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Volume 2 • Edition 7

US-Observer's INVESTIGATION

The US-Observer published an extensive article on Mark Turner's case in our last edition and public response was overwhelming. The blog at the end of the on-line posted Turner article has received over one thousand responses as we go to press with this edition.

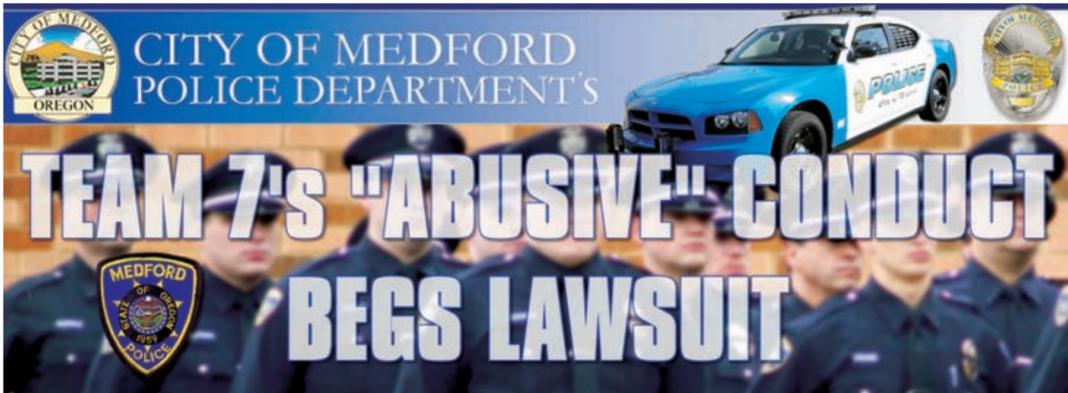
Rest assured, Pensacola, we will not rest until the truth is exposed!

We are currently seeking information from customers who have bid on cars offered by Pete Moore Chevrolet on the internet. Do you have your Bid-History? We would also ask people, who have information on Pete Moore Chevrolet employee Rick Hamilton, to contact Edward Snook at 541-474-7885 or via email: editor@usobserver.com.

All information received is strictly confidential.

Mark Turner

PENSACOLA



By Joseph Snook
Investigative Journalist

Medford, Oregon - A life-long dream of becoming Police Officers has become a nightmare for two Medford brothers who have learned that a lack of integrity isn't just something criminals have in common. Donald and Jason Libby, owners of Jackson County Security have spent many years encountering harassment from the Medford Police Department (MPD).

In 2010, the harassment turned to false accusations and false citations

against the brothers by officers from MPD. Unfortunately for the Libby brothers, the citations and harassment from four team seven officers and a few others have become so excessive since 2010, that they have been forced to seek legal counsel.

In the spring of 97' the Libby's became the youngest members of Medford Police Department's Explorer Program. The Explorer program is chartered through Boy Scouts of America and provides kids seeking a career in law enforcement with hands on training and realistic encounters that help prepare them for

future employment in law enforcement. The Libby's couldn't wait to become "Police Officers," and this was their first step towards that dream.

A few years into the Explorer program, Jason Libby began a relationship with another member, Monica, also the daughter of MPD Officer Rob Havice. Don and Jason Libby both state that Officer Havice disapproved of this relationship and caused problems not only for the Libby's, but within Officer Havice's own family. As Jason recalled, he remembered one rumor in particular

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One Step Closer to the Truth Shigeko Skarvan to be independently diagnosed

By Joseph Snook
Investigative Reporter

Manitowoc, WI - February, 2011 - After nearly two years of investigating the reported eight-years of abuse against seventy-five year old, Shigeko Skarvan, the truth regarding her alleged abuse by the State of Wisconsin is making headlines and progress.



Shigeko Skarvan, the truth regarding her alleged abuse by the State of Wisconsin is making headlines and progress. Shigeko's current court appointed legal guardian, Sharon Stelzer has verbally committed to the US-Observer that Shigeko

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HUNTING RIGHTS GONE

One Hunter's Fight Against What He Believes Are Rogue F&W Agents



See Page 2 for Story

An American Citizen's Duty



By Ron Lee
The Verbal Assassin



Who are we anymore?
Do we even know?

America has changed, folks, and for as much as many would like to pretend our societies new-found political correctness has fostered a worldly humanity, nothing is further from the truth. This "correctness" has literally destroyed our own sense of belonging to, what was once, the greatest nation on the Earth. It has, literally, stripped us of the ability to unite in one AMERICAN SPIRIT.

Due in part to the lack of involvement by citizens "Big Brother" and Uncle Sam have become "Mom and Dad." Because of this, citizens are viewed as children who need to be told what to do, eat, listen to, buy, say and be. How sad it is that many revere this philosophy of irresponsibility. They believe if the government wasn't involved people would get hurt or killed. They believe people would eat tainted meat and drive cars that are unsafe. They believe everyone would starve in the streets, and no one would be protected from the bully on Facebook. They believe that employers would enslave their employees and, that without government, the world would catch fire and would cease to exist. They also believe that they would no longer feel special, because if it wasn't for government, other people could call them plain Americans, not using the

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Pedophile Gets Prison Term John Andrews Sexually Molests Children

By Edward Snook
Investigative Journalist



John Aaron Andrews

Medford, Oregon - 70 year-old John Aaron Andrews of Medford was arrested on May 21, 2009 by Medford police and charged with two counts of Sodomy 1, Rape 1 and three counts of Sex abuse 1.

According to the Probable Cause Affidavit filed by the Medford Police Department, "11 year-old disclosed to Las Vegas P.D. and then to Medford P.D., that while spending the summer with her grandparents in Medford in the summer of 2006, her step-grandfather, John Andrews sexually abused her. The young girl discussed that John put his p_____ in her mouth and white stuff came out one time. She said John tried to force his p_____ into her v_____ but after she cried and told him it hurt, he told her, it wouldn't fit. Victim also said John put his mouth on her pee-pee multiple times while his hands spread her legs. A pre-text call was made. John said he was sorry, but he couldn't remember doing those things. Upon contact, John requested an attorney."

Obviously, to save embarrassment to the child involved, John Andrews was afforded a plea bargain by the Jackson County, Oregon District

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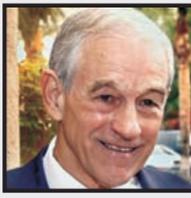
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Hunting Rights Gone

USDFW "Hunting" for their Man - Scott Winegarden in their crosshairs

By US-Observer Staff

EUGENE, OR - With the exception of his family and his country, there isn't anything Scott Winegarden loves more than hunting. Being out in the wild with family and friends has been an integral part of his life since he was a child, and it was something he desperately missed while serving honorably in the Army Medical Corps during Desert Storm. Now it seems, however, Winegarden may not be able to hunt for the rest of his life in Washington and Oregon, at least - and may even be facing jail.

According to Winegarden, who has received a lifetime hunting suspension in the state of Washington and a subsequent reciprocal suspension in Oregon, his hunting privileges are gone now because several Washington State Fish & Wildlife officers have taken it upon themselves to dog him, seemingly, at every turn by falsifying testimony and colluding to find him in fault of any regulation. "It seems like they have some sort of, you know, vendetta," Winegarden said in regard to F&W officers Brian Fulton, John Horn, Ralph Downes, and Jeff Lee. That, and due to a little known fact about hunting citations; RCW 77.15.700 - in the Washington game codes - wherein if you receive 3 tickets in any 10 year period, you will have both your hunting and fishing licenses suspended for a period of two years.

Winegarden did in fact receive 3 tickets between 1998 and 2005:

In 1998, there was an over-limit charge where, according to Winegarden, during a routine check by a game warden, Winegarden's dog came out of the brush carrying a dead duck, which Winegarden maintains, "appeared to be 2-3 days old." He paid the \$50.00 fine.

In 2003, Winegarden and his two sons were

hunting in Skagit County, WA, nearly 400 miles from their then home in Kennewick, WA. Winegarden reports that since he hadn't hunted this area before he contacted agent Russ Cahill, from La Connor, WA office



of WDFW, who told him where to hunt in Padilla Bay. After a day of hunting the Winegarden's made their way back to the boat launch where two WDFW officers were waiting for them. Winegarden recalls the situation, "... officers Weyland and Valentine approached and checked our gear. The two agents proceeded to inform me that they had received a report via cell phone from someone out on the bay claiming we were hunting in an area off limits. I immediately asked them if they had actually seen any violations occur, upon which both officers stated 'no,' they had not witnessed any illegal activity. I then requested that they show me on their map the area that I was allegedly hunting in. They adamantly stated they had no maps of the area, but that it is marked. I informed the wardens that officer Russ Cahill had instructed me on where to hunt. Given these facts the officers did not issue a citation but took pictures of my boat, truck and the birds, and stated there might be an investigation. A month later my son and I received a citation via regular mail from the Skagit County Prosecutors office." According to Winegarden he now knows he should have fought the charge, but at the time paid the fine which was reduced from \$300.00 to \$150.00 because, "the excessive distance that I was from Skagit County made it impossible to attend hearings, not to mention the cost."

In 2005, Winegarden has his first run-in with WDFW agent Brian Fulton resulting in a "shooting from a boat under power" ticket. Winegarden maintains it was a ticket that he was forced to sign under the threat of being taken to jail. On this infraction Winegarden says, "...it infuriates me knowing I did not

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 1 • One Step Closer to the Truth

will obtain independent (not on state or medical facility payroll) medical and psychological exams to prove or disprove the accusations that Shigeko has been wrongfully diagnosed and held against her will at Trempealeau County Health Care Center.

On February 14, 2011 and after numerous articles have been published on this case, Stelzer was finally willing to talk. She stated during our conversation that Shigeko, her cousin by marriage, was well taken care of at Trempealeau County Health Care Center. Stelzer stated that Shigeko has medical conditions that require assistance and would be willing to have independent medical and psychological doctors conduct an exam to finally prove or disprove the allegations that have reportedly kept Shigeko confined for nearly eight years. Stelzer stated that Shigeko is a diabetic and requires daily insulin injections, has to eat pureed foods due to a throat problem and suffers from bi-polar disorder, which she takes minimal medications for.

Stelzer went further to comment that the allegations of Shigeko's wrongfully diagnosed medical conditions were completely false, and that Shigeko in fact, does suffer from said conditions. Shigeko suffered greatly after her husband, also Stelzer's cousin and war-veteran Harlan Skarvan passed away according to Stelzer. "Shigeko was 'different' after Harlan's death and would have been better off returning to her immediate family in Japan" said Stelzer.

During my conversation with Stelzer, I explained the concerns that everyone involved, including many of former Governor Dole's staff (read previous articles at usobserver.com) passed the responsibility of being accountable around like a hot-potato. I explained to Stelzer that my prior attempts to contact her were to simply find the truth. Stelzer was informative, polite and seemingly concerned during our conversation.

Putting this case to rest will rely on the final reports made by the independent doctors. Had it not been for Stelzer wanting to disprove the allegations, Shigeko would still be allegedly held against her will and on medications for medical conditions that have been reported as false. Had it not been for Shigeko's friend, Robert Neuser contacting the US-Observer, these medical exams would not be taking place.

If you have any information regarding this case, or any case concerning elder abuse, please contact the US-Observer immediately. ***



Shigeko Skarvan

National Grange

Resolutions for a Stronger America

Oppose Executive Order #13528 Which Establishes the Council of Governors

The National Grange is the nation's oldest national agricultural organization, with grassroots units established in 3,600 local communities in 37 states. Its 300,000 members provide service to agriculture and rural areas on a wide variety of issues, including economic development, education, family endeavors, and legislation designed to assure a strong and viable Rural America. It was formed in the years following the American Civil War to unite private citizens in improving the economic and social position of the nation's farm population. Over the past 137 years, it has evolved to include non-farm rural families and communities.



National Grange

Each year, a listing of more than 1,400 issues of concern is published and distributed by the National Grange.

Each edition we feature another Grange resolution so you can see the issues that the Grange has taken-up in order to defend America's liberties.

Resolution:

Whereas: On January 11, 2010, President Obama released Executive Order #13528, which establishes the Council of Governors in the United States of America.

Whereas: Section 1. Council of Governors

(A) There is established a Council of Governors (Council). The Council shall consist of 10 State Governors appointed by the President (Members), of whom no more than five shall be of the same political party. The term of service for each Member appointed to serve on the Council shall be 2 years, but a Member may be reappointed for additional terms.

(B) The President shall designate two Members, who shall not be members of the same political party, to serve as Co-Chairs of the Council.

Section 2. Functions. The Council shall meet at the call of the Secretary of Defense or the Co-Chairs of the Council to exchange views, information, or advice with the Secretary of Defense; the Secretary of Homeland Security; the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism; the Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs and Public

Engagement; the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and America's Security Affairs; the Commander, United States Northern Command; the Chief, National Guard Bureau; the Commandant of the Coast Guard; and other appropriate officials of the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Defense, and appropriate officials of other executive departments or agencies as may be designated by the Secretary of Defense or the Secretary of Homeland Security.

Whereas: "This is a military plan that's designed to bypass the Posse Comitatus Act that traditionally prohibited the U.S. Military from operating within the borders of the United States. Not only will American soldiers be deployed at the discretion of whomever is sitting in the Oval Office, but foreign soldiers will also be deployed in American cities," warns Lt. Steven Rodgers, Commander of the Nutley, New Jersey Police Department's detective bureau.

Whereas: Executive Order #13528 violates our Constitutional Bill of Rights #10, which states: The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people."

Therefore be it resolved: That the Oregon State Grange requests that the Supreme Court put a stop to this unconstitutional Executive Order #13528, which violates the Posse Comitatus Act and the 10th Bill of Rights.

This resolution was adopted by the Deer Creek Grange #371, Josephine County, at its regular meeting held on May 10, 2010.

William D. Waggoner

William D. Waggoner, Master
1920 Thompson Creek Rd.
Selma, OR 97538

Delaine Sherman

Delaine Sherman, Secretary
P.O. Box 871
Selma, OR 97538

This resolution was adopted by the Oregon State Grange at its 137th Annual Session held at Roseburg, Oregon, week of June 20-25, 2010.

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If you are, then you are aware of how the 'justice' industry in America can be a racket. You (**the innocent person**) are falsely charged with a crime. Most of the time you receive a myriad of stacked charges intended for the sole purpose of extracting a "plea bargain" from you.

You then rush to an attorney, pay him a retainer to cover the usual \$150.00 per hour (if not higher), which he/she charges, to supposedly defend your innocence. The attorney usually files some motions, writes some worthless letters and makes many unproductive (unless they pertain to you accepting a plea bargain) phone calls until you are broke. Generally you haven't even started your trial and 99% of the time the attorney hasn't completed any investigation.

(your attorney) you frantically rushed to retain, became your worst enemy.

There is only one way to remedy a false prosecution: Investigate the accusers, the prosecutors, the detectives and then watch the judge very carefully. In other words, complete an in-depth investigation before you are prosecuted and then take the facts into the public arena.

The US~Observer newspaper will not waste your time or your money. This is not a game, it's your life and your freedom. We do not make deals. If you are innocent, then nobody has the right to steal what belongs to you, most of all, your liberty. Nobody! That includes your attorney—as well as your supposed public servants.

WELCOME TO THE LARGEST RACKET IN HISTORY - THE AMERICAN JUSTICE SYSTEM

All of a sudden your attorney is telling you that you can't win your case and you should accept the benevolent plea bargain that the almighty district attorney has offered you. "Do you want to take the chance on spending 30-40 years in prison when you can plea bargain for 18 months," your attorney tells you. What happened to: "I think we can win this case, it's a good case." Remember? Isn't that pretty close to what your attorney told you as he/she was relieving you of your money?

You then accept a plea bargain and go to jail or you have a jury trial, and are found guilty. Because your attorney hasn't produced enough evidence - if any - and because the judge directs the jury to find you guilty, you go to jail. When you finally wake up you realize that on top of now being a criminal, you are flat broke and incarcerated. You find that the very person

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In The Nation

Supreme Court rules for vaccine makers

WASHINGTON (Reuters) — The Supreme Court ruled that federal law shields vaccine makers from product-liability lawsuits in state court seeking damages for a child's injuries or death from a vaccine's side effects.

The high court on Tuesday ruled for Wyeth, which is now owned by Pfizer Inc, in a lawsuit brought by the parents of Hannah Bruesewitz, who suffered seizures as an infant after her third dose of a diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis (DTP) vaccine in 1992.

Pfizer and other vaccine makers had argued that a Supreme Court ruling for the plaintiffs could open the door to a flood of lawsuits -- many by families who believe vaccines cause autism -- and threaten the supply of childhood vaccines.

Pfizer Executive Vice President and General Counsel Amy Schulman said the company was pleased with the ruling.

"The Vaccine Act that Congress enacted nearly 25 years ago appropriately places the responsibility for determining the optimal design of life-saving childhood vaccines in the hands of expert federal agencies, not a patchwork of state tort systems," she said.

At issue in the ruling was the National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986, a law that created a special program to handle disputes in an effort to ensure a stable vaccine supply by shielding companies from most lawsuits.

The federal program, involving what is known as the vaccine court, has awarded more than \$1.8 billion for vaccine injury claims in nearly 2,500 cases since 1989. It is funded by a tax on vaccines.

In the Hannah Bruesewitz case from Pennsylvania, her parents claimed in their lawsuit that her seizure disorder and serious

developmental delay stemmed from toxins in the vaccine's design.

They said a safer alternative had been available but was not used. The DTP vaccine was taken off the market in 1998.

Russell and Robalee Bruesewitz said their daughter was a healthy infant until she received the shot, but has experienced seizure disorders and developmental problems ever since, requiring a lifetime of supervision and care.

WYETH HAS DENIED VACCINE CAUSED INJURIES

Wyeth has denied its vaccine caused her injuries.

After the couple's claims were rejected under the federal compensation process, they filed a lawsuit in state court. But a federal judge and then a federal appeals court based in Philadelphia ruled the 1986 federal law barred such lawsuits.

The Supreme Court, in a majority opinion by Justice Antonin Scalia, upheld that decision and ruled the federal law pre-empted all such design-defect claims against vaccine manufacturers.

"Vaccine manufacturers fund from their sales an informal, efficient compensation program for vaccine injuries; in exchange they avoid costly tort litigation and the occasional disproportionate jury verdict. Congress enacted this deal to coax manufacturers back into the vaccine market," Scalia said.

The ruling accepted the Obama administration's position.

O. Marion Burton, president of the American Academy of Pediatrics, which represents 60,000 pediatricians, applauded the ruling.

"Today, the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed what pediatricians have been advocating for decades," Dr. Burton said. "Vaccines save lives." ★



"Green Crime" costing taxpayers millions uncovered in probe

By Jim Kouri
Examiner.com

When President Barack Obama boasts of administration creating "green" jobs and environmental friendly projects, he's careful not to mention something else being created: "Green Crime."

The same government agency that mailed millions in fraudulent tax refunds to prison inmates has been cheated out of \$33 million by thousands of people who claimed tax credits for alternative and plug-in electric vehicles, according to a public-interest group that investigates government corruption and fraud.

In automatically granting the bogus tax credits the Internal Revenue Service was simply following an aggressive Obama Administration plan to reward consumers that purchase the costly "advanced-technology" vehicles. The president is on a mission to get 1 million of the environmentally friendly cars on the road by 2015, according to Judicial Watch officials.

"In order to help dealers sell unpopular vehicles, President Barack Obama and his administration are allowing law-abiding taxpayers to be swindled by a phony environmental program that invites fraud and abuse," said political strategist Mike Baker.

As a result of Obama pushing his environmental agenda, the IRS failed to appropriately scrutinize claims, even when they clearly didn't meet the criteria. In the first six months of 2010 alone, 20% of such federal tax credits were "erroneous," costing U.S. taxpayers more than \$33 million. Details of this latest IRS gaffe are laid out in a report released this week by the Treasury Department's own Inspector General for Tax Administration.

The report reveals that the IRS granted the lucrative tax credit — worth up to \$7,500 — to gas-guzzling sports utility vehicles and even a bicycle. Among those who cheated Uncle Sam are jail inmates and even IRS employees. Some people got multiple tax cuts for the same vehicle and 29 prisoners received nearly \$50,000 in alternative vehicle credits even though they were behind bars, according to Judicial Watch.

This isn't the first instance of convicts profiting from corrupt bureaucrats. The IRS has for more than a decade sent checks to incarcerated criminals who clearly didn't qualify for tax refunds. In 2010 over a quarter of a million prisoners filed tax returns and nearly 50,000 claimed more than \$130 million in refunds without bothering to report wage information.

In a separate report published just a few months ago - and examined by Judicial Watch -- the Treasury Inspector General found that 88% of the 287,918 returns filed by prisoners in 2010 were not selected for screening by the IRS. Investigators found that the agency seldom screens the returns of those most likely

to commit fraud.

"The IRS appears more interested in harassing taxpayers who play by the rules than to go after tax cheats who include members of the Obama Administration, such as Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner, or members of Congress, such as [Charlie] Rangel," said Baker.

"And the fact that prison inmates so easily play the system should result in heads rolling at the IRS and the Obama White House," Baker added.

Previous inspector general probes have exposed the perpetual problem over the years and the IRS has failed to act. As far back as 2005 the Treasury watchdog ordered the IRS to stop the millions of dollars in fraudulent refunds paid to prisoners. That probe determined that refund fraud committed by prisoners increased at an alarming rate of 318% from the previous year. ★★★

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State Budgets: The Day of Reckoning

By Steve Kroft
60 Minutes

(CBS) - By now, just about everyone in the country is aware of the federal deficit problem, but you should know that there is another financial crisis looming involving state and local governments.

It has gotten much less attention because each state has a slightly different story. But in the two years, since the "great recession" wrecked their economies and shriveled their income, the states have collectively spent nearly a half a trillion dollars more than they collected in taxes. There is also a trillion dollar hole in their public pension funds.

The states have been getting by on billions of dollars in federal stimulus funds, but the day of reckoning is at hand. The debt crisis is already making Wall Street nervous, and some believe that it could derail the recovery, cost a million public employees their jobs and require another big bailout package that no one in Washington wants to talk about.

"The most alarming thing about the state issue is the level of complacency," Meredith Whitney, one of the most respected financial analysts on Wall Street and one of the most influential women in American business, told correspondent Steve Kroft

Whitney made her reputation by warning that the big banks were in big trouble long before the 2008 collapse. Now, she's warning about a financial meltdown in state and local governments.

"It has tentacles as wide as anything I've seen. I think next to housing this is the single most important issue in the United States, and certainly the largest threat to the U.S. economy," she told Kroft.

Asked why people aren't paying attention, Whitney said, "Cause they don't pay attention until they have to."

Whitney says it's time to start. California, which faces a \$19 billion budget deficit next year, has a credit rating approaching junk status. It now spends more money on public employee pensions than it does on the state university system, which had to increase its tuition by 32 percent.

Arizona is so desperate it sold off the state

capitol, Supreme Court building and legislative chambers to a group of investors and now leases the buildings from their new owner. The state also eliminated Medicaid funding for most organ transplants.

Then there's New Jersey. It has the highest taxes in the country, a \$10 billion deficit and a depressed economy when first-year Governor Chris Christie took office. But after looking at the books, he decided to walk away from a long-planned and much-needed project with

government doesn't have the money to paper over it anymore, either, for the states. The day of reckoning has arrived. That's it. And it's gonna arrive everywhere. Timing will vary a little bit, depending upon which state you're in, but it's comin'!"

And nowhere has the reckoning been as bad as it is in Illinois, a state that spends twice as much as it collects in taxes and is unable to pay its bills.

"This is the state of affairs in Illinois. Is not

state, Hynes said, "Well, that's the tragedy. People borrow money. They borrow in order to get by until the state pays them."

"They're subsidizing the state. They're giving the state a float," Kroft remarked.

"Exactly," Hynes agreed.

"And who do you owe that money to?" Kroft asked.

"Pretty much anybody who has any interaction with state government, we owe money to," Hynes said.

That would include everyone from the University of Illinois, which is owed \$400 million, to small businessmen like Mayur Shah, who owns a pharmacy in Chicago and has been waiting months for \$200,000 in Medicaid payments. Then there are the 2,000 not-for-profit organizations that are owed a billion dollars by the state.

Lutheran Social Services of Illinois has been around since 1867 and provides critical services to 70,000 people, mostly the elderly, the disabled, and the mentally ill. The state owed them \$9 million just before Thanksgiving, and they nearly had to close shop.

Asked how long his organization can go on like this, Rev. Denver Bitner, the president of Lutheran Social Services of Illinois, told Kroft, "Well, we wonder that too because we really don't know."

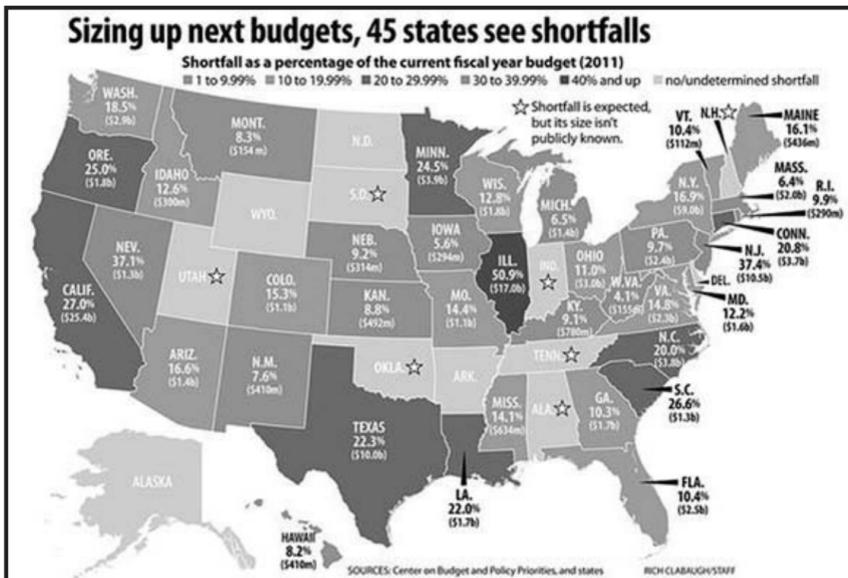
He says they were forced to tap their entire line of credit and all their cash reserves before the state would finally pay them as a hardship case.

"It has to be that you've sold off all your assets, you have borrowed from everybody that you can borrow from, and then, we'll think about it," Rev. Bitner explained.

And according to Bitner, that's even though the state owes his organization the money.

"The first words out of my mouth are usually an apology, because they have been you know put in this situation, that is really unacceptable. And you know there is very little I can do or say other than apologize," Comptroller Dan Hynes said.

It's not just the social safety net that Hynes has to worry about: there have been Illinois legislators that have been evicted from their offices because the state didn't pay their rent,



New York and the federal government to build a rail tunnel into Manhattan. It would have helped the economy and given employment to 6,000 construction workers.

Gov. Christie acknowledged that's a lot of jobs. "I canceled it. I mean, listen, the bottom line is I don't have the money. And you know what? I can't pay people for those jobs if I don't have the money to pay them. Where am I getting the money? I don't have it. I literally don't have it."

Asked if this is going on all over the country, Christie told Kroft, "Yes. Of course it is. It's not like you can avoid it forever, 'cause it's here now. And we all know it's here. And the federal

pretty," Illinois state Comptroller Dan Hynes told Kroft.

Hynes is the state's paymaster. He currently has about \$5 billion in outstanding bills in his office and not enough money in the state's coffers to pay them. He says they're six months behind.

"How many people do you have clamoring for money?" Kroft asked.

"It's fair to say that there are tens of thousands if not hundreds of thousands of people waiting to be paid by the state," Hynes said.

Asked how these people are getting by considering they're not getting paid by the

HEALTH

As sales soar, experts warn about energy drinks



By Frederik Joelving

NEW YORK (Reuters Health) – With Americans chugging energy drinks like never before, fears are growing among doctors that the ingredients might be putting some consumers at risk.

The beverages contain a hodgepodge of caffeine, sugar and dietary supplements such as vitamins and herbal extracts, whose effects aren't well understood.

In a new report out Monday, Florida pediatricians describe cases of seizures, delusions, heart problems and kidney or liver damage in people who had downed one or more non-alcoholic energy drinks -- including brands like Red Bull, Spike Shooter and Redline.

"Across the world there are signs that for some people who consume these drinks, there are side effects," said Dr. Steven E. Lipshultz, who heads the department of pediatrics at the University of Miami Leonard M. Miller School of Medicine.

"The incidence is low, but in certain groups that pediatricians care for there may be higher risks," he added.

The report, which calls for regulatory action and more research, comes only months after a U.S. crackdown on alcoholic caffeinated beverages such as Phusion Projects' Four Loko.

U.S. sales of non-alcoholic energy drinks are expected to hit \$9 billion this year, with children and young adults accounting for half the market.

Because the beverages are classified as nutritional supplements, they have received much less scrutiny and are under fewer restrictions than both foods and drugs.

Manufacturers claim their products will enhance both mental and physical performance. Red Bull's website, for instance,

says energy drink will increase concentration and reaction speed, and improve vigilance and emotional status.

"Red Bull's effects are appreciated throughout the world by top athletes, busy professionals, active students and drivers on long journeys," the website claims.

In 2010 alone, the company told Reuters Health, it sold in excess of 4 billion cans and bottles of the drink, which is now available in more than 160 countries.

But according to the Florida researchers, who reviewed the medical literature on the topic, the industry's claims of benefit are questionable.

"We couldn't find any evidence at all of any therapeutic effects," Lipshultz said.

He began to take an interest in energy drinks a few years ago, when four kids from South Florida were brought to the hospital after swallowing a vitamin concoction their teacher had bottled.

"They all came in feeling tingling all over," Lipshultz said. "This prompted me to say, we've got to really learn about this."

What he and his colleagues found was a pile of anecdotes, but little hard evidence. In Ireland, for example, the country's poison center reported 17 cases of possible side effects between 1999 and 2005, including seizures, heart rhythm disturbances and two deaths.

And in New Zealand, 20 similar cases were reported between 2005 and 2009.

"It's the tip of the iceberg," Lipshultz ventured. "How many people take the time to call a poison control center when they don't feel well?"

While the U.S. poison control centers haven't been able to track potential side effects from energy drinks in the past, they have told Lipshultz they will start doing so from this year on.

Of course, isolated anecdotes don't prove the drinks are to blame. But they do have doctors wondering whether some people, kids in particular, might be at risk.

For example, caffeine is known to cause fast heart rate, insomnia, and anxiety, especially in sensitive individuals.

According to one study from New Zealand, just one energy drink is enough to make most kids experience some side effect, including mild ones like irritability or upset stomach.

And there are other ingredients with effects of their own, such as the amino acid taurine, the herbal extracts yohimbine, guarana and ginseng, and often loads of sugar.

High doses of yohimbine have been linked to increased blood pressure and heart rate. And like ginseng, yohimbine may interact with other drugs.

"If it were as simple as energy drinks just containing caffeine, that would be one thing," Lipshultz told Reuters Health. "The problem is they contain a lot of other substances."

What this all adds up to is still unclear. It's obvious that few people suffer serious side effects, but nobody knows just how common they are and who is likely to experience them.

"Many ingredients are understudied and not regulated," the Florida researchers write in the journal *Pediatrics*.

Lipshultz, for one, says people with heart disease, seizures, diabetes, high blood pressure, or attention-deficit hyperactivity



disorder (ADHD) should think twice before downing an energy drink.

"Up until I did this review, I wasn't routinely asking my patients if they were drinking energy drinks," he told Reuters Health. "Now I am, and it is the basis for a discussion."

But manufacturers downplay the new report.

According to an e-mail from Red Bull, "This article just draws together material from the Internet and largely ignores in its conclusions the genuine, scientifically rigorous examination of energy drinks by reputable national authorities."

"The effects of caffeine are well-known and as an 8.4 oz can of Red Bull contains about the same amount of caffeine as a cup of coffee (80 mg), it should be treated accordingly."

The American Beverage Association, which represents several manufacturers, seconded Red Bull's criticism.

"Most mainstream energy drinks actually contain about half the caffeine of a similar size cup of coffeehouse coffee," it said in a statement. "In fact, young adults getting coffee from popular coffeehouses are getting about twice as much caffeine as they would from a similar size energy drink."

Lipshultz countered that he'd found caffeine contents ranging anywhere from 75 to 400 milligrams (mg) per container, including the small "energy shots."

Mild side effects begin to appear when people drink around 3 mg of caffeine per kilo body weight (1.4 mg per pound) in addition to normal dietary intake. That means an energy shot would push a typical 12-year-old three times over the limit.

And there is another difference between coffee and energy drinks, which are often marketed toward athletes.

"If you're a 16-year-old who just came out of football practice, you're not going to have three cups of hot coffee. But you might have three energy drinks," Lipshultz said.

In fact, high amounts of caffeine increase urine production, making our bodies lose water.

"If you are looking to prevent dehydration, sports drinks are what you should be drinking," Lipshultz said. Other experts recommend that tried and tested drink, water.

Concluded Lipshultz: "If there is no real upside to taking (energy drinks), and they clearly put some people at risk, my personal feeling is we should protect kids." ★★★

Continued from page 4 • State Budgets: *The Day of Reckoning*

and stories about state troopers being turned away from gas stations because the owners refused to take their state credit cards.

"The state's a deadbeat," Kroft remarked.

"Yeah. I mean, the state of Illinois is known as a deadbeat state. This is a reputation that has taken us years to earn and we've reached, you know, the heights of, I think, becoming the worst in the country," Hynes said.

Not all of the problems that Illinois and other states are facing right now can be traced to the recession. But the precipitous drop in tax revenues did expose decades of financial irresponsibility, reckless spending, unrealistic benefit packages for public employees, and the use of political gimmicks to cover up hidden deficits. It's forcing state governors and the public to confront some harsh realities.

"This is different, isn't it?" Kroft asked New Jersey's governor, Chris Christie.

"It is very different," Christie said. "The reason it's different is because the only choices left are choices that people previously have said were politically impossible, that you couldn't do. You couldn't cut K to 12 education funding. You couldn't do those things. They were, you couldn't talk about pension and benefit reform for the public sector unions. That were third rails of politics. We are now left with no alternatives."

"Just the third rail?" Kroft asked.

"Yeah, that's it. I'm just gonna grab it and go, and let the chips fall where they may," Christie said.

In some ways, Christie is the political canary in the coal mine of the state fiscal crisis. He slashed New Jersey's budget by 26 percent, including a billion dollars in cuts to education, forcing the layoffs of thousands of teachers. He got rid of 1,300 state workers and drastically reduced funding to New Jersey cities, counties and villages which have their own financial problems. And he's still facing another \$10 billion deficit next year.

Long term, the situation is much, much worse.

"Okay. Let's talk about the pension obligations. Forty-six billion unfunded liability for pensions? Sixty-six billion unfunded for healthcare liability?" Kroft asked.

"Yes, Sir," Christie said.

"That's a lot of money," Kroft remarked.

"That's a lot of money, even for the federal government."

"That's a lot of money," the governor agreed.

When Kroft pointed out that there are people who think it's worse, Christie said, "Yeah, I think that's an optimistic view. I think that's an optimistic view. Listen, at this point, if it's worse, what's the difference? I mean, it's bad enough as it is, so what's the difference? I mean now, we're talkin' about money that none of us can really get our arms around."

"This is unsustainable, right?" Kroft asked.

"Totally unsustainable. We have a benefit problem," Christie said. "It's not an income problem from the state. It's a benefit problem. And so we gotta change those benefits."

Asked what the reaction to that has been, Christie said, "Well, it depends on where you sit. I mean, I think the general public thinks, 'I can't believe anybody gets a pension anymore. I've got a 401(k). It got killed in the stock market. I don't know what I'm gonna do for my retirement. I can't believe people get a pension anymore.' So I think amongst the broad, general public, they've said, 'Amen.' And I think among the public sector unions, they are yellin' and screamin'."

And Christie is yelling back. He provoked a very public fight with the teachers union, which is one of the most powerful political forces in the state of New Jersey.

When one teacher told him at a public hearing, "And you're not compensating me for my education and you're not compensating me for my experience. That's all," the governor replied, "Well you know what, then you don't have to do it!"

It's a scene that is starting to play out all over the country.

Governors of cash-strapped states are beginning to cajole or bully public employee unions into making concessions on what are considered to be gold-plated retirement and health care packages, which are now collectively underfunded to the tune of \$1 trillion.

"Some union leaders have suggested that you're running the state like Tony Soprano," Kroft told Christie.

"Well, as an Italian American, I take great offense to that," he replied, laughing. "Listen, you know what it is? I'm the first person to expose them for what they've been doin' to the

public."

Asked if he wants the public employee unions to share the pain, Christie told Kroft, "You bet. I want them to share in the sacrifice. And this is what I say to public sector unions: 'Listen you can boo me now, but I'm the first governor who has walked into this room in ten years and told you the truth. And here is the truth. If you don't partner with me to get this done in ten years you won't have a pension.' And that's the truth."

It's also the truth that some of the responsibility for New Jersey's pension woes lie at the doorstep of the governor's mansion. Christie and his predecessors have failed to contribute to the state's share of its pension obligation in 13 of the last 17 years, one of the reasons the fund is going broke. Christie says it's ancient history.

"We spent too much on everything. We spent too much. We spent money we didn't have. We borrowed money just crazily. The credit cards maxed out, and it's over. It's over. We now have to get to the business of climbin' out of the hole. We've been diggin' it for a decade or more. We've gotta climb now, and a climb is harder. Gotta do it," he said.

The problem with that, according to Wall Street analyst Meredith Whitney, is that no one really knows how deep the holes are. She and her staff spent two years and thousands of man hours trying to analyze the financial condition of the 15 largest states. She wanted to find out if they would be able to pay back the money they've borrowed and what kind of risk they pose to the \$3 trillion municipal bond market, where state and local governments go to finance their schools, highways, and other projects.

"How accurate is the financial information that's public on the states? And municipalities," Kroft asked.

"The lack of transparency with the state disclosure is the worst I have ever seen," Whitney said. "Ultimately we have to use what's publicly available data and a lot of it is

as old as June 2008. So that's before the financial collapse in the fall of 2008."

Whitney believes the states will find a way to honor their debts, but she's afraid some local governments which depend on their state for a third of their revenues will get squeezed as the states are forced to tighten their belts. She's convinced that some cities and counties will be unable to meet their obligations to municipal bond holders who financed their debt. Earlier this year, the state of Pennsylvania had to rescue the city of Harrisburg, its capital, from defaulting on hundreds of millions of dollars in debt for an incinerator project.

"There's not a doubt in my mind that you will see a spate of municipal bond defaults," Whitney predicted.

Asked how many is a "spate," Whitney said, "You could see 50 sizeable defaults. Fifty to 100 sizeable defaults. More. This will amount to hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of defaults."

Municipal bonds have long been considered to be among the safest investments, bought by small investors saving for retirement, and held in huge numbers by big banks. Even a few defaults could affect the entire market. Right now the big bond rating agencies like Standard & Poor's and Moody's, who got everything wrong in the housing collapse, say there's no cause for concern, but Meredith Whitney doesn't believe it.

"When individual investors look to people that are supposed to know better, they're patted on the head and told, 'It's not something you need to worry about.' It'll be something to worry about within the next 12 months," she said.

No one is talking about it now, but the big test will come this spring. That's when \$160 billion in federal stimulus money, that has helped states and local governments limp through the great recession, will run out.

The states are going to need some more cash and will almost certainly ask for another bailout. Only this time there are no guarantees that Washington will ride to the rescue. ★★★



NJ's governor, Chris Christie

Can a state withdraw from a constitutional amendment?

By Devvy Kidd

Judge Roger Vinson's recent decision regarding the unconstitutionality of CommieCare is a victory of sorts. Of course, the usurper in the White House doesn't see it that way:

W.H. charges 'activism' in ruling

"This ruling is well out of the mainstream of judicial opinion," Stephanie Cutter, an assistant to President Obama, wrote on the White House's blog after Judge Roger Vinson in Florida ruled that the entire law is unconstitutional. "Today's ruling ... is a plain case of judicial overreaching. The judge's decision contradicts decades of Supreme Court precedent that support the considered judgment of the democratically elected branches of government that the Act's 'individual responsibility' provision is necessary to prevent billions of dollars of cost-shifting every year by individuals without insurance who cannot pay for the health care they obtain."

Nothing the judge wrote matters to the putative president, his lackeys and their agenda. Although, I'm sure Obama/Soetoro wishes his own words didn't come back to haunt him - which Judge Vinson included in his decision:

"Both of us want to provide health care to all Americans. There's a slight difference, and her [Hillary Clinton] plan is a good one. But, she mandates that everybody buy health care. She'd have the government force every individual to buy insurance and I don't have such a mandate because I don't think the problem is that people don't want health insurance, it's that they can't afford it," Obama said in a Feb. 28, 2008, appearance on Ellen DeGeneres' television show. "But, it's one that she's tried to elevate, arguing that because I don't force people to buy health care that I'm not insuring everybody."

Michael Boldin, Executive Director of the Tenth Amendment Center has brought forth an excellent argument against the courts ruling on the issue of health care:

Health Care Ruling: Victory or Trojan Horse?

"While many conservatives laud [the] ruling by U.S. District Judge declaring the federal health care bill passed last year unconstitutional, analysts at the Tenth Amendment Center displayed significantly less enthusiasm, calling the ruling a Trojan Horse.

"According to Vinson - and just about everyone else in the federal judiciary - the federal government actually does have the authority to control, reform, and regulate the health care industry. They're just going about it wrong," TAC executive director Michael Bolding said. "This is seriously dangerous for those who believe that the founders' Constitution needs to be followed: every issue, every time, no exceptions, no excuses."

"As James Madison explained, the commerce clause was intended to

make trade "regular" between the states, primarily to prevent interstate tariff wars. Madison wrote:

"It is very certain that [the commerce clause] grew out of the abuse of the power by the importing States in taxing the non-importing, and was intended as a negative and preventive provision against injustice among the States themselves, rather than as a power to be used for the positive purposes of the General Government."

"In other words, the framers never envisioned Congress regulating entire industries. The feds are authorized to make commerce in health care across state lines, 'regular' - that's for sure. But this power is far less than anything that's been proposed by either political party in....well, probably about forever," Boldin said. "The Center's director pointed out a 'better option' for those yearning for just a little decentralized freedom. State nullification of the federal health care law - every single word of it, as it should be. In fact, 11 states have bills before their legislatures in an attempt to do just that."

1913 Worst. Year. Ever.

- The Federal Reserve is Created
- 16th Amendment Reinstates Federal Income Tax
- 17th Amendment Kills State's Rights
- The very first IRS 1040 form published

While I agree with Michael, the problem I see regarding CommieCare is one that can't be done through nullification. The individual mandate requirement Judge Vinson shot down isn't going to be so easy for the states to simply ignore because the clever attorneys who wrote CommieCare for the miscreants in the Democratic Party made sure, just like SS (social security), they tied it to the IRS. Whether or not you ever apply for a Social Security Number (which no one is required to do to live or work in the US), you will be taxed to pay for someone else's retirement under that Ponzi scheme. Involuntary servitude and violation of the Thirteenth Amendment.

Let's say Texas says no, ObamaCare is null and void in our state. How will a legislature protect the citizens of our state from the IRS coming after them should Judge Vinson's decision be overturned by the U.S. Supreme as everyone feels this issue will go to be decided? Don't say it can't happen. The make up of the court is critical. Stuff happens in life. It would only take one or two of the conservative members retiring due to age, die or have an accident that kills or requires the justice step down to change the game.

As a matter of fact, right now, a watchdog group is pressing for charges: Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas Appears to Have 'Knowingly and Willfully' Violated Rule of Law for Twenty Years by Falsifying Disclosure Forms. This is a serious investigation that could have huge implications regarding make up of the court.

What does that have to do with the question: Can a state withdraw from a constitutional amendment?

While nullification can stop much of the tyranny coming out of the Outlaw Congress, it can't get us out of all the destructive trade treaties that have killed millions of jobs, confirmation of federal judges and supreme court justices. Not to mention the unconstitutional bills the U.S. Senate has passed over the decades. For almost 100 years, the U.S. Senate has not represented the interests of the states of the Union as was the original and ONLY intention of the framers of the Constitution for the U.S. Senate:

"James Madison wrote in The Federalist Papers No. 45: "The Senate will be elected absolutely and exclusively by the State legislatures." John Jay, co-author of The Federal Papers is quoted: "Jay then informed Governor Clinton that, unlike the Senate, where the two-thirds rule was in force for treaties and impeachment, the lower house had nothing to do with treaties; it represented the people whereas the Senate represented the states - for the Federalists always a significant distinction."

Those duties are the legal territory of U.S. Senators and yes, I'm back to the profound importance of the Seventeenth Amendment. We are faced with a real conundrum here and a constitutional crisis. Many are calling for the repeal of the Seventeenth Amendment. However, that amendment clearly was not ratified by enough states; the proof is on my web site. I stand firm in my opinion that repealing a law that doesn't exist simply puts a new lie on top of the old one. I ask the same question I have for longer than I can remember: Are we a nation of law or lies? Passage of the Seventeenth Amendment was a lie and it should be exposed as such.

The Outlaw Congress will not introduce an amendment to repeal the Seventeenth; you can take money to the bank on that one. I can also tell you the federal courts will kick this one to the curb because I don't believe there's a single federal judge in this country that has the courage to take this on.

So, where does that leave us? Back to the states. While I can't give you a number, I feel confident in saying many states would like to get rid of their counterfeit U.S. Senator - the ones that have sold out their state and our country. I'm not a lawyer, but I want to raise these questions because I believe there are many state reps and senators who would like to take up this issue -- and I believe they would if there was enough of a roar from their constituents.

What are the rights of a state when it comes to a constitutional amendment? What about states that were not in session or who took no

Devvy Kidd

"That liberty [is pure] which is to go to all, and not to the few or the rich alone."
-Thomas Jefferson



Investigative journalist Devvy Kidd is well known for her comprehensive columns on today's most pressing issues.

Devvy's Archives CD includes her best selling booklets *Why A Bankrupt America* (1,653,000 copies) and *Blind Loyalty* (700,00 copies on vote fraud).

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Knowledge is Power

action on the amendment? What about their equal suffrage rights in the Senate? Will it be mob rule (democracy) because allegedly enough states ratified (when they did not) so too bad for states like Georgia who took no action and with good reason?

The question was raised by Thomas Jefferson: "Question has arisen as to the power of a State to recall its assent to a constitutional amendment (V. 7042)."

Answer: "Question has arisen as to the power of a State to recall its assent to a constitutional amendment (V, 7042; footnotes to §§ 225, 234, infra) but has not been the subject of a final judicial determination."

Now, we're back to the courts again. I'm sorry, but the federal judiciary is absolutely broken and corrupt. Yes, a good decision came down to void CommieCare, but judicial activism is rampant; the courts cannot be trusted.

Equal suffrage rights, Article V: ".....Provided that no Amendment which may be made prior to the Year One thousand eight hundred and eight shall in any Manner affect the first and fourth Clauses in the Ninth Section of the first Article; and that no State, without its Consent, shall be deprived of its equal Suffrage in the Senate."



An activist here in Texas is determined to bring this issue to the forefront with our state legislature. Unfortunately, Texas is an every other year session. When ours goes out the end of May, they don't return until January 2013. But, what could be more important than restoring a states right when it comes to treaties (that have killed hundreds of thousands or millions of jobs in a state), confirmation of biased, activist judges or supreme court justices who owe their good fortune to a sitting president and unconstitutional bills like the dangerous Food Safety & Modernization Act? All crushing the rights of the states and her citizens courtesy of U.S. Senators who sit in office under an amendment that was not ratified.

Stephen King, founder of the Texas Tea Party has received keen interest from several members of our legislature as well as Tea Party members with the resolution he authored and has been handing out

at the capitol. Stephen has indicated to me there is great interest from Tea Party folks he's contacted. That resolution would create a constitutional crisis in the extreme. But, if the courts refuse to address the fraud as well as the Outlaw Congress, what choice do the states have?

How bad do we want to get rid of the Seventeenth Amendment? Bad enough for you to write a snail mail letter with a copy of the resolution and get it to your state rep and senator? Do you or someone you know live close enough to your state house to make copies and deliver them to dozens of office with a short cover letter? How about getting help on this from retired folks who are active? (Copy of the resolution at: <http://www.devvy.com/images/pdf/Fraudulent17thAmendment.pdf>)

Please feel free to print out this column and include it or copy and paste the historical references to include in your letter. Let your state rep and senator know that proof of non-ratification of the Seventeenth Amendment is on my web site, www.devvy.com. All documents I personally obtained (court certified) at the Library of Congress in Washington are scanned; the fraud is there for all to see. Get this column to your friends, groups, tea party chapters and let us stand with any state rep or senator who will take up this fight. They must for all the reasons cited. Will you do your part? We can force this to become a major issue, it just takes numbers and follow ups to your letter. Persistence does pay off even though sometimes it seems hopeless.

As always, writing for a newspaper is different than the Internet. To access the links below, use a search engine, type in the title and the page will appear.

Links:

- Nullification: Answering the Objections by Thomas E. Woods, Jr.
- 10 states invoke 1700s 'nullification doctrine'
- The "General Welfare" Clause by John W. Bugler
- Obamacare and the Individual Mandate: Violating Personal Liberty and Federalism
- New CRS Memo Confirms Enforcement of Individual Mandate Penalties Is Destined for Failure

Devvy Kidd authored the booklets, Why A Bankrupt America and Blind Loyalty. She left the Republican Party in 1996 and has been an independent voter ever since. Devvy is a constitutionalist who believes in the supreme law of the land, not some party. ★★★

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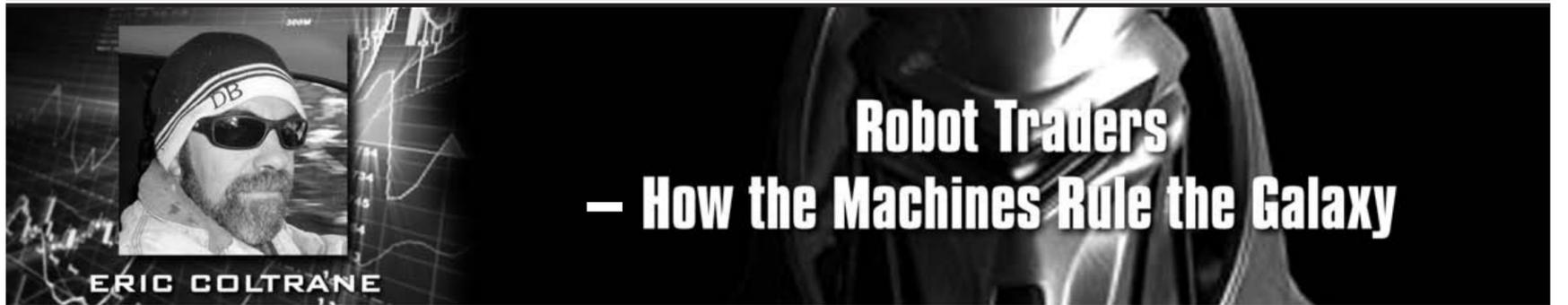
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ERIC COLTRANE

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The "Machines" have taken control, or nearly so. No, I'm not talking about the Cylons of Battlestar Galactica. The Machines aren't mining the moons of Jupiter, and trading minerals for Ju Ju Lube with the Alpha Centarions. Not yet anyway...

A February 12th 2010 NY Daily News Headline read: **'Goldman Sachs Spy' Sergey Aleynikov indicted on charges**

of stealing secret data. Apparently Sergei Aleynikov, an employee of Goldman Sachs (now ex-employee) had downloaded a "secret" trading algorithm to use in his new position with another trading company. This software, called "High Frequency Trading" is used to direct large volumes of electronic trades. In the bail hearing in New York it was claimed by, then U.S. Assistant District Attorney, Joseph Facciponti that if used erroneously this trading algorithm "could be used to manipulate markets in unfair ways."

Fast forward to May 6th 2010... The Dow Jones Industrial average dropped 998.5 points and almost fully recovered in 20 minutes of trading. This has been deemed the "Flash Crash." The first unofficial claim was that some "fat fingered" Citigroup trader had accidentally sold a billion shares of Proctor & Gamble instead of a million shares. Another rumor was that a malicious hacker had somehow hacked the system. Both claims were immediately discounted when no evidence could be found to back up these allegations. After a five month investigation the Securities Exchange Commission (SEC) concluded that it was **"a market so fragmented and fragile that a single large trade could send stocks into a sudden spiral,"** and detailed how a large mutual fund firm selling an unusually large number of Emini S&P 500 contracts first exhausted available buyers, and then how high-frequency traders started aggressively selling, accelerating the effect of the mutual fund's selling and contributing to the sharp price declines that day. My question here is, "which large mutual fund firm and how much is an unusually large number of contracts?" As previously noted there was no evidence of such a large trade to cause such a crash.

Some Market Background

As I write this the Dow closed at 12,233.2, up 71.5 points. In the last three weeks or so Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, and several other developing countries have seen large protests and food riots. Not to mention the collapse of Central Government in some cases. Yet the Dow Jones is unaffected and just keeps



going up and up. As one Investment advisor put it: **"We like to see SOME corrections - just to let us know how firm the bottoms are but no such luck in SUPER Market, which is up, up and away almost every day - but especially on Mondays."** I seem to recall markets falling over 100 points on even a whisper of such things in the past. It would also be nice to have some good old fashioned price discovery. Day Traders have given up on trading in this "unusual" market. They claim they can't compete with the Machines, which make up 2/3 of all trades on any given day.

Since November 2010 Ben Bernanke at the Federal Reserve Bank has been engaged in QE2 or what is called Quantitative Easing. In laymen's terms he is creating money from nothing, "out of thin air" you might say. It's all very complex and I don't quite understand all of it, but basically the Federal Reserve is buying U.S. Treasury Bonds through "Proxy Banks" (especially maturing bonds that need to be rolled over) because they can't seem to be able to sell them on the open market. No one wants to buy bonds from a country that is over 14 trillion dollars in debt. Other countries must buy some of these bonds because they have to have "Reserve Dollars" to purchase things like Oil, Wheat, Cotton, Sugar, Iron Ore, and everything else that is priced in the U.S. dollar. That is as long as the US dollar is the reserve currency of the world.



Ben Bernanke

So who are these "Proxy Banks?" One of them is Goldman Sachs, and still others are JP Morgan, Citigroup, Bank of America (these are also the most zealous users of high frequency trading, as of 2010 there were 404 high frequency traders) and, most probably, other central banks. How I have come to understand how this works is that the proxy borrows the money from the Federal Reserve at the "discount window," then buys the bond from the treasury then sells it back to the Federal Reserve who holds it on their balance sheet until they feel they can sell it on the open market.

Wikipedia says this:

Ordinarily, a central bank conducts monetary policy by raising or lowering its interest rate target for the inter-bank interest rate. The central bank achieves its interest rate target through open market operations - where the central bank buys

or sells short-term government bonds in exchange for cash. When the central bank disburses or collects payment for these bonds, it alters the amount of money in the economy, while simultaneously affecting the price (and thereby the yield) for short-term government bonds. This in turns affects the interbank interest rates.

In some situations, such as with very low inflation, or in the presence of deflation, the central bank can no longer lower the target interest rate, as the interbank interest rates are either at, or close to, zero. In such a situation, referred to as a liquidity trap, quantitative easing may be employed to further boost the amount of money in the financial system. This is often considered a "last resort" to stimulate the economy.

Steps

1. The central bank has previously targeted an extremely low rate of interest, near or at zero percent.
2. The central bank credits its own bank account with money it creates electronically.
3. The central bank buys government bonds (including long-term government bonds) or other financial assets, from commercial banks or other financial institutions, with the newly created money.

The Japanese tried this in the 1990's and concluded it didn't work. By the way, almost all Central Bankers and commercial bankers go to the same schools and learn the same Economic courses and monetary theories. It doesn't matter if they are from Zimbabwe or Switzerland.

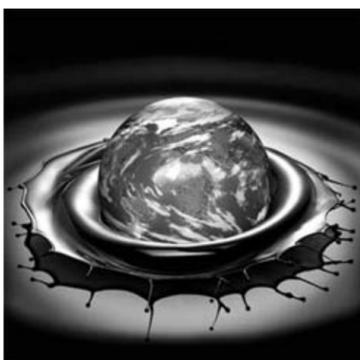
The Machines

I've gone the long way around to get to my point, which is The Machines are running the system. Presently it is alleged that 50-70% of ALL trades are high frequency algorithm trades. These trading algorithms are quite amazing really. They can research trends in the market and buy and sell, anticipating prices so well, that they can buy a stock (or bond) at a certain price and sell it a microsecond later for only a penny's profit. That doesn't sound like much, but if you do that 10 million times a day you make a lot of money. Add to that, the commercial bank, or investment bank, has an open fund from the Federal Reserve and PRESTO you have an almost perfect market that rarely goes down. A colleague of mine calls it AI (Artificial Inflation). According to Central Bankers if you have 2-3% inflation, year over year, you have economic growth. If you have growth you have prosperity. If you have prosperity everybody's wealthy. If everybody's wealthy then everybody's happy. You're wealthy and happy, right?

Or, maybe you're like every other common American and you are struggling to make ends meet every month - like me. If only I were a Cylon ...

Recession Over or Just Beginning? 21 "Oh Crap!" Statistics About The U.S. Economy

(The American Dream) - Is the recession over or is the economic downturn just beginning? Barack Obama and the Federal Reserve have been busy proclaiming that the U.S. economy is back on track, but the sad truth is that our economic problems look like they are about to get a whole lot worse. Without oil, our entire economy would shut down cold. Thanks to the chaos in the Middle East, oil is absolutely exploding in price. In fact, the price of oil in the United States went up more than seven dollars today. The global price of food has risen to record levels over the past 12 months and it is projected to continue to rapidly increase throughout all of 2011. This is going to hit struggling families all over the globe very hard. Meanwhile, thousands of manufacturing facilities and millions of good jobs continue to flee the United States. The gap between the wealth that we consume as a nation and the wealth that we produce as a nation continues to grow. We have attempted to fill this gap with asset sales and with massive amounts of debt, but that is a game that cannot last forever. When we come to the end of every single month, we are poorer as a nation and we are deeper in debt as a nation. From "sea to shining sea" we have become a nation that is flooded with red ink.



"American exceptionalism" thing. While it is true that there is something really special about the nation that our founding fathers originally established, the truth is that we are not guaranteed to be "the greatest nation on earth" forever. Over the last couple of generations we have really been abusing the great legacy that was passed down to us.

America was once the greatest economic machine on the face of the planet. The American people were once strong and brave and of noble character. At one time, America was first in almost every major category that mattered.

Are any of those things still true today? Of course not. The once great American economic powerhouse is being gutted and ripped to shreds right in front of our eyes. A large percentage of our population has become fat, lazy and obsessed with things like American Idol and Justin Bieber. We have become so dumbed-down that most of us don't even realize that something is seriously, seriously wrong with this country.

The U.S. economy is on the verge of major problems. That also means that the entire global economy is on the verge of major problems.

These next couple of years are going to be very interesting to watch. We truly are in unprecedented economic territory.

The truth is that things are not nearly as good



as the talking heads on television say that they are.

The following are 21 "Oh Crap!" statistics about the U.S. economy....

#1 U.S. light sweet crude for March delivery closed at \$93.57 on Tuesday. That was up \$7.37 in just a single day. Brent crude rose to \$108.57 a barrel before settling back to \$105.78.

#2 According to Zero Hedge, a one dollar rise in the price of oil reduces U.S. GDP by approximately \$100 billion.

#3 According to the World Bank, global food prices have soared 29% over the last 12 months.

#4 The United Nations is projecting that the global price of food will increase by another 30 percent by the end of 2011.

#5 Michigan has approved a plan to shut down nearly half of the public schools in

Detroit. Under the plan, 70 schools will be closed and 72 will continue operating.

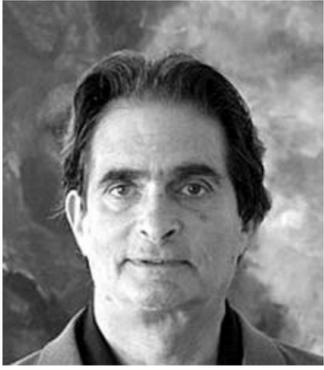
#6 If the U.S. government adopted a balanced budget today, approximately 12 percent of U.S. GDP would be wiped out. Can anyone say "instant depression"?

#7 Two years ago, the average U.S. homeowner that is being foreclosed upon had not made a mortgage payment in 11 months. Today, the average U.S. homeowner that is being foreclosed upon has not made a mortgage payment in 17 months.

#8 Single family home prices in the United States declined for the sixth month in a row during the month of December.

#9 According to CNN, in 2009 the wealthiest 10% of all Americans controlled half of all the wealth in America. CNN is also reporting that back in 2009 the wealthiest 0.1% of all Americans controlled approximately 10% of all the wealth in the

COMMENTARY Your Right to Speak Out



By Jon Rappoport

Last night, my friend, LG, solved a problem in five minutes the Pentagon has been struggling with for decades. How do you win a modern war in full view of the media?

When you go back to World War 2, you find there was an ironclad strategy. Destroy the enemy's country. Bomb everybody. Level cities. Civilian deaths? Who cares? In classical terms, destroy the enemy's will to fight. It worked.

But with the rise of television, things changed. People didn't want to see dead bodies and maimed persons while they were eating dinner every night. Vietnam was a PR disaster. Americans, confronted by the details of combat, were horrified.

And now, skipping ahead, we have Afghanistan, where American soldiers can't fire a weapon at a suspected Taliban until they see proper ID. They have to radio back to headquarters for permission.

"Got a guy at twenty yards. He's wearing a stained white robe and a head-thingsy. Beard, no shoes. Can't tell if he's from a village we're rehabbing. Requesting okay to blow his head off..."

And the villages. US soldiers are welfare workers. They're shoring up huts, putting in roads, holding night classes in Principles of Three-Branch Government. A little community sing, a few marshmallows.

So instead, back off. Pull all the troops out. Forget the feel-good strategy. Everybody knows we'd have to stay there forever—kill Taliban, they hide, we leave, they come back. Why go up against that plan? Just vacate the country.

Then...put a winner of a plan into effect. Something that actually makes sense.

Start easy. From hundreds of planes, drop fast food all over Afghanistan. Burgers. Fishsticks. McMuffins. Legs, breasts, wings. It's a good intro. Lighten everybody up a little. Two weeks of chicken done right.

Then, from those same planes—candy. Fifty

thousand tons of gum drops, jelly beans, Almond Joy, Reese's. Hell, Reese's all by itself is unstoppable.

Sugar! You're telling me people can resist sugar? Under threat of death, they'll be scooping that stuff up off the frozen ground. In high mountain areas, tribes live on lichen cooked over yak turds. All of a sudden, here come 20 colors of jelly beans out of the sky!

Give them enough sugar, and they'll be running in circles one minute and lying back and napping the next. It's a law of biology. A month of heavenly candy.

Then next, a million cases of various diet sodas dumped out of our planes. Get it? Aspartame! Weird those dudes out. Three months of diet-everything. They won't be able to find their way back to their yurts. They'll be bumping into rocks and trees, howling at the moon.

Now comes the heavy action. Carpet bomb the whole country with little TV sets. Satellite TV! Soaps, Judge Judy, Rachel Ray, Dave and Jay, Oprah, Little House on the Prairie reruns, Law and Order, CSI, and wait for it—sports! Soccer, and, you guessed it, women's beach volleyball! You kidding me? Amazons wearing almost nothing running on sand, hour after hour. And the NFL! Cowboys, Steelers, Giants, Green Bay, Bears. ESPN.

"Hey, Ahmed, it's time for the Friday night clan meeting."

"Shh! Victoria and Billy just adopted a baby. She can't have kids. Billy paid two million for a little girl. But it's actually Daisy's baby. Nobody knows it."

The fabric of Afghan society comes apart at the seams.

US planes return with a few million cases of Prozac, Zoloft, Paxil, and Ritalin. Open the bomb-bay doors. Drop those suckers right down the slot. And tranqu! Valium! Old stocks of Librium.

On the ground, pills and capsules everywhere. You can't walk by without picking a few up and swallowing them. It's another law of nature.

So after a few more months, you've got the whole country hooked on meds. They're weaving and wobbling and gnashing their teeth, when they aren't completely zoned. A suicide problem begins to develop.

And finally, out of those blessed US planes comes the coup de grace. Computers. Wireless. Afghanistan is online, which means—that's right—porn! Porn and gambling!

This, in a matter of, oh, six months, will



totally destroy the Afghan culture, such as it is. You see, my friends, we've got weapons we didn't know we had. Real weapons!

So we let all this simmer for a while. We let things take their natural course. We're out of there. Not a single US casualty is being sustained.

And then, just to make sure we have the entire country enveloped and warped beyond repair, the CIA begins to beam, through all those TV sets and computers—take a deep breath—ready?—the AFGHAN HOME SHOPPING NETWORK!

Boom!

Oh yes, my friends, where there's a will, there's a way. Don't bother bringing up the fact that the Afghan people don't have money. They'll find money! They'll sell each other if they have to! They'll pawn their yaks and rifles and take out second mortgages on their shacks



and huts and yurts. The Afghan Home Shopping Network won't be denied. Shampoos, soap on a string, Kleenex, shower caps, earrings, toe rings, rugs, couches, square-dance instruction CDs, kitchen knives, scarves, fans, belts, undies, shoes, pet food, bird houses, pot holders, battery operated hair dryers, perfume, books on tape, storage containers, stockings, lipstick, eye shadow, bathrobes, self-improvement tapes, bracelets...

Victory. Absolute conquest. And not a shot fired. And when the population begins to develop all sorts of symptoms from this all-out campaign, as they surely will, we send in the doctors and the shrinks, and they diagnose! They diagnose diseases and illnesses and disorders from here to Sunday, and they prescribe more drugs.

It's a party. We do to the Afghans what has been done to us.

Because you see, that's the pattern. We know it intimately, because we've bought into it ourselves.

We're already that kind of society. Who better to impose it on another population?

Jon is the author of Logic And Analysis, a course for home schools and adults, and has worked as a free-lance investigative reporter for over 20 years.

In 1982, the LA Weekly submitted his name for a Pulitzer prize, for his interview with the president of El Salvador University, where the military had taken over the campus. ★★



By Victor Sayre

Much debate has surrounded this amendment and its meaning yet the words are plain and easy to understand. The mandate "shall not be infringed" is an absolute prohibition against Government interference with one of our fundamental Rights.

As stated in the Declaration of Independence, our Creator endowed us with certain unalienable Rights: Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness. Your Right to Life presumes you have the Arms to defend it.

Like any Right, if an individual demonstrates through their actions that they have abused it, it can be infringed upon. A violent criminal endangers the Right to Life of others, therefore waives his own Right to Liberty, ending up behind bars, and likely loses legal access to weaponry having demonstrated ill intent toward others. That is good and sensible.

However, Governments have historically disarmed their good and honest people in order to cement their own Dominance of Force. They can then abuse the citizenry without fear of retaliation. With this in mind, our Founders worded the 2nd Amendment to prohibit Government from infringing upon your Right to Keep and Bear Arms.

Is the "shall not be infringed" mandate directed only against the Federal Government? The 1st Amendment states that "Congress shall make no law" - clearly a prohibition against only the Federal Government. Yet, the 2nd has no such limitation and therefore is universal. This makes sense given the purpose of the 2nd Amendment.

The defense of a free state by the people requires they be well regulated (equipped and trained) for armed combat and that they appear with modern military arms when called upon in a crisis. The Founders were clear on the notion that external threats to Liberty are bad yet internal threats are worse, for the halls of Government attract the most power hungry and corrupt.

Domestic military forces could not be trusted to defend individual Rights because they would be at the command of Government. Therefore, our Founders considered it the duty of The People to defend themselves - even against their own

US Constitution: Amendment II

"A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms shall not be infringed."

government's forces gone bad.

An example of this is the Battle of Athens, Tennessee (1946), in which the people of that town, having determined the ballot boxes were stuffed by crooked politicians and receiving no relief from the State or Federal Governments, took up arms and forcefully corrected the problem. Rebellion against corrupt politicians, to restore the Rule of Law, is one purpose for which

States vs. Miller (1939), in which the defendant asserted a Right to keep and bear a short-barreled shotgun under the 2nd Amendment. The defendant, Miller, was found shot to death prior to a ruling, having been deprived of his means of self-defense. No verdict could be rendered for the deceased, yet the court did issue a unanimous opinion on the matter:

In the absence of any evidence tending to show that possession or use of a 'shotgun having a barrel of less than eighteen inches in length' at this time has some reasonable relationship to the preservation or efficiency of a well regulated militia, we cannot say that the Second Amendment guarantees the right to keep and bear such an instrument.

Notice the litmus test applied - if the weapon could be shown to be useful for militia purposes (combat), then the Court could rule that the Right to keep and bear it would be guaranteed. The evidence was not presented to the court, due to Miller's death, but that style of weapon has been used repeatedly by armed forces in trench warfare and other situations. If such evidence had been presented, Miller's Rights would have been upheld.

Where do we stand today? In the wake of a tragic shooting in Arizona, in which no armed person was present and prepared to defend the innocent - a disturbing and repeated pattern - many Federal and State bureaucrats are making noise about new gun control laws. Any politician voting in favor of restrictive gun laws is in violation of his or her Oath of Office and is directly attacking the Free State as well as our Constitution.

Further oppression of our Right to armed self defense leads to fewer armed defenders and more massacres of innocents. The Columbine massacre, on school property, came after passage of Bill Clinton's "Gun Free School Zones" law.

Let's not be fooled by the notion that more laws will prevent criminal aggression, even with guns. A "street gun" is as easy to get as a bag of cocaine. Laws are ignored by criminal aggressors and politicians know this. The real target of these Constitutionally illegal laws is you, the law-abiding Citizen.

You are 'the people' whose absolute Right to keep and bear combat arms is protected by the 2nd Amendment so that, in a time of crisis, you can be called upon to join the Militia prepared to do your duty as a Citizen - or can defend yourself and your loved ones against predatory criminals and politicians.

Think about it. ★★



THE SECOND AMENDMENT
Washington didn't use his right to free speech to defeat the British. He shot them.

the 2nd Amendment was crafted.

Let's be clear on the meaning of 'Arms'. They are not "sporting" firearms nor is the intent of the 2nd Amendment to protect a Right to hunt ducks and bunnies. When you see a politician pose in a hunting costume with a shotgun proclaiming, "I believe in the Second Amendment, I'm a hunter too," you are observing a professional liar and deceiver who knows better. Or, worse, that posturing politician does not know better and is therefore unqualified for any job that requires an oath to uphold and defend the Constitution.

What about "assault weapons"? The term applies to modern arms that may be suitable for self defense. Those are, in fact, the 'Arms' at the crux of the matter. Any government interference with your right to own and bear them is Constitutionally prohibited.

This matter was examined in the Supreme Court case United

"Congress has not unlimited powers to provide for the general welfare but only those specifically enumerated. ... A wise and frugal government... shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned." -Thomas Jefferson

COMMENTARY

On Real Respect for the Constitution



By Dr. Ron Paul

I am pleased that the Constitution has received a lot of attention in recent weeks, thanks to the tea party movement. The 112th Congress kicked off with a reading of the

Constitution on the floor of the House. It goes without saying that Members of Congress should have read the Constitution many times, and should continue to study it.

Citing the particular clause of the Constitution that authorizes newly introduced legislation is a reasonable suggestion, yet in reality it will do little to restrain unconstitutional growth of the federal government. We have had such rules in the past and no benefit came of it.

The laws that are passed reflect the preferences and personal agendas of those in charge. For too long those agendas have expanded government at the expense of personal liberty, regardless of which political party was in charge. This expansion of government clearly violated the Constitution, yet it was always argued that this or that program somehow conformed to that "living" document.

By misinterpreting the general welfare clause, the interstate commerce clause, and the "necessary and proper" clause, Congress has justified every conceivable expansion of the federal government. Congress also has misinterpreted the 14th Amendment and legislated as

though it had repealed the 10th Amendment. Sadly, Congress has also systematically abdicated its prerogatives and responsibilities to the executive branch over many decades.

Too many people, in and out of Congress, grew up being taught that the Constitution was a "modern living document." Though the authors allowed for flexibility through the amendment process, this process has been ignored for the sake of speed and convenience. As a result, the Constitution now has little actual meaning.

Our Constitution should be viewed as law, and Members of Congress should be expected to follow, respect, understand, and uphold the law. But a document is just a piece of paper if those who represent us and promise to obey it ignore it instead. Celebrating the Constitution without this understanding will do

and the persistent temptation to seek security over liberty while ignoring personal responsibility and self-reliance.

I wonder: will this welcomed renewed interest in the Constitution lead to a healthy reassessment of all of our policies? Will there be no more wars without an actual congressional declaration? Will the Federal Reserve Act be repealed? Will only gold and silver be deemed legal tender?

Will we end all unconstitutional federal departments, including the Department of Energy, Education, Agriculture, Commerce, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, and Labor?

Will the Patriot Act be repealed and all warrantless searches stopped?

Will the TSA be abolished?

Will the IRS's unconstitutional collection powers end?

Will executive and judicial quasi-legislative powers end?

Will we end the federal war on drugs?

Will we end the federal government's involvement in medical care?

Will we end all of the federal government's illusionary insurance programs?

Will we ban secret prisons, trials without due process, and assassinations?

Will we end our foreign policy of invasion and occupation?

For America to once again become the standard for a free society, our love of liberty and

desire for peace must far surpass any public display of fidelity to the Constitution. We must first look to strong moral character, respect for the rule of law, and an understanding of the proper role of government in a free society. ★★★



nothing to restore the greatness of America.

Simply praising the document distracts from the need for Members to resist special interests, political self-interests, emergency needs in times of crisis, fear-based economic myths,

Continued from page 7 • Recession Over Or Just Beginning?



country all by themselves.

#10 According to Moody's Analytics, the wealthiest 5% of households in the United States account for approximately 37% of all consumer spending.

#11 The CredAbility Consumer Distress Index, which measures the average financial condition of U.S. households, declined in every single quarter in 2010.

#12 The average CEO now makes approximately 185 times more money than the average American worker.

#13 In 2010, more than a million U.S. families lost their homes to foreclosure for the first time ever, and that number is expected to go even higher in 2011.

#14 When you adjust wages for inflation, middle class workers in the United States make less money today than they did back in 1971.

#15 China now controls about 97 percent of the total global production of "rare earth elements". China is using this monopoly power to persuade foreign high

technology firms to relocate to China.

#16 Average household debt in the United States has now reached a level of 136% of average household income. In China, average household debt is only 17% of average household income.

#17 In Canada, 117 out of every 100,000 people are in prison. In Japan, 59 out of every 100,000 people are in prison. In the United States, 743 out of every 100,000 people are in prison which is the highest rate by far in the world.

#18 There are currently more than 4 million Americans that have been

unemployed for more than a year.

#19 The Social Security trust fund will run a deficit of 56 billion dollars this year. Just a couple of years ago government planners were promising that we would not have any Social Security deficits until at least 2016 or 2017.

#20 The U.S. national debt is over 14 times larger than it was just 30 years ago.

#21 During Barack Obama's first two years in office, the U.S. government added more to the U.S. national debt than the first 100 U.S. Congresses combined.

U.S. government debt is spinning wildly out of control and our politicians seem powerless to even slow it down. The globalization of the world economy is ripping millions of jobs away from middle class Americans and most of our politicians appear unwilling to lift a finger to stop it. Barack Obama, the Democrats, the Republicans and the Federal Reserve are all running our economy into the ground, and yet the mainstream media keeps telling us that these are the "heroes" that are going to turn this whole thing around.

The problems with the U.S. economy are not that difficult to figure out but they are going to be incredibly difficult to solve.

Why?

Because there are some very powerful people that are making obscene amounts of money off of our economic suffering.

There is a ton of money to be made lending hundreds of billions of dollars to our federal government, our state governments and our local governments every year.

There are huge profits to be made by getting rid of American workers and setting up new manufacturing facilities in countries where they allow workers to be paid slave labor wages.

Do you think that the ultra-wealthy people making tons of money from the current economic system are just going to roll over and give up because we ask them nicely?

No, the truth is that the ultra-wealthy have no intention of changing things. In fact, they pretty much control both political parties in America. Why do you think they give so much money to political campaigns?

It isn't because they are trying to be nice.

The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. Those at the top of the pyramid love the current system because it makes them massive amounts of money.

Unfortunately, the road that we are currently on is going to end in complete and total economic disaster for the entire world.

That won't be good for anybody. ★★★

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Restoring Economic Sovereignty:

In the Last Month, Three States Join the Movement for State-Owned Banks



By Ellen Brown

Responding to an unfilled need for credit for local government, local businesses and consumers, three states - Oregon, Washington and Maryland - in the last month have introduced bills for state-owned banks,

joining Illinois, Virginia, Massachusetts and Hawaii to bring the total number of states with state-owned banks bills to seven.

While Wall Street is reporting record profits, local banks are floundering, credit for small businesses and consumers remains tight and local governments are teetering on the edge of bankruptcy. There is even talk of allowing state governments to file for bankruptcy, something current legislation forbids. The federal government and the Federal Reserve have managed to find trillions of dollars to prop up the Wall Street banks that precipitated the credit crisis, but they have not extended this largesse to the taxpayers and local governments that have been forced to pick up the tab.

In January, Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke announced that the Fed had ruled out a central bank bailout for state and local governments. The collective state budget deficit for 2011 is projected at \$140 billion, a mere one percent of the \$12.3 trillion the Fed managed to come up with in liquidity, short-term loans and other financial arrangements to bail out Wall Street banks, multinational corporations and foreign financial institutions following the 2008 credit crisis. But Chairman Bernanke said the Fed is limited by statute to buying municipal government debt with maturities of six months or less that is directly backed by tax or other assured revenue, a form of debt that makes up less than two percent of the overall muni market. State and municipal governments, it seems, are on their own.

Faced with federal inaction and growing local budget crises, an increasing number of states are exploring the possibility of setting up their own state-owned banks, following the model of North Dakota, the only state that seems to have escaped the credit crisis unscathed. The 92-year-old Bank of North

Dakota (BND), currently the only state-owned US bank, has helped North Dakota avoid the looming budgetary disasters facing other states. In 2009, North Dakota sported the largest budget surplus it had ever had. The BND helps fund not only local government, but also local banks and businesses, by providing matching funds for loans to commercial banks to support small business lending.

In the last month, three states have introduced bills for state-owned banks, following the North Dakota model. On January 11, a bill to establish a state-owned bank was introduced in the Oregon State legislature; on January 13, a similar bill was introduced in Washington State; and on February 4, a bill was introduced in the Maryland legislature for a feasibility study looking into the possibility of a state-owned bank. These three join Illinois, Virginia, Hawaii and Massachusetts, which introduced similar bills in 2010.

Broad-Based Support

The bills are widely supported by small-business owners. The Seattle Times reported on February 3 that 79 percent of 107 business owners surveyed by the Main Street Alliance of Washington supported the Washington bill. More than half said they had experienced a tightening of business credit, and three-fourths of those said they could create additional jobs if their credit needs were met.

A survey by the Main Street Alliance of Oregon produced similar results. Its survey, which covered 115 businesses in 28 communities, found that two-thirds of small-business owners had delayed or canceled expansions because of credit problems; 41 percent had been turned down for credit; and 42 percent had seen their credit terms deteriorate. Three-quarters of the business owners surveyed supported the Oregon bill.

Also supporting the idea of a state-owned bank is Oregon state treasurer Ted Wheeler, with this twist: he thinks Oregon can unlock additional lending capacity in partnership with existing institutions by creating a "virtual" bank. The state would not need to build new brick and mortar banks requiring hundreds of new employees to service them. The new tools afforded the state by being a "bank" could be arranged quickly and cheaply through a framework he calls a "virtual economic

development bank." In an op-ed posted on The Oregonian newspaper's web site Oregonlive.com on February 9, he wrote:

This new model would consolidate Oregon's various economic development loan programs in one place, and allow state government to step in as a new lending participant, which will

Street at much higher interest rates and have to worry about such things as credit ratings, late fees and interest rate swaps, which have proven to be very good investments for Wall Street and very bad investments for local governments.

By consolidating their assets into their own state-owned banks, state and local governments can leverage their own funds to finance their own debts, and they can do this essentially interest-free, since they will own the bank and will get the interest back. The BND contributed over \$300 million to state coffers in the past decade, a notable achievement for a state with a population that is less than one-tenth the size of Los Angeles County.

The growing movement to establish local economic sovereignty through state-owned banks is a grassroots effort that has grown spontaneously in response to unmet needs for local credit. In Oregon, the push has come from an active volunteer group called Oregonians for a State Bank, working with the Working Families Party. In Washington, the Main Street Alliance has played a major role. The Alliance is a project

"It is time to declare economic sovereignty from the multinational banks that are responsible for much of our current economic crisis. Every year, we ship over a billion dollars in Oregon taxpayer dollars to out-of-state and multinational banks in the form of deposits, only to see that money invested elsewhere. It's time to put our money to work for Oregonians."

- Bill Bradbury, former Oregon senate president and secretary of state, quoted in *The Nation*

help qualified Oregonians to secure additional financing. We also have strategic investment tools such as the Oregon Growth Account that could be better utilized as part of this framework.

Banks "create" money by leveraging their capital into loans. At an eight percent capital requirement, they can leverage capital by a factor of 12, so long as they can attract sufficient deposits (collected or borrowed) to clear the outgoing checks. States give this leveraging power away when they put their deposits in Wall Street banks and invest their capital there.

State and municipal governments have assets tucked all over their states in separate rainy day funds, which are largely invested in Wall Street banks for a very modest return. At the same time, states are borrowing from Wall

of what is now called the Alliance for a Just Society (formerly the Northwest Federation of Community Organizations, or NWFCO), a coalition of several northwest states' Citizen Action Networks and other groups. A major legislative champion in Washington State is Rep. Bob Hasegawa (D-Seattle). In Maryland, the campaign was initiated by the Wisconsin-based Center for State Innovation (CSI), the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and the Progressive States Network. Progressive Maryland is a prominent NGO supporter. CSI has done detailed analyses of the Washington and Oregon initiatives and their projected benefits.

For grassroots efforts and petitions in other states, see <http://publicbankinginstitute.org>

Ellen Brown is an attorney, author and president of the Public Banking Institute. ★

Back on Uncle Sam's Plantation

By Star Parker

Six years ago I wrote a book called "Uncle Sam's Plantation." I wrote the book to tell my own story of what I saw living inside the welfare state and my own transformation out of it.

I said in that book that indeed there are two Americas. A poor America on socialism and a wealthy America on capitalism.

I talked about government programs like Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS), Emergency Assistance to Needy Families with Children (EANF), Section 8 Housing, and Food Stamps.

A vast sea of perhaps well intentioned government programs, all initially set into motion in the 1960's, that were going to lift the nation's poor out of poverty.

A benevolent Uncle Sam welcomed mostly poor black Americans onto the government plantation. Those who accepted the invitation switched mindsets from "How do I take care of myself?" to "What do I have to do to stay on the plantation?"

Instead of solving economic problems, government welfare socialism created monstrous moral and spiritual problems. The kind of problems that are inevitable when individuals turn responsibility for their lives over to others.

The legacy of American socialism is our blighted inner cities, dysfunctional inner city schools, and broken black families.

Through God's grace, I found my way out. It was then that I understood what freedom meant and how great this country is.

I had the privilege of working on welfare reform in 1996, passed by a Republican congress and signed into law by a Democrat president. A few years after enactment, welfare roles were down fifty percent.

I thought we were on the road to moving socialism out of our poor black communities and replacing it with wealth producing American capitalism.

But, incredibly, we are going in the opposite direction.

Instead of poor America on socialism becoming more like rich American on capitalism, rich America on capitalism is



Star Parker

becoming like poor America on socialism.

Uncle Sam has welcomed our banks onto the plantation and they have said, "Thank you, Suh."

Now, instead of thinking about what creative things need to be done to serve customers, they are thinking about what they have to tell Massah in order to get their cash.

There is some kind of irony that this is all happening under our first black president on the 200th anniversary of the birthday of Abraham Lincoln.

Worse, socialism seems to be the element of our new young president. And maybe even more troubling, our corporate executives seem happy to move onto the plantation.

In an op-ed on the opinion page of the Washington Post, Mr. Obama is clear that the goal of his trillion dollar spending plan is much more than short term economic stimulus.

"This plan is more than a prescription for short-term spending-it's a strategy for America's long-term growth and opportunity in areas such as renewable energy, health care, and education."

Perhaps more incredibly, Obama seems to think that government taking over an economy is a new idea. Or that massive growth in government can take place "with unprecedented transparency and accountability."

Yes, sir, we heard it from Jimmy Carter when he created the Department of Energy, the Synfuels Corporation, and the Department of Education.

Or how about the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 -- The War on Poverty -- which President Johnson said "...does not merely expand old programs or improve what is already being done. It charts a new course. It strikes at the causes, not just the consequences of poverty."

Trillions of dollars later, black poverty is the same. But black families are not, with triple the incidence of single parent homes and out of wedlock births.

It's not complicated. Americans can accept Barack Obama's invitation to move onto the plantation. Or they can choose personal responsibility and freedom.

Does anyone really need to think about what the choice should be? ★★★

Continued from page 2 • Hunting Rights Gone

commit any violation and could just as easily have not acknowledged Officer Fulton's request waving me in from 200 meters out in the river. My vehicle and boat launch were five miles upstream on the other side of the river. But I respected his request and complied, only to get interrogated and chastised for something I did not do. I vowed to fight this citation and began the process." Winegarden reports that he was appointed a public defender in the case, who did nothing but instruct him to pay the fine of \$167.00. Winegarden did.

Winegarden maintains all the citations were excessive and unwarranted, yet opted to forfeit (pay) the fine amount for each. He states that he did this due in part to the print on the reverse of the tickets that clearly states that paying a fine is not an admittance of guilt and he never knew about the clause in the regulations that state the 3-strike rule; as it reportedly appears nowhere in the waterfowl regulations.

Reportedly, 6 months after his 3rd violation, Winegarden received a notice of 2 year suspension. On this Winegarden stated, "... the subsequent WDFW suspension came on the heels of my forced decision to pay the fines instead of hiring or in hind sight that I even needed an attorney. I couldn't afford my own legal counsel due to economic hardships and was issued a public defender on the Nov 2005 citation. The secretive operations of WDFW are not openly released to the public; therefore WDFW blatantly violates the Constitutional rights of citizens without their knowledge. Case in point: when the WDFW labels these citations as 'convictions' in spite of a trial, confrontation clause or other due process it, clearly violates the 5th and 6th amendments! To this day WDFW operates under severe scrutiny as there was, and still is, no disclosure notice set forth in the Washington Game regulations informing the public that a 3 citation/suspension rule exists. WDFW never presented prior notice or instruction to me that opting to pay a fine on a citation regardless would result in hunting or fishing suspension based upon their definition of 'conviction'. A very inexorable decision affecting many people's lives."



Darci and Scott Winegarden

Winegarden continued, "I immediately sent notice to the WDFW about this suspension and submitted an appeal for a hearing. I received notice via regular mail that July 13, 2006 would be the conference call hearing. During this call in July 2006 every attempt I made to question the validity of this suspension notice was flatly denied because the WDFW hearings panel ... refused to allow my testimony regarding the history of the 3 prior citations. I instructed them these were not court ordered convictions but rather only minor citations that I opted to pay in lieu of expensive attorney fees. Each time I referred to the context of those minor citations the biased WDFW operatives would refute discussing them because they were considered convictions ... and ultimately they denied my appeal. They had no intent on listening to facts."

Winegarden went on to file a petition for reconsideration in August, 2006, under RCW 34.05.470, something he claims he has still never received any sort of disposition.

Having not heard, ultimately, what the final determination was regarding his suspension, Winegarden, who purchased a hunting license, kept doing what he loved. He claims to have been checked by two separate WDFW agents who found nothing wrong before running into WDFW's Jon Horn in January of 2007, who cited Winegarden for hunting on a suspended license.

This began Winegarden's real legal battles and, reportedly, true harassment by WDFW agents. Winegarden hired an attorney, who it has been said, stated that fighting this mess wouldn't be a problem.

Winegarden, who maintains he did not hunt at all from the time he was initially cited for hunting on a suspended license, acted as a non-

Continued on page 14

Continued from page 1 • Pedophile Gets Prison Term

Attorney's Office. John Andrews was represented by defense attorney Jeni Feinberg as he pled guilty to Attempted Unlawful Sexual Penetration in the 1st Degree. Andrews was sentenced on January 14, 2011, to 16 months in prison and 10 years of post-prison supervision by Circuit Court Judge Lorenzo Mejia.

Back in 2002, The US~ Oregon Observer, now the US-Observer reported that John Andrews set-up his brother Steve on false sex abuse charges. The Observer proved Steve's innocence and he was subsequently acquitted.

During the course of our investigation we discovered that John Andrews had raped his own daughter when she was a young girl and we made our findings public. John's ex-wife stated, "I came into the room and found him on top of our daughter." We received calls and petty threats from friends of John Andrews at the time - some from members of the Church he attended, where he held the office of Deacon.

Many citizens would be irate at the short prison term that John Aaron Andrews received, yet the real sentence is that Andrews is now required to register as a sex-offender for life. This basically means that his life is over, and in many cases a criminal who sexually molests and rapes children has a very tough

time of it in prison. In fact, many Pedophiles have been attacked and even murdered while in prison for their crimes against innocent children.

Editor's Note: The names of the young victims in this article have been withheld in an effort to protect them from further trauma.

The US-Observer has watched John Andrews for the past 9 years. We watched the injustice as Jackson County Circuit Court Judge Daniel Harris assisted John Andrews in taking his Mother's estate from his two brothers Darrell and Steve. We also witnessed the fact that Andrews avoided prosecution for raping his own daughter. At this time we are concerned that there is a high probability that there are other young victims of John Andrews who have been too afraid to come forward - this is far too often the case concerning the victims of predatory sexual pervers who tragically violate them.

The Observer's main business is vindicating the victims of false prosecutions. However, while we take on false and manufactured sex abuse charges, which are literally rampant today, we are also acutely aware that there are many valid charges of

sex abuse and that we must strive to be just as adamant regarding justice in the cases that are valid as we are in the cases that are unwarranted and unjust.

A VOICE FROM THE GRAVE

The following letter was written by my friend Darrell Andrews to his brother John. As stated above, John, with the help of a third-party had set his brother Steve up on false sex abuse charges back in 2001-2002. Darrell died before he could deliver this letter to his brother...

Where were you John?

1. When your brother Stephen was forcibly and without warning, removed, by the Oregon State Police, from his duties as caregiver for our alzheimered mother leaving her abandoned, helpless, and in danger for over two hours, all by the order of a tainted Josephine County Grand Jury?

2. Where were you John when Stephen had to pay a heavy bail for his freedom just so that he could work on his defense against the charges

that were, in the end, proven false and proving that the (in)justice system had not properly investigated his case. Can you, John, explain to us why the Jackson County Justice Department (with whom you are closely associated) prosecuted Stephen's case in Josephine County? Why did you involve yourself in the false allegations by Nancy Huntley, a friend of yours? This case cost Stephen a huge sum of money for Attorney and Investigation fees and has reduced him to poverty for the rest of his life. Why didn't you come forth and help me save our innocent brother from the "Wolf Pack" attack by Jackson and Josephine Counties? I think I can understand why now. In retrospect I can see that you have a hatred for Stephen that is totally unreasonable and unfair. How could anyone hate their own brother so much as to attempt, to have that brother unjustly imprisoned on false charges? We now know that you manipulated some of your "friends" in the Jackson County Sheriff's Department to see that our brother was treated in such an inhumane and unjust manner. Remember John, eternity is a long, long time!

Darrell Andrews

Continued from page 1 • An American Citizen's Duty



hyphenated term of their own desire to set them apart from the rest. And, they readily believe that they ARE special and that they should have rights above everyone else.

So, just what does it mean to be an American citizen anymore? Are we so far removed from having to do that we are simply complacent to just be whatever we're told to be? When did the spirit that was the American Way die? When was the American Dream attained so the rest would be a nightmare of authoritarian rule? When did we give up on ourselves?

It used to be a citizen's duty to protect the Republic and his/her neighbor. Well, we got so caught-up with competing with our neighbors on a material level that kindness and fellowship fell from our way of life and we have, literally, become islands unto ourselves - afraid of everyone and thing around us.

The sad fact is most people need the government to be their parents, to protect them - from themselves, even!

People are so far removed from their citizen's duty of old that they have even lost the knowledge of the Republic, instead replacing it with a democracy which has been designed to give everyone the feeling of having a voice.

It's a fake feeling, let me tell you!

It is time to do our citizen's duty! Just what is that you wonder?

Well, according to conventional modern interpretations, in order to be a good American you must (as Chris Seabury, an eHow Contributor, lists):

Follow All Regulations

1. In America, it is a citizen's duty to obey the laws enacted by the government, interpreted by the courts, and enforced by the police.

Jury Duty

2. Citizens are often called for jury duty, which they are required to perform. In the United States, all suspects have a right to due process and a trial by jury. Part of ensuring that the criminal justice system works properly is having citizens serve on juries in trials.

Witness

3. If you are witness to a crime, you could be summoned as a witness. It is your duty as a citizen to inform the authorities of everything that you saw. You could also be called if you did not witness the crime but have information relevant to the case.

Taxes

4. It is all American citizens' constitutional duty to pay taxes. Taxes are necessary to ensure that various services can be provided, such as national defense, infrastructure, public works, government operations and more.

Selective Service System

5. When American male citizens become 18 years old, they must register with the Selective Service System. Should the government employ a military draft, this is how the government would choose those who would be drafted.

Poppycock! Yeah, I just used that word. That list outlines a good little boy or girl who does what they are told! It has nothing to do with being an American, and honoring that which sets us apart.

I believe that to do our citizen's duty we have to become champions of the Constitution. Know it. Show it. Fight to your last breath to protect it. It IS the Republic - at least the foundation that it was created upon. Get to know your neighbors and offer them a hand with something they need. Go to your city council and county commissioner meetings and be involved!

Perhaps the most applicable outline for a modern citizen's duty comes from January 26, 1883, when Theodore Roosevelt wrote "The Duties of American Citizenship." It, in part, states:

"... It ought to be axiomatic in this country that every man must devote a reasonable share of his time to doing his duty in the Political life of the community. No man has a right to shirk his political duties under whatever plea of pleasure or business; and while such shirking may be pardoned in those of small means it is entirely unpardonable in those among whom it

is most common -- in the people whose circumstances give them freedom in the struggle for life. In so far as the community grows to think rightly, it will likewise grow to regard the young man of means who shirks his duty to the State in time of peace as being only one degree worse than the man who thus shirks it in time of war. A great many of our men in business, or of our young men who are bent on enjoying life (as they have a perfect right to do if only they do not sacrifice other things to enjoyment), rather plume themselves upon being good citizens if they even vote; yet voting is the very least of their duties. Nothing worth gaining is ever gained without effort. You can no more have freedom without striving and suffering for it than you can win success as a banker or a lawyer without labor and effort, without self-denial in youth and the display of a ready and alert intelligence in middle age. The people who say that they have not time to attend to politics are simply saying that they are unfit to live in a free community. Their place is under a despotism; or if they are content to do nothing but vote, you can take despotism tempered by an occasional plebiscite, like that of the second Napoleon. In one of Lowell's magnificent stanzas about the Civil War he speaks of the fact which his countrymen were then learning, that freedom is not a gift that carries long in the hands of cowards: nor yet does it tarry long in the hands of the sluggard and the idler, in the hands of the man so much absorbed in the pursuit of pleasure or in the pursuit of gain, or so much wrapped up in his own easy home life as to be unable to take his part in the rough struggle with his fellow men for political supremacy. If freedom is worth having, if the right of self-government is a valuable right, then the one and the other must be retained exactly as our forefathers acquired them, by labor, and especially by labor in organization, that is in combination with our fellows who have the same interests and the same principles. We should not accept the excuse of the business man who attributed his failure to the fact that his social duties were so pleasant and engrossing that he had no time left for work in his office; nor would we pay much heed to his further statement that he did not like business anyhow because he thought the morals of the business community by no means what they should be, and saw that the great successes were most often won by men of the Jay Gould stamp. It is just the same way with politics. It makes one feel half angry and half amused, and wholly contemptuous, to find men of high business or social standing in the community saying that they really have not got time to go to ward meetings, to organize political clubs, and to take a personal share in all the important details of practical politics; men who further urge against their going the fact that they think the condition of political morality low, and are afraid that they may be required to do what is not right if they go into politics.

"The first duty of an American citizen, then, is that he shall work in politics; his second duty is that he shall do that work in a practical manner; and his third is that it shall be done in accord with the highest principles of honor and justice....

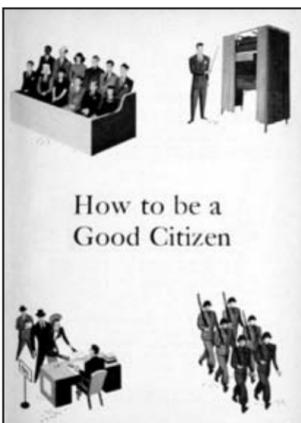
"Finally, the man who wishes to do his duty as a citizen in our country must be imbued through and through with the spirit of Americanism. I am not saying this as a matter of spread-eagle rhetoric: I am saying it quite soberly as a piece of matter-of-fact, common-sense advice, derived from my own experience of others. Of course, the question of Americanism has several sides. If a man is an educated man, he must show his Americanism by not getting misled into following out and trying to apply all the theories of the political thinkers of other countries, such as Germany and France, to our own entirely different conditions. He must not get a fad, for instance, about responsible government; and above all things he must not, merely because he is intelligent, or a college professor well read in political literature, try to discuss our institutions when he has had no practical knowledge of how they are worked. Again, if he is a wealthy man, a man of means and standing, he must really feel, not merely affect to feel, that no social differences obtain save such as a man can in some way himself make by his own actions. People sometimes ask me if there is not a prejudice against a man of wealth and education in ward politics. I do not think that there is, unless the man in turn shows

that he regards the facts of his having wealth and education as giving him a claim to superiority aside from the merit he is able to prove himself to have in actual service. Of course, if he feels that he ought to have a little better treatment than a carpenter, a plumber, or a butcher, who happens to stand beside him, he is going to be thrown out of the race very quickly, and probably quite roughly; and if he starts in to patronize and elaborately condescend to these men he will find that they resent this attitude even more. Do not let him think about the matter at all. Let him go into the political contest with no more thought of such matters than a college boy gives to the social standing of the members of his own and rival teams in a hotly contested football match. As soon as he begins to take an interest in politics (and he will speedily not only get interested for the sake of politics, but also take a good healthy interest in playing the game itself -- an interest which is perfectly normal and praise-worthy, and to which only a prig would object), he will begin to work up the organization in the way that will be most effective, and he won't care a rap about who is put to work with him, save in so far as he is a good fellow and an efficient worker. There was one time that a number of men who think as we do here tonight (one of the number being myself) got hold of one of the assembly districts of New York, and ran it in really an ideal way, better than any other assembly district has ever been run before or since by either party. We did it by hard work and good organization; by working practically, and yet by being honest and square in motive and method: especially did we do it by all turning in as straight-out Americans without any regard to distinctions of race origin. Among the many men who did a great deal in organizing our victories was the son of a Presbyterian clergyman, the nephew of a Hebrew rabbi, and two well-known Catholic gentlemen. We also had a Columbia College professor (the stroke-oar of a university crew), a noted retail butcher, and the editor of a local German paper, various brokers, bankers, lawyers, bricklayers and a stonemason who was particularly useful to us, although on questions of theoretic rather than applied politics he had a decidedly socialistic turn of mind.

"Again, questions of race origin, like questions of creed, must not be considered: we wish to do good work, and we are all Americans, pure and simple. In the New York legislature, when it fell to my lot to choose a committee -- which I always esteemed my most important duty at Albany -- no less than three out of the four men I chose were of Irish birth or parentage; and three abler and more fearless and disinterested men never sat in a legislative body; while among my especial political and personal friends in that body was a gentleman from the southern tier of counties, who was, I incidentally found out, a German by birth, but who was just as straight United States as if his ancestors had come over here in the Mayflower or in Henry Hudson's yacht. Of course, none of these men of Irish or German birth would have been worth their salt had they continued to act after coming here as Irishmen or Germans, or as anything but plain straight-out Americans. We have not any room here for a divided allegiance. A man has got to be an American and nothing else; and he has no business to be mixing us up with questions of foreign politics, British or Irish, German or French, and no business to try to perpetuate their language and customs in the land of complete religious toleration and equality. If, however, he does become honestly and in good faith an American, then he is entitled to stand precisely as all other Americans stand, and it is the height of un-Americanism to discriminate against him in any way because of creed or birthplace. No spirit can be more thoroughly alien to American institutions, than the spirit of the Know-Nothings.

"In facing the future and in striving, each according to the measure of his individual capacity, to work out the salvation of our land, we should be neither timid pessimists nor foolish optimists. We should recognize the dangers that exist and that threaten us: we should neither overestimate them nor shrink from them, but steadily fronting them should set to work to overcome and beat them down. Grave perils are yet to be encountered in the stormy course of the Republic -- perils from political corruption, perils from individual laziness, indolence and timidity, perils springing from the greed of the unscrupulous rich, and from the anarchic violence of the thrifless and turbulent poor. There is every reason why we should recognize them, but there is no reason why we should fear them or doubt our capacity to overcome them, if only each will, according to the measure of his ability, do his full duty, and endeavor so to live as to deserve the high praise of being called a good American citizen."

For me, this is the citizen I want to be. How about you?



A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.



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Obama to push gun-control measures



By Julie Mason
Washington Examiner

President Obama's decision to push new gun-control measures in the wake of the mass shootings in Tucson, Ariz., is out of character and faces dubious prospects with a new Republican majority in the House.

Though he omitted any reference to gun control in his State of the Union address, three of Obama's key advisers assured reporters the issue is on the president's to-do list.

"He's going to address this," senior adviser David Plouffe told NBC News. "It's a very important issue and I know there's going to be a lot of debate on the hill."

Added press secretary Robert Gibbs, "I wouldn't rule out that at some point the president talks about the issues surrounding gun violence. I don't have a timetable or, obviously, what he would say."

Obama's style is to raise contentious issues

then defer follow-through, as he has done with immigration reform, or forge compromise, as he did with his Afghanistan war strategy, health care and more.

Whether the prospective push for new gun-control laws is a response to Tucson or reaction to criticism of the State of the Union is uncertain.

Obama senior adviser David Axelrod told political bloggers this week that the speech was written to focus more narrowly on the economy. He promised Obama will "engage" on the gun-control issue.

But in any case, it may be an engagement without the ring: Republican control of the House and Democrats' withered majority in the Senate make gun control a tough sell for at least the next two years.

"The anti-gun people I am sure would frame it as losing more rights," said Susan MacManus, a political scientist at the University of South Florida.

A safer political bet for Obama is to frame the debate in terms of the danger to law enforcement officers from a proliferation of guns, and to restrict any new lawmaking effort to assault weapons, she said.

A recent poll for ABC News by Langer Research Associates found no shift or surge in support for new gun laws following the Tucson mass shooting earlier this month.

The poll found 52 percent of Americans favor tougher-gun control laws, down from 61 percent in 2007. Forty-five percent oppose stricter gun laws.

Still, there is room to legislate.

About 57 percent support banning the type of high-capacity ammunition clips used in the Tucson massacre, and 83 percent support a registry to keep guns from the mentally ill or drug abusers, according to the poll.

Many Republicans and gun enthusiasts had worried that Obama would prove a tough adversary on gun control. But in 2009, he signed two bills that allowed concealed weapons in national parks and permitted passengers with guns on most Amtrak trains.

The administration last year looked at reinstating a ban on assault weapons, but never took action.

The National Rifle Association, which lobbied for the Amtrak and parks laws, could not be reached for comment. The Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, which has been critical of Obama's lack of leadership on the issue, did not respond to a request for comment. ★★★

The experts agree...



Gun control works!

Running count of U.S. gun deaths goes on tour

(Reuters) - A truck carrying a billboard with a running tally of the number of Americans killed by gun violence since the January 8 massacre in Tucson departed New York on Wednesday for a two month tour of 25 U.S. states.

The Arizona shootings left U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords and 12 others wounded, and six dead.

As the billboard left Times Square the tally of those killed in gun violence since the Tucson incident was given as 1,300, with another 24 added by mid-morning.

The truck is the idea of New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg's Mayors Against Illegal Guns -- a group of more than 500 leaders of

U.S. cities who want the U.S. Congress to pass laws requiring stiffer background checks for gun buyers.

"It is time for Washington to listen to the 250,000 Americans that have signed our petition and take action; since the Tucson shooting more than 1,300 people have been killed with guns in the United States and that number continues to grow," Bloomberg said in a statement.

The group's online petition can be found at www.fixgunchecks.org.

A spokesman for the National Rifle Association, the country's best-known gun rights group, said the truck was an attempt by Bloomberg to court media attention.

"It would be more constructive if the truck showed how many prosecutions (for gun crimes) they've had," said NRA spokesman Andrew Arundalam.

Among the drivers of the truck is Omar Sheeha, whose sister Reema was killed in the April 16, 2007, massacre at Virginia Tech in which a gunman shot dead 32 people.

In January, Bloomberg caused a stir after announcing New York City investigators had performed an undercover sting in Arizona in which they said they bought guns like the one used in the Tucson rampage without a legally required background check.

(Reporting by Bernd Debusmann Jr.; Editing by Mark Egan and Jerry Norton)

Data Shoots Holes in Bloomberg's Anti-Gun Billboard Campaign



Michael Bloomberg

BELLEVUE, WA - While anti-gun New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg is sending a moving billboard truck around the country claiming that 34 Americans are "murdered with guns every day," the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms says the mayor is selectively ignoring the hundreds of lives saved every day because firearms are there when needed.

CCRKBA Chairman Alan Gottlieb, citing

research that places the number of lives saved annually with firearms at between 800,000 and 2.5 million - frequently without even a shot being fired - said that translates to "lives saved that Bloomberg chooses to ignore."

"If you take the estimates and divide them by 365," Gottlieb observed, "you realize that between 2,100 and 6,800 people successfully defend themselves every day of the year with firearms in the United States. The majority of those incidents result in nobody being injured or killed. In some cases where shots are fired by armed citizens, several lives are saved. Bloomberg and his cronies at Mayors Against Illegal Guns evidently don't think their lives are valuable enough to notice."

Gottlieb co-authored America Fights Back: Armed Self-Defense in a Violent Age. That book detailed scores of cases in which legally-

armed citizens successfully defended themselves from violent attack.

"What Mayor Bloomberg is not telling you with his roving billboard," Gottlieb noted, "is that violent crime has declined during the same period when gun ownership in this country has skyrocketed, and the number of Americans legally licensed to carry concealed handguns has risen dramatically. Today, more than 6.2 million private citizens are legally carrying in more than 40 states, and yet according to FBI data, violent crime has decreased."

"If Bloomberg was really interested in public safety rather than publicity," Gottlieb concluded, "he would park that truck and take all the money he's spending on the billboard and the fuel, and give it to local gun clubs for firearms safety training and education."



OPPOSE BATFE GUN REGULATION IN BORDER STATES

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The goal of *US-Observer* is to ensure “due process” and “equal protection under the law.”

Citizens who have founded and support it believe in the Bill of Rights and Article 1, Section 1, of the Oregon Constitution which states:

“We declare that all men, when they form a social compact are equal in right; that all power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority and instituted for their peace, safety, and happiness and they have at all times a right to alter, reform, or abolish the government in such a manner they think proper. This enumeration of rights and privileges shall not be construed to impair or deny others retained by the people.”

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Continued from page 1 • TEAM 7's “Abusive” Conduct Begg Lawsuit

where Havice allegedly told another member of Jason and Don's Explorer Post; “the Libby brothers were a couple of clowns who shouldn't be in the program.”

As time passed, more issues arose within the Explorer program. An allegation was made about Jason Libby. Concerned and upset, Jason consulted his mentor, Officer Don Lane of MPD. He was reportedly assured that everything would be fine. No charges ever came of the allegation, but Jason was continuously harassed by MPD Officer Lemhouse, who apparently knew the person making the accusations. The following day, MPD Officer and head of the Explorer program, Corey Schwab called Jason into his office and informed him he was terminated from the program. Don Libby inquired as to why his brother was terminated, but with no success. He also turned in his uniform and the brothers were no longer “Explorers,” after five years of service.

Months later, the Libby's were denied re-entry to the Explorers due to Officer Havice's reported disapproval. At this point the Libby's ventured into other businesses and Jason became engaged to officer Havice's daughter. After three years of marriage, Jason and Monica divorced, despite having a child together. Jason stated that his relationship with Officer Havice during his marriage was up and down. At one point Officer Havice played on the Libby's softball team, and another time he reportedly threatened him with physical harm.

In 2009, the Libby brother's construction business was in peril due to the poor housing market, so they pursued other work. Jackson County Security was now a reality for the Libby's. The Libby's became certified Armed/Unarmed Private Security Professionals through the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training with the State of Oregon and started their new business.

MPD Officers Professional Conduct Questioned

Working in security requires occasional contact with Police, and shortly after Jackson County Security opened for business, the harassment began. MPD Officer Whitman III harassed Jason Libby at his place of employment, for parking his vehicle in two parking spots in a private parking lot. The following weekend at approximately one o'clock in the morning, at the same private parking lot of Jason's employment, Officer Whitman cited him for parking in a handicap spot while unloading equipment from his trunk.

July 4, 2010 – While attempting to vacate a group of people trespassing at the Medford Medical Eye Center, Jason and Don Libby reportedly had one person from the “crowd” who wouldn't leave the property. After explaining to this person that he was trespassing, an argument occurred and when physical and verbal threats were made towards Jackson County Security, they placed Ronald Tedford under arrest for disorderly conduct and criminal trespass and called MPD for assistance. MPD Officer Dennis was first on the scene, where he explained to Jackson County Security that it was a busy night. Officer Dennis was citing Tedford for trespass, when MPD Officer Wulff from Team 7 arrived at the scene and decided to take over. After waiting over an hour, MPD Officer's Reimer and Wulff approached the Libby's and informed them they were being cited for harassment. While explaining why they were being cited, Officer Wulff stated that he had to be fair and cite both parties. Although the brothers' actions were completely legal, they were charged with a misdemeanor and Tedford received a violation.

According to police records, Tedford has four prior burglary charges, which are only part of his three page rap sheet. According to the Mail Tribune, Tedford was arrested on a separate occasion for burglary, criminal mischief, and trespass. Deputies reportedly confiscated burglar's tools and amphetamine from Tedford and his accomplice during his prior arrest.

“Pretty Weird How Cool the Cops Were This Time”

During a recent attempt to make contact with Mr. Tedford, I discovered that his apartment, which was close to the Eye Center, was vacated. After attempting to make contact with other witnesses, I turned a corner and noticed two ladies sitting on their porch, smoking a joint. As I approached them, they quickly put it out. They stated that Ronald Tedford was a good friend, and they were witnesses on the night of July 4. They weren't too fond of Jackson County Security for arresting Tedford, but stated that MPD officers were “way cool” to them on the night in question. One lady stated that it was “pretty weird how cool the cops were this time.” Weird yes, after the Libby's, no question whatsoever.

Early January 2011 - While working a separate job, Jason Libby witnessed Officer Whitman III



Jason and Don Libby

in uniform, staring at him in the parking lot as he exited his place of employment. Days later, his lead supervisor informed Jason that Officer Whitman III was making allegations against Jason and was telling his employer that Jason shouldn't be working there. Jason called Internal Affairs at MPD to report the incident, and stated that to date, he has not received a returned phone call. This is status quo for MPD Internal Affairs Department – cops protecting bad cops...

“I Originally Hired Jackson County Security, Because the Police Took Over Two Hours to Respond to Emergency Calls.”

January 23, 2011 - During an attempt to vacate someone who had failed to pay at a client's hotel, Don Libby was cited for impersonating a peace officer. Don, along with the hotel manager and owner stated that Debbie Vanos, who was to be vacated, was given notice seventy-two hours prior when the hotel manager informed her that Don was with Jackson County Security.

Earlier that day, the owner of the hotel met with MPD Officer Sgt. Easton, his attorney and the hotel manager to find out how to vacate Vanos. Sgt. Easton reportedly told the hotel owner that since he'd given her seventy-two hours notice, she had until midnight and that his shift ended before then, but the night shift could help if needed. At approximately midnight, the hotel owner had Jackson County Security vacate Vanos from the premises and she reportedly left without any altercations.

At approximately 5:00 am, Vanos allegedly began calling Donald Libby and harassing him, making threats of suing him and stated she contacted MPD and they gave her his phone number and let her back in the room. Don contacted the hotel manager and confirmed that Vanos was back in the room and that the Sheriff's department was en route since MPD wouldn't do anything.

MPD Jumps into Bed with Known Prostitute and Illegal Drug User?

Don went to the scene to assist the Sheriff and upon arrival, was informed that Vanos had unauthorized guests in her room. Don, along with the hotel manager told the guests to leave, since they weren't authorized to be there. Vanos then called MPD. MPD Sgt. Ianieri and Officer Reimer arrived on the scene and Don was cited for impersonating a peace officer. Don was told by Officer Reimer that Vanos and two of her friends stated that three Jackson County Security Officers identified themselves as police officers and that was the reason for the citation. I should note that during the course of our investigation, there were allegations that Vanos and others staying at the room were involved with illegal drugs.

“I Was Present and Personally Informed Ms. Vanos That Donald Libby was a Jackson County Security Officer.”

Despite statements from the hotel owner, manager, and security officer Don Libby that he never impersonated a police officer, Don was still issued a citation, which is a felony charge. It was also reported that another witness stated after the incident that she only went along with what Vanos said because she didn't have a place to stay and thought her statement would allow her to remain in the room.

Career Criminal Debbie Vanos?

According to credible information obtained, Vanos has an EXTENSIVE twenty-two, yes, twenty-two page rap-sheet with crimes committed in at least eight states. Vanos' charges range from over twenty-five arrests for prostitution, felony conviction for fleeing police in Minnesota, numerous controlled substance charges, numerous battery on a police officer charges, bribery, burglary, and get this; unlawful

possession of a hotel key in Las Vegas, Nevada. Vanos was arrested in Medford on January 25, 2011 for Disorderly Conduct during an altercation at the Hotel in which she was allowed to stay after MPD refused to vacate her from the premises for non-payment, stating it was a “Civil” issue. According to records, Vanos was also cited for forcible entry and interfering with making a police

report.

Vanos went to trial on February 11, 2011 before the hotel owner could “Legally” vacate her for over four weeks of non-payment. It was reported that the presiding judge gave her four extra days to vacate the hotel after the trial ended.

“I Was Laughed At By Dispatch When Attempting to Call on Police for an Emergency Because of My Accent.”

While questioning the hotel owner, he stated that not only did MPD officers insinuate that he was to let Vanos stay in the room, he stated that they were intimidating, unprofessional and threatening in how they conducted themselves. He said that other hotel owners had complained to him about MPD's night shift being unreasonable. He stated that he'd had enough and was thinking about taking legal action. He also stated that MPD wouldn't enforce the law and they cited Jackson County Security for upholding the law. The Hotel owner explained, “I have a business to run and will do what is necessary to protect myself and my business.”

MPD Knowingly Files False Charge

Since the citation for impersonating a peace officer was issued, Don and Jason said that they and their employees have been followed by MPD on numerous occasions. Don was recently pulled over and cited for a faulty license plate light, and more recently, Jason was cited for talking on his cell phone while using his vehicle in the capacity of his employment, which is completely legal according to Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 811.507, clause g.

Other reports indicate that an argument between MPD Sergeant Mak and one of the Libbys took place regarding the Libby's alleged harassment charge on July 4, 2010, wherein Sgt. Mak asked, “What did you do to bring these actions upon yourself?” We have received information that Sgt. Mak has a family member who owns Maksimum Security in Medford - This company is in direct competition with Jackson County Security...

The Libby's have received threatening emails, phone calls and text messages. It is more than apparent that the Libby's, who had reportedly never broken the law and never had a criminal charge, all of a sudden have a lengthy record, since starting their security business.

Don and Jason Libby have not only been harassed, cited for a felony, a misdemeanor, and minor traffic infractions, officer Havice's daughter, also Jason's former wife, told him recently that he and his brother were going to lose their business. Don was

suspended by the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training on February 8, 2011, jeopardizing his income and future employment as part owner of Jackson County Security. This confirms the warning from Jason's ex-wife.

Medford Police Chief, Randy Schoen has his work cut out for him as a few of his officers are adversely affecting the image of his entire department. If he fails to act, both he and MPD will experience the same bad publicity they encountered several years ago from the Medford Mail Tribune and the *US-Observer*.

Jackson County Security Officers, brothers and once highly enthused Explorers, who dreamed of being police officers, are now fighting back against the few MPD Officers who have all but ruined their business, and clean-records.

Editor's Note: Don Libby stated that his court date has been postponed and he hasn't been formally charged by Jackson County's District Attorney for “Impersonating a Peace Officer.” The Libby's stated they aren't waiting any longer and have sent a letter of intent to file a civil lawsuit against MPD. Don and Jason Libby's tragic story shows exactly how a few bad cops can make an entire police department appear dirty and corrupt.

Anyone with information regarding this case is urged to contact the US-Observer at 541-474-7885. All calls are strictly confidential. ★



Debbie Vanos



MPD Chief Randy Schoen

Pennsylvania Judge Convicted in Alleged 'Kids for Cash' Scheme

By Lindsey Davis, Frank Mastropolo and Lauren Sher

Mom Confronts Convicted Judge After Verdict



(ABC News) - A former juvenile court judge in Pennsylvania could face more than 10 years in prison after being convicted in what prosecutors called a "kids for cash" scheme.

Prosecutors say former Luzerne County Judge Mark Ciavarella used children as pawns, locking them up unjustly in a plot to get rich. Ciavarella is accused of taking nearly \$1 million in kickbacks from owners of private detention centers in exchange for placing juvenile defendants at their facilities, often for minor crimes. Ciavarella claims that the payment he received from a developer of the PA Child Care facility was legal and denies that he ever incarcerated kids for money.

"Absolutely never took a dime to send a kid anywhere," said Ciavarella.

Ciavarella, 61, was found guilty of 12 out of 39 charges on Friday, including racketeering, money laundering and conspiracy, in connection with the nearly \$1 million payment from Robert Mericle, the developer of the PA Child Care center. He plans to appeal. Ciavarella was acquitted on charges of bribery and extortion in relation to additional payments from the center's builder and owner.

Families complain of Ciavarella's rapid-fire brand of justice and trials that lasted only minutes with even first-time offenders sent to detention centers.

In one reported case, Ciavarella sentenced a child to two years for joyriding in his mom's car. In another, he sentenced a college-bound high school girl to three months in juvenile detention for creating a website that made fun of her assistant principal. Some of the kids he ordered locked up were as young as 10.

"The numbers of children going into placement in Luzerne County tended to be two to three times higher than in other counties," said Marsha Levick, deputy director of the Juvenile Law Center in Philadelphia.

In October 2009, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court dismissed 4,000 juvenile delinquency cases Ciavarella handled from Jan. 1, 2003 to May 31, 2008. The court said that it "cannot have any confidence that Ciavarella decided any Luzerne County juvenile case fairly and impartially while he labored under the specter of his self-interested dealings with the facilities," and called Ciavarella's actions a "travesty of juvenile justice."

Though most of the affected youth have already served their time, many parents were outraged by Ciavarella's sentence, including Sandy Fonzo, who could not contain her anger.

Fonzo's son Edward Kenzakoski was sentenced by Ciavarella to juvenile detention in 2003 for possession of drug paraphernalia. Fonzo said her 17-year-old son had no prior record when he landed in Ciavarella's courtroom. She claims Kenzakoski never recovered from the months he served behind bars and years later, at 23, he killed himself.

"Do you remember me? Do you remember me? Do you remember my son? He was an all-star wrestler and he's gone," Fonzo screamed to Ciavarella as he exited the courthouse Friday.

Ciavarella remains free until sentencing. Fonzo said she expected to see Ciavarella carted off in handcuffs as the former judge often did to juveniles he sentenced.

Ciavarella is expected to get a minimum prison sentence of 12 years behind bars, according to prosecutors. To Fonzo, that is not justice.

"You know what he told everybody in court? They need to be held accountable for their actions," she yelled to Ciavarella Friday. "You need to be!!"

The case of alleged corruption first shocked Luzerne County residents in January 2009 when federal prosecutors announced that the respected county judges Ciavarella and Michael Conahan had pleaded guilty to tax evasion and honest services fraud. However, the plea deal and relatively light sentence were later rejected by a federal judge who ruled that Ciavarella had failed to accept responsibility for the crimes.

Wilkes-Barre residents exploded with anger when they heard that men they elected, and trusted to judge their children, had allegedly profited from their incarceration.

Conahan pleaded guilty to one count of racketeering conspiracy on July 23, 2010. He faces up to 20 years, but has not yet been sentenced.

Teens Sentenced by Ciavarella Speak Out

Eric Stefanski had never been in trouble before he found himself in front of Ciavarella, who took office in 1996.

"I was 12 years old when I got locked up. I had no clue what to say when he asked me how do I plead," Stefanski told "20/20" correspondent Jim Avila in a March 2009 report. "I was 12 years old. I didn't know too much about the court system."

Stefanski went joyriding with his mom's car and ran over a barrier, smashing the undercarriage. No one was hurt, not even

Stefanski, but in order to get his insurance to pay for the damage, his mom, Linda Donovan, had to file a police report. Donovan even thought an appearance before a judge would be good for her son and give him a little scare. She wasn't prepared for what happened when Eric came before Ciavarella.

"He read me my charges and said, 'How do you plead?' And I didn't know what to say, so I looked at my mom, and I guess she didn't know I was looking, and I said, 'Guilty,'" Stefanski recalled. "That's when I turned around, I looked at my mom and she started crying."

Stefanski was locked up for two years. He was not represented by an attorney, his mom said, because she didn't think he needed one.

"His first offense, he's so young, I just didn't think that it was necessary," Donovan said.

Juvenile Justice Exposed

It's not supposed to be like this in juvenile court, where incarceration is considered the

last resort, legal experts said. But Levick told ABC News she saw a disturbing trend inside Ciavarella's courtroom.

Levick claimed the kids going into placement in Luzerne County tended to be two to three times higher than other counties and the kids were being locked up for minor infractions. "A child who shoplifted a \$4 bottle of nutmeg," she said. "A child who was charged with conspiracy to shoplift because he was present when his friend was shoplifting. A child who put up a MySpace page, taunting her school administrator."

"I think what we have here in Luzerne County is probably the most egregious abuse of power in the history of the American legal system," Levick said.

Levick turned her findings over to the FBI, and the outcome rocked the Pennsylvania justice system.

Ciavarella and Conahan allegedly devised a plot to use their positions as judges to pad their pockets. They shut down the old county-run

juvenile detention center by first refusing to send kids there and, then, by cutting off funds, choking it out of existence.

They then allegedly replaced the facility with a cash cow -- a privately owned lockup built by the judges' cronies -- and forged a deal for the county to pay \$58 million for a 10-year period for its use. At the time, Conahan was serving as president judge of the Luzerne County Common Pleas Court, a position that allowed him to control the county-court budget. Ciavarella was the Luzerne County juvenile court judge.

In the judges' original plea deal, they admitted that they took more than \$2.6 million in payoffs from the private youth detention center between 2003 and 2006.

Prosecutors said the judges attempted to hide their income from the scheme by creating false records and routing payments through intermediaries. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court removed them from their duties after federal prosecutors filed charges Jan. 26, 2009. ★★★



Michael Conahan and Mark Ciavarella

Continued from page 11 • Hunting Rights Gone

hunting guide for family and friends on various occasions. It was on October 21, 2007 during such an outing that Winegarden was cited by game warden officer Ralph Downes for hunting on a suspended license, and according to Winegarden, obstruction of justice and using another's hunting license. The license issue reportedly arose when they found an old friend of Winegarden's license on the boat. Winegarden was arrested and the officer confiscated Winegarden's personal property, right down to Winegarden's son's shotgun.

On November 19, 2007 the trial on the first offense of hunting while suspended commenced. It lasted two days, and according to Winegarden was a complete disaster. He was found guilty and had to pay a \$1,100.00 fine and forfeit his shotgun. He immediately set about appealing the case.

In December of 2007 the same agent, Ralph Downes, found Winegarden again while Winegarden guided one of his sons and an old college friend while they hunted. Stating that he had received a "report" of illegal hunting activity, Downes arrested Winegarden on multiple charges and confiscated all of Winegarden's belongings, including his boat and all his gear. Winegarden would eventually be forced to buy back most of his belongings or face absolute forfeiture. Winegarden believes the

"we have a report" statement WDFW often uses is their modus operandi, clearing the way for them to cite people at will.

Over the next several years Winegarden was thrown into the legal realm of attorneys allegedly not doing their jobs, instead representing the interests of the court rather than that of their client. He was ultimately found guilty at every turn and once the state finished with him, the federal government filed charges against him on the reported prompting of one WDFW officer - these charges are pending.

The Winegarden's have since moved to Oregon following better jobs and he even found that he could hunt in the Beaver State. Recalling their move Winegarden stated, "My wife and I found different employment opportunities and decided to move out of Washington State. We

wife and I to purchase hunting licenses. So with that, my wife and I were set for the upcoming season. No problems at all occurred during the hunting season even after simple routine field checks by Oregon wildlife enforcement officers. To this day my wife and I have never been accused of violating any hunting laws nor have we received any citations in Oregon. The hunting season was going well when unexpectedly in January,

2009 I get a call from an operative of the Oregon state police telling me that they received a malevolent notice from Washington state fish and wildlife claiming I was suspended in that state and in accordance with the Compact Law I was going to be suspended in Oregon also. This was 8 months after I moved to Oregon ... I was very confused and unaware of the existence of any Compact law; I was a legal resident of Oregon! I was paying state income tax, and was a registered voter. I had a valid hunting and fishing license in Oregon. Yet under the persistence of Washington State, Oregon was now going to suspend my



Scott Winegarden and one of his sons

needed a change, and a break from the bureaucracy was enlightening. We moved south to Eugene, Oregon, putting us closer to family and the U of O, for which my brother-in-law is on the football coaching staff. It was a great move that we were excited about, and during our first summer here in Oregon my wife and I began enjoying the outdoors again. We purchased our crabbing licenses and hit the coast. Life was great. In September when bird season started, I inquired with ODFW regarding any issues preventing me from purchasing a hunting license in Oregon. ODFW licensing division sent me an email authorizing my

hunting license for life also." Instead of continuing to fight by following the rules of the system, something Winegarden now knows to be a losing battle, he contacted the US-Observer.

"I truly hope we can help Mr. Winegarden, and, at very least, see his hunting rights reinstated in Oregon," said Ron Lee a US-Observer investigative journalist. "However, I would prefer, if our investigation finds conclusive evidence, to unwind everything completely, so Mr. Winegarden can enjoy the freedoms he deserves."

Winegarden has his first hearing regarding the federal case on March 3.

Speaking on his experience with WDFW, Winegarden said, "I am not their first casualty and most likely will not be their last. These agencies blatantly usurp the system operating as a monarchy within an axis of power, whereby they dispatch disciples of evil both administratively and judicially, starting at the enforcement level, reducing peoples Constitutional rights to rubble. I am a military veteran just trying to make a life for my family here in Oregon, of which includes passing down what I learned as an outdoorsman from my father to my children and grandchildren. My rights to do this are being held hostage."

Please contact the US-Observer at 541-474-7885 if you have any information regarding Scott Winegarden or WDFW agents Brian Fulton, John Horn, Ralph Downes, and/or Jeff Lee, or have witnessed any WDFW agents arresting anyone at the Coupeville, WA city boat launch. Also of interest is Robert Scott Stanley of Kennewick, WA.

Editor's Note: If any hunters out there want to tell their story, please contact the US-Observer at editor@usobserver.com. ★★★

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BORDER WAR

For Immigration Agents, Slaying Highlights Perils



By John Burnett

(NPR) -U.S. and Mexican investigators are looking into the killing of an American Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent and the wounding of another in northern Mexico this week by suspected drug traffickers. The incident has rank-and-file agents on both sides of the border accusing ICE of failing to protect them.

Special Agent Jaime Zapata was one of 30 ICE agents posted in Mexico. He and Special Agent Victor Avila were driving a big blue armored Chevy Suburban with diplomatic plates from San Luis Potosi to Mexico City.

Rep. Michael McCaul (R-TX), who was briefed by ICE, says the pair had stopped for lunch. When they left the restaurant, the gunmen followed them and ran them off the road. When the agents identified themselves, the cartel members opened fire. Mexico forbids U.S. law enforcement from carrying weapons on its territory.

The facts of the case raise questions: Why were federal agents driving a marked vehicle in an area with a known drug mafia presence that had a standing threat to kill U.S. officers?

"I would be asking questions regarding why they were in such a high-profile car," says Fred Burton, a former deputy chief of diplomatic security for the State Department who is now with the global intelligence firm Stratfor. "What intelligence was known about that route 24 hours ahead of time? Where was the failure point?"

Retired ICE Deputy Director Alonzo Pena, who has experience in Mexico, said in an interview that all embassy personnel drive those armored sport utility vehicles, and that the safety of agents is paramount. An ICE official, speaking on background, added that there were no embassy travel restrictions on the section of highway where the agents were attacked, and there were precautions taken to keep them out of cartel country.

But this and another incident have left ICE agents shaken, and wondering if the law enforcement agency they work for is adequately protecting them in an increasingly violent criminal environment.

"We definitely feel that the incident in Mexico is a clear indication that there is a significant problem, that our officers and our agents are outgunned, that we're not handling this situation on either side of the border appropriately," says Chris Crane, an active-duty ICE agent and president of the National ICE Council, which represents 7,000 agents and employees who work in detention and deportation operations. The union does not represent ICE federal investigators, special agents, or agents stationed overseas.

The Mexico shooting closely follows an incident that happened



Special Agent Jaime Zapata, murdered in Mexico

in San Antonio on Jan. 13. According to the police report obtained by NPR, masked gunmen burst into an ICE agent's apartment. They held his fiancée at gunpoint, molested her and, when they realized the agent wasn't there, left. The agent's job was to interview illegal immigrants in jail and decide whether they could be deported. The local ICE office declined to discuss the incident.

ICE moved the agent and his fiancée to another residence and sent out an e-mail warning to federal immigration agents in the Laredo-San Antonio region, but only after pressure from the union, Crane says. "I was outraged," he says. "We had to get in and call headquarters that night and say, 'Hey,



ICE Director John Morton

"We had to get in and call headquarters that night and say, 'Hey,

"We definitely feel that the incident in Mexico is a clear indication that there is a significant problem, that our officers and our agents are outgunned, that we're not handling this situation on either side of the border appropriately."

- ICE agent Chris Crane, president of the National ICE Council

this guy needs a protective detail, immediately. He needs to be relocated, immediately.' I mean, ICE doesn't even have a policy in place to address situations like this."

ICE agents complained for some time — because of the sensitivity of immigration policy — that the agency treats them as pseudo-cops. For instance, ICE agents contend they are not allowed to have Tasers, and the policies on use of handcuffs, batons and pepper spray are too restrictive.

Last June, local union presidents nationwide cast a vote of no confidence against ICE Director John Morton and Assistant Director Phyllis Coven.

Crane said the recent incidents in Mexico and San Antonio have deepened agents' concern about the agency's management and the growing climate of violence in which they work. ★★★

WHERE DO YOU STAND ON THE ISSUES? CONSERVATIVE OR LIBERAL... WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

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Counterinsurgency needed at US-Mexico border: lawmaker

"Let's stick with the facts ... We need to be up front and clear about what's really happening along our borders."

- Janet Napolitano



By Jim Kouri
Law Enforcement Examiner

Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano's recent visit to the U.S.-Mexican border was less than admirable, according to many law enforcement commanders. She accused them and others of exaggerating the danger and violence within border states such as Arizona, California and New Mexico.

However, in light of the recent news that three teenagers were shot to death at the border, including two Americans, Congressman Connie Mack (R-FL) responded yesterday with outrage, calling for an all-encompassing strategy to provide for U.S. national security through what he termed "bold steps and bold solutions."

In 1979, President Reagan proposed a North American Accord between the United States, Mexico and Canada, saying, "We live on a continent whose three countries possess the assets to make it the strongest, most prosperous and self-sufficient area on earth." Mack believes that U.S. foreign policy has neglected this reality and must now must reestablish its authority of the United States



Congressman Connie Mack

drug war, [while] expanding the influence of terrorists."

A report unveiled yesterday by DHS agencies shows progress in seizures and apprehensions, but falls short in keeping America safe, Rep. Mack noted. Mack quickly responded to the DHS report with his own proposed strategy for securing the U.S. Mexico border while restoring U.S. sovereignty.

Mack's strategy calls for:

Doubling Border Patrol Agents from 20,000 to 40,000 - fully funding needed border protection equipment such as additional unmanned aerial vehicles and the completion of the double-layered security fencing in urban, hard to enforce

areas of the border. Utilizing the full resources of the U.S. intelligence community aligned to the mission.

Coordinate closely with Mexico to ensure swift justice on both sides of the border while collaborating on governance reform, economic development, community stabilization and essential services.

"Mack makes some excellent points and provides solutions such as having 40,000 border agents. In New York City [where I worked as a police officer] there are upwards of 50,000 police and law enforcement officers, the largest agency being the NYPD. That's for one city and that's great. But for two huge borders, we only have 20,000 agents? That doesn't sound like we give border security the attention it needs," said former police detective and military intelligence officer Mike Snopes.

Snopes also pointed out that 20,000 agents doesn't mean that's the number on duty.

"When you begin to breakdown the numbers to reflect three shifts, days off, holidays, vacations, sick days, personal days -- you're lucky if you have 7,000 or 8,000 agents covering both borders at any one time," said Snopes.

As Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Western Hemisphere Subcommittee, Congressman Mack will hold hearings to both implement his new strategy and expose the truth behind the Administration's failures in the drug war. ★★★

over illegal organizations which threaten U.S. Security at the Mexican border.

Mack stated yesterday, "A counterinsurgency strategy from our government that includes civil society, law enforcement, civil authorities and military personnel at the U.S. border is urgently needed. Repeated calls on the Administration have not gotten ahead of this plague and the lives of two more U.S. citizens have been taken in the meantime, adding to the tens of thousands of people who have been killed in a

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Scam Artist's Worldwide - Investigated by the US~Observer

By Joseph Snook
Investigative Journalist

Today's Scam-Artists, also referred to as Con-Artists are quickly evolving into tomorrow's Scram Artists. A Scram Artist is someone who gains the trust of another and fraudulently relieves them of money or assets and attempts to stay under the authority's radar by continuously moving or changing their identity.

Three key factors often overlooked that tremendously assist scam artists

Licensing, depending on the type of scam being conducted can create a false hope for the victim. The thought that if this "guy" is licensed, he is legit, is far too often accepted. Just because someone is licensed, doesn't always mean they have your best interests in mind- they just might be out to steal, just like unlicensed crooks. **Contracts** can create loopholes within the system that can produce a financial disaster for victims who attempt to recover their losses. To make

than they have lost, and recover absolutely nothing in the end. **Corruption** thrives in today's society. Getting the "authorities" to enforce laws and help the victim has become quite the challenge. It's not shocking to pick up a newspaper, watch the news or go online and find reports of so called "trusted officials" who get caught "red handed" for scams.

Although Scam/Scram Artists continue to use their tools to prey on others at each new location they call home, there are technological advancements available that can greatly benefit the victim. The internet is abundant with a vast amount of information from consumers, bloggers and victims. Accessing information on the world-wide-web about people makes it much more difficult for Scammers over time. The US~Observer investigates and exposes Scammers, which has proven to be very effective in bringing losses and justice back to the victims.

Today, one thing is certain. Many innocent people have lost a lifetime of savings from these thieves or their associates. The US~Observer has exposed and helped bring Scammers to justice and we are continuing to do

matters worse, the victim often spends more on legal fees

so. If you have any information regarding the people above, we urge you to contact us immediately. These people are running financial scams or they are known associates of financial Scammers/Scrammers. Help save others from becoming their next victim. Help their victims serve justice.

UPDATE: Jeff Lowrance is reportedly hiding out in Lima, Peru. Jeff is a very polished scammer and has reportedly swindled hundreds, if not thousands of people out of millions.

UPDATE: Gary Douglas Holmes is reportedly hiding out in the Dominican Republic, continuing to deceive people with his "God" fearing Financial Hope and Ministry scam. He has left many people bankrupt.

WARNING: If you are looking to invest money and you hear of some business/person who is offering the proverbial "Goldmine," be very careful. Call the US~Observer at 541-474-7885 to have us check them out ... ★★★



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