

Not Entirely Idle Thoughts

Some people collect stamps, others collect sea shells, and I collect notions. Unfortunately, unlike those others, I can't just stick mine in albums or glass jars. I have to stick them in my articles.

First up is illegal immigration. Before Obama or Congress gets around to pulling any stunts, they should enforce the laws already on the books. Nobody is entitled to sneak into our country any more than they have the right to sneak into your house. Anyone caught sneaking in should only be deported after serving a six month stretch in one of those Tent City prisons overseen by Arizona's Sheriff Joe Arpaio.

Nobody lacking a green card should ever be hired. Anyone caught hiring illegals should be sentenced to the same six month term as illegal aliens, giving them ample time to consider the error of their ways.

Every president of a nation south of our border should be compelled to get the word out to his people that the gravy train has been put in mothballs, and anyone caught trying to sneak into Los Estados Unidos will be shot. If they refuse to get the word out, all future aid from the U.S. will be stopped.

As you may have noticed, in his post-election press conference, Obama announced that our mission in the Middle East is to forge a border between Syria and Iraq, thus once again establishing Iraq's sovereignty. It's a shame that he is so much more concerned with Iraq's sovereignty than he is with our own.

As we saw on November 4th, the Democrats attempt to divide the electorate along racial and gender lines didn't work nearly as well as it has in the past. This is not only a good sign for the GOP, but a better one for America.

When I read that Albert Camus once wrote that "Too many have dispensed with generosity in order to practice charity," I immediately thought of billionaires like Bill Gates, Ted Turner and Warren Buffet, who set up foundations in order to fund left-wing causes, but never consider bestowing huge bonuses on the people whose labor has provided them with their wealth.

I have often had similar thoughts regarding Hollywood big wigs. Some actor who is paid \$10 or \$20 million to appear in a movie will turn around and, one, condemn capitalism and, two, attend a \$35,000-a-plate fundraiser for Barack Obama. What he won't do is donate a couple of million to the members of the crew, blue collar workers to whom \$25,000 would be a massive windfall.

Speaking of actors, I don't really have a problem with them taking advantage of their First Amendment rights to sound off on things they know nothing about. However, the hypocrisy of people who make more money in a single year than most folks will earn in a lifetime promoting socialism is extremely annoying, as is the parroting of Al Gore's claptrap about global warming by knuckleheads who never even took high school science. But the First Amendment doesn't distinguish between the wise and the foolish. On the other hand, as John Kindseth recently reminded me, in 1927, when Jack Warner suggested that Warner Brothers finance "The Jazz Singer," promoting it as the first sound movie, his brother Harry very sensibly asked: "Who would want to hear actors talk?"

In the wake of the recent elections, my friend Steve Maikoski asked me who came up with the idea of calling liberal states blue and conservative states red when, historically, red was not only the color closely associated with the Soviet Union, but communists and socialists, alike, were commonly referred to as Reds. It took a while, but then I recalled it was the late Tim Russert, who mis-colored the states during the 2000 election. At the time, I assumed he was colorblind, but

perhaps he was merely mischievous or stupid.

Will Rogers was regarded as something of a homespun sage when it came to political commentary. Part of the reason is because, like Bob Hope in the 40s and 50s, he was seen as non-partisan, taking good-natured swipes at both parties. In 2014, those innocent days seem as distant as Mars. America has become so polarized over the past few decades, the differences between Democrats and Republicans are wider and deeper than the Grand Canyon. And, sadly, anyone who says he votes for the man and not the party just sounds like a drooling idiot.

Still I believe that something Will Rogers said back then clearly delineates the difference between the two parties. "I would rather," he said, "be the man who bought the Brooklyn Bridge than the man who sold it." From my perspective, the Democrats are always trying to sell someone a bridge they don't own and, too often, Republicans are the ones pulling out their checkbooks.

Finally, I'd like to pay my respects to Tom Magliozzi, who recently died at the age of 77. For years, he and his brother Ray hosted a radio show I loved called "Car Talk." What made this rather extraordinary is, one, the show was on NPR, the home of everything left-wing and, two, the show consisted of people calling in seeking advice about their cars. Considering that I hate everything associated with the Left and that my disinterest in cars is rivaled only by my disinterest in golf, Brittany Spears and the accordion, my having been a fan astonishes even me.

But the Magliozzis never talked politics, at least not while I was listening, and they were very funny. From personal experience, I know it's pretty easy to get laughs when your subject is Barack Obama or Hillary Clinton, or when you're writing dialogue for Hawkeye Pierce or Lou Grant, but being able to get laughs about cars is a rare gift.

But there were times when Tom would expand his subject matter, as when he disclosed the secret of his successful marriage: "I know I'm always right, but it's more important to be happy. So whenever my wife and I disagree, I tell her she's right. As a result, she thinks I'm a big dummy, but she loves me anyway. So I'm happy."

I'll miss Tom, but at least now God will know whom to turn to the next time He needs a good laugh or has trouble with His carburetor.

**Burt's Webcast is every Wednesday at Noon Pacific Time.
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Solving the Deficit

I know that Barack Obama puts a great deal of stock in people like Timothy Geithner, Ben Bernanke, Harry Reid and Barney Frank, but they're the folks who helped get us into this financial mess. As usual, it takes an ordinary American such as myself who relies on logic and common sense, not a bunch of pie charts and Keynesian theories, to get this economy moving in the right direction.

I realize that Obama is counting on class warfare to win  re-election, but I'm here to tell him that most Americans won't fall for it. They know that Bush started that jalopy down the hill, but it was Obama who kept pushing it over the cliff or into the ditch or wherever the hell it wound up. As a result, a child of six can see that placing a two or three percent surtax on rich people is just more of the same.

After studying the problem, I am here to report that, as usual, Obama's thinking is small and entirely inside the box. I, on the other hand, have discovered that the solution is well within our grasp. I suspect that the reason that Obama didn't arrive at the obvious answer is that for all his grousing about millionaires and billionaires, in his heart he realizes that most of his friends, not to mention he himself, are members of those two elitist groups. I mean, who else do you think can afford to plunk down \$35,000 to attend one of his fund raisers? When your nearest and dearest include the likes of Jeffrey Immelt, Jon Corzine, the folks at Goldman Sachs and George Soros, you don't want to act too rashly.

I, as you've probably guessed, suffer from no such inhibitions. If you are serious about getting the deficit under control, you can't nibble a little here, a little there, especially not if you wish to keep spending tax dollars like a fleet of drunken sailors, otherwise known as Democrats.

After conducting a little research, I discovered that there are over 400 billionaires in America. Thirty-one of them are worth more than ten billion dollars, 11 of them worth more than 20 billion. Bill Gates tops the list at \$59 billion, followed by Warren Buffet at \$39 billion. I'm sure it's just the cynic in me, but when those two pals get together for lunch, I can't help wondering which of them pretends to have left his wallet in his other jacket.

Most of the people in the billionaires club are fairly anonymous, having come by their fortunes through mining, hedge funds, hotels, the media, banks, construction, computers, sports teams, casinos, supermarkets and real estate. A few of the better known include Meg Whitman, H. Ross Perot, Jerry Jones, Steven Spielberg, Donald Trump, Stephen Bechtel, Ralph Lauren, Michael Milken, Oprah Winfrey, Sam Zell, Steve Wynn, Charles Schwab, George Lucas, Ted Turner, Barry Diller, Mark Zuckerberg, George Kaiser, Michael Bloomberg, David Geffen, three people named Ziff, four people named Hearst, seven

people named Pritzker, T. Boone Pickens and a whole bunch of heirs to Walmart and the Mars candy company.

These 400-odd people are worth over 10 trillion dollars. The way I figure it, all we need to do is confiscate all their money and we are nearly 70% of the way to eliminating the national deficit. Frankly, I'm a wee bit surprised that with all the advisors and czars who make up this administration, it took an outsider to come up with this brainstorm. Of course it's just possible that Valerie Jarrett or Van Jones suggested it, but once Obama saw so many of his friends and supporters on the list, he had no option but to nip it in the bud.

It's one thing, after all, to whine constantly about generic millionaires and billionaires not paying their fair share, and quite another when you have to break the news to old chums like Oprah, Bloomberg, Diller, Geffen, Spielberg, Kaiser and Soros, that their future won't be quite as rosy as they had anticipated, and will likely consist of panhandling, food stamps and homeless shelters.

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