



The Oklahoma LABOR STANDARD

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The difference between a Republican and a Democrat is the Democrat is a cannibal they have to live off each other, while the Republicans, why, they live off the Democrats. - Will Rogers

ISSUE 1 VOL. 1

"FINANCIAL ARMAGEDDON"

Self-Reliance and Community Solidarity: The philosophy of the *Oklahoma Labor Standard*

I predict future happiness for Americans if they can prevent the government from wasting the labors of the people under the pretense of taking care of them.

– Thomas Jefferson

A general dissolution of the principles and manners will more surely overthrow the liberties of America than the whole force of the common enemy.... While the people are virtuous they cannot be subdued; but once they lose their virtue, they will be ready to surrender their liberties to the first external or internal invader.... If virtue and knowledge are diffused among the people, they will never be enslaved. This will be their great security.

– Samuel Adams

The modern mainstream media often hides behind claims of being ‘fair and balanced’. In spite of their pretenses of objectivity, most people see through their self-proclaimed journalistic integrity. Most people understand that television stations and newspapers have to tow the line of the companies and political action committees that pay for advertising. After all, advertising is what keeps the media companies in business. *The Oklahoma Labor Standard*, however, takes no money from private advertisers or national political action groups. We rely solely on contributions from our readers and staff. We subscribe to the republican philosophies of the Founding Fathers and the belief in self-reliance and community solidarity. In that spirit, we are truly an independent voice for Oklahoma’s community of working people.

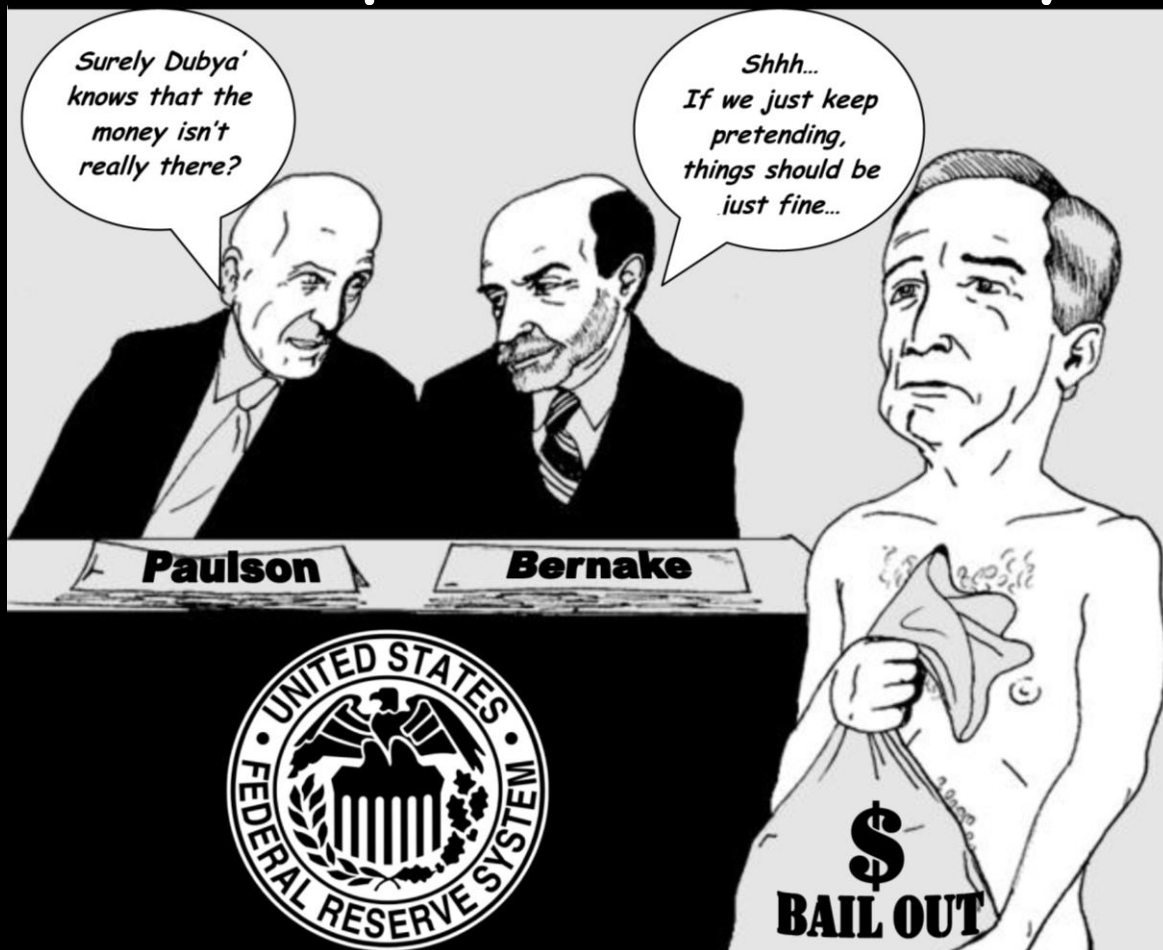
Unlike other Oklahoma-based media sources, *The Oklahoma Labor Standard* is **not** owned by out-of-state media tycoons. We also do not pretend to be neutral in our journalism. Since we, the Editors, are working people ourselves, we are biased toward the interests of working people – just like the media that belongs to wealthy tycoons is biased toward the interests of wealthy tycoons.

Unlike other pro-labor newspapers, we do not blindly advocate the agenda of either the Democratic or the Republican political parties – but we also do not claim to be ‘bi-partisan’. Yes, some members of our Editorial Board have been, at one time or another, registered Republicans and Democrats, but we are all fiercely independent thinkers, loyal to our families, our communities and our state first. In this sense, we are loyal partisans to reason – not to political parties or personalities, but to the rank-and-file working people of Oklahoma.

Oklahoma was founded in the spirit of hard-work and local self-reliance. Unless hard-working people return to that spirit and stick together, our state government and our communities will continue to be sold to the highest bidder, used as pawns in the political and financial games of elitists who maintain no loyalty to Oklahoma’s communities. (*Continued on pg. 2*)

NEO-LIBERALISM:

'The Emperor's New Economy'



GLOBALIZATION AND THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

HOW “FREE MARKET” FUNDAMENTALISM COSTS JOBS AND THREATENS OUR SECURITY

By M. Sullivan

As we descend deeper into our national economic crisis, it’s important for us to understand how we got here so that we do not repeat the same mistakes. With so much at stake, we cannot allow media pundits and private interests to obscure the reality of the situation. We must understand what wealth is, how the “globalized” economy actually works, and the role that we – the citizen, the working person, the soldier and taxpayer – truly play. To understand this, we have to begin by dispelling some popular economic myths. Only once we have a sober perspective on the crisis can we begin to resolve it.

We can’t simply stop at blaming a handful of poorly managed businesses on Wall Street (although it is obvious that they have been greedier and more wasteful than ever before), and we certainly can’t place all the blame on a single political party in Washington. After all, one of the main policies that open the flood gates to the problems we’re facing today was the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which was signed into law by Bill Clinton, a Democrat. And as much as we’d like to tie the blame neatly onto one politician or one single party, the cracks in the American economy began a long time ago. (*Continued on pg. 4*)

THE 2008 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

How democratic are the Democrats? How republican are the Republicans? What’s In a Name

Strategic Considerations
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THE ECONOMY: What’s Next?

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Globalization and the Economic Crisis: How “Free Market” Fundamentalism Costs Jobs and Threatens Our Security

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THE 2008 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: The Tough Questions Washington *Can't* Answer (Continued from pg. 2)

How *democratic* is the Democratic Party?

The Democratic Party is not encouraging the American people to become more involved in the actual decision-making processes of government – that would be far too democratic for their liking. If they were to push for true democracy, they would support campaign finance reforms that would make it so that working people could run for office, and not just multi-millionaires. Instead, the Democrats – just like the Republicans – are trying to convince America that their Party leaders know what’s best for the people and that we shouldn’t worry, we shouldn’t get too involved in the process, we should simply vote for the candidates they choose for us in order to legitimize their Party’s pre-existing political and economic agenda. This, however, is a blatant shift away from American thinking. As Jefferson said, “I am not among those who fear the people. They, and not the rich, are our dependence for continued freedom.”

WHAT THE DEMOCRATS DONT SEEM TO UNDERSTAND: THE DANGERS OF DEPENDENCY AND PATERNALISM IN GOVERNMENT

Professional politicians count on the fact that the people are too tired and over-worked to investigate the political records and quiet backroom activities of their representatives. They count on the fact that we are too busy with raising our families and earning our paychecks to see who really benefits from privatization, globalization and the outsourcing of our economy. Both parties hope that the average voter will simply over-look the blatant lies and consistent mistakes of their candidates, and give them free reign to govern over us as if they were our parents. We should trust in them, never question their wisdom, and never attempt to strengthen our local democracies against the schemes of Washington and Wall Street while they carve-up our nation amongst themselves and their business cronies.

This deference to a paternalistic government, removed and separate from the people, is exactly the kind of dependency that our Founding Fathers warned us to guard against. Again, Jefferson is clear on the point: “Dependence begets subservience and venality, suffocates the germ of virtue, and prepares fit tools for the designs of ambition.” In a democratic-republic, there should be no distinction between the people and their government. Based on the principles of Jefferson, Washington, Paine, Adams, and America’s first patriots, neither party in government is truly *democratic* or truly *republican*. The very idea that government is something beyond the reach of the people is the most telling fact that our nation has lost its direction and its true patriotic identity.

What the American people want is a government of American principles – not just American flags, not charismatic personalities making hollow promises. We are not interested in partisan political successes for either of the two major parties because, as experience has shown, neither of the two major parties is run by people who care about us. For over two-hundred and forty years, the American people have struggled to assert the power of the local community over the power-brokers of distant government. Now more than ever we need to hold our “Democrats” and “Republicans” democratically accountable to republican principles by defining democracy ourselves, the way our Founding Fathers did.

"I belong to no organized party. I am a Democrat."

- **Will Rogers**

How *republican* is the Republican Party?

Thomas Paine:

“MANKIND being originally equals in the order of creation, the equality could only be destroyed by some subsequent circumstance; the distinctions of rich, and poor, may in a great measure be accounted for, and that without having recourse to the harsh ill sounding names of oppression and avarice [the immoderate desire for wealth]. Oppression is often the consequence, but seldom or never the means of riches...”

"For were the impulses of conscience clear, uniform, and irresistibly obeyed, man would need no other lawgiver; but that not being the case, he finds it necessary to surrender up a part of his property to furnish means for the protection of the rest."

George Washington:

"It may be laid down as a primary position, and the basis of our system, that every Citizen who enjoys the protection of a Free Government, owes not only a proportion of his property, but even of his personal services to the defense of it."

“Laws made by common consent must not be trampled on by individuals.”

Unfortunately, this sort of self-less devotion to the common good has been lost in the modern usage of the term republican.

Today, the Republican Party is synonymous with corruption, ‘sweetheart deals’ between business and politicians and wasteful spending. Sure, Republican politicians will quote passages from the Founding Fathers when it suits them, but they conveniently omit the radical nature of early American revolutionary republicanism (in the small ‘r’ sense of the word) as cited above. Instead, today’s so-called Republicans pay lip service to reducing the size of government, while in reality have created more new government agencies than any other time in our history. They criticize the role of government in our lives, and then enacted the USA PATRIOT Act which has virtually destroyed the Bill of Rights and created agencies that invade the privacy of every American. They criticize giving tax money to needy people and then spend billions of our tax dollars on corporate ‘bail-outs’ for their friends in the private sector. They balk at welfare for the poor and the unemployed, but they have no problem taking money from working people and handing it over to their private campaign contributors. And they have the audacity to wave the American flag and call themselves ‘Republicans’, while criticizing the Democrats as “insiders”.

The current strain of professional politicians making-up the Republican Party leadership has circulated through different government jobs since the times of Nixon, and has consistently used our government as a tool for removing truly *republican* obstacles to the schemes of big-business (like the Constitution). Sure, they talk about tax breaks, but who *really* gets the benefits? You pay nearly 30 percent of your income in taxes and get a four-hundred dollar check in the mail. Meanwhile, the multi-millionaires supporting the Republicans pay next to nothing. They claim to support our troops, but they weasel out of paying taxes that go to the Defense budget, and prevent our troops from getting the support and protection they need. They criticize wasteful government spending, but they have created the largest deficit in history. They talk about family values and protecting innocent lives, but in all their years in power, while in control of all three branches of government, they still failed to outlaw abortion – because they never tried – because they don't care about abortion – because they are liars, and because so-called 'family values' issues are just a cynical tool for the Republican Party to win votes. If Republicans were to actually pass laws that preserve "family values", they would have nothing to run on during the next election cycle.

THE NEXT PRESIDENT: AMERICAN PRINCIPLES AND STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVES

By M. Sullivan

Instead of chasing around professional politicians in hopes that we can convince them to do the right thing by the people, we should deprive them of any support whatsoever unless they start following the peoples' lead. We shouldn't view politicians as 'leaders'. We are their leaders. Politicians are *our* representatives, assigned the day-to-day tasks of carrying out *our* wishes. Unfortunately, the two-party system doesn't leave a lot of room for the peoples' leadership. And regardless of who becomes President in November, working people should be mindful of several possible scenarios that we may face and be prepared to take a pro-active, forward-thinking stand.

If McCain wins...

If this stalwart of big business-turned-populist “maverick” has his way, we’re facing a President committed to more of the same policies implemented under the Bush Administration and worse. More invasive legislation, like the deceptively named USA PATRIOT Act which has opened up Pandora’s Box and given the government the right to rifle through every file in your computer, your e-mail, review records of your phone calls and invade every last corner of your personal life regardless of whether or not you are charged with a crime. Say good-bye to habeas corpus, good-bye to the Bill of Rights. Washington opportunists have exploited our fear of terrorism and McCain hopes to go even further. As Ben Franklin said, “Those that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety.”

The great irony is that Congress justified these legislative actions by claiming to preserve “our way of life” and our “values” while it was *they* who destroyed the principles that define America. By doing so, they have played into the hands of terrorists. The bombs and guns of foreign terrorists can’t kill our principles, but our Congress can and did. Our enemies know that. Their strategy is to cause our reactionary government to pass laws that over-extend our military, destabilize our economy and destroy the freedoms guaranteed by our laws. They hope this chaos will generate enough anger and fear to paralyze America and cause us to collapse through partisan infighting – and the Neo-Conservatives have been manipulated every step of the way into doing exactly what the terrorists expected. This isn’t speculation. Bin Laden himself said, “We are continuing this policy in bleeding America to the point of bankruptcy”. During the 1980s, mujahedeen fighters used the same tactics against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, employing “guerrilla warfare and the war of attrition to fight tyrannical superpowers.” Bin Laden claims it has been “easy for us to provoke and bait this administration...All that we have to do is to send two mujahedeen to the furthest point east to raise a piece of cloth on which is written al Qaeda, in order to make generals race there to cause America to suffer human, economic and political losses without their achieving anything of note other than some benefits for their private corporations.”

Now, in spite of bin Laden's publically stated strategy, McCain wants to continue with the same methods of his Republican predecessor. Of course the Neo-Conservatives responsible for these measures have proven time and time again that they don't care for American principles. Sure they love waving American flags and saying the Pledge of Allegiance, but these are empty symbols unless they are loyal to the Cause of America, as defined by patriots like Thomas Paine and Samuel Adams – and judging by their policies, these so-called patriots have never read a word of the Founding Fathers. There is no mention of America's great Revolutionaries in the Republican lexicon. Instead, every word out of their mouths is meaningless rhetoric attempting to disguise the fact that they are little more than agents for global companies. What they are *really* in search of is a way to destroy the ideals that our Founding Fathers struggled to enshrine in our laws so that they can go about their dirty business dealings unhindered.

The Republicans in Congress have already undermined so much, but if McCain wins there is no doubt that America will lose jobs, that our economy will become increasingly globalized and unstable, and we will lose even more of the few remaining freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution. But that's not all. McCain is committed to eliminating Social Security. That's right, they intend to take all the money we've paid in for our future security and pass it on to their friends in business. McCain is also targeting our education. He thinks the cure for our overly bureaucratic education system is redirecting it's funding toward more private business schemes – the same schemes that led us to the current economic crisis and required us, the taxpayer, to bail-out big business. **(Continued on pg. 8)**

How THE STOCK MARKET REALLY “Works”

Working People Must Have a Voice in Managing Our Economy

By M. Sullivan

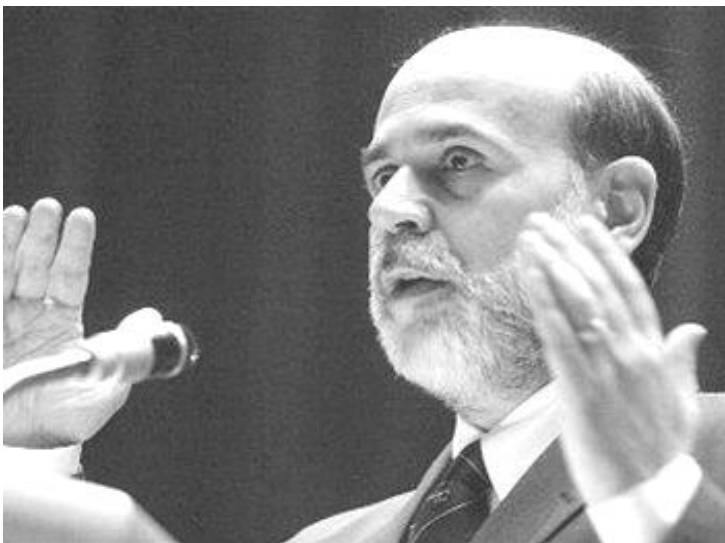
I place economy among the first and most important of republican virtues, and debt as the greatest of the dangers to be feared. To preserve our independence we must not let our leaders load us up with perpetual debt. We must make our choice between economy and liberty, or profusion and servitude.
-Thomas Jefferson, 1816

In spite of reassurances from Washington politicians, the economy looks as though it will be getting worse – not better. On September 16th, words like “carnage” were being used to describe the economic “bloodbath” from the floor of the Stock Exchange. Similar sentiments were echoed from the desks of CEOs and commentators across the country and all the way to expert economic analysts in Europe and Asia. “Strains in financial markets have increased significantly and labor markets have weakened further,” said the Federal Reserve. Reiterating the Feds point, Nariman Behravesh, chief economist at Global Insight, a Lexington, Mass., forecasting firm admitted, “When you have jobs being lost, industrial production down, personal incomes down and so forth, the economy’s not in good shape.” Stuart Hoffman, chief economist at PNC Financial Services Group in Pittsburgh echoed the sentiments of thousands in the financial field, stating, “By my own forecasts, it gets worse before it gets better.” Amidst the chaos, many are asking, How could this happen? Where were the regulators? Why didn’t anyone warn us? The answer, sadly, is that we were being warned. Unfortunately, some of those ‘wasteful’ government programs that Bush helped to eliminate or reduce to ineffectacy were the regulatory agencies that protect our economy from the kind of blind greed that creates the crisis we’re now facing.

The signs were everywhere, but the average stock-holder didn’t see what is being likened to the Crash of ’29 by some. How did this crisis take so many by surprise? One of the major reasons is because our new ‘globalized’ economy functions a lot like the Emperor’s new clothes. When companies lend imaginary money (credit) to people so they can buy the real things required for survival, but that they can’t actually afford, there’s going to be trouble. In fact, the companies count on it and use the fact that we can’t always pay as justification for charging us even more money to pay off debts that we couldn’t pay in the first place. Then these companies sell these additional debts to other companies that make more profit off the lending of more money that isn’t real. Essentially, someone with nothing lends nothing to people with nothing, and then those people buy something for nothing and promise to pay back more than the something (which was actually nothing) that they borrow in the first place. Then to make it more complicated, the company who loaned nothing to the people with nothing sells the debt on nothing to another company which then charges the people (who borrowed nothing to buy something) even more than the debt they owed on the original nothing. If you can’t pay back something on the nothing you borrowed, then the banks come and take the something you bought, which – since they leant you nothing in the first place – become 100 percent profit for them. Make sense? No. Damned right it doesn’t make sense – and that’s why it’s the Emperor’s new clothes, but if we just don’t say anything, we can go on pretending – at least that’s what we thought.

A lot of people try to portray the stock market as something mystical, beyond rational comprehension and there is a degree of truth to this assumption. The stock market ‘works’, in essence like a casino, and those who play it are more or less gamblers relying on luck and faith in the elusive, nearly supernatural “hidden hand of the market” rather than a firm grasp of economic theory. What makes this situation so dangerous for us regular working stiffis is that these professional gamblers are betting other peoples’ money – and a lot of time, it’s your money – you just don’t know it.

The average Wall Street gambler is like the guy who you’ll meet at the roulette table who tells you he’s got a ‘system’. Sure, maybe he understands the odds a little better than the average recreational gambler, but the truth is he’s taking the exact same risk as everybody else every time they turn the wheel. They haven’t been trained in understanding the deeper complexities and subtleties of the world-economy. They don’t grasp the profound effects of politics, war, changes in foreign governments, environmental movements, the cost of labor and production, etc. Instead, they rely on convincing the investor – you or your boss – that everything is fine, all you have to do is believe in the system he’s selling and he’ll take care of the rest. Of course, any gambler with any sense wouldn’t go to the table and turn his money over to those folks that claim to have a system. We’d probably want to test that system and see it work with our own eyes first. Unfortunately, that’s not how



Federal Reserve Chairman, Ben Bernake giving testimony

the brokers work. After all, if the average investor understood that the game was always stacked overwhelmingly in the favor of the house, we’d recognize that the system isn’t quite as fool proof as we were told and we probably wouldn’t risk our hard earned dollars and pensions.

What makes gambling on the Stock Market even more onerous is that it is the lynch pin that holds our society together and is vital to maintaining the strength and stability of our country. It’s the basket holding everyone’s eggs, and if something goes wrong, the country - especially the little guy – suffers immeasurably. That’s why there has to be publically accountable oversight that has no vested interest in convincing us that things are going well, when the opposite is true.

The big brokerage firms would like us to believe that incidents like the Crash of ’29 or the Recession of the 1970s are exceptions to the rule. They tout this myth because if we (the average investor who’s got our savings in 401ks, stock options and various pension funds) were to take a step back and see the situation for what it really is – we’d take all our money out of their stocks and they would go out of business. So, instead of owning up to the realities of the situation, the big players on the stock market lay-off individual brokers hoping to place the blame on poor day-to-day management and regain a bit of confidence from their investors. Unfortunately, the projections that most brokers use – the ones they show us on television – are the short-terms ‘peaks and dips’ of the market, but not the over-all picture.

We’ve all heard the cliché about making a mountain out of a mole hill – well, think of the ‘peaks and dips’ analysis of the stock market as the opposite, making mole hills out of mountains. If you get close too close, it all appears to be small ups and downs, but when you step back and see things in perspective, it’s a series of small ups and downs on a steadily declining line.

The Stock Market is maintained by giving the investors a very limited snapshot of the macro-economic situation. Investors are like horses wearing blinders, only seeing part of the whole picture in order to keep them focused and prevent them from getting scared. After all, the situation looks bleak and would scare anyone with a broader perspective.

The fact is that American money was once valued because it was tied to actual commodities of real value, i.e. raw materials, factories, industrial labor and the Gold Standard, etc. After the government (at the behest of international finance companies) got rid of the Gold Standard, they realized they could print money as they pleased. The second element to our economic strength was America’s massive industrial production output which tied American money to actual products, raw materials, factories and labor-power. However, as big business steadily outsources all of this to places like China in search of cheaper labor, the only reason the world-economy maintained respect for the American Dollar is because we had the military power to crush those who wouldn’t play ball. Now, after Vietnam, after Lebanon, after Afghanistan, after seven years in Iraq, the civilian politicians running the American military have shown that they can’t defeat a handful of superstitious theocrats running around in the desert with small arms and homemade explosives. What does that tell investors about the ability of the U.S. to stabilize its foreign markets, imports and production bases?

The situation doesn’t inspire confidence – that’s for sure –and thus the economic house-o-cards that the two-party system has created is getting a little too shaky for most investors and they’re pulling-out before it gets worse. Unfortunately, the bureaucrats that run Washington are in essence employees of the big international finance companies, so instead of telling us the truth and taking the bold political steps necessary to stabilize the economy, they’re simply giving your hard-earned tax dollars to their corporate bosses in the form of “bail-outs”. Whatever happened to the “hidden hand of the market” that would regulate things? Whatever happened to their constant harping on about removing government interference in business, and let the “free market” regulate itself? Well, folks, now we see they aren’t against spending your tax money, as long as it benefits their business friends and political contributors.

The fact is that government will always be involved in matters of the economy. However, if our government were truly democratic, that wouldn’t be such a scary reality for the average citizen. But instinctively we know that our government (both the Republicans and Democrats) isn’t truly democratic, and functions independently of the people, behind closed doors and brokers sweetheart deals with big business. It’s a fact. You don’t have to be an economist or political scientist to see it. What is left to be decided is who should benefit from government involvement in the economy – a handful of billionaires who are gambling with your money, your 401k, your pension, your Social Security and your retirement, or working people themselves? The fact is that there is no such thing as the “hidden hand of the market”. In reality, there are only producers, distributors, consumers, and regulators that determine the strength of our economy. Shouldn’t we, the people, be able to use our voice in government to protect ourselves from the kind of crises we’re facing?

Some say they want to get rid of government, but the only real example that can be found in the world of an economy without any interference from government is Somalia. Is that the course we are taking? Shouldn’t we work to create a system where the all-important decisions made about our economy are inclusive to all the people that are affected? Instead of getting rid of government, we have to redefine what we mean by government – and the Founding Fathers are a pretty good place to start. Here’s what Thomas Paine had to say about the role of government:

Society in every state is a blessing, but government even in its best state is but a necessary evil [and] in its worst state an intolerable one; for when we suffer, or are exposed to the same miseries by a government, which we might expect in a country without government, our calamities is heightened by reflecting that we furnish the means by which we suffer!...For were the impulses of conscience clear, uniform, and irresistibly obeyed, man would need no other lawgiver; but that not being the case, he finds it necessary to surrender up a part of his property to furnish means for the protection of the rest; and this he is induced to do by the same prudence which in every other case advises him out of two evils to choose the least. Wherefore, security being the true design and end of government, it unanswerably follows that whatever form thereof appears most likely to ensure it to us, with the least expense and greatest benefit, is preferable to all others.

-Thomas Paine, “On the Origins and Design of Government”,
Common Sense, 1776

Paine’s logic is simple: if money is power, then a system that excludes the people from making democratic economic decisions is essentially excluding the people from the true source of power in America.

GLOBALIZATION AND THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

HOW “FREE MARKET” FUNDAMENTALISM COSTS AMERICA JOBS AND THREATENS NATIONAL SECURITY

(Continued from pg. 1.)

The first step in understanding the nature of this crisis is to understand *real* wealth. Things have two sorts of value: 1) things that we need and use for survival, and; 2) things that we don’t need for survival, but have chosen as a society to give it value anyway. Food, for example, is something of real “use” value. Gold, on the other hand, is something that is worth far more than what it can be used for as a tool of survival. In economics they call this “exchange value”, meaning it is valued because you can *exchange* it for things you can use. Things like precious metals or stones, gold, diamonds, etc. are the primitive form things like currency and stocks today. However, they are not only valuable because we can trade them for things we can use, but they are also valuable because we can trade them for peoples’ time and work.

The second thing we have to understand is that things like currency and stocks are different than gold and jewels because they are not valuable to everyone everywhere. Instead, they are only valuable in certain situations. Currency, for example, is a contract issued by a government that entitles the person who possesses it to a certain amount of the wealth that belongs to that government. The strength of a currency depends on the government’s ability to guarantee the currency holder a portion of national products or reserves of natural resources.

The stock market functions in much the same way as a government. Stocks in a company are only valuable because they guarantee the possessor a portion of the ownership and profits. However, if that company ceases to be profitable, then their stocks become worthless because they are not tied to actual wealth. Currency and stocks are a lot like the Emperors new clothes – they only seem real if everyone believes they are real. From this perspective, our national economic crisis becomes a bit easier to understand, but we have to view today’s crisis in context with the historical evolution of our modern economy.

During the early twentieth century, the United States maintained a gold-standard which entitled the possessor of U.S. currency to a portion of the gold held by the U.S. government. Before World War II, countries all over the world chose to remove their currencies from their own national gold standards and instead, replaced gold with U.S. Dollars. Since American Dollars were tied to gold, these countries felt confident in backing their own currencies with U.S. currency. However, shortly after WWII the value of the U.S. Dollar ceased to be tied directly to gold and instead retained its value due to America’s massive post-war production capacity. We were the largest producer of commodities in the world, and we had proven during the war that U.S. labor and manufacturing could be relied upon to get U.S. materials and commodities to the world. The value of the U.S. Dollar was due greatly to the fact that the post-war world chose to respect the American government and the value of its currency. This respect was rooted in two facts about post-war America: 1) the U.S. was an industrial giant and capable of producing an abundance of commodities with real use value that could be traded for U.S Dollars; 2) the U.S. military had proven that the American government can enforce the promises of its government (such as its currency guarantees) throughout most of the world.

By the 1960s, many U.S. industrialists began to realize that they could further maximize their profits by refusing to pay U.S. workers. Instead, manufacturing jobs could be sent to “third-world” countries where the Dollar was even more valuable, and less would have to be spent on labor. Furthermore, it was soon realized that, instead of buying natural resources and brokering deals with independent foreign governments, U.S. agents could manipulate foreign politics in favor of U.S. companies. Americans had learned from the mistakes of the French and British and saved themselves the expense of colonizing these countries. The U.S. believed that it was unnecessary to replace local governments with Americans. Our colonies could keep their flags, and run their own governments as long as the people in charge were “friendly” and compliant to U.S. businesses.

After several years, however, the indigenous peoples from the countries being manipulated by U.S.-controlled dictators would often rebel. These rebellions jeopardized both the immediate business investments in the countries being threatened, and also worried U.S. businesses that, if these rebellions were successful, they could cause other governments to raise questions about the strength of the America – and U.S. currency. For these reasons, the U.S. was forced to react with military operations, as was the case in Korea, Vietnam, Cuba, Nicaragua, and several other nations. For this reason, the U.S. military became an essential component to maintaining the strength of the U.S. economy. The pivotal role of the U.S. military in our economy required massive investments by U.S. taxpayers to support the development and production of the U.S. Military Industrial Complex. This use of the peoples’ tax money for military-business purposes is also a reason why U.S. spending on social services, such as public transportation, health care and education, were miniscule in comparison to Europe. Europeans were free to develop their civil services and infrastructure because they were under the protective umbrella of the United States through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

As we can see, when the American military suffers, the American economy suffers. And since so-many currencies of the world are tied to the U.S. Dollar, the world-economy suffers with us. For example, the recession of the 1970s was in no small way due to the fact that impoverished, malnourished Vietnamese guerilla fighters, armed with little more than small arms and improvised weapons, were able to defeat the United States military with all it’s technical might and superior firepower. The world understood the implications of the U.S. defeat in Vietnam, and foreign confidence in America’s ability to protect its own business interests continued to decline. Today, we are witnessing a similar situation in Afghanistan. However, unlike the recession of the 1970s, the economic fall-out will be far greater this time around because the U.S. has no domestic manufacturing base to fall-back on economically.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the U.S. continued to advocate the mythology of “Free Trade” fundamentalism and allowed our domestic manufacturing base, the primary source of America’s economic strength, to be outsourced to foreign countries. This was profitable in the short-term because it allowed U.S. companies to evade U.S. laws restricting the unregulated disposal of toxic industrial waste, and laws that upheld livable wages and protection of workers. The goal of the Free-Market Fundamentalists was to cheat the American worker out of the political gains he and she had inherited through hard-fought union struggles and the sacrifices American workers made during the industrial mobilization of World War II. Not only was the outsourcing of American manufacturing and increased reliance on foreign oil production some of the greatest betrayals of America since the days of Benedict Arnold, the “globalization” of our economy has come to pose strategic vulnerabilities to our national security.

As the old saying goes, “Those who don’t learn from history are doomed to repeat it.” Based on the bi-partisan mistakes our government has consistently made over the last several decades, it appears that all those Ivy League graduates turned career politicians in Washington didn’t really get their money’s worth out of their educations. As anyone who studies history knows, the problems we’re facing today have several historical precedents. The greatest example of this is the Fall of Rome.

The Roman elite decided they would force the “barbarians” on the outskirts of the empire to replace Roman laborers in order to maximize their profits. (Sound familiar, Mr. Clinton and all you pro-NAFTA, Neo-Liberal, Free-Marketeers?) Then, after hinging Rome’s economic power on its enemies, it was forced to use the Roman military to keep its former partners and new enemies in line. However, this usage of the professional Roman military became offensive to the Roman people, and the government was forced to employ non-Roman mercenaries to bolster the work of the Roman army. War after war, the Roman economy became increasingly dependent on its military, mercenaries and foreign auxiliary forces to subdue uprisings on the frontier. Finally, when the various “barbarian” tribes under Roman occupation began to successfully defeat the Romans, everything began to unravel.

There is a secondary point on the nature of our military to be taken from this lesson that is also of the utmost importance for us today. As Machiavelli pointed out on mercenaries and foreign auxiliary forces;

“Mercenaries and auxiliaries are useless and dangerous; and if one holds his state based on these arms, he will stand neither firm nor safe; for they are disunited, ambitious and without discipline, unfaithful, valiant before friends, cowardly before enemies; they have neither the fear of God nor fidelity to men, and destruction is deferred only so long as the attack is; for in peace one is robbed by them, and in war by the enemy.”

“AUXILIARIES, which are the other useless arm, are employed when a [government] is called in with [its] forces to aid and defend, as was done by Pope Julius in the most recent times; for he...had poor proof of his mercenaries, turned to auxiliaries, and stipulated with Ferdinand, King of Spain, for his assistance with men and arms. These arms may be useful and good in themselves, but for him who calls them in they are always disadvantageous; for losing, one is undone, and winning, one is their captive.”

From this ancient wisdom, we must accept that reliance on young men who fight for the benefits of the G.I. Bill are, in essence, mercenaries. Although it is politically incorrect to admit, these young men are not fighting for principles – they are fighting for a paycheck, for healthcare and for college money. In their minds, warfare is simply a job that they do until they can return home and reap the benefits of their service. Their opponents, however, are fighting for their ideology, their spiritual beliefs and have nothing to lose and everything to gain by victory. For the Islamic radicals, death is victory. An enemy such as this has never been beaten by a mercenary army throughout all of history. Furthermore, history has also disproven the myth that the U.S. can develop reliable foreign auxiliaries capable of effectively fighting radical Islamic guerrilla forces. A more recent example of this failure of strategy is the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which led to the bankruptcy and collapse of the USSR, the world’s second largest Superpower.

Nevertheless, the arrogance of these spoiled Ivy League careerists, who have been raised by powerful multimillionaires to believe that nothing and no one can ever hurt them, caused the U.S. to make the same mistakes as Rome and the Soviets. These politicians denied history and outsourced our economy. They then denied history by resorting to “private military contractors” and mercenary forces to protect our outsourced economy, or “national interests”. After realizing that these troops would be incapable of defeating Islamic insurgents alone, they began incorporating foreign auxiliary troops to bolster our own military.

From a historical perspective, it is almost as if the careerists in Washington were deliberately following in the footsteps of the greatest failed nations in history. Although the greatest motivation for the Free-Market Fundamentalists in Washington and Wall Street was short-term profit schemes, the ideological force they adopted to justify those schemes derived from the political philosophy of the Russian philosopher, Ayn Rand – not the U.S. Founding Fathers. It is this mystical faith represented in Rand’s writings fueling the superstitious belief in a “hidden hand” controlling a “free market” in favor of the United States that has led to both this bungled war and decline in our economy. Today, this superstition can be likened to the belief in the “Divine Right of Kings”, which our Founding Fathers rejected and fought a revolution to defeat. It can also be likened to the belief in “Manifest Destiny” that caused European empires to decimate and eradicate entire civilian populations in search of new resources and markets. Yet it is this mythology that our leaders continue to swear by. It is their justification for removing the taxpayers’ democratic voice in government from economic policy-decisions.

(Continued on pg. 8)

SELF-RELIANCE: LIVING MORE WITH LESS

MONEY-SAVING TIPS FROM OUR FRIENDS AT *THE BETTER TIMES ALMANAC*

Keeping warm in a winter weather emergency

For when there is no electricity or gas due to a utility shut-off or natural or man-made disaster. If the electricity or natural gas is disrupted during the winter, you must take action to protect your family. Depending on the weather, lack of heat can be life threatening! Don't try to heat the entire house in a winter emergency. First bundle up your body. Then heat a single room. Hang blankets over doorways and use plastic sheets, blankets, quilts, & newspapers over windows. Blankets can insulate floors without carpets. Don't seal the room so tight that no fresh air can get in. Even if it is cold, you need fresh air to stay alive.

Layer clothes in loose layers. Beware of wind and wet. Keep dry. Wet clothing loses its ability to insulate, and can suck heat right out of you. Stay out of the wind as much as possible. Clean clothes keep you warm better than dirty clothes. Make sure your head, hands, and feet are protected.

Use newspapers for emergency insulation. They can be wrapped around legs, arms, torso, taped over windows, laid on the floor. The best place for babies is on their mother's bodies. in their arms or using one of the many ways of carrying a baby and still having your hands free.

For emergency backup heat, the best choice is wood heat – *IF* you have a fireplace or properly installed wood stove. If you don't have one, the next choice would be propane and kerosene. These fuels have been used for indoor heating and cooking for many years. Look for this equipment at a flea market or thrift store; propane bottles are sold in most discount stores. Even when bought brand new, this equipment can be relatively inexpensive. A free-standing natural gas heater can be converted to run on propane. Ventless propane heaters certified for indoor use are also available.

Ventilation. Any form of indoor open flame heating requires adequate ventilation. Always place the propane or kerosene heater in front of the ventilation opening (such as a window open 1/4 inch). If you place it away from the ventilation, the fumes will first fill the room before they start to exit from the window. Always have a carbon monoxide and smoke detector in rooms where you use kerosene heaters. If you are in a winter emergency without any backup heat, use candles or "canned heat" like sterno or chafing dish fuel. Even the flame of one candle can generate enough heat to keep a person from freezing to death. NEVER LEAVE CANDLES BURNING UNATTENDED OR WHILE YOU ARE SLEEPING. Make sure there is nothing burnable close to the candles, and that they are secure in a candle holder that can't be knocked over.

NEVER USE CHARCOAL BRIQUETS INSIDE A HOUSE FOR COOKING OR KEEPING WARM IN A WINTER WEATHER EMERGENCY. People die every year from carbon monoxide poisoning when they fire up charcoal briquettes inside the house to keep warm. Carbon monoxide detectors are cheap; if there is a chance you may be using improvised heating, get one. Pregnant women and unborn babies are particularly at risk for carbon monoxide poisoning. While using any kind of inside heat with an open flame, if the room seems "stuffy" and you begin to feel headachy and lethargic and/or your vision gets blurry, get everyone out of the room and ventilate it with fresh air immediately. With all forms of alternative open flame heating, beware of the fire danger. Place a fire extinguisher where it can be quickly used. If you don't have a fire extinguisher, get a couple of large boxes of baking soda and a bucket of sand.

SOME GREAT ENERGY SAVING IDEAS

Cooking. If you are stuck with a big energy hawg of an electric stove, turn off the burners before the cooking is finished. It will continue cooking as the burner cools. Crockpots, roaster/toaster ovens, and electric frying pans are more efficient than full size electric stoves. Large ovens don't cook small meals efficiently, so use those small appliances. When you do heat up the oven, cook several dishes at once; alternate their placement in the oven so that air circulates easily. Minimize pre-heating. Glass or ceramic oven pans are the most efficient. Make sure the flame on a gas stove is bluish, a yellow flame indicates the gas isn't burning efficiently. Pressure cookers use less energy for stove top cooking because foods cook in less time. Uncovered pans can use 3 times as much energy as a covered pan to cook the food. Defrost frozen foods before cooking them. Use the smallest pan that will fit the recipe, and match the burner to the pan if possible (use a small burner for a small pan). Keep the metal splash guards under the burners clean, blackened guards will absorb, not reflect, cooking energy.

Hot Water. Use less hot water (and water in general) by installing low-flow shower heads and faucet aerators. This can cut your hot water requirements as much as 50%, saving 14,000 gallons of hot water per /year for a family of 4. They are cheap and easy to install. Insulate the hot water pipes. Insulate the hot water tank with a special "jacket" made for the purpose (typically \$10-20 at home supply stores), or wrap it with insulating materials. Do not cover the top or the bottom, the thermostat or the burner compartment of the tank. Lower the temperature on the water heater to 120 degrees or less. Take quick showers, not baths. You can make a simple solar heater: get a 5 gallon plastic bucket with a tight fitting lid, and paint it black. Fill it with water and set it in the sunlight. Voila, easy and free five gallons of hot water.

Lights. Your grandfather was right: Turn off the lights when you're not using them. Compact fluorescent bulbs work in regular light fixtures, last longer and use much less energy. They cost a bit more, but they use 75% less energy than regular bulbs & last for 1000s of hours. Use less electrical lighting during the day when natural light is available. Use more "task lighting" -- smaller lights focused on what you are doing, rather than the entire room.

Washing Clothes. Whenever possible, wash clothes in cold water. Wait until you have a full load, don't do small loads. Instead of using the dryer, air dry your clothes. Get some racks to use for indoor clothes drying when its raining or too cold outside. Wash small amounts of clothes by hand.

Dishwasher. The best thing to do with your dishwasher is disconnect it and sell it to somebody else. Washing dishes by hand should be a family affair -- when many hands pitch in, the work is less tedious and gets done faster.

Small batteries. Avoid spending money for small batteries. For \$30 or less, you can get a solar powered battery charger and rechargeable batteries. Or you could use a recharger that runs on household current. Small batteries are expensive -- the fewer you have to buy, the more money you have for other things.

Beware of the Energy Draining Ghosts! Many appliances have "ghost loads" -- even when they're "off", they are still "on" and burning up dollar bills of electricity. This is common with televisions, for example. Plug them into an extension cord that has a switch and put it in an easily accessible place. If you use the extension cord switch to turn it off and on, you avoid wasting power. One of those "plug strips" with an on-off switch also works well for controlling these kinds of energy wasters. If you have "wall warts" - those little boxes that you plug into an outlet in order to charge something like a cell phone, always unplug them when they aren't in use. If you feel them, you will notice they are warm even when not charging something. This means they are burning up dollar bills while you sleep.

Learn how to read your meters. This will help you manage your energy expenses, because you can tell exactly how much you will owe at any given time. The electric and gas utilities can tell you how to do this and calculate your bill as you consume the energy. If necessary, read it every day and adjust your energy use to meet your budget. Stop wasting energy, and you will start saving money. You will also give planet Earth a break from the pollution.

Be wary of bringing more electrical gadgets into your house and scrutinize what you already have. Do you really need that stuff? If you have a computer, don't leave it on when it isn't being used. Instead of an electric blanket, use more regular blankets or quilts (and never leave the electric blanket on during the day). Never use the television for "background noise" while you're doing something else; a radio consumes less power. Sell your garbage disposal, or don't use it. Compost your vegetable food scraps for your garden. Sell or don't use your garbage compactor.

Minimize the number of times you go shopping each month. Car pool with friends or take public transportation for shopping. The more times you go into stores, the more money you will spend. Always shop with a list, & avoid "impulse buying".

Buy at thrift stores and flea markets, start avoiding "new stuff." Plan your shopping, and never go to the store for "just one thing." Stop using disposable plates & cutlery, use cloth rags instead of paper towels. Save bottles for other uses, re-use gift wrapping, ribbons & bows, & be creative in reducing your trash load..

Ignore advertising. Your life will not be better because you buy advertised products, but you will be poorer. Teach your kids about the lies of advertisers.

Take the bus to work if possible, or car pool. For some people, a bicycle will be a cost effective option. Buy a car with greater fuel efficiency. Drive slower (above 55 MPH, fuel economy crashes), accelerate gradually. Living close to your work can save you hundreds of dollars every year.

For more survival strategies and simple-living tips visit: www.bettertimesinfo.org

CUTTING GASOLINE CONSUMPTION IN YOUR AUTOMOBILE

1. Avoid sudden jack rabbit starts and stops. Accelerate slowly. If you see a stop coming, take your foot off the gas pedal, don't accelerate and then suddenly break hard unless it is an emergency stop.
2. Fill your gas tank when it is half empty. Don't overfill the tank.
3. Keep your tires inflated to the manufacturer's specifications.
4. Don't buy a higher grade of octane gasoline unless your engine manufacturer recommends it.
5. Change the air filter and oil regularly and get tune-ups as needed..
6. On the highway, keep a steady speed and drive slower. For many vehicles, fuel economy goes way down when you drive faster than 55 MPH. Cruise control helps reduce gasoline consumption.
7. Don't carry extra weight by leaving stuff in the trunk or back seat that doesn't need to be there.
8. If you will be idling more than 2 minutes, turn off the engine.
9. Small vehicles get better mileage than big ones.
10. Keep the windows rolled up, but avoid using the car air conditioning. Use the vents. The car heater doesn't impact gasoline consumption.

REMEMBER: There are no gas additives or special gee-whiz gizmos that you can buy that will significantly increase your gas mileage.

SURVIVAL STRATEGIES FOR LOW AND MODERATE INCOME PEOPLE

By Robert Waldrop

It's not news to anybody with low or moderate income that economic hard times are here. In constant dollars, over the last 30 years **the average American worker has *LOST* 22% of his or her purchasing power**, and the less money you have, the bigger the impact this has been on you. For people with low to moderate incomes trying to live a regular American lifestyle, things are going from bad to worse, and then they will get even worse. Your dollars will not buy as much in the future as they do now. We are headed for an economic crisis so terrible it will make the Great Depression of the 1930s look like good times. If you want to protect yourself and your family from these economic hard times, make changes in the way you live.

If people are not worried about this, then they simply aren't paying attention to what is happening. Our entire economy is a stack of cards that can be knocked over at any time. Instead of looking out for the common good, powerful politicians make decisions that hurt ordinary people but benefit special interests that make big contributions to election campaigns.

The good news is you don't have to play their game. Even in the midst of these hard times, you can find financial security and develop a high quality of life for you and your family. Here are some basic survival strategies for coping with what is coming at us, and triumphing over it.

People who don't consider themselves low to moderate income can also benefit by following these strategies, because their ultimate effect is to increase the quality of life, security, and happiness of families. It just isn't possible to spend your way to prosperity. The advertisements and political talk that encourage this are the economic equivalent of methamphetamine addiction. Sure, you feel better for a while, but then you have to spend more money to get "high", and then even more money, and pretty soon you are spending your money but not getting any high at all, so you spend more money, and more money, and then comes the crash as the bills come due and you can no longer escape the consequences of your foolish and extravagant lifestyle.

THE EASY GARDEN FOR THE URBAN GARDENER

By Marcus Evans, courtesy the *Better Times Almanac*

I am always looking for new places on my property to plant useful or edible plants. My wife, children & I maintain several gardens on our property and I look forward to the time when I can say that my property *is* a garden.

We have a home in a rather normal northwest Oklahoma City neighborhood. Our property measures approximately 60' X 150'. Because we plant in raised beds that have been sheet mulched and we try never to step directly into the beds, our yields are plentiful and our soil is well conditioned.

We compost all of our vegetable kitchen scraps directly on the soil surface. Then cover the compost with mulch; therefore the nutrients of the compost leach directly into the soil around the plants. An additional benefit of mulching in place is the effect it has on the worm population within the soil. There is no bad smell and the worms grow healthy spending their time nearer to the surface of the soil consuming the scraps and fertilizing the soil.

This method of gardening isn't only an easy way to garden - it is an environmentally responsible way to grow our own food. No need for fertilizers- the compost and worms do all the fertilizing. No need for power tilling- the worms keep the soil aerated and the since we don't step into the beds the soil tends not to get compacted. No big need for pesticides-when the beneficial insects are thriving and the soil is aerated you have less of a negative insect problem. No need to water every day- with a good thick bed of straw or other mulch your soil will retain more of the water.

But, there still is an even easier garden to maintain, the spinach garden. There isn't much work or materials needed to maintain an abundance of spinach for your family in an Oklahoma City garden from October until March.

Start out by looking around your property to find an area that is already a flowerbed or vegetable garden. If you do not have an area available build your own garden bed by using untreated lumber, rocks, bricks, logs or hay bales as a border. Remember to design your garden bed so that you will not be required to step into the garden to harvest or work the soil. Then place a couple of layers of brown cardboard directly onto the ground making sure to overlap the seams. Next, cover the cardboard with a layer of well-rotted compost, leaves, horse manure, or other organic material. Then, cover the organic material with topsoil or rich mix.

You are now ready to sprinkle the soil surface with spinach seeds. Make sure after you are done sprinkling the seeds over your garden that you lightly tap the soil surface with the end of a rake to settle the seed just under the surface of the soil. Finally it is time to lightly water the garden. In about a week you will notice many small spinach plants growing. Make sure and water regularly. You will be harvesting spinach until about March as long as you only pinch off the leaves and allow the roots to produce more spinach leaves.

No fertilizer, no tilling, no raking, no weeding, just good wholesome food grown by you on your own property for you and your family.

ELEVEN LAWS FOR COPING WITH A CRUMBLING ECONOMY

- 1. Start by closing your ears to the lies of politicians and corporations.** Turn off your televisions and ignore all advertising. Your life will not be better if you buy advertised products. Your kids will not be smarter if they wear expensive designer clothes. In fact, if you buy advertised products, your quality of life will deteriorate. You will have less money, more stress, and your family will be at risk of the many evils that derive from financial stress.
- 2. The borrower is the slave of the lender.** Avoid debt like the plague it is. Never finance frivolous consumption on credit cards. Never take out a pay day loan. Stay out of pawn shops unless you want to buy something cheaply..The only real valid reasons for debt are to buy a house or for education that enables you to earn a better living. Pay off such debts as quickly as you can. As long as you have a mortgage, you are not the owner of your house, the bank is the real owner, and a sudden drop in your income could put you out on the street, homeless. By making extra principle payments with every monthly payment, you pay less interest over the life of the loan. Never take out a home equity loan for vacations, remodeling, or any kind of consumer spending. Don't consolidate credit card debt as a home equity loan - this puts your house at risk for your frivolous consumption spending decisions! Low income people must in particular beware of predatory loan schemes. Never take out a loan that has a prepayment penalty. If your property is paid for, do not, under any circumstances, get another mortgage. Debt-free housing is one of the most important survival strategies for the upcoming hard times.
- 3. Choose co-housing.** This is a fancy name for "more than one family living together in one large household." The day is coming when individuals of low and moderate incomes will not be able to live alone as single person households, unless they own their own housing free of debt or are in some kind of government subsidized housing. This is also true for single mothers with kids. Two or three smaller families living together can do so for less money than each would spend operating a separate household. Co-housing works for house purchases too. Three families could go together and buy a triplex.
- 4. If possible, go car free.** This is perhaps the one choice that can save the most money. Operating a car, including the capital cost of the automobile, insurance, taxes, repairs, interest, etc. can easily top \$3,600/year. It is much cheaper to take the bus or the occasional taxi, or even to rent a car a few times a year than to own a car. This may require moving to an area with adequate public transportation and access to shopping, but that effort is well worth it.
- 5. Stop buying new stuff.** Reduce, reuse, recycle, repair, make it over, made do, do without. Shop at flea markets, garage sales, and thrift shops. Never buy new furniture, new appliances, new clothes, new home decoration items. Always look in the "after market" first, only then, if you simply can't find what you need, should you consider buying something new. If you shop because of emotional needs, get into counseling, never spend money to cheer yourself up or because you are emotionally upset about something.
- 6. Use energy with extreme frugality.** The cost of energy is going up and over time this will get much worse. Follow the many suggestions given in the section on Energy Conservation in this almanac.
- 7. Develop a part-time business on the side that can perhaps grow in time to become a full-time job that you own.** This could be something simple like baking bread or pies from your home, or mowing lawns, or doing laundry and ironing for other people. Buy stuff cheap and then re-sell for a little more at flea markets or swap meets. Clean houses. Grow vegetables to sell to your neighbors. Don't be taken in by schemes that want you to pay money for people to teach you how to make money, or by multi-level pyramid sales scams. Develop an honest business, providing a service or product that people regularly need. Teach your kids to do the same.
- 8. Grow as much food as you can.** Plant things that you like to eat, and which are easy to grow and have a lot of value. If you own your property, landscape it with fruit and nut trees and berry bushes, and learn to make your own jams, jellies, and pie fillings. Growing food is like growing money in your back yard. Follow other suggestions elsewhere in this almanac and cook your meals from basic ingredients, shop frugally but wisely.
- 9. Save some money each month.** Even if it is only \$5 from each paycheck, stash it away. Life is full of surprises, and unexpected expenses that send you to the pawn shop or pay day loan service or run up your credit cards can be real financial problems for you and your family. Work to build your household savings. Keep some of your savings as food, always have at least 2 or 3 months of basic food staples on hand in your house to insulate yourself from the mood swings of supermarket pricing and the risks of sudden emergencies and crises. GET YOUR MONEY OUT OF THE BANKS. USE CREDIT UNIONS!
- 10. Beware of the two income trap.** Many families feel they need two incomes to survive, and in some cases this may be true. However, with both parents working outside the home, the family acquires significant additional expenses, including transportation and child care/babysitting. Do the math on your two incomes. Make sure that both parents working outside the home is a net economic benefit and not a net loss over the long run. Understand that a parent working at home is a net economic asset to the family. The additional time a parent can devote to in-home activities makes it possible to save money in many areas of life. A "work at home parent" can also participate in part-time businesses the family may start. Home schooling becomes a possibility, at least through the elementary grades, and this is a great blessing for families.

11. Don't give in to despair and don't feel sorry for yourself. Sow blessings and kindness and you will reap blessings and kindness. By living more frugally and sustainably, you aren't going second class, you will have a first class, worry-free lifestyle. The people to feel sorry for are those, of whatever income category, who are locked into the super-consumer lifestyle. Their self-image is bound up in how much stuff they have. They are never satisfied, they always must have more stuff, new stuff, better stuff. If they aren't spending money, they feel depressed. They may have flashy clothes and lots of new possessions, but they are in reality slaves to banks, corporations, and credit card companies. Such people will have real problems adjusting to the realities of life in coming years. The more you follow our "Better Times" ideas, the more control you will have over your life, and the less vulnerable you will be to crises and emergencies. By organizing your life in favor of Better Times, you will reduce the amount of stress, risk, and emotional trouble in your life.

GLOBALIZATION AND THE ECONOMIC CRISIS: HOW “FREE MARKET” FUNDAMENTALISM COSTS AMERICA JOBS AND THREATENS NATIONAL SECURITY

(Continued from pg. 5)

Now, as we can see more clearly than ever through the debates over taxpayer “bail-outs” for bungled businesses, there is no such thing as a “free market”. Governments will always intervene in the economy. The only place in the world where this doesn’t happen is Somalia, which has been free from government (aka anarchy) for over ten years, and is now riddled with brutality, crime, corruption, poverty and piracy on every level imaginable. Without government, violence and gangsterism becomes the only law. Therefore, the question the American citizen must ask is not over whether or not the government should or should *not* be involved in the economy; the question – as was posed by our Founding Fathers – is how can we, the people, best control corruption in our government. The fact that business has the right to control our government, but that the people have no right to use their government to control business has led us to the crises we face today. It is the people that will lead us out, but only if we take responsible action. First and foremost, those who continue to preach this “free-market” nonsense and those who caused this mess must be controlled. They are nothing less than traitors representing a treasonous ideology rooted in two-hundred year-old economic superstitions. We must then work to rebuild our infrastructure, our domestic economy and reduce the influence of foreign lobbyists, private money from multi-national corporations, and special interests in our government. This is the American way.

THE NEXT PRESIDENT: AMERICAN PRINCIPLES AND STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVES

(Continued from pg. 3)

If Obama wins...

If Obama wins, be on the look-out for intensified racism, mild racial scapegoating in politics and all the injustices and irrational behavior that goes with this line of thinking. It’s obvious by Obama’s choice for Vice-President, Joe Biden, that he is just another one of the Democratic Party’s Beltway insiders. And though his policies aren’t as aggressive as McCain’s, the same people who gave massive campaign contributions to McCain also gave money to Obama, and they’ll expect favors in return. That means more sweetheart deals for big business and more of the same politics as usual in Washington.

But for the sake of argument, let’s give Obama, as an individual, the benefit of the doubt. Let’s not be cynical and take his reformist rhetoric seriously for a moment. Here’s what he’s up against...

First, the momentum behind policies enacted under the Bush Administration is still very powerful. Even if Obama were to *try* to reverse the negative effects of these policies, it would be virtually impossible for him to make any noticeable changes for several reasons. Aside from the fact that he will be inheriting the greatest economic crisis of our time, a protracted war that appears to be opening yet another front in Pakistan, a government that is not only bankrupt but mired in a historic level of debt, etc., Obama has also made a lot of enemies in his own party. The Democratic insiders that supported Hillary Clinton didn’t take to kindly to this young upstart winning the party’s primary, and they are so blinded by careerism that they are willing to sacrifice the greater good of the nation to put their people back on top in Washington. Furthermore, private arms companies, the Military Industrial Complex and the network of war-profiteers that President Eisenhower warned us about half a century ago will do anything and everything in their power to keep us at war for as long as possible. So, you can forget about Obama ending the war. The arms and oil industries have already proven that they follow John D Rockefeller’s advice for making money, “Buy where blood flows in the streets.” Both the petroleum and arms interests have reaped record profits due to this war and they will not allow a single politician to interfere with their plans. If he were truly committed to ending the war, he wouldn’t have made it this far.

So, back to the original point: why will we experience an upsurge in partisan infighting and racism? This will happen because the establishment interests

Electing Obama now is like appointing a new captain to the deck of the Titanic after we’ve already hit the ice berg. There’s not a lot he can do for us (assuming he was serious about wanting “change” in the first place.). Of course electing John McCain is like trying to turn the wreckage of the Titanic around and crash it into the iceberg again.

in both parties won’t allow for the sweeping reforms this country needs, and they certainly won’t allow themselves to be blamed for the crises we are facing today. Instead, they will cultivate a subtle message that Obama, America’s first black President, and his “radical” supporters are to blame for things getting worse. The Republicans will use their old tried-and-true tricks of blaming everything on minorities, liberals and the new Democratic administration that has simply inherited the problems that the Republicans created. The Democratic Party establishment, however, will also do as they have always done and ensure that enough of their members cross the isle to vote with Republicans – even against their own President – to ensure that the big business establishment can continue to get away with murder. Therefore, no matter how we slice it, Obama will be seen as a lame duck, just like Jimmy Carter. We just have to be sure we understand why all this is happening. It’s not about race or “family values” – it’s about corruption throughout the entire two-party system. It’s about private interests taking precedent over the public good. It’s about globalization and Neo-liberalism replacing patriotic the principles established by the American Revolution.

Electing Obama now is like appointing a new captain to the deck of the Titanic *after* we’ve already hit the ice berg. There’s not a lot he can do for us (assuming he was serious about wanting “change” in the first place.). Of course electing John McCain is like trying to turn the wreckage of the Titanic around and crash it into the iceberg again. However, whoever wins, during the next four years, the impotency and corruption that defines the two-party-system will become so transparent that America’s only hope will be returning to our founding principles and forming a movement of ordinary people, led by ordinary people and establishing a party of real Americans – not the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of industrial tycoons and careerist politicians. We cannot settle for mere patriotic symbols, we must define our patriotic ideals and build a new movement that will enshrine these sacred beliefs in unalterable laws, and place principles above the political careerism of Washington and the private special interests of Wall Street.

SUICIDES CAUSED BY FINANCIAL CRISIS ON THE RISE

Americans tend to blame themselves when times get tough, but who is *really* to blame?

By M. Sullivan

In California, a man who seemingly devoted his life to making money and defined himself by his wealth went from being a successful money-manger to being unemployed. He lost his fortune due to the current financial crisis and murdered his entire family before committing suicide. In Ohio, a 90-year-old woman took pride in caring for her family’s modest house, but after losing her husband, the money wasn’t there and the banks sent authorities to take their home. Instead of being removed by repossessioners, she shot herself in the chest as they arrived. In Massachusetts, a devoted housewife feels so ashamed by the family’s financial troubles that she sends a letter to her mortgage company stating, “By the time you foreclose on my house, I’ll be dead.” Soon after the mortgage company began foreclosure, Carlene Balderrama shot herself to death.

According to the Associated Press, “Across the country, authorities are becoming concerned that the nation's financial woes could turn increasingly violent, and they are urging people to get help. In some places, mental-health hot lines are jammed, counseling services are in high demand and domestic-violence shelters are full.”

In America, we are raised to believe in self-reliance and hard work. We are also taught that the American Dream is available to everyone, but those of us struggling to make ends meet know that achieving “the Dream” can often feel like a nightmare. However, for the last several decades, the media has fomented a new way of looking at those who aren’t so fortunate. They have fostered a belief that the only people that matter in America are those that work their lives away, slaving for those creature comforts, and have the new cars, the fancy home and the glamorous job. Television reinforces this myth by showing us sitcoms where even ordinary working-class Americans live in huge homes, drive new cars and have all the latest in home entertainment. We’re also bombarded with supermodels, Hollywood celebrities, and rock stars constantly shoving their decadent lifestyles in our face. We’re being held up to the ridiculous standards of less than .001 percent of the population and made to feel guilty if we can’t achieve that level of success.

The truth is that far more Americans are living below the poverty line than ever before, and our culture has become dominated by a world-view that disdains low-income and working-class culture. During our grandparents’ era, it was understood that the cards were stacked against working people and they took pride in the fact that they didn’t need to conspicuously consume everything they saw being advertised. In those days, working-class people had their own culture. We had Woody Guthrie singing songs about working people, and screen-stars like Will Rodgers who poked fun at how ridiculous that phony Hollywood image actually had become. In those days, working people had their own heroes, and even if daily life was humble, we took pride in our ability to put food on the table every night.

We also understood that most rich people didn’t get rich by working hard – they got rich by being related to other rich people. Inheritance, not hard work, is what made families like the Rockefellers and Bushes stand out. Others, like the Kennedys, made their fortunes through organized crime, and later invested their blood-money into politics. The truth is that, along the career path of almost every ultra-wealthy person today, you’ll find gangsters or daddy’s money helping them along, but the hard-working, decent American very rarely gets a chance to show what we’re really made of.

(Continued on pg. 12)

IMPROVING BUSINESS-LABOR RELATIONS

Going Union? Tough Choices Grown-Ups Make

By Kenneth T. (Borrowed from a web-posting)

Adults are often called upon to make important decisions that may have a significant impact on themselves and their families. These decisions are often economic in nature and are not, one would hope, made without careful consideration of their moral consequences. The decisions of moral men and women, who are compelled to choose principle over economic comforts, are sometimes criticized as naïve and self-destructive. Those of us who have been confronted with such quandaries, and went with our principles, are secure in the knowledge that we made the correct choice and can comfortably face ourselves in the mirror each morning.

One of the decisions we make as adults is the type and place of employment we might seek to best provide for our families needs and future. A principled person will not, under any circumstance betray those principles and take a job that he or she feels is contrary to those principles. Neither can, or should, any outside force compel a person to do so against their will. For a *moral* person, it is beyond them to perform, or to take employment with a company who asks them to perform, a task or assignment they find repugnant. When seeking employment, a moral person must be vigilant to ensure that they accept no condition of employment that runs counter to their principles.

A very unsettling aspect of modern employment is the many of concessions that a company will ask of a potential employee. While many people are disturbed by the nature of some of such requests, the employer reserves the right to seek permission to delve into the most intimate details of the job seekers life and employment history. The principled adult must when considering a future employer/employee relationship, decide if they are willing and able to, among other things:

- Take a drug test
- Take a physical
- Take a polygraph test
- Take a personality profile examination or undergo psychological testing
- Consent to a medical history search
- Consent to a background check, including police records
- Consent to a credit check of themselves and their spouse

The applicant, who deems these requirements acceptable will agree to them and, if all goes well, be asked to return to the job site for further discussion. The discussion often times leads to another set of conditions that the potential employee must agree to in order to be eligible for employment. These might include:

- Getting a haircut
- Shaving or removal of facial hair
- Removal of all jewelry or piercings
- The necessity to work a schedule other than the preferred 9 to 5, Monday through Friday
- A diminished salary until a probationary period is completed
- Required participation in the company health plan, whether needed or desired
- Required participation in the company stock purchasing program or 401k
- Required payment for the use and cleaning of uniforms
- Payment for required tools or vehicles necessary to perform the work

Voicing unwillingness or reluctance to agree to these terms might be met with a terse “These are the terms and conditions of employment. You must accept each and every one before you can start work”. Making the decision that these conditions are acceptable will lead the applicant to their first day of work. If you, the applicant, find these requirements to be irrelevant and invasive you will be led to the door.

Suppose the principled job seeker agrees to all the requirements of a particular employer and states that they are ready to go to work. The employer says ‘Oh, one more thing... the employees here have a Union. So, if you accept employment with us, you would be required to become a member of that Union”.

The job applicant, who may have heard negative myths about Unions, is confronted with another decision. As in the previous cases, the applicant has to accept all of the employer’s conditions to get the job – non-acceptance gets the door. The applicant, finding the idea of being in a Union repugnant, can state his or her feelings and seek employment elsewhere. Their moral compass has provided direction through the turbulent waters of this decision and they can continue to look themselves in the mirror each morning, confident in the correctness of that decision.

The claim that an applicant is subject to “compulsory Unionism” by accepting employment at an establishment where the employees have, democratically and under protection of the law, made the choice to form a Union is cynical and is, most often, made by those who would benefit from the dismantling of Unions – not the workers themselves. It also diminishes the significance of the

READ THE LEGISLATION: The Text of CO’s AMENDMENT 47

*Educate and inform the whole mass of the people...
They are the only sure reliance for the preservation of our liberty.*
- Thomas Jefferson

*As our enemies have found we can reason like men, so now let us show them we
can fight like men also.*
- Thomas Jefferson

Several years ago, Oklahoma passed ‘Right-to-Work’, which promised to keep jobs in Oklahoma. Since then, Oklahoma has closed its most productive plants and lost thousands of manufacturing jobs. It has come to The Editors’ attention that Colorado will soon be facing similar ‘Right-to-Work’ legislation. Therefore, we would like to offer some insights to our Colorado-based union brothers and sisters who receive our paper.

The Editors of *The Oklahoma Labor Standard* are of the belief that the people should make up there own minds about proposed laws that will affect their working lives, therefore, we pledge to provide the text of these laws in full. We staunchly oppose the propaganda tricks used by other media outlets, which try to confuse these issues by debating the merits or dangers of a piece of legislation without discussing what the document actually says...

AMENDMENT 47

Be it Enacted by the People of the State of Colorado:
SECTION 1. Article XVIII of the constitution of the state of Colorado is amended BY THE ADDITION OF A NEW SECTION to read:

Section 16. Right to work.

(1) THIS AMENDMENT SHALL BE KNOWN AND MAY BE CITED AS THE "COLORADO RIGHT TO WORK AMENDMENT".

**(2)(a) NO PERSON SHALL, AS A CONDITION OF EMPLOYMENT, BE REQUIRED TO:
(I) BE A MEMBER OF A LABOR UNION; AND
(II) PAY ANY DUES, FEES, ASSESSMENTS, OR OTHER CHARGES OF ANY KIND TO A LABOR UNION OR TO ANY CHARITY OR OTHER THIRD PARTY, IN LIEU OF SUCH PAYMENTS.**

(2)(b) NOTHING IN THIS SECTION SHALL PREVENT ANY PERSON FROM VOLUNTARILY BELONGING OR VOLUNTARILY PROVIDING FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO A LABOR UNION.

(3) ANY PERSON WHO DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY VIOLATES ANY PROVISION OF THIS SECTION COMMITS A MISDEMEANOR AND UPON CONVICTION THEREOF SHALL BE PUNISHED BY A FINE IN AN AMOUNT EQUIVALENT TO THE MOST STRINGENT MISDEMEANOR CLASSIFICATION PROVIDED BY LAW.

(4) THIS SECTION SHALL APPLY TO ALL UNION EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS ENTERED INTO AFTER THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS SECTION AND SHALL APPLY TO ANY RENEWAL OR EXTENSION OF ANY EXISTING UNION CONTRACT.

(5) AS USED IN THIS SECTION, "LABOR UNION" MEANS ANY ORGANIZATION OF ANY KIND, OR AGENCY OR EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATION COMMITTEE OR ORGANIZATION, THAT EXISTS FOR THE PURPOSE, IN WHOLE OR IN PART, OF DEALING WITH EMPLOYERS CONCERNING WAGES, RATES OF PAY, HOURS OF WORK, OTHER CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT, OR OTHER FORMS OF COMPENSATION; ANY ORGANIZATION THAT EXISTS FOR THE PURPOSE OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING OR OF DEALING WITH EMPLOYERS CONCERNING GRIEVANCES; AND ANY ORGANIZATION PROVIDING OTHER MUTUAL AID OR PROTECTION IN CONNECTION WITH EMPLOYMENT.

SECTION 2. Effective date. This amendment shall take effect upon proclamation of the vote by the governor.

decisions of those employees who exercised their right to form a Union at that workplace and to collectively bargain with their employer. The fact that they did form a Union may explain why the wages, benefits and terms and conditions of employment at their place of employment are more attractive than those at others. The very idea that an adult, who lives by their morals and principles, can be “forced” to join a Union demeans every person who fills out an application. They either have the capacity to make reasoned decisions on, and take responsibility for, the many
(Continued on pg. 10)

To the Readers of *The Oklahoma Labor Standard*,

At present, *The Oklahoma Labor Standard* reflects the limitations of a newspaper with a small staff and few resources. With apologies to the readers, we are aware of typographical errors and formatting inconsistencies. With time, increased readership and further support from people like you, we have no doubt that these formal errors will be corrected. However, we also believe that the information and discussions presented here are so important, that we could not wait for the ideal circumstances. Instead, we decided to move forward with production, flaws and all, and with the hope that other like-minds will offer contributions as volunteer editors, writers, etc.

Any additional support is greatly appreciated, but, we believe strongly that people of principle cannot wait for perfection or convenience to take a stand. With so much at stake in our state and throughout our nation, we believe that the work of producing local, independent information bulletins, newspapers, websites, etc. providing a voice outside the corporate-dominated media networks to be imperative to preserving free-speech, and the health of our communities and our republic.

We thank you for your patronage, your support and encourage all to submit articles, letters and essays to our Editorial Staff so that we might truly make *The Oklahoma Labor Standard*, THE independent media source for Oklahoma’s working people.

- The Editors, October 2008

Going Union? Tough Choices Grown-Ups Make

(Continued from pg 9.)

choices they are confronted with in the search for employment or they do not.

A responsible and principled person who does not want to be in a Union should, when applying for a job, make the question “Is there a Union here?” their first. If the answer is “Yes”, they should move on and seek employment with a company that will not present them with a condition of employment that they find contrary to their principles.

A worker who finds themselves confronted with a situation where their co-workers have initiated a Union election is neither defenseless nor “doomed” to become a Union member. Their options include urging their co-workers to vote no in the election or urging them to vote down any contract that includes “closed shop” language. Should they be unsuccessful in those attempts they have the right, after one year, to initiate a de-certification of the Union. The employee has the same right to initiate a de-certification election that their co-workers had to initiate a certification election.

Should the anti-union employee be unsuccessful in their attempts at the first three options then, as a person of integrity and principle, they can exercise their right to not be a union member by finding a different job. Not fair, you say? Well, the fact is that thousands of people quit their jobs every day. They quit for a variety of reasons; the boss is not fair or is mean to them, they don’t get paid what they are worth, the work is too dangerous or dirty for the pay given, etc... The best way to generalize all the reasons workers leave their jobs is to say that the conditions of employment have become intolerable. The pay and benefits are no longer sufficiently motivating to continue doing the work and the employee self-selects non-employment. In a democracy, no person is bound by any legal requirement to stay at a job they find unpalatable and can, at any point, self-select and move to other employment.

We have found, in this country, that the best way to make decisions that impact a group is to rely on the democratic process to determine the will of that group. The wishes of the majority will prevail, unless those wishes are counter to some inalienable right guaranteed by law. It was then decided by our representatives in Congress that the ability to collectively bargain was worthy of federal protection and that the principles of democracy should determine whether or not employees want to exercise that right. This decision was signed into law in 1935 under the National Labor Relations Act. The process is guided by the NLRA and is monitored by an employee of the NLRB to ensure the process is indeed democratic and immune from conditions that would negate the true desires of the group. Each employee in the group has an equal opportunity to express their choice and to communicate that choice to other members of the group. That individual does not, however, have the right to enjoy the benefits of remaining in the group without assuming the responsibilities assigned to each member of that group.

There is a legal term called "coming to the nuisance" that can be applied to the concept of “forced unionism”. The term restricts an individual’s right to make claims against an entity for conditions that existed prior to the individual being negatively impacted by those conditions. For example, if someone buys a home along the flight path of an established airport, they can make no claim against the airport for the noise that existed before, or at the time when, they bought the home.

The reason they would have no claim is that a) the airport was there before the individual; b) the individual should have known that the house was on the flight pattern, had they used due diligence in investigating the conditions and; c) they knew about the conditions and purchased the home anyway, thereby accepting the conditions that existed prior to their arrival. This principle protects existing enterprises from being sued or having complaints filed against it by people who, knowingly and willingly, “come to the nuisance” and then attempt to have the nuisance removed, thereby causing the enterprise harm or the inability to continue operation.

If someone applies for a job at a company that has an existing agreement between the employer and employees stating "all employees who fall within the bargaining unit, as determined by the NLRB, will be required to be a member of the union", what right does the individual have to remain outside of that pre-existing agreement? The "nuisance" of union membership existed before they applied, they knew, or should have known, that there was a condition of employment requiring union membership before they accepted employment. The applicant had the opportunity to avoid the “nuisance” by declining acceptance of that condition.

An employee who is confronted with a union election at their worksite has equal opportunity to participate in that process and to communicate their desires to their co-workers. Should their co-workers disagree, and vote for a union, the opportunity exists to keep a “closed shop” agreement from being passed. Finally, they have the opportunity to decline the groups’ requirement of union membership by avoiding the “nuisance” and removing themselves from the group. The individual has no right to remain in a group without meeting the requirements of that group.

So-called Right-to-Work laws attempt to restrict employers and employees from negotiating contracts that would require all employees to support the organization that both parties have determined will protect their common interests. Such an agreement does no harm to the employer and, under the law of some states, requires an additional polling of the group to determine whether or not a majority of employees desires such language. This illogical restriction on an agreement between two legally recognized entities, the employer and the employees’ organization, is not, as some claim, intended to safeguard some non-existent *right* to avoid “compulsory unionism”. It is, rather, a cynical attempt to diminish the actual right of employees to collectively bargain with their employer. Right-to-work laws presume that working people are too stupid to know what’s good for them. Are we children? Those that seek to weaken our collective-bargaining rights are attempting to fool voters into aiding and abetting the self-interested goals of large anti-union employers. This is yet another example of big business and Washington careerists claiming to know what is best for you and stripping you of your rights to make your own grown-up decision.

LETTERS

CHALLENGES FOR 2008 AND BEYOND: “CHANGE”, TREASON, AND THE DIRTY POLITICS OF DEREGULATION

Dear Editors,

With all the Presidential “debate” going on during this political season, there has been a noticeable absence of any discussion on how Barack Obama actually plans on reversing the successful destruction of government regulatory agencies. The Neo-Conservatives occupied Washington like a foreign army and carried out their systematic destruction of the only agencies dedicated to the protection of the people. Obama faces the difficult reality of fighting this enemy on two fronts.

The first assault will continue to come within DC, led by the massive lobbying and PR groups representing the Ayn Rand cult of “free market” fundamentalism. Over the last several decades, these pro-corporate globalization groups justified their activities with a pseudo-anarchistic opposition to government, while using gangster-style big business tactics to occupy the highest positions of nearly every agency. They then cultivated a political base for their nonsensical ideology outside of Washington and combined forces with other far-right political elements in service to international private interests. These traitors make up the second assault and operate in essence the same way that Vichy traitors betrayed France by accepting jobs working for the Nazis.

With these two forces allied against Obama, the ability to make change seems unlikely at best. Without a plan that directly and aggressively roots out corruption and exposes those that have sold our safety, health and regulatory agencies to reckless private companies and foreign profit interests that have done America so much harm already, real “change” is impossible.

The political dismantling and ideological attacks against agencies designed to protect the American public from the insatiable greed of big-business have been more effective than if the “Neo-Con” political army in DC had actually blown up the buildings that house the regulators and imprisoned the people that work there. The anti-regulation zealots who created this plan realized these agencies have large constituencies that would not accept their destruction without a huge, damaging political fight. So, instead, they decided to keep the agencies in place but eliminate their ability to achieve the original goals of regulation and protection. Then, after sabotaging these government agencies themselves from the inside, the anti-regulation ideologues could attack them for “inefficiency.” They used the buildings that house these agencies as mere store-front facades, much like a church building that actually houses a brothel. Tearing down a church to replace it with a brothel would create an unacceptable uproar. The Neo-Cons and “free market” fundamentalists understand that, so they leave the stained glass and exterior niceties but replace the altar and prayer with a strippers pole and lap dances. People driving by see the church and are comforted by its presence. They assume that the people inside are doing what they are supposed to be doing – serving the Lord and his flock. They have little reason to believe that, behind the doors, the pastor has been replaced by the pimp and the congregation is being encouraged and facilitated in the pursuit of unregulated greed and lust.

The church-brothel strategy has been effective in most, if not all, agencies that have historically protected the American people at work. Two staggering examples of how the pastor has been replaced by the pimp are the Department of Labor and OSHA, whose founding principles were to protect and advance the rights of the American worker. The man who now runs the Employment Standards Administration, which is supposed to protect working people, is also the author of a 1995 article, written for the Heritage Foundation, called “How to Close Down the Department of Labor”. Why would this man want to head the Department of Labor if he intended to close it down? The answer: because he is a saboteur, a wolf in sheep’s clothing and one of the worst traitors to America’s working people in modern history. He believes that his pals can make more money if they don’t have to pay for workers’ safety and he’s there in the Department of Labor to makes sure that it can’t interfere with their schemes. OSHA, which was created to protect workers from dangerous working conditions and punish those employers who put their people at risk, now has as its director Edwin Foulke, former partner in the notorious union-busting law firm of Jackson and Lewis. (www.osha.gov/as/opa/foulke_bio.html) These are the types of insiders that the Republicans pretend to oppose, and these – along with the Democrats implicit in their schemes – are the people that will stop at nothing to undermine any effort to restructure Washington.

Regardless of who we support for President, it is simply unrealistic to believe that one man in the Oval Office has the power to independently turn the tide in Washington after three decades of Neo-con infiltration and betrayals. We are facing a fundamental crisis of ideology, not personality. The change we need will only come when the people demand change in principles, not just leadership.

A Proud Oklahoma City Union Worker

DEFINING AMERICA

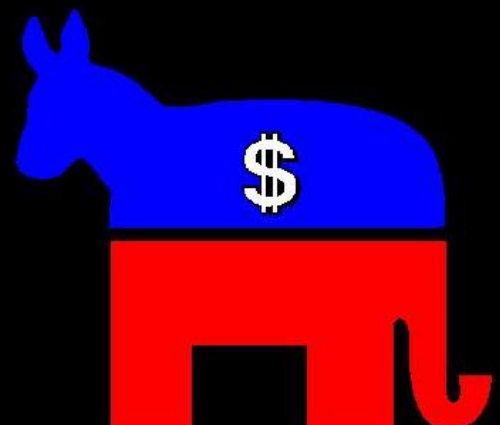
plu·toc·ra·cy

Pronunciation:

\plü-'tä-krə-sē\

Function:

noun



Etymology:

Greek *ploutokratia*, from *ploutos* wealth;

1: government by the wealthy

2: a controlling class of the wealthy

What does it *really* mean to be a republican?

What does it mean to be a citizen?

Everyone who considers themselves patriotic must have the answer to these questions.

Patriotism is not about flags, parties or slogans...

Patriotism is about principles.

“Sell not virtue to purchase wealth, nor Liberty to purchase power...

Those who would give up ESSENTIAL LIBERTY to purchase a little TEMPORARY SAFETY, deserve neither LIBERTY nor SAFETY.”

— Benjamin Franklin, From Poor Richard’s Almanac

“If ye love wealth better than liberty, the tranquility of servitude than the animating contest of freedom, — go from us in peace. We ask not your counsels or arms. Crouch down and lick the hands which feed you. May your chains sit lightly upon you, and may posterity forget that ye were our countrymen!”

- Samuel Adams, Founder of The Sons of Liberty

Every patriot must know these principles and be prepared to act to preserve them.

SUICIDES CAUSED BY FINANCIAL CRISIS ON THE RISE

Americans tend to blame themselves when times get tough, but who is really to blame?

(Continued from pg. 8)

This feeling of powerlessness and betrayal has no outlet. We’ve been dealt our cards from a deck stacked in the favor of the ultra-wealthy, but we can’t even say that or those wealthy people accuse us of being “class-warriors” and “commies”. The Cold War made it so that we can’t even take pride in being working people and members of the working-class. No, we should be ashamed to be working-class and instead we should strive to be like the gluttons in Hollywood, Manhattan and D.C. Working people have been denied the respect they deserve in American culture and the right to be frustrated when we get cheated. With no outlet, we begin turning our frustrations inward – people begin drinking, using drugs, gambling, fighting with the people they love, cheating on their spouse – doing anything to distract themselves from the hardships of the rat-race. Some, however, turn to suicide.

According to the Samaritans of New York, the suicide-prevention hotlines have been ringing off the hook. Last year alone, even before the recent Wall Street meltdowns, suicide-prevention hotlines have experienced over a 16 percent increase of calls – most of them due to financial problems. According to the Associated Press, “The Switchboard of Miami has recorded more than 500 foreclosure-related calls this year.

"A lot of people are telling us they are losing everything. They're losing their homes, they're going into foreclosure, they've lost their jobs," said Virginia Cervasio, executive director of a suicide resource enter in southwest Florida's Lee County.

In Los Angeles, after a man gunned-down his entire family and then himself, police and mental-health officials urged people to look for help when the pressures get to be too much, but acknowledged that “mental help” isn’t enough. Deputy Police Chief Michel Moore said. "It is critical to step up and recognize we are in some pretty troubled times...[A] perfect American family...has absolutely been destroyed, apparently because a man just got stuck in a rabbit hole, if you will, of absolute despair."

LA’s Deputy Chief of Police Moore is right; the first step is acknowledging our “troubled times.” However, the second step is *doing* something about it. We can’t just sit idle while these spoiled children – who have no concept of reality – use their daddy’s money to take the reigns of our society, through the Stock Market and politics, and run our country off a cliff. There must be accountability and the people must be the ones to hold them accountable.

Experts say it’s common for people to feel ashamed and try hiding their financial problems from others – even their families. However, the secrecy only makes the tension worse, as it did for the Massachusetts housewife mentioned earlier. She tried refinancing her home but was declined and, after falling behind in payments for 3 ½ years she couldn’t take anymore. On the day the house was to be auctioned, she wrote her note to the mortgage company. Then the 52-year-old walked outside, shot her three beloved cats and then shot herself with her husband's rifle. According to reporters, “notes left on the table revealed months of planning. She'd picked out her funeral home, laid out the insurance policy and left a note saying, ‘pay off the house with the insurance money.’”

Today, over half a million people are being foreclosed on. Nearly 5 million Americans are at least one month behind on their mortgages, according to the Mortgage Bankers Association. However, it is imperative for those who are facing these hardships to understand the nature of the crisis we are facing, and not blame themselves.

The bankers that ruined our economy and corrupted our government are now being given an additional \$700 billion of our hard-earned tax-dollars – money that should be devoted to Social Security, education and job opportunities – and then claiming peoples’ homes in hopes to rebuild their lost profits. What’s even more shocking is that our government is doing everything they can to give more of our money to the bankers that have brought on so much agony and caused so much chaos in our economy. When our House of Representatives denied President George W. Bush the bailout he demanded, Bush renounced the 1878 Posse Comitatus law, stationed the 3rd Infantry Division on “Active Duty” on *American* soil, sending a subtle message to the American people and, according to independent media sources, pressuring the entire Congress with the implied threat of a court martial. Of course Bush and the plutocrats he represents then accomplished their goal and passed the “bail out”. However, this raises entirely new questions as to the fundamental nature of our country. These kinds of policies, and such heavy-handed government behavior, one expects in a plutocratic system – not in the American republic of our Forefathers. Americans cannot stand-by while this travesty continues. Instead, of turning our frustrations inward, it’s time we start blaming the people *truly* responsible.

The Oklahoma
LABOR STANDARD

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