



The Herald (Sharon, Pennsylvania)

On the howl page of a great American daily, echoes of the Obama economic plan, also known as the Economics of the Magic Wand:

Why would anyone be against American taxes being spent on ourselves; isn't this why we pay taxes?

As long as the pork and earmarks mean my tax dollars are spent here in the U.S.A., I don't care what the earmarks are. If it means family breadwinners aren't getting laid off then spend, spend and spend.

When the economy is doing bad give us lots of pork barrel spending. When the economy is good then cut out the pork from the bills and budget.

(March 10, 2009)

New Republic

A carefully researched feuilleton on the friendship and co-conspiracy of former FBI director Louis Freeh and Prince Bandar bin Sultan bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud, Esq. reveals mysteries of etiquette and gourmandizing that bring back memories of dinner at the London home of Madonna:

A friendship soon blossomed. Bandar would drop by Freeh's office, where he alone was permitted to smoke cigars. Freeh, in turn, would visit Bandar at his McLean, Virginia compound, which featured a 38-room home and a 12-bedroom dormitory for

staff. On visits to the kingdom, Freeh would dine with the royals. At one dinner in Riyadh, Freeh recalls how "the elegant Saudi ambassador"—that would be Bandar—"reached his well-manicured hand into a roast baby camel's rump, drew out a fistful of meat, and deposited it on my plate—a great honor."

(May 6, 2009)

The Hill

Zoological notes for the solons of Washington, D.C., deposited in the pages of Capitol Hill's newspaper of record:

Ali Wentworth, actress and wife of ABC's "This Week" host George Stephanopoulos, doesn't hold back.

During her weekly appearance on Oprah's "Friday Live" last week, she revealed that she and George were recently caught having "marital relations" by their 6-year-old daughter, Elliott.

When Elliott asked, "Daddy, what are you doing to Mommy?" Daddy was temporarily speechless, but Wentworth responded brightly, "Daddy's just tickling me."

The subterfuge didn't last, though, because the ABC newsman, who quit his White House spinning job years ago and now uncovers (if that's the right word) the truth, corrected her, saying, "We're making love."

Wentworth has talked frankly about sex on the "Friday Live" show.

Last October she discussed pornography and sex addiction in light of actor David Duchovny's stint in rehab. Wentworth told viewers she's fine with porn, but would not be fine if her husband visited an X-rated Internet chat room. That would be cheating, she claimed.

"I like it," Wentworth said of sex. "I don't love it. I don't need to have it 10 times a day. I'm happier with a Klondike bar sometimes."

(April 14, 2009)

The Spectator (UK)

The editor of the famed British weekly asks minicon David Frum(p) to comment on the state of American conservatism toward the end of the Prophet Obama's first 100 days, and what does he get for his hospitality? More of young David's narcissism:

I'll make some claims on behalf of the website I edit, a forum for conservative reform and renewal titled NewMajority.com, which has run innovative and courageous pieces by young writers and veteran public servants.

(April 18, 2009)

Countdown with Keith Olbermann (MSNBC)

A Miss Janeane Garofalo, possibly a historian on the faculty of the University of California at Berkeley, puts the recent tax protesters in historic perspective while making Mr. Keith Olbermann's knees knock:

"Let's be very honest about what this is about. It's not about bashing Democrats. It's not about taxes. They have no idea what the Boston tea party was about. They don't know their history at all. This is about hating a black man in the White House. This is racism

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straight up. That is nothing but a bunch of tea-bagging rednecks."

(April 16, 2009)

New York Times

As the recession grinds on, the venerable Times reports the moral costs of economic slow down in the Hawkeye State, where homosexual couples, all 23 of them, were forced to live in sin for 72 more hours:

Licenses for same-sex marriages were supposed to be issued in Iowa starting this Friday. But because of a crimped state budget, court employees will be on mandatory furlough that day and the courts will be closed. Gay couples cannot start filing for their licenses until Monday.

(April 24, 2009)

Harvard Crimson

A promising investigative journalist working for the student gazette of Harvard State University passes on a controversial e-mail from that great university's Muslim chaplain, the Rev. Taha Abdul-Basser (Class of '96), wherein the holy man puts in a good word for haria law's injunction to butcher a lapsed Moham-medan if the slacker refuses to return to the faith and pray in the now-familiar bottoms-up fashion:

There is a great wisdom (hikma) associated with the established and preserved position (capital punishment [for apostasy]), and so, even if it makes some uncomfortable in the face of hegemonic modern human-right discourse, one should not dismiss it out of hand.

(April 14, 2009)

University of Chicago Magazine

In the correspondence section where old Maroons gather in the afterglow of days gone by, Michael from San Francisco remains true blue for the

North Vietnamese while still unafraid of those business-school ruffians:

There is something unsettling about the cover feature on David Booth. Something is missing in the story of a student arriving at the U of C in 1969 with the campus and country seething with turmoil, and the only mention of Vietnam is how school kept him from the war. To speak only of the stimulating atmosphere and the great

departmental parties, while thousands of others, mostly of a different color and economic class, were being maimed and killed, is to display a convenient myopia. Those of us who marched at the time recall the appearance of business-school students, from their distant precincts, to obstruct the protests to a brutal war.

Michael Brant, AB'70, AM'82
San Francisco

(March/April 2009)

From the Archives

Timeless Tosh from Current Wisdoms Past

(June 1989)

Philadelphia Inquirer

Mr. Helmut Raether of Deutsche Presse-Agentur transforms anthropology into Art:

TOKYO—Finding somewhere to answer nature's call can be confusing in Japan, where a public convenience isn't always quite what it seems.

The latest luxury toilets that have been replacing the humble public latrines up and down the country have names like "Marble Pocket" and "Charm Station," and newspaper reports of their inauguration read like reviews of theater premieres....Users spend more than \$2 to enter one of the cubicles, each of which is named after a famous brand of perfume.

A toilet receptionist instead of the more familiar attendant ushers the customers into one of six rooms, each of which measures 3.3 square yards and contains every comfort, including a hair dryer.

The "lingering time" tends to be longer than in conventional conveniences, and the receptionist has noticed that many visitors are lulled to sleep by the gentle strains of Baroque music that issue from loudspeakers installed in the cubicles.

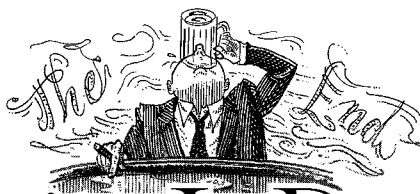
(February 19, 1989)

New Republic

The horrible depths to which Messrs. Collier and Horowitz sank, as reported by Paul Berman whilst reviewing their latest monograph, Destructive Generation: Second Thoughts About the Sixties:

Peter Collier and David Horowitz's new book presents itself as the anti-60s memoir, especially anti-Gitlin and anti-Hayden, who are excoriated for harboring excessive loyalties to the past. Where Collier and Horowitz tread, nostalgia does not bloom. Nor did their own second conversions bring them to graduate school, feminist family life, brown rice, or basketball; or to any other green and shady place likely to seem respectable to New Leftist eyes, such as tomato farming or Hasidism. The authors became Republicans.

(April 24, 1989)



Density Is Destiny

by Philip Klein

WAS IT REALLY WORTH DEALING WITH? We were pulling out of the parking lot of a White Castle in Nashville, and my college friend Mike had just realized that we had been overcharged for our pile of burgers. After some consideration, we decided to back up and turn into the drive-through again.

With no other cars in front of us, we coasted to the window, and Mike explained everything to the cashier. There was a short pause, and we prepared for the worst. The thing is, when you've lived in New York City, you're conditioned to expect that any consumer dispute will be a major hassle or a potential altercation. But things worked differently down here. The young cashier threw up his arms and exclaimed, "Well, let's figure it out!"

Huh? You mean, he was actually going to cooperate with us, resolve the problem in a calm and rational manner, and do so happily, without giving us dirty looks or rolling his eyes?

Within 90 seconds of our initial wavering about whether we were going to deal with the situation, we peeled out of the White Castle parking lot a few dollars richer, with our burgers still warm. We were a pair of stunned Yankees.

This incident was one that made me realize that it isn't a myth: once you get out of Northeastern cities, people are significantly more civil to one another. It wasn't until I did some more traveling that I came to understand that this had nothing to do with people in other parts of the country being inherently better (no offense to any Southern readers), but rather, it was a matter of numbers. That is, the more people there are in a given area, the more likely it is that people will come into conflict, and the less likely that they will treat each other with basic decency.

In the 1950s, psychologist John B. Calhoun did some crowding experiments with rats, and found that as population density increased, males became more aggressive, violence ensued, and rodent society broke apart. This is something that holds true

wherever I have visited throughout the world, and it's amazing to observe how easily my own behavior can be influenced by my environment.

When I visited Omaha, Nebraska, I became a much friendlier version of myself. Yet while touring some of China's congested cities, when people kept cutting in front of me in lines, I became frustrated by my inability to curse at them in Mandarin and was forced to whip out my New York elbows from their holsters. Driving on open roads out West is a pleasant experience, but when dealing with bottlenecks in the New York to D.C. corridor (or even worse, I-95 in southern Florida), I adopt the mentality of a gladiator and the vocabulary of Joe Pesci.

This is one of the reasons why—beyond my ideological and practical policy disagreements—I marvel at the inability of liberals to grasp what a massive public backlash is in store should they achieve their dream of national health care. Liberals want to give free or heavily subsidized health care to millions more people. At best, the number of doctors will remain the same (though that number could shrink if the government slashes reimbursement rates as part of the effort to cut costs). A combination of more demand for services, a stable or shrinking supply of physicians, and price controls can result in only one thing: much more crowded doctors' offices and hospital emergency rooms, with far longer waits.

While citizens of other countries are accustomed to socialized medical systems, this sort of thing won't fly in America, where people are much more impatient and demanding. Sure, Americans want medicine to be cheaper, and ideally they'd like to see everybody covered, but despite this, a CNN poll released in March found that more than eight out of 10 Americans are satisfied with the health care they receive. How will they react when taking a kid to the doctor's office replicates the experience of navigating rush-hour traffic on the New Jersey Turnpike? ☛

Philip Klein is *The American Spectator's* Washington correspondent.