

Good Riddance, 2011

Bad year, 2011, even though some bad guys and charlatans got a karma blast. Osama bin Laden got it up close and personal from a SEAL, while his cohort al-Awlaki got drilled from the sky. Khadafy went down, and Assad is tottering.

Schwarzenegger, Weiner, Sheen, and Cain all got hammered in the court of public opinion. Blagojevich, Bonds, and Mubarak were held accountable in actual courts.

Casey Anthony got away with killing her two-year-old daughter. Amanda Knox finally beat the rap in Italy. And Kim Kardashian continued to be the poster girl for narcissism.

Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, by all accounts a stellar human being, survived a brutal gun attack. But more than 20,000 Japanese did not survive the earthquake and tsunami that hit in March.

But things like these happen every year. The primary reason that 2011 is not a year to remember is focused around one thing: The folks continue to get a bad deal.

Most Americans work hard, are honest people, and look out for their neighbors. They deserve prosperity, and capitalism was set up to provide it. But with technology changing the way we live, the rules of capital engagement are changing, and the U.S. government has not acknowledged that. The unemployment rate is just below 9 percent. But if you have a college degree, the jobless rate is cut in half. If you are educated, you most likely will get a decent paying job. If you have a skill like plumbing, you'll work as much as you want. But if you can't write a sentence, you speak like the Jersey Shore crew, and/or you have a bad attitude in the workplace, you are up against it.

In most situations, the employer is holding all the cards.

Competition for jobs is intense, and that drives wages down. The boss man can make demands and set a strict workplace regimen. If you are supporting a family, this is not the greatest scenario. So, the Occupy protestors are right about one thing: the American worker is on the defensive.

President Obama wants you to believe that the feds can change all that and can right those private marketplace wrongs. That is bull. They can't, and they are bankrupting the country with false hopes. Right now, only individuals can improve their own circumstances. Pinheads in Washington cannot help us.

The most important thing for workers to understand is that you have to make yourself indispensable. You have to make your employer money or his life easier. Preferably both. Also, you have to learn as much as you can about your chosen endeavor. Again, if you can fix things, you will earn good money. If you can sell things, you will prosper. If you're primarily interested in tattoos, you will suffer economically unless you're a member of Green Day.

In prosperous years, the marginal workers get by. In tough times, they get the shaft. Let's all hope 2012 finally brings relief on the economic front. But don't count on it. Make your own way and a happy new year will be far more likely to occur.