to use GM plants as campaign backdrops. And Republicans and conservatives—potential car buyers!—would see GM showrooms as Obama’s turf and stay away. Given the partisan bombast in Biden’s speech, one can understand their apprehension.

“Mitt Romney, Rick Santorum, and Newt Gingrich—these guys have a fundamentally different economic philosophy than we do,” Biden said. “Simply stated, we’re about promoting the private sector. They’re about protecting the privileged sector. We are for a fair shot and a fair shake. They’re about no rules, no risks, and no accountability.”

Worse, Republicans were ready in 2009 to let the American auto industry collapse, at the cost of 1 million jobs, he said. “But the guy I work with every day, the president, he didn’t flinch. This is a man with steel in his spine. . . . He made the tough call and the verdict is in.” Obama saved GM, Chrysler—and even Ford, though it received no money in the government bailout of the auto industry.

Here we see the Obama reelection drive in high gear, only to be outmaneuvered by GM. Obama routinely exploits the auto rescue as a central talking point in his quest for a second term. It dominates his campaign in the industrial Midwest. The Big Three, having averted destruction, are

now thriving, and the president is seeking full credit. “It’s the only domestic policy success the man has had in his first term,” an auto analyst says.

But there’s another aspect of the Biden episode that’s enormously revealing. The Obama administration still owns 26 percent of General Motors’s stock. Yet GM officials weren’t afraid to tell the White House, No, you can’t use our facility. And this reflects a larger truth about GM: It is free from control by the Obama administration.

It’s not Government Motors anymore. Nor is the green-tech Volt—part electric, part gas powered—being produced at the insistence of the administration. The Volt is not an Obamacar or an Obamamobile. It’s been in the GM pipeline since 2006. Back then, Obama was a senator and GM needed an answer to a political environment that frowned on SUVs and trucks, the company’s gas-guzzling mainstays.

GM board members and management tell the same story about the Obama administration. It “has been absolutely true to its word to stay out of the business,” says David Bonderman, a Texas financier and board member. “They didn’t attempt to run the company,” says Ed Whitacre, CEO for nine months after the company emerged from bankruptcy in 2009. “They didn’t attempt to micromanage.” The current CEO, Dan Akerson, is more emphatic. “I will testify in front of the good Lord that this administration has never had a presence in the boardroom or any input in the operation of the business,” he told a House Oversight and Government Reform subcommittee in January.

Nor has the administration put any government officials on the board of directors. Akerson, by the way, is a Republican. GM keeps Washington abreast of its activity in the car business, since the government is still a large shareholder. And administration officials show up for annual GM shareholder conferences. That’s about it. There’s a tie, but it doesn’t bind.

The “new GM” has crossed the Obama administration repeatedly. Though the president has often expressed his fondness for the Volt, GM has suspended production of the vehicle for five weeks, with 6,000 unsold. This decision clashes with Obama’s goal of 1 million plug-in cars on the road in 2015. According to the Department of Energy’s

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

blueprint issued last year, this would include 505,000 Volts. That goal was always unattainable. Now an Energy spokesman says it's "no longer up-to-date." Only 7,671 Volts were sold in 2011 and 1,626 in January and February this year. Sales appear to have picked up a bit in March.

In November 2009, the GM board reversed its decision to sell its European car division. That division's main car, the Opel, is built in Germany, and the sudden change of plans caused a bitter backlash in Germany and embarrassed the White House. German chancellor Angela Merkel, who had approved the sale, was visiting with Obama when the decision to keep GM Europe was announced.

Eight months later, GM acquired AmeriCredit to, as its press release said, "meet customer demand for leasing and non-prime financing for GM vehicles." This put GM in direct competition with its former financing arm, GMAC, now known as Ally. The government owns a large chunk of Ally stock.

Despite these displays of independence, GM has been unable to escape Obama's shadow. The problem here is Obama. He treats GM as an adopted child, the Volt as his pet vehicle. He's visited three GM plants as president. Speaking to a UAW audience in Washington in February, Obama recalled getting "inside a brand new Chevy Volt fresh off the line. . . . It was nice. I'll bet it drives real good." He actually drove it 10 feet.

Obama said the Secret Service wouldn't let him take the Volt out for a spin. But, he promised, "five years from now when I'm not president anymore, I'll buy one and drive it myself." Then last October, he toured the GM plant in Lake Orion, Michigan, 30 miles north of Detroit, and plugged the subcompact Sonic. "You've got to sit in that car," he said. "There's a lot of room in there, even for a pretty tall guy like me."

That's not all. In his stump speeches, the president applauds himself for making the "unpopular" decision to "help the auto industry retool [and] prevent its collapse," as he put it in Chicago in January. He doesn't mention President George W. Bush, who provided the initial bailout funds. In his memoir, *Decision Points*, Bush said he told Obama just after he'd been elected, "I wouldn't let the automakers fail. I won't dump this mess on him."

GM officials wince at Obama's references, fearing he's politicizing their company and keeping alive the Government Motors stigma. "I hated that name," Whitacre, now retired, says. "I still hate it. It was very harmful to the company."

No doubt Obama thinks he's aiding GM. He's not. "If you talk to these [GM] guys privately, they can't get out from under the government fast enough," says Daniel Howes of the *Detroit News*. But Obama won't let go. He took another pro-Volt step in his 2013 budget, asking Congress to

increase the tax credit for purchase of a green car to \$10,000 from \$7,500—an attention-grabbing provision that's unlikely to pass. Obama also wants buyers to get the credit at the time of purchase, not later.

The administration's 26 percent of GM stock gives it a hook into the company, though it hasn't exploited its shares to interfere with corporate decisions. But when GM had an initial public offering in November 2010, the Obama team declined to sell all its shares, despite Whitacre's pleas.

"There was so much interest in that IPO because we were making money," Whitacre told me. He said he "begged" administration officials to "sell all their stock" and pay back more of the tab for the \$50 billion bailout. "The government had the final say," Whitacre says. It sought merely to give up its position as the majority (61 percent) stockholder.

Now the stock is underwater. The IPO opened at \$33 a share. The price rose to \$38 before falling to \$20. Last week, it hovered between \$25 and \$26. At that price, the administration probably won't unload its shares before the election. Selling now would expose how far short—roughly \$14 billion—taxpayers are of being paid back in full. The stock price would have to double for taxpayers to achieve full reimbursement.

Until all the stock is sold, GM will continue to fall under the Troubled Asset Relief Program, since TARP funded the \$50 billion bailout. This means salaries of top GM executives must be approved by the Treasury Department. Whitacre insists salaries are kept so low, at least by Fortune 500 standards, that GM can't hire corporate talent from outside the company.

Though GM is a free-market company today, out of Obama's grip since emerging from bankruptcy in July 2009, accusations about the bailout have lingered. Government intervention was unnecessary. GM could have been saved through the regular bankruptcy process. A private loan could have come to the rescue.

The businessmen who run GM don't think so, nor do the executives, money people, analysts, and journalists who make up the car community. The GM board members aren't left-wing billionaires of the George Soros school or, as best as I can tell, even mild-mannered liberals like Bill Gates. After talking to Bonderman, Whitacre, and Akerson, I'd be shocked if they voted for Obama in 2008 or intend to this November. But it would be rude to ask them.

Bonderman is cofounder of the private equity powerhouse TPG and known as a shrewd dealmaker. He says he opposes government intervention in the economy, except in "this particular, unique case." Without it, he says, there was "not a chance" GM would have survived. "It was absolutely the right thing to do," says Whitacre.

There's a political factor. No president is going to let the country's Big Three automakers—or two out of three—go out of business on his watch. In an emergency such as GM and Chrysler faced in late 2008, any president would have done what President Bush did and quickly lent billions to keep the companies afloat. Bush isn't shy about defending his decision. "I'd do it again," he told the National Automobile Dealers Association recently.

But why not a normal bankruptcy? The answer is it would probably have taken several years, not the two months it took Obama's Auto Task Force to hustle GM through the process. Speed mattered. GM didn't have the cash to exist for long in bankruptcy. It might have been forced to liquidate.

That possibility was a major worry at Ford, which wasn't facing bankruptcy. According to a new book, *American Icon*, by Bryce Hoffman, Ford made secret arrangements with Toyota and Honda to keep a network of suppliers alive if GM and Chrysler collapsed.

Another fear: Customers wouldn't buy cars from a company struggling through a lengthy bankruptcy. Opponents of the bailout dispute this, citing the current bankruptcy of American Airlines. Travelers are still booking American flights, aren't they? Yes, but the analogy doesn't work. Buying a car involves a warranty and, on average, keeping the car for eight years. When one buys a plane ticket, there's no long-term relationship with the airline.

A large bridge loan would have kept GM going, but it wasn't available in late 2008 and early 2009. Steve Rattner, who headed Obama's Auto Task Force, has challenged anyone to show him where private capital might have been obtained. No one has.

True, Rattner is an interested party. Howes, the conservative business columnist of the *Detroit News*, isn't. "I've challenged a number of people who've made that charge and asked them to give me an example of who could have provided the capital," Howes says. "They just stand there. And these are my conservative friends."

A loan guaranteed by the government could have been obtained, Rattner says. "But it wouldn't have changed anything." The government would have placed the same amount of money at risk as it did in the bailout. That was \$50 billion in GM's case. And it would have set the conditions for GM's acceptance of the money—thus, government intervention.

The Auto Task Force, Rattner argues, had every reason to get private money. The government bailout was unpopular. "We would have been delighted had there been private capital," he says. "There was no private capital available for anything," much less for auto companies on the verge of going belly-up.

When asked after a speech to the Detroit Economic

Club last December if he'd do anything differently, Rattner said the UAW might have been asked to give up more. Wages, pension accruals, and health care benefits of current union workers were left untouched by the task force, leading to charges of favoritism for the Obama-supporting UAW.

Rattner says "very unpleasant choices" had to be made. Bondholders suffered, many of them middle-class individuals who had invested in relatively inexpensive bonds. "I felt sorry for them," he told me. "We could have thrown more money at them." Others were large investment funds. The decision "was heartrending." More important, the UAW was crucial to GM's future. The bondholders weren't.

The Volt is "the single most politicized automobile since the Corvair," says car industry analyst Edward Niedermeyer of the website *The Truth About Cars*. The Corvair was attacked by Ralph Nader in 1965 in his book *Unsafe at Any Speed*. The car was later dropped by GM, Nader became a national figure, and the industry began to adopt more safety measures in autos.

Conservatives have latched onto the heavily subsidized Volt as a symbol of Obama's meddling in the economy and misguided zeal for killing off gasoline-powered cars. Bill O'Reilly and Lou Dobbs of Fox News and Rush Limbaugh have led a chorus of Volt critics. An article in *Forbes* was headlined "How the Chevy Volt Is Like Obamacare." Another in *Townhall* said the Volt is "the perfect car for the Occupy Wall Street crowd."

The Volt has few public defenders. One is *Media Matters*, which is highly partisan, left-wing, pro-Obama, and Soros-funded. Its defense, to the extent anyone is aware of it, is likely to make the Volt even less popular. Jay Leno is more appealing as a Volt admirer. He got a Volt in December 2010. After driving 11,000 miles, he's "never had to put gas in it yet," he told the *New York Times* last year. The car switches automatically to gas once the battery power is used up, usually after 30 to 40 miles.

GM has contributed to the Volt's troubled image. The company "fueled totally unrealistic expectations for Volt, equating it with a symbol of its rebirth even before collapsing into bailout," says Niedermeyer. In truth, the car was never going to be GM's savior and certainly isn't today. It was introduced at the Detroit Auto Show in 2007 as a futuristic concept car. But it came to market in 2010 as a four-seat car that looks like the Chevy Cruze, a hot-selling compact.

This was unfortunate. The Volt sells for \$41,000, more than twice the sticker price of the Cruze, which gets up to 40 miles a gallon and thus makes sense as a cheaper, fuel-efficient alternative to the Volt. Obama's task force concluded in a 2009 report that the Volt would "likely be too expensive to be commercially successful in the short term." GM had already decided to eliminate the Pontiac, Saturn,

Hummer, and Saab from its lineup. The Volt was spared.

There's more. Production of the Volt has been halted three times. Then came the crash tests of three Volts last November by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The battery of the third Volt emitted smoke and sparks, and a week later a fire broke out in the battery of the second. The test didn't follow GM instructions, and investigation found no safety problem. There was no recall.

The most significant fallout from the test was an eruption of criticism, much of it from conservatives, and much of it exaggerated. This, in turn, prompted a full-throated push-back from Bob Lutz, the former GM vice president, champion of the Volt, and a conservative himself. No Volt has ever caught fire "in normal use or in accidents," he wrote in *Forbes*. He added, immodestly, the Volt was "conceived by me and my team well before any federal bailout of GM."

Then he unloaded this barrage:

"What on earth is wrong with the conservative media movement that it feels it's OK to spread false information, OK to damage the reputation of perhaps the finest piece of mechanical technology our country has produced since the space shuttle, OK to hurt an iconic American company that is roaring back to global pre-eminence, OK to hurt American employment in Hamtramck, Mich., as long as it damages the Obama administration's reputation?"

Akerson bemoans the Volt's having become "a political punching bag," but GM won't give up on the car. It needs hybrids like the Volt and all-electric cars like the Spark, due to be introduced next year. The fuel efficiency standards imposed by Obama—54.5 miles per gallon in 2025—are so onerous that it needs them to hold down its fleet average. Obama boasts the new standard will save drivers on gas. He neglects to say it will drive up the price of cars.

One more thing. A study by the Mackinac Center for Public Policy said the first 6,000 Volts sold received government subsidies ranging from \$50,000 to \$250,000 per car. True, but the cost of subsidies per Volt will go down as more Volts are purchased.

Akerson, 63, is not a car guy. In his eight years at the Carlyle Group, the private equity firm, his only brush with the automobile industry was his role in Carlyle's acquisition of Hertz. His primary residence is in McLean, Virginia. He commutes weekly to Detroit. A graduate of the Naval Academy, Akerson is a decisive, blunt man who tends to rely on those who know more about cars than he does. He believes a commander is only as good as his generals. He says his father always bought GM cars, but he drove a Mercedes before joining the GM board in 2009 and taking over as CEO in September 2010. Now he has two Cadillacs in Virginia, one in Detroit.

When Carlyle Group cofounder David Rubenstein

learned Akerson was considering the CEO job at GM, he asked, "Do you know how much money you're leaving behind [at Carlyle]? . . . Does your wife know? . . . Do your children know?" In 2011, he earned \$9 million at GM, with no cash bonus. His pay had to be approved by the administration's TARP paymaster. Both Alan Mulally of Ford and Sergio Marchionne of Fiat, which owns Chrysler, earned considerably more.

Two pictures in Akerson's 39th-floor office in the Renaissance Center in Detroit's grim downtown reflect his vision of GM's past and future. A framed cover of a 1986 copy of *Fortune* sits on a table near the door. It's a picture of cars from five GM brands. They all look alike. Over his desk, there's a picture of the Cadillac ELR concept car. It's an "electric hybrid" like the Volt and would be built with a Volt powertrain. Akerson has hinted it's set to go into production.

The ELR and Volt will have a lot of competition, and not just from Nissan's all-electric Leaf. Green vehicles are soon to flood the auto market: the Ford C-Max plug-in, Ford Fusion plug-in, Chevy Spark EV, Toyota Prius plug-in, Volvo C30 EV, and Toyota RAV4 EV. But selling high technology cars is the least of his worries.

His biggest test is turning money-losing GM Europe into a profit center. His three predecessors at GM—Rick Wagoner, Fritz Henderson, John Smith—failed at this task. He also needs to improve sales in Latin America and keep pension benefits under control. But auto analyst Itay Michaeli of Citigroup says Akerson has begun to change GM's corporate culture. He's cut out the bureaucratic log-jam of 30 committees and continued closing GM facilities in the United States, from 47 in 2008 to 33 this year. GM's net income in 2011 was \$7.6 billion.

At Carlyle, Akerson avoided the press. In Detroit, auto company bosses are rock stars, and a posse of reporters follows them and plays up their every word. He appears to dislike the media clamor. Some of his comments have been indiscreet. He said a \$1-a-gallon increase in the gasoline tax would help the auto industry. During the flap over the battery fire, he offered to buy back the Volts of unhappy owners. More than 100—less than 1 percent—came forward.

Akerson visited Solidarity House, the UAW's headquarters, a few weeks before he became CEO, the first GM leader to do so. He meets more often with UAW chief Bob King than his predecessors did with their union counterparts. It wasn't Akerson's doing, but many in the automobile community are still amazed the UAW allowed 40 percent of the workers at the Sonic plant to be paid at half the normal level—\$14 an hour rather than \$28. The goal is to show a small car can be produced profitably in the United States, not just in foreign countries with lower wages.

Now if GM can just get President Obama out of its hair . . . ♦

A Tale of Two Budgets

Paul Ryan draws the contrast Republicans will need this fall

BY YUVAL LEVIN

Last spring, when House Republicans passed Budget Committee chairman Paul Ryan's ambitious fiscal agenda, it would have been easy to make two basic guesses about the proposal's lasting impact: On the one hand, it seemed that the budget's focus on the immense scope of the fiscal calamity heading our way would put the deficit and debt at the center of our politics for the rest of Barack Obama's term. But on the other hand, it looked like the Medicare proposal in the budget would be highly controversial and politically risky.

For a time, both predictions seemed to be confirmed by events. The Ryan budget forced President Obama essentially to retract the budget he had proposed two months earlier and replace it with a vague series of promises to address the deficit and debt. There followed several months of budget showdowns, with Republicans setting the agenda, even if they got only a small portion of the spending cuts they sought. Meanwhile, the Democrats were in full attack mode on Medicare, accusing Republicans of pushing old ladies off cliffs and asserting that the defense of "Medicare as we know it" would be the centerpiece of their own election platform.

As the year went on, however, both predictions turned out to be wrong. The case for saving Medicare (and with it the federal budget) from bankruptcy through consumer choice and competition quickly gained the status of Republican orthodoxy—with most of the party's presidential candidates backing it, just about every congressional Republican voting for it, and almost no conservative commentators and pundits opposing it. And voters did not seem to hold it against Republicans, especially when contrasted with President Obama's proposal to reduce Medicare spending by empowering the Independent Payment Advisory Board—a panel of 15 experts—to ration care. By November, the *New York Times* was reporting that the merits of a Ryan-style reform were getting a serious look beyond Republican ranks and "some Democrats say that—if carefully designed, with enough protections for beneficiaries—it might work."

Yuval Levin is a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, Hertog fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center, and editor of National Affairs.

In December, Democratic senator Ron Wyden of Oregon joined with Ryan to propose a bipartisan version of the idea.

But even as the notion of a market-oriented Medicare reform has taken hold, the intense focus on the country's fiscal problems has dissipated. The Democrats seem to have realized that their political prospects depended on distracting the public from those problems, rather than on drawing attention to Republican attempts to solve them. So while budget politics dominated much of 2011, recent months have seen a shift of attention toward other subjects—especially the question of income inequality. President Obama has been flying around the country raging against millionaires with corporate jets, bands of upper-middle-class college graduates have been occupying public parks to complain about having to repay school loans, and Warren Buffett keeps pleading for a higher tax rate.

It has made for good theater, but it has been completely disconnected from the fiscal realities facing the federal government, and that is exactly how the administration wants it. All the drama has masked a stunning dereliction of the president's basic duty to keep the government solvent and avert economic catastrophe.

Obama's 2013 budget, released in February, fails even to propose any means of preventing the coming explosion of debt, and the president's economic advisers have been remarkably frank about their lack of answers. In a February 16 hearing of the House Budget Committee, Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner was asked by Ryan to describe the administration's plans for addressing the mounting risk of a debt crisis. "We're not coming before you today to say we have a definitive solution to that long-term problem," Geithner replied. "What we do know is we don't like yours."

A few months earlier, when Washington's attention was focused squarely on the coming fiscal calamity, such a stunningly irresponsible statement would have made news. But this winter, it barely registered. It seems clear, therefore, that the challenge for Republicans the remainder of this year is to bring the nation's foremost economic and fiscal challenges back into focus for the public, to highlight Obama's failure of leadership, and to offer an alternative—a governing vision of their own.

And once again it is of all things a House budget resolution that offers them an opportunity to make their case. If the goal of last year's Ryan budget was to unite Republicans

around a few key reform proposals, the goal of this year's Ryan budget—released on March 20—seems to be to highlight the utter failure of President Obama's vision of government and to propose a plausible alternative.

Much of the agenda is the same, of course. Ryan would repeal Obamacare, spend \$5 trillion less than the president plans to over the next decade, reduce the deficit by \$3 trillion more than the president would over that period, reduce debt as a share of the economy within two years, modernize and strengthen the social safety net, and reform Medicare. But the particulars, and some of the ways in which this year's budget differs from last year's, make for a striking contrast with Obama's dereliction—one that will serve Republicans well this election year.

First, President Obama seeks to gut the defense budget to procure temporary life support for a bloated welfare state. Military spending has not been a significant driver of the growth in government spending in recent decades. While federal spending increased from 18 percent of GDP in 1960 to 24 percent last year, defense spending declined in that period from 9 percent to less than 5 percent of GDP, according to the Office of Management and Budget. But in President Obama's 2013 budget, defense spending is cut by \$487 billion by 2021 while overall federal spending actually *increases* by \$2 trillion over the coming decade. The Ryan proposal would provide level funding for defense—not increasing the budget, but also not slashing it by half a trillion dollars while expecting the military to defend America's interests in a dangerous time and leaving the real causes of our budget crisis untouched.

Second, President Obama's budget seeks to use the tax code to advance a populist election message, while the Ryan budget seeks to reform the tax code to spur economic growth. In essence, the president wants to temporarily stabilize annual deficits at around \$600 billion (the largest deficit in American history until 2009, even adjusting for inflation, was \$460 billion) before seeing them climb again. And he would do so by increasing the top marginal tax rate from 35 percent to roughly 40 percent and increasing taxes on investment. The Ryan budget contends that such tax increases would be damaging to economic growth at a time when dynamism is badly needed, and pursues instead an aggressive pro-growth tax reform—consolidating today's six personal income-tax brackets into just two (with rates of 10 percent and 25 percent), reducing the corporate rate to 25 percent, and broadening the tax base by curbing deductions, credits, and other so-called tax expenditures. The details of such reforms would depend on the House Ways and Means Committee, but the general outline, developed in tandem with that committee, aims for federal revenues

at the postwar average of 18.5 percent of GDP (up from last year's roughly 15 percent) with significantly lower tax rates.

Third, President Obama's budget proposes simply to pump more money into our existing safety-net programs, which have been growing uncontrollably in recent years, while the Ryan budget seeks to modernize them to improve their effectiveness and reduce their costs. The food-stamp program alone now costs more than four times what it did a decade ago, and that growth is by no means attributable only to the recession. Caseloads increased by almost 30 percent between 2003 and 2007, as unemployment was falling. The design of this and similar programs uses federal dollars to encourage states to increase their caseloads, and creates no incentives for efficient management. Ryan would use the model of welfare reform to put the states in charge of making these programs work for their populations—funding them through federal block grants indexed to inflation and the size of each state's eligible population, and requiring that states make aid contingent on working or obtaining job training. The idea is not only to save money, though the cumulative savings from such reforms would be significant, but also to use our safety-net institutions to help make poor Americans more independent, rather than less so.

The most profound transformations of the welfare state in the Ryan budget, however, are directed to the federal programs most responsible for our current fiscal straits and for our coming debt disaster: our health care entitlement programs. Conservatives are in the habit of seeing reductions in domestic discretionary spending as the gold standard of reining in government, but in fact health-entitlement spending is the essence of the problem to be solved, and to a degree that few Americans appreciate. In 1971, federal health spending accounted for 1 percent of GDP, and all other government spending combined (excluding interest on the debt) accounted for 17.1 percent of GDP, according to the Congressional Budget Office. Forty years later, in 2011, health spending accounted for 5.6 percent of GDP and all other spending combined (excluding interest) accounted for 17.1 percent of GDP—exactly the same portion of the economy as it had four decades earlier (having fluctuated rather little over that time). In essence, the net growth in government as a percentage of the economy in these 40 years has been entirely a function of federal health spending.

And without meaningful reform, this problem will only grow worse. In its latest long-term projections, the Congressional Budget Office forecasted that, between now and 2050, spending on the federal health care entitlements (especially Medicare and Medicaid) will more than double as a percentage of the economy, while all other federal spending combined will actually *decline* as a share of the economy. The health care entitlements are, in essence,

responsible for our disastrous long-term debt problem.

In his budget, President Obama proposes to see this trend continue unabated. Under Obamacare, 16 million more Americans would be shoved into an unreformed Medicaid program that is already failing to provide ready access to quality care. Millions more would enter a whole new poorly designed federal health entitlement created to subsidize coverage in new state exchanges. And the most powerful driver of American health care costs—the fee-for-service design of the Medicare system—would be left essentially untouched, with a board of price controllers expected to finally make it efficient but not empowered to actually change it.

It is on this front—health care, where he claims to have marked his greatest achievement—that President Obama has in fact failed most decisively. And it is on this front that Republicans have an opportunity to offer the starkest contrast with that failure of leadership. The Ryan budget goes a long way toward doing that, though it does not go all the way.

Ryan proposes a much-needed reform of Medicaid—ending the open-ended federal/state funding structure that creates an enormous incentive for overspending and transforming the program into a federal block grant that would allow states the flexibility to pursue greater efficiency and provide more options to the poor. And most important, he proposes to transform Medicare into a premium-support program—and in a way that draws an even more effective contrast with Obama’s approach than last year’s Republican budget did.

As with last year’s plan, none of Ryan’s proposed changes would apply to current seniors and people who are now over 55. For people who retire more than 10 years from now, Medicare would become a system in which the government would provide a fixed amount per recipient each year to pay for insurance that each senior would choose from a menu of comprehensive options. Unlike last year’s proposal, however, the private insurance options would be joined by one government-run fee-for-service option resembling the current Medicare system, and the level of the premium-support benefit each year would be set by competitive bidding among insurers, rather than just by a predetermined formula fixed to inflation.

Both of these new elements would tend to make the transition to the new system more gradual and orderly, and to complicate Democratic efforts to scare voters about it. The fee-for-service option would have a version of “Medicare as we know it” compete for consumers in the new system on something like a level playing field with private insurers, while the competitive bidding system

would combine the best elements of defined-benefit and defined-contribution coverage.

A defined-benefit system, like today’s Medicare system, is one in which the government commits to provide a certain set of benefits and then pays whatever they cost. This assures recipients of a guaranteed benefit but encourages cost inflation, since providers of care have a huge incentive to perform more services and thus earn more fees. A defined-contribution system, like the one Ryan proposed last year, would have the government provide a predetermined amount to individuals to spend on insurance. They would choose the coverage they wanted; if it cost more than the preset amount they would pay the difference, and if it cost less they would keep the difference. This would make consumers more cost conscious, driving providers to seek ways to offer quality care at lower prices, but it risks leaving beneficiaries with more out-of-pocket expenses if health costs still grow faster than the premium-support benefit.

Ryan’s new proposal is a bit of both: The government would define the minimum insurance benefit to be provided to all covered seniors, based on the level of coverage Medicare now provides, and then there would be a process each year in which competing insurers would offer bids proposing to provide that (or a greater) benefit at the lowest cost they could. The level of the premium-support payment given to seniors would be set at the level of the second-lowest of the bids; poorer and sicker seniors would get additional help, while the wealthiest would get less. Thus, there would be a defined benefit, but payments to providers would not be open-ended. And there would be a defined contribution (with providers competing to win over consumers), but its value would be automatically set to a level that makes premiums affordable, since at least one option would always cost less than the government subsidy.

Because CBO refuses to score the effects of market competition, and a budget resolution has to be scored by CBO, Ryan had to back up his competitive bidding process with a blunt cap on Medicare’s overall growth (CBO then simply scores the proposal as meeting the cap). To sharpen the contrast with Obama, he chose to just give CBO the same cap Obama proposes for the IPAB—keeping the annual growth of costs below GDP growth plus 0.5 percent. Both caps are of course just scoring conventions; they are goals, not reforms. They raise the question of how costs would be kept below the cap, and the differing answers to that question clarify once again the choice before voters this year.

On one hand are Obama’s 15 numinous know-it-alls, charged with setting prices, rationing care, and finding just the right balance between quality and access from Washington, and without the power to change Medicare’s payment system. And on the other hand is a system that seeks efficiency by having 50 million consumers in search of the

quality they want at the lowest price they can find pressuring 15 million insurance and health care providers to find innovative ways to meet their demands and make a good living. One involves sheer faith in expert managers, and the other involves using real economics to lift the burden of the oppressive fee-for-service system and enable a new era of innovation, efficiency, and quality in American health care. It is hard to imagine a clearer contrast for voters than that between the two visions of government, and of American life, at the heart of these two proposals—and indeed, at the heart of these two budgets.

The Ryan budget could certainly have taken a further step on health care and offered a specific alternative to Obamacare beyond its Medicaid and Medicare components. It could also have launched its Medicare reform sooner than a decade from now, especially since the two new elements in this year's proposal would make the transition significantly easier for new beneficiaries. And it could have taken a more aggressive approach to cutting domestic discretionary spending in its first year. While such spending is not the driver of our fiscal problems, it has grown vastly in recent years, and trimming it back would make the larger task of fiscal responsibility a little easier. By not being quite as aggressive as it might have been, the Ryan budget has earned

some critics on the right—some of whom are no doubt also unhappy with its move to avert steep defense cuts.

But seen in the context of the Ryan budget as a whole, and of the demands of this election year, such criticism seems to lack proportion. There is, of course, no chance that the House Republican budget will be adopted by the Democratic Senate this year, and no chance that President Obama will adopt it. Its purpose, rather, is to put before the public an agenda and a vision—to contrast Republican priorities with those of the president on the most important economic issues before the country. Its purpose is to remind voters that, as things now stand, we are headed toward a perfectly predictable yet thoroughly avertable calamity, that the president prefers to do nothing to prevent it, and that Republicans have a plausible, coherent plan to address it.

President Obama has successfully turned voters' attention away from our most significant problems in recent months, and he surely hopes to keep them distracted through the election. But just as they did last year, House Republicans have the opportunity to recapture the agenda—not by distracting voters from our problems but by offering real solutions and daring the Democrats to offer their own. We can only hope that the Republican presidential candidate has the good sense to follow their lead. ♦

Invest in Infrastructure to Spur Growth, Create Jobs

By Thomas J. Donohue
President and CEO
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

In the 20th century, the United States built the most advanced infrastructure system ever. Investments put millions to work and fueled our economic growth, expanded our horizons, and made us the envy of the world. But in the years since, we've failed to keep up those investments, and we've moved from first in the world to middle of the pack.

It's time to restore our infrastructure through smart investments, which can help strengthen our economy, create jobs, and enhance U.S. productivity and competitiveness.

First, we must pass legislation to maintain investment in our roads, bridges, transit, and water resources. And we can no longer afford short-term extensions. Without the certainty of multi-year funding, projects will continue to be delayed, allowing infrastructure to fall further into disrepair and pushing land, labor, and materials costs higher.

Second, Congress must ensure

that money invested in infrastructure is spent wisely by aligning federal policy, programs, and resources with national needs. Lawmakers should prioritize efforts by focusing on a sensible mix of projects based on actual need, not politics.

Third, we need to better leverage private capital. Traditional funding mechanisms are inadequate for meeting the growing needs of our economy, businesses, and citizens. So it is imperative that we remove regulatory impediments, state and local laws, and outdated attitudes that are taking an estimated \$250 billion in global private capital out of play. By investing that private capital into American infrastructure projects, we could create 1.9 million jobs over 10 years and spur untold economic growth.

Fourth, we can't allow permitting delays to hold up infrastructure development. The administration should limit environmental reviews to six months, prevent duplicative reviews, and forgo them when no significant environmental impact is expected. Accelerating the permitting process

would quickly mobilize economic activity, construction, and hiring from one end of our country to the other.

Finally, we must act with urgency. If we fail to make adequate investments in transportation infrastructure, by 2020 we'll lose almost \$1 trillion in economic growth. Businesses will see their transportation costs rise by \$430 billion, and the average American household income will drop by more than \$700. U.S. exports will decline by \$28 billion. Meanwhile, global competitors will surge past us with superior infrastructure that will attract jobs, businesses, and capital.

Now is the time for lawmakers to set aside politics, resolve differences, and get moving on commonsense investments in our infrastructure. It's time to leverage public and private resources to fundamentally bolster our economy, create jobs, and increase productivity.



100 Years Standing Up for American Enterprise
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

What's Left, Who's Right?

Why did the Chinese Communists purge Bo Xilai?

BY ROSS TERRILL

The crisis over Bo Xilai in huge Chongqing, a city-state double the size of Switzerland with 28 million people, proves the left lives on in China, despite 35 years of Communist party flight from Maoism—and despite U.S. China specialists' calling leftists "conservatives." A pro-free-market right is also intellectually strong, and the Beijing government seems hesitant to attack it. Are a hundred flowers blooming? Is the party-state skillfully balancing left and right to keep politics stable and boring for the populace? Or are darker clouds on the horizon?

Bo Xilai, as Communist party chief in hillside, cacophonous Chongqing, embraced the poor with housing and social benefits, encouraged red storytelling, "singing red songs," and mass texting of messages displaying Mao's thoughts. Bo, who boasts a famous father but has some history of opportunism, hitched his rising career to this deployment of leftist mobilization to combat crime, increase public spirit, and isolate enemies. He was successful enough to discomfort Beijing. A flamboyant politician, he made President Hu Jintao and other bigwigs in Beijing look like stick figures.

Astonishingly, on February 6, Chongqing's police czar, Wang Lijun, one of Bo Xilai's henchmen, fled to the U.S. consulate in Chengdu, another major southwestern city, out of fear or with a story to tell (or both). The United States apparently denied Wang asylum, and on leaving the consulate he was at the mercy of a large, waiting

Beijing security force. Bareknuckled fighting had protruded through the lovely tapestry of socialism. Few concrete charges were laid at Bo's door, only "corruption." Bo does have a son at the Kennedy School at Harvard, which may bother some colleagues, but then Vice President Xi Jinping has a daughter at Harvard too.

In some ways the crisis was less opaque than past shake-ups. Bo traveled as a Politburo member to Beijing for a parliament meeting, giving a cheery press conference there, yet failed to return to Chongqing or otherwise appear. The Chinese people could observe Bo's truncated public presence, and a huge electronic buzz ensued. It was like a game in which the villain, while not especially appealing, was fun to watch; had he fallen off his high wire?

The last major purge of the left in the Chinese Communist party (CCP) was the dramatic arrest of the so-called Gang of Four, heroes turned villains of the Cultural Revolution, in the immediate aftermath of Mao's death in September 1976. This was a historic



Bo Xilai

coup d'état, but sudden and secret; the Chinese public knew nothing of the seizure of Mao's widow and the others until they were behind bars. Count it progress that Bo and Wang have not been declared counterrevolutionaries, as Mao styled Deng Xiaoping in April 1976 and Deng styled the Gang of Four. Nor was Bo said to have tried to split the party, as Deng said of party chief Zhao Ziyang after the Tiananmen Square crisis in 1989.

In outcome, Bo's purge will probably have more in common with Deng's quiet demotion of Mao's chosen successor Hua Guofeng in the early 1980s or Zhao's house arrest for the duration after Tiananmen. Bo has been relieved of the top post in Chongqing, but Beijing has not yet said he is guilty of crimes.

More remarkable than Bo's dismissal—surely triggered by his clash with Wang and the embarrassing incident

Ross Terrill, associate in research at Harvard's Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies, is the author of Mao, The New Chinese Empire, and Madame Mao.

PHOTOS: NEWSCOM

inside an American consulate—was that his neo-Maoist policies flourished for five years in a Chinese bastion (close to Deng’s birthplace, as it happens). Nevertheless, for whatever reason, Premier Wen Jiabao chose to warn in alluding to the Chongqing shake-up that the *Cultural Revolution must not recur*.

Bo was replaced by Zhang Dejiang, a Politburo protégé of Hu Jintao with the sparkling background of an education in North Korea. Police czar Wang was replaced by a cop from Qinghai Province, long part of Tibet and desolate home to numerous labor camps. But are left and right really contending in China?

Last year I lectured at the School of Marxism in a major Chinese university. Many students were socialist believers anxious about the future of Marxism in today’s world, as well they might be. Coming out of the classroom, a professor from a different school, political science, who had escorted me, complained in English, “That class and its teacher are so conservative!”

“They’re leftists,” I rejoined.

“Of course they are, but don’t American China specialists call our leftists conservatives?” The Chinese professor had picked this up from the *New York Times*.

Here is a sample of the mind-boggling array of terms used within one essay by two respected China scholars to avoid saying the successful reform era brought in some right-wing economic policies and the anti-reform grumblers are left wing: “leftist,” Old Left, conservative, “conservative,” neoconservative, old guard, “right.” The verbal dancing seems an effort to uphold the premise “no enemy on the left.” Why call leftists conservative or put “left” in quotation marks? For the same reason Beijing does: A discredited leftist cannot be considered a true leftist.

Even the brilliant Willy Lam, doyen of English-language journalists on Chinese politics, falls into this orthodoxy from the packed trenches of liberal American Sinology; in his case not out of political confusion but out of respect for those packed trenches. He recently called the Leninist CCP “ultra-conservative.” Anything clearly behind the times can be dismissed as conservative. How convenient to the Western left-of-center mind.

L'affaire Bo Xilai should clarify matters for Sinology. No one can call Mao’s revolutionary songs and texts conservative with a straight face. Will the packed trenches call the fallen Bo Xilai “conservative,” neoconservative, old guard,

right, “right,” or “Old Left”? What, after all, is conservatism? Key traits in any current definition must include free markets, the primacy of the individual, and limited government. By these yardsticks, Chinese Communists, like all Communists, are at the other end of the spectrum from conservatives. The only intrinsic reason to call Bo conservative was his wish to replicate a past leftist surge—a thin reed on which to hang a definition of conservatism.

An anti-West and anti-free-market element known all over China as left-wing supported Bo Xilai’s reprise of the Cultural Revolution. In the days around his fall many of its websites were blocked by Beijing. One, “Utopia” (www.wyzxsx.com), offered a note saying the site was down for maintenance.

Since the 1980s there have been numerous bursts of “Mao fever,” as fascination with the dictator is called (in Chinese, *Mao re*), whether cultural, nostalgic, or superstitious (farmers clutching a picture of Mao to ward off Yangtze River flood waters). A Chinese edition of my

own biography, *Mao*, has recently sold 600,000 copies and produced a Mao fever, with youth snapping up the book for reasons not fully clear to the publisher or to me. But Bo’s Chongqing Mao revival was the first political Mao fever since the titan’s death in 1976.

Neo-Maoism is not a full alternative set of policies, rather an impulse, a mentality, an anxiety, that says “No!” to aspects of the post-1978 reform era. The left saw Bo, not altogether in focus, as a potential brake on private enterprise, Western influence, China’s insertion into global finances, and Deng’s idea that it’s fine for some to get rich while

others may follow later. This left does battle with a right that says, “Reform further or we’re doomed.” Mao’s grandson, privileged with an army sinecure, has written a feeble left-wing book that praises the Cultural Revolution, and some in his camp are mounting lawsuits against rightists for having abandoned socialism.

Business circles in China are by implication largely on the right. Explicitly right are the many classical liberal economists in universities and think tanks. Li Daokui, until recently an adviser to the People’s Bank of China, said boldly this month: “We need market-oriented interest rates.” He gets away with this as Bo got away (for a time) with red songs in Chongqing.

Among intellectuals, self-styled social democracy is a surprising enthusiasm for the right, especially since the publication of an essay, “The Social Democracy Model



Wen Jiabao

and China's Future," in 2007. Wrote its author, Xie Tao: "Why are we still worshipping Leninism—something the Russians have discarded—like a deity and a banner to be hoisted?" He pointed out candidly: "Without the material wealth created by capitalism, socialism in China would be forever a fantasy."

Li Rui, a friend of Xie Tao (who died in 2010) and like him a veteran party member well known to Hu and Premier Wen Jiabao, declared in his living room last November, "We need the people to advance and the state to retreat." These folks are proud of having joined the CCP long before Hu and Wen, and they enjoy some respect within the party. "Hu Jintao once sat where you are sitting," Li Rui said with a smile.

"Only in the abstract is communism a beautiful thing," Xie Tao wrote. "In practice it is very bad and produces chaos. It is like our Chinese ideal of *da tong*," a reference to the utopian "Great Unity" of the 19th-century philosopher Kang Youwei.

The social democrats, deeply hostile to the one-party state, say the CCP has replaced socialism with quasi-capitalism, so China should take the next step and adopt the political system, liberal democracy, that has accompanied capitalism throughout the West. They claim Sweden, which combines social democratic politics with capitalism, has less economic inequality than Communist-ruled China. What's so great about one-party rule if it offers less "fairness" (a big cry in China at present) than social democracy in Europe does? No wonder one young social democrat, after listening in to a leftist salon criticizing Xie Tao, observed: "They think we're traitors, following in the footsteps of Gorbachev."

Xie Tao and Li Rui cannot be styled dissidents, but rather distinguished retired figures making constant intellectual mischief for the party. Neither signed Charter 08, a pro-democracy manifesto written by Nobel laureate Liu Xiaobo; Li Rui told me it was too confrontational. Before his death, Xie Tao said he was told Hu read the 2007 article and promptly added Sweden to his itinerary for an upcoming European trip. Sometimes these veterans get a phone call from a party official suggesting "a cup of tea" at the precise time scheduled for one of their social democracy salons.

It is striking that the CCP has until now allowed debate, in society broadly and especially on the Internet, between quasi-Maoists and social democrats. The party makes it known that it does not agree with Mao's grandson

or with people like Xie Tao, but it does not silence them. To its credit, the party, while saying both left and right wings depart from the "scientific development concept," allows the two to snipe at each other.

Quite another matter is a flamboyant senior figure like Bo armed with policies that may challenge the gray consensual caution of Beijing. Bo paid a price for popping his head up on a low assembly line. Still more threatening would be a senior figure on the right, a Chinese Boris Yeltsin, who resigned his party post and made the case for social democracy as the political path for China's quasi-capitalist economy.

For the moment we are left with the unruffled calm that was displayed by Xi Jinping on his U.S. visit and is meant to convince the Chinese people and the world that the governance of China is scientifically managed and politics should not concern anyone but the all-wise party. Some will see this as a skillful balancing act, a CCP steering a safe middle ground, smoothly discouraging enemies to left and right.

Yet hardly a single bold decision has been made in Beijing since the death 15 years ago of Deng, who made many, and none in the years of Hu. This determinedly collective leadership in Beijing, somewhat

resembling the semifinal years of the Soviet Union under Leonid Brezhnev, could be suffering from a no-risks paralysis. Should an economic or social crisis occur—a sharp slowdown in economic growth, social trouble simultaneously in the Muslim west and the business-friendly southeast—basic principles would be at stake, arguments would soar, and the remarkable unity of the CCP since 1989 could crack.

The vast difference from the former Soviet Union is that post-Mao China has had over 30 years of remarkable economic progress, thanks to Deng's turn against Maoism starting in 1978. Gorbachev had no post-Stalin decades of dismantling central planning to build on in Moscow; Brezhnev presided over economic stagnation as well as political stasis. Whoever leads China a decade from now, regardless of where current and future gyrations within the Communist party may lead, will benefit from the economic transformation of China that the CCP triggered, and the modest intellectual ferment it permitted, in its terrified flight from the Cultural Revolution. ♦

Should a crisis occur—a sharp slowdown in economic growth, social trouble simultaneously in the Muslim west and the business-friendly southeast—basic principles would be at stake, arguments would soar, and the remarkable unity of the CCP since 1989 could crack.

The Price of Glory? FREE!



Actual size
is 27.3 mm



**OFFICIAL 2012
OLYMPIC
GAMES COIN
TO FIRST 2000 CALLERS**

It's coming.

The heart-pounding, adrenaline-soaked, all-muscle-and-no-fear freight train that is the Summer Olympic Games.

And it's coming soon. This July, 200 countries—*more than the membership of the United Nations*—will be sending 15,000 athletes and 20,000 media to London to create history.

And we will ALL be watching. An estimated 4 billion of us will watch the Opening & Closing Ceremonies.

But today, the starting gun is already sounding.

In honor of the London 2012 Olympic Games, we are giving away an official legal-tender London 2012 sports coin **FREE**—we'll even cover the shipping!

A FIRST-EVER Olympic Games Coin!

2012 marks the third time that London has hosted the Olympic Games—but this is the *first time ever* that they have issued legal-tender British Olympic Games coins. This London 2012 Triathlon coin bears a fifty pence denomination (the British equivalent to a U.S. dollar). Each Copper-Nickel coin is about the size and weight of a U.S. dollar coin and

each comes displayed in a colorful London 2012 Olympic Games collector card.

A Gold Medal Offer—but only for the swift!

A \$4.95 value, you can claim yours **FREE** and we'll even pay the shipping and handling cost. As an official London 2012 distributor, we're the **ONLY** ones giving away these collectible coins! But supplies are limited, so you must be one of the first 2000 callers to claim this Olympic Games prize! **Limit one free coin per U.S. household.**

London 2012 Olympic Games Fifty Pence Coin with Collector Card ~~\$4.95~~ **FREE**

Toll-Free 24 hours a day

1-888-201-7109

Offer Code FLC133

Please mention this code when you call.



Official Distributor for the London 2012 Olympic Games

14101 Southcross Drive W., Dept. FLC133, Burnsville, Minnesota 55337

www.GovMint.com



Prices and availability subject to change without notice. Note: GovMint.com is a private distributor of worldwide government coin issues and is not affiliated with the United States government. Facts and figures were deemed accurate as of March 2012. Offer restricted to U.S. households only. Must be 18 years or older to call. ©GovMint.com, 2012



A Movement Explained

What does the Tea Party mean? BY MATTHEW CONTINETTI

The world came unhinged in the fall of 2008.

The United States had been in recession since the previous December, according to the Bureau of Economic Research, and in March 2008 the Fed had brokered a panicked fire sale of Bear Stearns to JPMorgan Chase. But the real drama did not begin until September, when the government nationalized mortgage giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, Lehman Brothers went bankrupt, the government took over AIG, global credit markets froze, and a

Matthew Continetti is editor of the Washington Free Beacon and a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

The Tea Party
Three Principles
by Elizabeth Price Foley
Cambridge, 256 pp., \$25

run began on money market funds.

To restore calm, President George W. Bush, Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson, and Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke proposed the \$700 billion emergency Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) to bail out insolvent financial institutions. TARP failed in the House of Representatives on the first vote, sending markets into a tailspin, but was later passed by both houses of Congress and signed into law by the president in October.

TARP did not end the crisis, however. Global output continued to plunge, contributing to the presidential election of Barack Obama in November. The crash threatened the big three American automobile manufacturers, which lobbied the government for aid. On December 19 President Bush announced that the Treasury would award General Motors and Chrysler \$13.4 billion in bridge loans to cross the financial ravine. Throughout all this, the Federal Reserve was massively increasing the money supply in an attempt to sustain liquidity.

Such a flurry of state activity would have been enough to spark a reaction from Americans traditionally suspicious of central government. But the

NEWS.COM

interventions did not stop there. Even before Obama was inaugurated in January 2009 the collective wisdom in Washington held that the way to restore prosperity was a massive stimulus of public spending. So Congress passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, at an eventual price tag of \$840 billion, in February. The bill, which included an increased refundable tax credit for working people, showered money on state governments (and the public sector unions that staff them), on welfare and unemployment recipients, and on the Departments of Energy, Education, and Transportation. Then, on February 18, Obama proposed a \$275 billion housing bailout to encourage refinancing among homeowners whose mortgages cost more than their homes were worth.

The fact that it was the mortgage plan—rather than the bank or auto bailouts or the stimulus—which provoked the first call for a new American Tea Party has been little remarked upon. But the detail is revealing. On the morning of February 19 CNBC anchor Rick Santelli delivered his famous rant against President Obama’s housing agenda, in which he called for friends of liberty to gather in Chicago in the summer to dump mortgage-backed securities into Lake Michigan. Santelli, in the space of less than five minutes, set the template for the coming populist reaction against the bipartisan, elite policies of tax, spend, bail out, and elect.

That template had two significant features. Santelli’s plea was grounded in American first principles, invoking the founding generation in its reference to the Tea Party and in appealing to the authority of “people like Benjamin Franklin and [Thomas] Jefferson—what we’re doing in this country now is making them roll over in their graves.” Second, Santelli was not arguing simply that the government was spending too much money; his critique had a moral dimension that transcended mere accounting. “The government is

promoting bad behavior,” he said. Some people had made mistakes during the height of the boom. Why should the government reward those mistakes by bailing out insolvent enterprises or lavishing money on homeowners who took on more debt than they could handle?

Spending one’s way out of a recession was not only counterintuitive; it was also harmful for one’s descendants, who would foot the bill. Implicit in the critique of bailouts has always been a moral critique of the actions that result in bailouts and the behaviors that are encouraged by them. Intrusive and profligate government doesn’t just harm economies and destroy balance sheets;



Rep. Paul Ryan

it erodes character. There’s a reason the term for this is “moral hazard.”

A curious thing happened as the Tea Party grew in influence. Outside observers continued to notice the role that the American Founding played in Tea Party ideology. But those same observers increasingly neglected the Tea Party’s moral analysis of contemporary America. A left-wing writer such as John B. Judis would note the movement’s “obsession with decline” while downplaying the connection between the Tea Party’s regard for the Founders and its fear that what Charles Murray would call the “founding virtues”—industriousness, honesty, marriage, religiosity—were passing away. Some of the more libertarian Tea Partiers wanted to avoid social questions as much as possible.

Certainly events played a role in obscuring the Tea Party’s social agenda.

For one thing, the deep and prolonged recession created huge deficits, adding to the nation’s sizable debt and throwing into sharp relief our long-term entitlement problem. President Obama seemed happy to ignore the trillion-dollar shortfalls while proposing a budget that would increase taxes and spending even further. The specter of Greece—which sank into political chaos and economic depression after years of overly generous pension and welfare benefits, lax tax collection, and voluntary submission to the euro’s monetary straitjacket—acted as a sort of Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come in American politics. Meanwhile, Obama wanted to create yet another entitlement, a national health care plan, which not only would potentially break the bank but also extend the government’s reach into more and more aspects of individual economic decision-making.

It was no mere coincidence, then, that as the Tea Party’s profile grew, so did that of Rep. Paul Ryan of Wisconsin. In the face of Obama’s multipronged attempt to put America on a “New Foundation” more closely resembling the generous welfare states of Western

Europe, Ryan was the sole Republican to put forth an equally ambitious and intellectually coherent policy response. The Ryan Roadmap, a revised version of which was released in the winter of 2010, incorporated Tea Party ideas on taxes and spending and would act as the basis for future GOP budgets. The White House’s Health Care Summit in February 2010 backfired when Ryan dismantled the Obama policy piece by piece in a six-minute speech that has been viewed more than 300,000 times on YouTube. On the issues of dollars and cents, the president had met his match.

Congressman Ryan, however, was no culture warrior. He was a self-described “second-generation supply-sider” whose goal was to foster economic growth, opportunity, and prosperity for all Americans through fiscal and monetary policies that helped

innovators, entrepreneurs, and businesses. He was a budget geek whose fastidiousness and discipline extended to his personal life, where he avoided sweets and followed the punishing P90X fitness program. He framed the debate with President Obama as a “choice between two futures,” but defined that choice primarily in economic rather than moral terms.

It was the positive influence of Ryan, along with Republican victories in the 2010 midterm elections, that gave rise to the notion that the Tea Party was most successful when it put economic issues ahead of social ones. Almost all of the 85 House Republican freshmen who took back that chamber of Congress were social conservatives who supported the right to life and traditional marriage. So were most of the 12 Republicans who won Senate seats. But the failure of Republicans to take the Senate was blamed on several weak candidates who (it was said) incorrectly made social issues the focus of their campaigns: Christine O’Donnell in Delaware, Ken Buck in Colorado, Joe Miller in Alaska, Sharron Angle in Nevada, and Joe DiGuardi in New York were all viewed as too socially conservative for their states, and therefore unelectable.

A Tea Party candidate who wanted to win, common opinion held, would be well advised to talk about balancing the budget rather than protecting the unborn. Or as Elizabeth Price Foley puts it, “The emphasis of Tea Party conservatism is economic and constitutional, not social.” The sources of the Tea Party’s appeal to everyday Americans are the ideas of limited government, American sovereignty, and constitutional originalism, Foley writes. And these ideas were “widely embraced at the time of the country’s founding.” The cause of the Republican resurgence was not social conservatism; it was “classical liberalism.”

Foley’s study is well written. She accurately summarizes important currents in Tea Party thought. Her legal analysis of the constitutionality of Obamacare’s individual health insurance mandate is must-reading. I encourage readers to mail copies of the book to Justice Anthony Kennedy’s Supreme

Court chambers. But her libertarian inclinations and legal background lead to a misreading of the Tea Party. Most of the activists in revolutionary garb do not attend rallies with a specific constitutional doctrine in mind. “Sovereignty” is not mentioned on the Gadsden flag, and it is a good question whether the Tea Party has a consistent foreign policy. Limited government is surely an important feature of the Tea Party, but it is an idea that encompasses far more than economics. Limited government presupposes self-government, which presupposes a citizenry that possesses virtue and good character.

When Tea Partiers recall the Founders, they summon images of wise and reflective men who instituted constitutional government to protect the liberties of the people against overweening factions. But they also summon images of an earlier age in which (they believe) virtues such as thrift, self-reliance, fidelity, piety, industry, and responsibility were valued. And it is precisely these virtues, in the Tea Party’s understanding, which allowed the Founders’ institutional arrangements to work for as long as they did—until the Founders’ vision of rights was replaced by the progressives’ vision, and limited government fell to the administrative state and its politicized dispensation of entitlements.

What motivates the Tea Party, then, is a sense of loss, a feeling that America has come unmoored from her political and moral inheritance and is in danger of seeing it disappear entirely. Self-reliant, frugal, industrious America could be turned irrevocably into a dependent, cynical, spendthrift, licentious America. What Paul Krugman has taken to calling the Lesser Depression may have heightened those fears, but they are unlikely to disappear as the economy naturally recovers. After all, Barack Obama’s ambitions for America will remain no matter the condition of the economy, and it is these ambitions to “transform” the character of our society that have fueled the Tea Party more than anything else.

Looking at the Tea Party from a non-“classical liberal” angle clarifies some

apparent paradoxes. To begin with, this supposedly libertarian movement holds socially conservative attitudes: A Pew study from February 2011 found that “Tea Party supporters tend to have conservative opinions not just about economic matters, but also about social issues such as abortion and same-sex marriage” and “are much more likely than registered voters as a whole to say that their religion is the most important factor in determining their opinions on these social issues.” The Public Religion Research Institute found in November 2011 that 47 percent of self-identified Tea Partiers also identify with the religious right. Sociologists David E. Campbell and Robert D. Putnam write in the March-April issue of *Foreign Affairs* that “the strongest predictor of a Republican becoming a Tea Party supporter is whether he or she evinced a desire in our 2006 survey to see religion play a prominent role in politics.”

Tea Partiers are less concerned with the size of government than with its character. They are worried less that government welfare will be generous than that it will be undeserved. For years, Democrats have joked that this supposedly “anti-government” group does not want to see drastic cuts in Social Security and Medicare. But the Democrats’ condescension has been doubly misplaced: The Tea Party is more anti-Obamacare than it is anti-New Deal, and Tea Partiers regard Social Security and Medicare as deserved benefits. The recipients paid into the system, they should get something out. And what they receive could be modified depending on necessity and prudence—and by supporting the Ryan budget, Tea Partiers have done more than any Democrat to cut government while preserving the idea of deserved benefits.

The Tea Party’s moral vision also explains why it has been reluctant to embrace Mitt Romney’s presidential candidacy. If the Tea Party really were as economics-based as some would like us to believe, it would back the Republican candidate who has made jobs policy the center of his campaign. Instead, Tea Partiers have thrown their support behind a variety of candidates, all of whom have emphasized the religious

and the social over the merely economic. It is Mitt Romney's checkered past on the abortion issue, along with his Northeastern roots in a Southern and Western party, that have given him trouble with conservatives.

Nor was it social issues that doomed those Senate candidacies in Delaware, Colorado, Nevada, Alaska, and New York in 2010. If social issues were poison pills, then equally conservative candidates such as Marco Rubio, Ron Johnson, Kelly Ayotte, and Rand Paul would not have won competitive races in their states. Social conservatism did not cost the GOP Harry Reid's Senate seat; Sharron Angle's flakiness did.

Indeed, the real achievement of the Tea Party is not that it has successfully purged social issues from the Republican agenda but that it has given Republican economic policies a moral ground on which to stand. Lower taxes, less spending, reformed entitlements, and freer trade can be tough sells on their own. But wedded to the vision of the Declaration of Independence, in which government exists to secure only those rights that we possess by virtue of being human, a market-friendly agenda makes a lot more economic, social, and political sense.

So we owe thanks to the Tea Partiers because they are responsible for recovering the Declaration's vision. They remind us that the business of government is not to help anyone's profit margin but to protect the natural rights of individuals from intrusive, meddling majorities. Harking back to the Founders gives the Tea Party an ideological consistency and political adaptability that could prove immensely powerful. The Tea Party is in a unique position to explain the economic costs of Obamacare as well as the law's infringement of both the right to life and the right of conscience. Such a critique of liberalism on the grounds of natural justice may disappoint dyed-in-the-wool libertarians, but it has the potential to mobilize more voters than a 20 percent cut in the marginal tax rate.

The problem with most current perspectives on the Tea Party is that they look at the movement through contemporary eyes rather than the eyes of

the Founders, who saw no distinction among the moral, the political, and the economic. The closest Elizabeth Price Foley comes to attempting this is when she quotes Jefferson's 1821 letter to Charles Hammond:

When all government, domestic and foreign, in little as in great things, shall be drawn to Washington as the center of all power, it will render powerless the checks provided of one government or another, and will become as venal and oppressive as the government from which we separated.

What did Jefferson think would be the check against the centralizing tendencies of government? "It is the manners and spirit of a people," he wrote in *Notes on the State of Virginia*, "which preserve a republic in vigor." The Tea Party is significant because it embodies the manners and spirit of an America that seeks to preserve a vigorous constitutional republic, and because it reminds us that one cannot have a limited and good government without an active and virtuous people. ♦

BCA

Natural Philosopher

The skeptical mind, and sympathetic character, of David Hume. BY LAWRENCE KLEPP

After pretending to study law, and abandoning a brief attempt to work for a sugar importer in Bristol, David Hume, the second son of a prominent Edinburgh family, decided to return home and live with his mother, sister, and brother. He was then in his early twenties, and his mother had this to say about him: "A fine good-natured creature but uncommon wake-minded [weak-minded]." He went on to become one of the two most influential thinkers to emerge from the Scottish Enlightenment, with his friend Adam Smith, and something more. David Hume (1711-1776) is probably the greatest philosopher to have written in English.

He disturbed the philosophical peace. It was reading Hume, Kant said, that awakened him from his dogmatic slumbers. He consummated the empiricism developed by Locke and Berkeley while casting its premises into doubt. And in the middle of the Age of Reason, he said reason alone couldn't give us motivation or morality.

Lawrence Klepp is a writer in New York.

But unless you're a hidebound metaphysician, or a very confident rationalist, you aren't likely, after a few hours with Hume, to stagger out of the room, your ordinary world suddenly upended. Just the opposite: He

may plunge you into skeptical bewilderment, but only to pull you back to familiar habits, instincts, attachments, and customs.

What might be the most famous passage he wrote conveys that exact maneuver. After pursuing his subversive analysis of experience to the point where the world and the self seem about to disappear forever in a blur of transient mental events, he writes:

Most fortunately it happens, that since reason is incapable of dispelling these clouds, nature herself suffices to that purpose, and cures me of this philosophical melancholy and delirium. . . . I dine, I play a game of backgammon, I converse, and am merry with my friends; and when, after three or four hours' amusement, I would return to these speculations, they appear so cold, and strained, and ridiculous, that I cannot find it in my heart to enter into them any further.

Hume didn't think we could reason our way to ultimate reality, and wasn't interested in authenticity. He did spend some time with someone who was: Rousseau, who repaid his characteristic kindness, and his generous help in getting the Swiss vagabond safely to exile in England, with peevish complaints and paranoid accusations. They didn't quarrel over ideas, but Rousseau made a hugely influential opposition between authentic nature and inauthentic society, and Hume did not. Social pursuits and pleasures were, for him, natural pursuits and pleasures.

But Hume did write, "Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions." He made the feeling of sympathy the basis of morality. He thus contributed something to the change (usually charged to Rousseau's account) from the traditional ideal of a reason-ruled moral life to one in which moral purpose and meaning come from inner feelings.

But since Hume's own feelings were those of a broad-minded 18th-century British Tory, with pride of possession conspicuous among the "natural passions" he enumerated, he doesn't come across as radical, or as what turgid academic theorists would call a "transgressive" thinker. Like his far more unsystematic but equally conservative skeptical predecessor, Montaigne, he substitutes character and instinct and social convention for reason and abstract virtue. Like Montaigne, Hume was an oracle of the ordinary.

Hume is still inspiring and vexing professional philosophers, especially those in the Anglo-American analytic tradition. But lacking the tremulous life-changing urgency of a Pascal or Kierkegaard or Nietzsche, he doesn't often tempt the general reader. In this compact introduction to his life and thought, Annette C. Baier, a professor emerita of philosophy at the University of Pittsburgh and clearly a Hume fan, attempts to tempt. She goes over his major ideas without the usual analytic fretwork, making them accessible and

interesting, although Bertrand Russell's chapter on Hume in his *History of Western Philosophy* still gives you a better idea of what was at stake and what their consequences have been. The only thing missing is an adequate discussion of the essays, especially those on taste and on tragedy, which can be read as Hume's brief but strong foray into aesthetics and a persuasive account of the power that art can have over us.

The best thing about this book is the way Baier captures and contemplates, with the help of excerpts from

philosophical works didn't do much better, but his essays, his *Political Discourses*, and his massive and sometimes slyly satirical *History of England* brought him enough money to settle in a handsome house (still standing in Edinburgh) between stays in continental Europe, where he served as secretary to a British general and was a frequent and genial guest welcomed as *le bon David* in the freethinking salons of Paris.

There a married aristocratic lady called Hippolyte de Saujon, Comtesse de Bouffleurs, openly flirted with him. But Hume politely retreated, preferring the more rough-hewn company of Scotland to French finesse and intrigue. He never married. His one marriage proposal was spurned, but he was no solitary sage. He was, in his own description, "a man of mild dispositions . . . of an open, social and cheerful humour," and he had many loyal friends and avoided intellectual feuds despite his sharply ironic religious skepticism.

Though he deployed it against miracles in a famous essay, and against what is now known as intelligent design in his posthumously published *Dialogues on Natural Religion*, it was real skepticism, not militant atheism, and he didn't presume to tell people what to believe; he just resisted the efforts of

"enthusiasts" of all stripes to impose their own beliefs. The blasphemies of the Parisian *philosophes*, Baier thinks, made him uncomfortable. And he would have despised the rationalist fanatics who turned the French Revolution into a massacre.

But before dying in the year that America declared her independence, he was already sympathetic to the far more moderate American cause. Benjamin Franklin visited him in Edinburgh, and Hume, noting the resistance to his work in Scotland, England, and Ireland, wrote to him, "I fancy that I must have recourse to America for justice." This casual but compelling little book helps prove him right. ♦



Portrait of David Hume by Allan Ramsey

an autobiographical sketch Hume wrote, the odder episodes of his mostly even-keeled life. There's his first stay in France, for instance, where in his mid-twenties he spent three years writing his first and greatest book, a monument of philosophical and ethical naturalism called *A Treatise of Human Nature*, while using the library of a nearby Jesuit college. She imagines "the large, clumsy, studious young Scot, with his poor French," arguing the improbability of miracles with the surprised Jesuits.

It took Hume a year of looking in London to find someone willing to publish it, and then, he said, "it fell dead-born from the press." His other

Out of This World

George R.R. Martin and his fantastic universe.

BY CATHY YOUNG

The 11-year-old daughter of a great noble house is brought to court as bride to the crown prince, only to find herself reduced to a hostage against her mutinous family. A king's fatal injury on a boar hunt may or may not have been an accident—and his two brothers challenge the legitimacy of his heir, unleashing a war that rips the realm apart. A royal cortege crossing a city ravaged by wartime privations is besieged by a hungry crowd, whose pleas turn to anger, and whose anger escalates from obscene taunts to a deadly riot.

Pages from a historical drama? Not quite. These events happen in a series of novels best described as fictional history with a dash of magic and a layer of the supernatural: George R.R. Martin's bestselling fantasy epic, *A Song of Ice and Fire*. Its fifth installment, *A Dance with Dragons*, was released last summer, several months after the HBO cable channel brought the first volume to television in a hit 10-part series.

Fantasy is something of a cultural stepchild, often treated as childish, geeky, or both. When the HBO series *Game of Thrones* began to air—mostly to glowing reviews—a few critics used the occasion to bash the genre. In the *New York Times*, Ginia Bellafante made snide jokes about “Dungeons & Dragons,” dwarves and hobbits, and dismissed Martin's books as “boy fiction.” (In fact, Martin's fan-base definitely cuts across gender lines.)

Leaving aside, for now, the literary worth of J.R.R. Tolkien, Martin

is, as his admirers often stress, an anti-Tolkien of sorts. There is, in *A Song of Ice and Fire*, no grand battle between good and evil, only a struggle for power and survival in which morality is fuzzy and good intentions tend to end badly. The



Peter Dinklage (left), Michelle Fairley in HBO's 'Game of Thrones'

supernatural elements are fairly marginal. And the only dwarves in this tale are the nonmagical kind—chief among them one of Martin's best antiheroes, Tyrion, the smart, tart-tongued, cynical black sheep of the powerful Lannister family who quips bitterly, “All dwarves are bastards in their fathers' eyes.”

The invented world of *A Song of Ice and Fire* bears a not entirely accidental resemblance to the real one. Its main location, the continent of Westeros,

is clearly based on medieval Europe; most of it is occupied by the Seven Kingdoms, unified under one king (until war breaks out) but ruled by their own feudal lords. Lands to the east and south are populated by cultures with a recognizable Mediterranean or Middle Eastern feel, and by hordes of Mongol-like conquering nomads. But this world is also marked by a peculiar climate in which winters and summers can last years (no, this is not a climate-change parable) and by even more peculiar things that dwell in the far north: malevolent humanoid beings known as the Others. Between them and civilization stands a man-made ice wall guarded by the black-clad Night's Watch—less a romantic brotherhood than a dumping ground for Westeros's rejects, criminals who “take the black” as an alternative to execution, and high-born bastards.

If nothing else, Martin's ability to make his universe a rich three-dimensional landscape is truly dazzling. His world has its history and religion, skillfully woven into the narrative without lecturing the reader. The characters inhabiting this landscape are equally impressive: royals or servants, nobles or mercenaries—none feel flat or recycled, and only a few ever skirt cliché or caricature. Some are irredeemably vile, such as Joffrey, the petulant prince turned boy-king from hell. A few are clear-cut “good guys,” notably Eddard (Ned) Stark, a great lord of Westeros and the king's chancellor in the first book, a man whose honor and mercy lead to all-around disaster. Most are painted in varying shades of gray.

Ned's wife Catelyn is strong-willed, intelligent, gracious, kind—and coldly vicious to Jon Snow, the illegitimate son Ned has chosen to raise. Sandor Clegane, a Lannister henchman nicknamed “The Hound,” at first seems a despicable thug but later emerges as a tormented man with his own brand of honor, and develops a strange bond of sympathy with child bride-turned-hostage Sansa Stark. Sansa herself is a poignant figure, a sheltered girl whose illusions about “true knights” and fairy-tale romance are

Cathy Young is a contributing editor to Reason magazine and a columnist for RealClearPolitics.

brutally shattered. But this story of lost innocence never waxes sentimental, and Sansa is no saintly victim but an adolescent girl who can be egocentric, peevish, and obnoxious.

Other memorable characters include Sansa's tomboy sister Arya, who flees across a war-torn country disguised as a commoner boy; Jaime Lannister, an arrogant scoundrel who learns humanity in the school of bitter experience; Jon, grappling with conflicted loyalties as a member of the Night's Watch; and Daenerys Targaryen, an exiled princess from a fallen Westerosi dynasty who is sold in marriage to an Attila-like tribal chief, and unexpectedly finds both power and heartbreak as his wife and, later, widow.

Martin's ever-growing "cast of thousands" (in his own words) has led to some narrative sprawl. The fourth and fifth volumes were originally meant to be a single book, split into two when it grew too unwieldy; the fourth, *A Feast for Crows*, is widely viewed as inferior to the first three, and opinions on *A Dance with Dragons* have been sharply divided. There are certainly places where the story could have been tightened. Yet, for the most part, it remains consistently gripping—and it is gratifying to know that, in the age of Twitter, people will stick with a multilayered epic that takes the time to develop its characters and settings.

A Song of Ice and Fire has other problems that may be the flip side of its virtues: The much-praised "grittiness" sometimes slides into excessive details of bodily functions, over-the-top violence, and sexual grotesquerie that feels like shock-value material. Still, the quality of Martin's prose, storytelling, and characterization more than offsets these flaws.

The HBO series, cowritten by Martin himself—formerly a television writer—is probably as good an adaptation as one could make of an 800-page novel in 10 hours of TV. Alas, the producers could not resist some gratuitous sex and nudity; but the nuance and complexity of the characters survive, aided by excellent performances (particularly Sean Bean as Ned and the Emmy-winning Peter Dinklage as Tyrion). The production vividly captures the atmosphere of the locales, from the sunny lushness

of the southern capital city to the grim wintry world of the Wall.

The *Song of Ice and Fire* phenomenon will be around for a while. The television show came to DVD in March and returns to HBO for a second season April 1, with a season planned for each volume. And there are at least two more books coming—without, one hopes, the six-year hiatus between *A Feast for Crows* and *A Dance with Dragons*.

To say that a work of genre fiction

transcends genre may be a cliché—but it is one that, in this case, is true (though it is also true that the genre itself transcends its reputation). Who's to say that the Great American Novel cannot be set in imaginary medieval Westeros? Ultimately, despite its grimness, Martin's epic is about honor, courage, love, and compassion enduring—sometimes—against impossible odds. It is the oldest theme in literature, its relevance undiminished. ♦

BCA

Journey to Clubland

'A place where people can go to escape, but still belong.'

BY SARA LODGE

Readers, have you ever been inside a London club?

I do not mean a jazz club, or a nightclub, or a golf club. I refer to those pillared edifices on Pall Mall whose names are so blatantly *not* blazoned on their façades. These are the venerable "Gentlemen's Clubs" of London, founded two centuries ago to provide men of a certain social standing with a cloistered sanctum in which to congregate, to converse, and to carouse.

Often, as I have passed from Green Park to Trafalgar Square and surveyed their magnificently stony frontages, I have felt a yearning curiosity to discover what lay within. I never thought myself fated to find out. Last year, however, I discovered that membership in a small and impecunious Scottish institution for writers and artists, by a fluke of second-cousinship, would grant me access to the haughty havens of St James's. Now, with all the enthusiasm of a new arrival in a strange land, I would like to show you around.

Sara Lodge, a senior lecturer in English at the University of St Andrews, is the author of Thomas Hood and Nineteenth-Century Poetry: Work, Play, and Politics.

Aptly, the most dramatic entrance of any London club belongs to the Garrick, haunt of actors and writers, which stands amongst theaters, a brief stroll from grubby Leicester Square. To enter it is to be surrounded by a gallery of smiling ghosts. The walls are crowded with oil paintings of celebrated actors, actresses, and playwrights of the 18th and 19th centuries. As you ascend the stairs, Melpomene, the muse of tragedy, towers at full length above you. You can ogle the Victorian pin-up Henry Erskine Johnston, who smoulders in a plaid, with bare biceps, and looks rather like the modern Scottish screen star James McAvoy. All around the green room (aptly, it *is* green) you catch the lively eyes, flamboyant gestures, and colorful costumes of performers who are now eternally *resting*, though you sense that most of them would make a comeback given half a chance.

At the head of the stairs are cabinets of theatrical relics: the fan given by Madame Vestris to her dresser, Henry Irving's keychain, which terminates in a Japanese mask. You pass, then, into the Morning Room, where the 18th-century actor and impresario David Garrick himself (attired in a pink tunic and trousers with gold braid and a blue fur-lined cape, holding a spear) presides from

head to toe over the mantelpiece, upon which sail two silver galleons accompanied by silver dolphins. In such a theatrical environment, it is very difficult to resist the temptation to pose. Even the Ladies' Cloakroom—a blue boudoir of mirrors and sofas, with an audience of ladies, playing roles from *The Provok'd Wife* to *The Fair Penitent*—encourages you, while applying lipstick, to practice a smouldering look towards the stalls.

Hierarchy is important here. The candlelit dining room has a central table and satellite tables: Diners will know where they stand by where they sit. Recent applicants for membership who have been blackballed include Jeremy Paxman, a famous political journalist. The Garrick is also one of a handful of old London clubs where women are admitted only as guests. It is like a superannuated actor of the old school: grand, flamboyant, entertaining, but also jealous of its privileges and apt to cherish its favorites and punish its enemies. It relishes its own controversy.

The majority of old London clubs consist of a Morning Room, in which one can read newspapers and drink coffee; a splendid Dining Room, in which lunch and dinner are taken; a billiard room, a library, and a bar. There are often other reception rooms and bedrooms for the accommodation of out-of-town members, but the essential business of a club revolves around the leather chair in which, now as then, a member can rest undisturbed in the perusal of current affairs, or chat with his peers while consuming reasonably priced food and drink.

For the best lamb cutlet and the best library, you should visit the Reform Club, an elegant example of 19th-century neoclassicism founded to bring together supporters of the Reform Act of 1832, which extended the vote to the British middle classes. It now admits members of all political stripes who consider themselves “reformers.” Stepping into the light-filled, rectangular atrium,

you look up towards a leaded-glass cupola. If you stand on the eight-pointed star in the middle of the marble floor, you may feel as if you are inside a Victorian musical box and should pirouette on one leg to the tune of “Rule Britannia.” Around you are wine-colored carpets, dark wood, and portraits of earnest Victorian politicians, clutching speeches and bills. It is on this compass that the famous bet is made in Jules Verne’s novel about whether or not it is possible to go *Around the World in Eighty Days*.

The light and spacious galleries and the long, book-lined rooms, with their busts of Churchill and political cartoons,

the troops and patients more effectively. Club food in general is traditional, substantial, and unfussy. But the Reform takes an amusingly sidelong approach to this remit. They do not serve fish and chips, but they do offer Guinness-battered haddock goujons, French fries, peas, and sorrel mayonnaise. You might finish with a gin and tonic jelly. I did—and it slipped down, both sharp and sweet: a literal parting shot.

For an academic, working in the Study Room at the Reform Club feels naughtily pleasurable. A bell will still summon a butler with a toasted teacake and a dry sherry. It is a library with

booze: a sedate speakeasy all the more luxurious for its tranquility. Headed notepaper and inkstands wait for you to dash off a poem. Henry James looks down from the wall, ready to add a superfluous clause to your sentences while you contemplate the garden. There is also a full-time librarian, who can aid your research.

I read about clubs, discovering that they are largely a British and American phenomenon: Other European nations developed few social clubs in the 18th and 19th centuries. Perhaps they had less need of them. The British, living in a highly stratified society, created enclaves that both reflected divisions—of class, politics, and gender—and

enabled meetings that otherwise would not have happened. One 18th-century club included 16 members who had been born in London and 39 who had originated elsewhere. An important function of clubs has always been to integrate those from outside the social heartland into the metropolis.

To experience a London club at its most international, it is fascinating to visit the Royal Automobile Club—also on Pall Mall, but with a wholly different atmosphere. Where the Reform Club’s interior is the color of morocco bindings with gold inlay (like the Houses of Parliament, which Charles Barry also designed), the RAC is racing blue. It resembles an early 20th-century hotel:



The Reform Club

serve to emphasize that this is a club that prizes intellectual debate. I attended a meeting of the Reading Group, where each member had read at least one (and often several) books on the agreed topic, “The Literature of Africa,” and gave a synopsis and appraisal. To add zest to the digest, the chef had devised a clever menu on an African theme with South African wines. Both the discussion and the degustation were impressive.

The Reform has had a reputation for its cuisine since its flamboyant Victorian chef, Alexis Soyer, who enjoyed preparing outrageous feasts but was also sufficiently interested in cheap nutrition to accompany Florence Nightingale to the Crimea to explore ways of feeding

bright and unapologetically sumptuous, with a colorful round carpet in the foyer representing the RAC's signature dial, on which a luxury car is sometimes parked. Doormen in blue jackets and top hats wave you upstairs to a cocktail bar, where a waiter will instantly ply you with gargantuan olives, nuts, and potato chips. You can try the signature "Gloom Raiser" or a "London Sky," which is made of London blue gin shaken with lavender, fresh lemon juice, cranberry juice, and crème de violette. A syllabus of a cocktail, it is a fetching lilac, which

in the library) and openly expensive, it nonetheless ticks many of the boxes that younger professionals look for in a club: They can work there, and they can work out there.

This may be one reason why London clubs are surviving in the modern world. No longer dominated by artists, aristocrats, and intellectuals, clubs—more central, economical, and exclusive than hotels—have become meeting rooms and conference facilities for businesspeople. The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives 1980 as the first use of "network"

exclaiming, "Nonsense. . . I've thrown nothing but jelly all evening."

Now, if you want to experience bohemian behavior that goes beyond tipping, there is only one London club I can reliably recommend: the Chelsea Arts Club. Where most of the Pall Mall clubs are palaces, the Chelsea Arts Club is a den. Near the King's Road, where 1960s rock stars and models flaunted their flares, it is small, with a mansard roof, a garden with a gazebo, and stripy deck chairs where you can flirt, fight, forgive, and forget. The billiard table, which bears the legend "no glasses, no cigarettes, no diving in at the shallow end," is not relegated to a separate room here: It is at the heart of the club, by the bar, surrounded by sculptures, nudes, drinkers, and the ginger club cat: Squeak. I suggested to Gary Morgan, a seventysomething artist who has been a member for 50 years, that the colorful nature of billiards must appeal to artists: his red trousers, the green baize, and red balls made a striking composition. "How do you know what color my balls are?" he twinkled. "We've only just met."

Punches are sometimes thrown across the billiards table on a Friday night. But the prevailing spirit is fun. Morgan explained to me that painting in a studio is a very solitary life: "Having another place to come saves artists from themselves." As Max Beerbohm put it, a club is more than a home: It is "a refuge from many homes." Here making eye contact is not threatening; noise levels allow chat; cell phones and computers are banned.

A club is a place where people can go to escape, but still belong; where they do not have to explain themselves; where there is always a free table, and no waiter is wondering if they would like to order, or to leave. Bertie Wooster's friend Bingo announces gleefully, "[This club] is the eel's eyebrows." I haven't found a worthy heir to P.G. Wodehouse's epithet. But there is life in the old clubs yet. Showing me the billiard table on which Edward VII once took his mistresses, one member of the Reform Club winked: "That sort of thing isn't usual these days. Then again, if the door's closed, it's always best to knock." ♦

PETER APRAHAMIAN / CORBIS



Dining Room at the Garrick Club

bears no resemblance to the London sky unless you are under the influence of hallucinogens. It may, however, make you see stars.

In the basement is a swimming pool with Egyptian columns, which would grace a Busby Berkeley musical with 50 girls in blue bathing suits forming an imaginary driver's wheel. There are also squash courts and Turkish baths. Vast banquet rooms, a lounge of Corinthian splendor with tableaux of exotic birds, and a billiards room with five tables exemplify the scale. With 16,000 members—10 times the number of many other clubs—the RAC is the America to its neighbors' Liechtenstein. Slightly brash (it has computers

as a verb meaning "to engage in social or professional 'networking.'") Two years later, "network" was first used meaning "to link computers together to allow the sharing of data." Of course, people have always networked; but it is the Google-eyed self-consciousness of our time that has given all social interactions a professional dimension, and vice versa.

Gone is the spirit of Bertie Wooster's Drones Club, where if you wanted to attract a chap's attention you simply "heave a piece of bread at him." Food fights were once normal. One clubman of the prewar era was accused of throwing a boar's head at a peer of the realm, which had knocked him into the fireplace. The member denied the charge,

The Children's Hour

A modern comedy of manners just misses the mark.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

For a while, *Friends with Kids* is a breath of fresh air, a movie that offers a satirical look at fashionable New Yorkers as sharp in its depiction of low-level intimate conflict as a really good old *New Yorker* cartoon.

It follows three couples. Two are married and have small children. They have decamped to Brooklyn and use their kids as the guilt card to force the third couple, Julie (Jennifer Westfeldt) and Jason (Adam Scott), to take the \$70 cab ride from Manhattan to visit them. Julie and Jason are a couple in every way except romantically: They have been the closest of friends since college, but as she approaches 40 and he despairs of ever finding “my person,” they decide to conceive and raise a baby together.

Maya Rudolph and Chris O'Dowd are the down-to-earth marrieds, Jon Hamm and Kristen Wiig the chic and sexy ones. What they have in common is squabbling, and short tempers, and a sense of being overwhelmed. Julie and Jason arrive at the down-to-earth Brooklyn apartment for his birthday party only to find the house in chaos, nothing ready, and a barely suppressed marital explosion in the offing. O'Dowd (who played the incredibly charming cop in *Bridesmaids*, which featured Wiig, Rudolph, and Hamm as well) retreats from the demanding Rudolph to the bathroom with a beer and his computer—and then complains about having to do everything. When the time comes to cut the cake, Rudolph

John Podhoretz, editor of Commentary, is THE WEEKLY STANDARD's movie critic.

Friends with Kids

Directed by Jennifer Westfeldt



has her head propped up on her elbow, and is snoring.

This is all clever, and funny, and true—and inventively done by Westfeldt. She starred in two previous films she wrote, *Kissing Jessica Stein*



Adam Scott, Jennifer Westfeldt

and *Ira and Abby*, but in *Friends with Kids* she takes the reins as writer and director, and proves herself a pretty snappy one.

The same cannot be said of her performance, however, and this is where *Friends with Kids* begins to go off the rails. Tight of face, and with a voice simultaneously breathy and nasal, Westfeldt does not naturally hold the screen as a romantic comedy lead. She was terrific in *Kissing Jessica Stein* and *Ira and Abby*—in the first she played a self-defeating perfectionist, in the second a hyper-empathic busybody—but here she's playing Meg Ryan, and cute is one thing Westfeldt is not. She needs a sharp, defined character to play and she hasn't written one for herself.

Julie is supposed to be winsome and wise, but the movie's plot makes any rational viewer question those qualities. She and Jason see the pressure children place on a marriage and think they can circumvent it by simply avoiding being sexually intimate or sharing quarters with the mother or father of your child.

It's hard not to sympathize when other people point out that having a child, who won't understand the setup when he's old enough to ask questions, with someone you don't live with and who doesn't love you is (let us say) ill-conceived. Jon Hamm, Westfeldt's real-life boyfriend, has a corker of a drunken monologue in which he lets loose at the two of them, and the speech is so good the movie can never get its slick romantic comedy vibe back.

Jason is an equally problematic character. He is supposed to be smart, and kind, and thoughtful, but as he nears 40, he has absurdly adolescent ideas about sex and love—boorish notions that do not make sense coming from the mouth of this most sensitive of sensitive New Age guys.

The brilliant twist of *Kissing Jessica Stein* comes when the unlucky-in-love title character goes gay, only to discover she has all the same problems as a lesbian she had as a heterosexual. At the equally clever climax of *Ira and Abby*, Westfeldt has the two over-therapized title characters gather all their shrinks in one room so they can figure out that all the advice they're getting is ruining them. But the final third of *Friends with Kids* is a head-scratching misfire. Westfeldt never finds a way to get Jason and Julie on a course that makes any rational sense and, instead, has them doing ever more unbelievable things to and with each other.

Jennifer Westfeldt and Jon Hamm are famously unmarried and say they intend to stay that way. Perhaps her willingness to live in a kind of unresolved stasis made it impossible for her to find a resolution for Julie and Jason. In the end, *Friends with Kids* shines on the margins, but is a black hole at its center. ♦

“Mitt Romney promised Wednesday that he would not change his positions if he wins the Republican presidential nomination, hours after a top adviser compared the general election to an Etch A Sketch toy and claimed that Romney can ‘shake it up’ and ‘start all over again’ in the fall.”

—CNN, March 21, 2012

ONE DOLLAR CHEAP

ROMNEY SLAMS ETCH A SKETCH

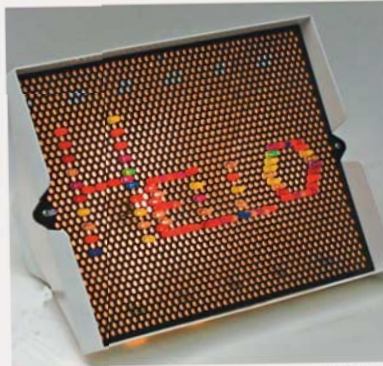
Likens Campaign to Lite-Brite

By ASHLEY PARKER

KENOSHA, Wisc. — Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney told reporters to “stop wasting my time” with questions concerning an adviser’s comparison of the general election to an Etch A Sketch toy. “For the last time,” pleaded Romney, who was campaigning at a Culver’s restaurant, “I did not make that analogy. My adviser did. I don’t even own an Etch A Sketch, although I am friends with the makers of it.”

It was top aide Eric Fehrnstrom who told CNN that Mr. Romney could “shake [things] up” and “start all over again” after securing the nomination, much like the 1960s children’s toy. “Yes, you can shake it up,” Mr. Fehrnstrom explained later to reporters, “but there are also parameters, too. Like, you can only turn the dials left and right and up and down, which requires a great deal of skill. Governor Romney has that skill. He is able to twist the dials simultaneously to create a remarkable work of art.”

Mr. Fehrnstrom’s clarification did little to silence Mr. Romney’s critics. Primary rival Rick Santorum said the remark confirmed his suspicions of Mr. Romney as a closet liberal. “The governor’s whole campaign is an Etch A Sketch. He’ll shake things up and everything he’s promised you will be erased from memory,” said Mr. Santorum. “And then you won’t be left with an Etch A Sketch—you’ll be playing a game of Sorry! while the current president



Mike Matas

Preferred by the Romney campaign

continues to give us Operation at great Risk because he hasn’t a Clue about Life!” The former Pennsylvania senator went on to describe the federal government as a “Hungry, Hungry Hippo.”

Mr. Romney told a crowd of supporters he was “exasperated” by the toy analogy but said, if anything, he wants Americans to see his campaign not as an Etch A Sketch but as a Lite-Brite, “easy to understand, fun to do, and pretty to look at.” And while the candidate insists he has never owned an Etch A Sketch, he did admit to enjoying the game Monopoly as a child. “I especially loved being the banker. And this one time, we ran out of fake money so I used

Continued on Page A17

Edwards Explains Past with Madam

‘I just wanted to be held’