

Thayer's

Wild Bunch

By J E Ted Thayer

Thayer's Wild Bunch

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Thayer's Wild Bunch

INDEX

Flyleaf	2
Index	3
Photo Credits	5
Preface	6
Dec 25, 2013 What's Next?	7
Jan 09, 2014 GOP To Censure McCain	9
Jan 13, 2014 Censure Update	11
Jan 16, 2014 Howdy Troops!	13
Jan 21, 2014 Benefit of the Doubt	22
Jan 30, 2014 State of the Union and Thistles	23
Feb 04, 2014 ACA to Cost 2.2 M Jobs	25
Feb 13, 2014 Lights Out Revisited	31
Feb 16, 2014 House of Cards Returns	35
Feb 20, 2014 Minimum Wage	36
Feb 27, 2014 Minimum Wage Redux	40
Mar 06, 2014 Shooting War	44
Mar 12, 2014 Climate & Keystone	48
Mar 20, 2014 Déjà Vu Just Keeps On ...	53
Mar 27, 2014 The Search Goes On	55
Apr 03, 2014 For the Little Guys	58
Apr 10, 2014 TedThayer.com ... 300 Pix	62
Apr 19, 2014 Bundy	63
Apr 24, 2014 Western Land Ownership	65
May 01, 2014 No Ruler	67
May 08, 2014 Benghazi	68
May 15, 2014 Voter Registration	75
May 22, 2014 Just here to help	82
May 28, 2014 Montel Williams	82
May 30, 2014 Here's Chucky & Phil	83
June 05, 2014 Not My Job, Man	87
June 06, 2014 VA Waiting List	90
June 12, 2014 GWB Socks	95
June 19, 2014 Immigration	97

Thayer's Wild Bunch

INDEX (Con't.)

June 26, 2014 Failure to Communicate	109
July 03, 2014 Amy Adams	111
July 10, 2014 Your Turn to Opine	113
July 10, 2014 Special Report – Transparency	115
July 17, 2014 Comments	131
July 24, 2014 Reckless Rhetoric	132
July 31, 2014 Minimum Wage	137
Aug 07, 2014 Open Your Mind	146
Aug 21, 2014 What's In A Word ...	151
Aug 28, 2014 No Guff	152
Sept 04, 2014 Right On, Sharpton!	153
Sept 11, 2014 Affordable?	156
Sept 18, 2014 Is It News?	159
Sept 25, 2014 Intimate History and New Vinyl	160
Oct 02, 2014 Secure?	163
Oct 09, 2014 Twilight Zone	166
Oct 16, 2014 Imagine ...	174
Oct 18, 2014 Special – Good Enough	177
Oct 23, 2014 Beware of Badware!	182
Oct 30, 2014 Happy Halloween	185
Nov 06, 2014 Agree to Disagree	193
Nov 10, 2014 God Bless Our Veterans	195
Nov 13, 2014 Ad Hominem	206
Nov 20, 2014 Executive Amnesty	209
Nov 27, 2014 Happy Thanksgiving	211
Dec 04, 2014 I Object!	212
Dec 11, 2014 Up-Sizing?	215
Dec 18, 2014 Higher Gas Taxes?	217
Dec 25, 2014 Merry Christmas!	219

Thayer's Wild Bunch

PHOTO CREDITS

Page	Source	Year
Front Cover	'Hutch' charcoal artist Monterey CA	1957
Back Cover	Claudette, Karen & Yvonne - Old Tucson	1990
Preface	http://www.tedthayer.com	2014
35	<i>House of Cards</i> – Netflix	2014
62	Mattel Toys	1967
74	Washington Post – <i>The Fact Finder</i>	2014
84	Phil Robertson – A&E - <i>Duck Dynasty</i>	2013
137	MasterPark, Seattle, WA	2014
144	Arin Dobe, " <i>Minimum Wages ...</i> "	2014
156	Gorrell	2014
163	Congressman Dr. Paul Gosar	2014
166	Fox News Channel – Bill O'rielly	2014
166	Varvel	2014
167	USBLS	2014
169	Arial	2014
170	Ramirez	2014
211	Payne	2014

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PREFACE

December 31, 2014

<http://www.tedthayer.com/default.html>

TedThayer.com



J E Ted Thayer | 12-31-2014

THIS IS ...

a compilation of The Wild Bunch commentaries published via email broadcast pretty much every Thursday as well as on the TedThayer.com website in 2014.

I love to write, so I save most of my stuff. This became an easy way to write some history and keep it safe. To me, it's interesting to see how facts and opinions change over time.

Each chapter is one week's offering without the above banner.

Enjoy.

December 25, 2013

WHAT'S NEXT?

That's the question on everybody's lips.

The Affordable Healthcare Act's window to the world is a disaster, incapable of handling the massive number of customers that must log on to HealthCare.gov just to begin the application process.

There is also ample evidence that the "backside" of the web system is incapable of delivering accurate and complete information to the insurance companies that must collect premiums before issuing the policies required sometime around the first of the year (or not.)

All Americans are expected to have government-approved health insurance, but it isn't clear when that requirement goes into force because there have been so many exemptions and extensions issued by the government legally or not.

Because far less than enough people have applied for coverage it appears to some that "ObamaCare" will crash because without enough paying customers insurance companies will go bankrupt. There is, however, a provision in the Affordable Care Act that allows for insurance company bailouts by the government to avoid the predicted "death spiral" created by puny cash-flow.

ObamaCare was supposed to cost around \$710 Billion over the next ten years, but estimates have ballooned to over \$1.8 Trillion. Add insurance company bankruptcy bailouts and the burden to America's economy will likely be reaching a "tipping point."

Thayer's Wild Bunch

The Congress may be developing the will to kill the Affordable Care Act but it doesn't have a workable alternative that can take its place and, in addition, insure those who have become un-insured through policy cancellations.

To a number of observers, 2014 could be the year that America's government-driven healthcare system collapses of its own weight, leaving millions to fend for themselves.

Thus, the question: What's next?

January 9, 2014

GOP TO VOTE ON MCCAIN CENSURE

Self described "leaders" of the Maricopa County Republican Party have submitted a resolution to the annual Mandatory Meeting Resolutions Chairman describing Arizona Senator John McCain's record as "*disastrous and harmful to Arizona and the United States.*"

Jeni White, Maricopa County Republican Committee Secretary, commented about the resolution in an email Thursday. "*The resolution ... was submitted anonymously to the Resolutions Chairman for consideration at the MCRC Mandatory Meeting which takes place this Saturday [January 11th]. It has not yet been signed by anyone, because it has not yet been voted on by a quorum of the Republican Precinct Committeemen of Maricopa County. Results of that vote will be published within a few days after the meeting ...*"

Frosty Taylor, Editor of the MCRC "Briefs" newsletter, also commented Thursday. "*The resolution was originally distributed to precinct committeemen in the Maricopa County Republican Committee's Call Letter for the Jan 11 Mandatory Meeting. It is also posted in the 1-5-14 Maricopa County Republican 'Briefs' newsletter which you can view at <http://briefs.maricopagop.org/> It has since circulated on national news including Glen Beck and various blogs.*"

The following is the text submitted to the MCRC.

RESOLUTION #8:

Senator John McCain Censured by Arizona's Republican Leadership – As leaders in the Republican Party, we are

Thayer's Wild Bunch

obligated to fully support our Party, platform, and its candidates. Only in times of great crisis or betrayal is it necessary to publicly censure our leaders. Today we are faced with both. For too long we have waited, hoping Senator McCain would return to our Party's values on his own. That has not happened. So with sadness and humility we rise and declare:

√ Whereas Senator McCain has amassed a long and terrible record of drafting, co-sponsoring and voting for legislation best associated with liberal Democrats, such as Amnesty, funding for ObamaCare, the debt ceiling, liberal nominees, assaults on the Constitution and 2nd amendment; and

√ Whereas this record has been disastrous and harmful to Arizona and the United States; and

√ Whereas Senator McCain has campaigned as a conservative and made promises during his re-election campaigns, such as the needed and welcomed promise to secure our borders and finish the border fence, only to quickly flip-flop on those promises; and

√ Whereas McCain has abandoned our values and has been eerily silent against Liberals, yet publicly reprimands Conservatives in his own Party, therefore

√ BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the Maricopa County Republican Committee censures Senator McCain for his continued disservice to our State and Nation, and

√ BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that until he consistently champions our Party's Platform, we, the Republican leadership in Arizona will no longer support, campaign for or endorse John McCain as our U.S. Senator.

Senator McCain was not contacted for comment.

January 13, 2014

UPDATE ...

Matthew Boyle | 12 Jan 2014

The Maricopa County Republican Party in Arizona formally censured Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) Saturday evening by an overwhelming 1150-351 vote, Breitbart News has learned.

Maricopa County is Arizona's most populous county and includes Phoenix within its borders. The official GOP body's rebuke undermines McCain's reelection chances should he decide to run for the Senate again in 2016.

“As leaders in the Republican Party, we are obligated to fully support our Party, platform, and its candidates,” the formal censure resolution reads. “Only in times of great crisis or betrayal is it necessary to publicly censure our leaders. Today we are faced with both. For too long we have waited, hoping Senator McCain would return to our Party’s values on his own. That has not happened.”

The resolution continues by stating, with “sadness and humility, the Republicans in the county rise and declare that McCain has amassed a long and terrible record of drafting, co-sponsoring and voting for legislation best associated with liberal Democrats, such as Amnesty, funding for ObamaCare, the debt ceiling, assaults on the Constitution and 2nd amendment, and has continued to support liberal nominees.”

That voting record from McCain, they say, “has been disastrous and harmful to Arizona and the United States.”

McCain was elected, the Republicans say in the censure resolution, by campaigning “as a conservative” and making promises during his various reelection campaigns “such as the

Thayer's Wild Bunch

needed and welcomed promise to secure our borders and finish the border fence, only to quickly flip-flop on those promises.”

The Republicans say that McCain “has abandoned our core values and has been eerily silent against Liberals, yet publicly reprimands Conservatives in his own Party.” Therefore, the Maricopa County GOP leadership “censures Senator McCain for his continued disservice to our State and Nation.”

The censure states that formally, “until he consistently champions our Party’s Platform and values, we, the Republican leadership in Arizona will no longer support, campaign for or endorse John McCain as our U.S. Senator.”

Maricopa County joins Apache County and Mohave County in voting to formally censure McCain via similar resolutions. There are 15 counties total in Arizona, which means that at this point, 20 percent of Arizona’s county GOP bodies have officially censured McCain three years out from his potential reelection campaign for the U.S. Senate in 2016.

McCain has not made a final decision yet on whether or not he will run for re-election.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

January 16, 2014

HOWDY, TROOPS!

This year I plan to churn out a more-or-less regular email each week dealing in financial and political subjects for the most part. If you don't want my missives, please drop me a quick note at tedthayer@cableone.net and I'll be happy to take you off the broadcast. By the same token, if you have a friend or relative you'd like added to the broadcast, feel free to beam me up!

I'm in the process of writing a book - have been since spring of 2010. Since I'm no longer driving school buses and "wrenching" I have the time and inclination as well as a publisher. It's called *Caca Pasa (Historias de un Hombre Viejo)* and you'll have to find an interpreter to figure out what that means or wait until the thing is published. I'll try to include an excerpt occasionally.

Byron Wien (below) is a columnist and financial analyst for Blackstone Group (BX).

To quote from their background statement: *The Blackstone Group L.P. (Blackstone) is a manager of private capital and provider of financial advisory services. It operates in five segments: Private Equity, Real Estate, Hedge Fund Solutions, Credit Businesses, and Financial Advisory.*

Some of Wien's remarks are off the mark, but they go all long way in helping to give an idea the breadth of things political and financial that can affect us all.

Enjoy.
tt

Market Commentary

by Byron Wien
01/07/2014

The Surprises of 2014

The purpose of The Ten Surprises is to stretch the thinking of investment professionals so they consider events beyond the prevailing perceptions that could have an impact on the financial markets in the year ahead. My definition of a surprise is an investment-influencing event that most money managers would only assign a one-out-of-three chance of happening but which I believe is "probable," meaning the event has a better than 50% chance. Not all of the Surprises are contrarian. Some are in the direction of the consensus but more extreme.

While I am more interested in the thought process that relates to the various surprises, this is Wall Street, where a score is kept on everything. I have been preparing The Ten Surprises for 28 years and I usually get five or six pretty much on the mark. I have had a number of years when I got seven nearly right and in 2009 I scored nine. As in any endeavor of this sort, there are bad years also, and 2013 was one of them. While it was not a total washout, it was below average. The year 2012 had been a good one for the markets (and the Surprises) and I thought that 2013 would be more difficult. As it turned out, for the developed markets, last year was remarkably strong. The economies in the United States and Europe had a more uninspiring time, however. Earnings grew slowly and a lack of demand caused revenues to expand even more modestly than most observers expected. The accommodative monetary policies of the Federal Reserve and other central banks provided the liquidity necessary for the increase in price earnings ratios, and markets in the United States, Europe and Japan did well.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

By year end, there was hope on the geopolitical front as well. A deal with Syria to surrender its chemical weapons and another with Iran to limit its nuclear development program were underway. On the domestic front Congress approved a budget and the debt ceiling was likely to be raised. The Affordable Care Act however, was off to a bad start. During the third and fourth quarters, there were signs that the U.S. economy was gaining some momentum. While little progress was made on the income inequality issue and 7% of Americans seeking employment were still out of work (almost 14% were in part-time jobs looking for full-time positions), the mood at Christmas was generally positive. The Federal Reserve began to reduce its bond buying, housing starts exceeded one million units and an optimistic view of 2014 prevailed as we entered the new year.

Now for a review of The Ten Surprises of 2013 and the list for 2014. Some clients have told me that there is more information content in the ones I get wrong than the ones I get right. I certainly hope so because I got most of the Surprises wrong last year.

In the first Surprise I said that Iran would announce that they had enough nuclear material to produce a bomb and that the International Atomic Energy Agency would confirm the claim. Israel and the United States would have to shift to a policy of containment. While Iran made no such announcement with respect to nuclear material, many believe the country is close. As a result, there is a school of thought that the sanctions were working and so therefore the U.S. should have pressed for Iran to abandon its nuclear efforts. I believe, however, that this was unlikely to happen. Others worry that Iran will be uncooperative along the way (there are signs of that now as they restrict observer access to certain sites), but we have a deal that runs for six months and we should see if they have

Thayer's Wild Bunch

complied at the end of it. I would say I was partially right on this one.

In the second Surprise I said that this would be a tough year for earnings and the market would respond unfavorably. I expected profit margins to peak (they edged up slightly) and revenues to grow somewhat, causing the Standard & Poor's 500 earnings to fall below \$100 (they are likely to be \$108). Revenues were disappointing (up 2%) and earnings did grow (up 4.7%), but corporate net income was less impressive. Share buybacks played a major role in earnings per share growth, with the total the highest since 2007. The total return of the S&P 500 of over 32% was certainly a surprise to me. If I had only seen the sharp rise in the market, I would have been pretty much alone among strategists and that would have made up for a lot of Surprises that didn't work out.

The third Surprise followed the second. I thought the financial stocks would have a tough time because of intense competition, over-capacity, increased regulation and lawsuit settlements. All of those factors came into play during the year but many financial stocks performed well in spite of that because of the strong equity market.

The fourth and fifth Surprises were political in nature. In the fourth I said that President Obama would embrace an ambitious energy policy. U.S. energy production did continue to rise, and attitudes toward hydraulic fracking, harnessing the natural gas flare-off for productive purposes and extending the Keystone pipeline all remained neutral or moved toward positive. I cannot say that the Administration made energy a primary focus of its agenda, however. As for the fifth Surprise on immigration, little progress was made. The president spent the year fighting with Congress over the budget, the debt ceiling and the Affordable Care Act and there was very little time for anything else. The long-hoped-for

Thayer's Wild Bunch

revision in the tax code went nowhere. It turned out to be one of the least productive legislative sessions on record.

The sixth Surprise concerned China, where I expected the new leaders to focus on rebalancing the economy toward the consumer, reducing official corruption and maintaining growth in excess of 7%. I expected Chinese mainland traded equities to appreciate by 20% during the year, which did not happen. I also thought the new leadership would improve the country's healthcare and retirement programs. While there is talk of this I believe few initiatives have come forth.

I thought the combination of global warming producing variable weather conditions and resultant crop failures coupled with increasing demand for better diets from the developing world would cause agricultural commodity prices to rise. I expected corn, wheat and cattle futures to move higher. They ended up the year well short of my projections; crop realizations were strong, keeping prices low, even though demand from the developing world continues to increase.

I did think inflation would remain tame during the year but I expected gold to rise. This was my worst call, since gold collapsed in the spring. My reasoning was that central banks in the major industrialized countries would continue to debase their currencies and investors would want to protect the purchasing power of their portfolios by owning something "real" like gold which has been a store of value for thousands of years. What I underestimated was the amount of speculation that had occurred in driving the price to \$1900 an ounce. When the price began to decline, the selling pressure from individuals became intense. Much of the physical gold was bought by Indian and Chinese investors who will probably hold it for the long term. As a result the price should rise sharply if interest in the metal ever comes back.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

I finally got one clearly right in the ninth Surprise, but even then I did not go far enough. I said the Japanese market would be strong and the yen would decline. I got the yen right, but the market did better than I thought it would.

Finally in the tenth Surprise I said that the structural problems in Europe would remain unresolved and the recession there would continue. I expected the European Union to continue intact in spite of this, but I thought the equity market there would decline, which it did not.

Although the performance of last year's Surprises was disappointing I plan to continue turning out an annual list for as long as I am able. As Yogi Berra allegedly said, "Forecasting is difficult, particularly about the future."

Thinking about what unexpected events might happen in the coming year stimulates the creative process and that is always useful for investors. I work on the Surprises over several months and I seek the views of many others in the process. I want to thank my Third Thursday Group of former research directors of Wall Street firms (plus a few newcomers); Gideon Rose and Jonathan Tepperman of Foreign Affairs and others at the Council on Foreign Relations; Ian Bremmer of Eurasia Group; the energy expert Tom Petrie; Richard Chilton and others at the Chilton asset management firm; George Soros, who has discussed the Surprises with me since the 1980s; and other friends, acquaintances and colleagues who have provided useful suggestions. In the end, however, I take total responsibility for the Surprises, right or wrong.

The Surprises of 2014

1. We experience a Dickensian market with the best of times and the worst of times. The worst comes first as geopolitical problems coupled with euphoric extremes lead to a sharp

Thayer's Wild Bunch

correction of more than 10%. The best then follows with a move to new highs as the Standard & Poor's 500 approaches a 20% total return by year end.

2. The U.S. economy finally breaks out of its doldrums. Growth exceeds 3% and the unemployment rate moves toward 6%. Fed tapering proves to be a non-event.

3. The strength of the U.S. economy relative to Europe and Japan allows the dollar to strengthen. It trades below \$1.25 against the euro and buys 120 yen.

4. Shinzo Abe is the only world leader who understands that Dick Cheney was right when he said that deficits don't matter. He continues his aggressive fiscal and monetary expansion and the Nikkei 225 rises to 18,000 early in the year, but the increase in the sales tax, the aging population and declining work force finally begin to take their toll and the market suffers a sharp (20%) correction in the second half.

5. China's Third Plenum policies to rebalance the economy toward the consumer and away from a dependence on investment spending slow the growth rate to 6% in 2014. Chinese mainland traded equities have another disappointing year. The new leaders emphasize that their program is best for the country in the long run.

6. Emerging market investing continues to prove treacherous. Strong leadership and growth policies in Mexico and South Korea result in significant appreciation in their equities, but other emerging markets fail to follow their performance.

7. In spite of increased U.S. production the price of West Texas Intermediate crude exceeds \$110. Demand from developing economies continues to outweigh conservation and reduced consumption in the developed world.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

8. *The rising standard of living and the shift to more consumer-oriented economies in the emerging markets result in a reversal of the decline in agricultural commodity prices. Corn goes to \$5.25 a bushel, wheat to \$7.50 and soybeans to \$16.00.*

9. *The strength in the U.S. economy coupled with somewhat higher inflation causes the yield on the 10-year U.S. Treasury to rise to 4%. Short-term rates stay near zero, but the increase in intermediate-term yields has a negative impact on housing and a positive effect on the dollar.*

10. *The Affordable Care Act has a remarkable turnaround. The computer access problems are significantly diminished and younger people begin signing up. Obama's approval rating rises and in the November elections the Democrats not only retain control of the Senate but even gain seats in the House.*

Every year there are always a few Surprises that do not make the Ten either because I do not think they are as relevant as those on the basic list or I am not comfortable with the idea that they are "probable."

Also rans:

1. *Through a combination of intelligence, extremism, celebrity and cunning Ted Cruz emerges as the clear front runner for the 2016 Republican presidential nomination. Chris Christie and the moderates fade in popularity as momentum builds for fiscal and social conservative policies.*

2. *In 2½ years the price of a Bitcoin has increased from \$25 to \$975. The supply of Bitcoins is fixed at 21 million with 11.5 million in circulation. Bitcoins lack gold's position as a store*

Thayer's Wild Bunch

of value over time. During the year Bitcoin's acceptance collapses as investors realize that it cannot be used as collateral in financial transactions and its principal utility is for illegal business dealings where anonymity is important.

3. Overcoming objections from the Cuban exile community, President Obama opens discussions on initiating trade and diplomatic relations with Cuba. A reduction in sanctions is proposed, as well as limited financial support in the form of bonds, quickly dubbed as "Castro convertibles."

4. Hillary Clinton decides not to run for President in 2016. She says her work with various Clinton not-for-profit initiatives is important and unfinished. Specifically, she explains that her health was not an issue in her decision. The Democratic race for the top seat becomes chaotic.

Next month I will discuss the reasoning behind each of The Ten Surprises of 2014.

J E Ted Thayer | Jan 21, 2014

BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT

I've been giving the President the benefit of the doubt for long enough. Now, I've had it with him! Never in my life have I disrespected the Office of the President of the United States, but I'm very close to it, my friends.

I can get over him saying he didn't know about the IRS' hassling non-profits; not knowing about the FBI's gun-running with the Border Patrol; ignorance of the terrorists' attack at Benghazi; indecisiveness on Keystone oil pipeline construction; no clue about security for the Affordable Health Care web portal; and no idea why the back-end of the ACA isn't functioning right.

I'll forgive his indiscretions that have been characterized by some in the media and most conservatives as blatant lies. I'll even cut the guy some slack for what has the appearance of lavish spending on any number of well-earned vacations for him and his family.

But somebody has to draw the line when our President disrespects his own Office by blaming his political and personal problems on racism. Only the foul stench of dog excrement on the feet of those who support and promote such ruminations from the Oval Office is worse than the slug of a coward who would slink around our Nation's House pretending to wear the mantle of President.

My allegiance to the Office is unswayed, but the benefit of any doubt in support of the person who holds the title left town on the last flight Monday out of Ronald Regan Washington National Airport.

J E Ted Thayer | Jan 30, 2014

STATE OF THE UNION AND THISTLES

I don't have a clue what per-centage of Americans watched the State of the Union Address Tuesday night. But, according to *Politico* writer Dylan Byers, "*fewer than 33.3 million Americans watched President Obama's State of the Union address ... , the lowest turnout since President Clinton's final State of the Union address in 2000 ...*

"Viewership for Obama's State of the Union addresses has been in decline since 2009, when he drew 52.4 million television viewers ... This year's speech ... replaces last year's as the second-lowest rated since Nielsen began recording viewership in 1993.

"Nielsen's totals are based off viewership for CBS, ABC, NBC, FOX, Azteca, Fox Business, Fox News Channel, CNN, MSNBC, CNBC, Al Jazeera America, Galavision and Mun2. They do not include digital livestreams."

I was listening to KTAR in the car the other day and one of the talk show hosts said she didn't think many would be listening (or watching) the President's speech because "*most of what he says is just white noise to most people anymore.*" Guess that just about wraps it up, you think?

Ok, so I promised something from my book every now and then. Try the following:

Nettles, Thistles – Whatever

After Carmel Valley, we moved to a place adjacent to the Del Monte golf course in Monterey. South of the fourth fairway

Thayer's Wild Bunch

was a road that wound its way up into the hills overlooking the bay. Newfound friends and I loved to peddle our bikes up there about a mile and coast back down at break-neck speed. What fun! How crazy!

One day we were on our way speeding down the hill ... I think I was third in line. We were flying! Toward the bottom, the road split - turning slightly left in one direction toward the highway, while the other turned hard right up a draw to the golf course. The two kids in front of me safely made the hard right turn. I didn't. I hurtled off that road directly into a bed of thistles and nettles! Nothing was broken; there were no cuts or bruises and the bike wasn't even dented. But it felt like I had landed in an ant farm!

Don't ever get involved with nettles ... they have these tiny little spines that stick in the skin like cactus spikes. They sting so badly that they actually cause chills. They have little barbs on them so one can't just wipe them off. Either they wear off or they are pulled out with tweezers. A cold shower accompanied by vigorous rubbing helps a little, but the only true relief comes from calamine lotion.

God works in amazing and mystifying ways in his dealings with children. When they are doing dangerous and stupid things, he manages to keep them relatively safe while instilling a stern message at the same time. He spoke to me that day ... clearly. *Don't try to turn right when you're going too fast – try a little more liberal tack.*

Best regards.

ACA TO COST 2.3 M JOBS, \$1.8 TRILLION

J E Ted Thayer | Feb 4, 2014

The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office reported recently that the Affordable Care Act will overrun cost estimates by more than a Trillion dollars over the next ten years. Early estimates from the CBO concluded that the ACA would cost some \$710 Billion over the next decade. That estimate was revised upward recently to \$1.8 Trillion.

Tuesday the CBO announced another upward revision to its employment forecasts. Over the next ten years, the ACA will cost America some 2,300,000 jobs. The CBO claims that fewer full-time jobs will be created than originally predicted and more workers will quit their jobs because their healthcare insurance will be guaranteed rather than remain an employer-furnished benefit.

The CBO also announced that ACA sign-ups by the end of March will come in some 7 million shy of what it will take to operate the new healthcare program. The Congressional Budget Office had earlier forecast a shortfall of 6 million sign-ups.

DOCTORS QUITTING MEDICARE

J E Ted Thayer | Feb 2, 2014

The President stated repeatedly that The Affordable Care Act would have no effects on Medicare recipients. I'm not so sure

Thayer's Wild Bunch

his proclamation is true anymore. Maybe some of us cannot keep our doctor if we want to . . . because physicians are beginning to refuse new Medicare patients and some have even opted to no longer provide their services to existing patients.

One of my doctors confided that he couldn't keep up with the paperwork and that the rates had gotten so poor that he can no longer afford to keep a secretary to do it for him. He is now a member of an elite group calling themselves concierge physicians. He accepts actual money for his services.

I'm old enough to remember the doctor coming to the house to check on sick family members. House calls they were called. They cost a smidgen more, but the convenience was worth the extra cash. He carried a black leather bag filled with medicine and cotton balls and syringes and cool stuff like a blood-pressure cuff (sphygmomanometer) and heart monitor that plugged in his ears (stethoscope).

The doctor that came to my house was very kind and gentle. That's where the phrase "bedside manner" came from, I'll bet. There aren't many like him anymore - they're called General Practitioners or Family Physicians. They're hard to find because government insurance programs don't pay much for house calls and office visits any more.

All that is just the tip of the iceberg. Not only is the back-end of the Affordable Care Act software so bad that it doesn't adequately handle the billing and payments transactions between patients, insurance companies and the government, it turns out that error correction software hasn't even been written! That's right! If there is a mistake in the information about a patient/policyholder, it can't be corrected. Instead, an "appeal" must be filed. What's more, there is nothing in law holding anyone accountable for this mess.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

This is not a very good time to be a doctor, a patient or a health insurance company. Everybody is getting screwed by the government! And there appears to be no light at the end of the ACA tunnel.

ONE BRAVE DOCTOR STANDS UP TO OBAMACARE

David Limbaugh | Feb 04, 2014

I don't have a completely satisfactory answer when people ask me what we can do to combat the tyranny we are witnessing in this country, but one brave and principled Texas physician is showing how people can stand up.

Dr. Kristin Held of San Antonio, whom I've befriended on Twitter and grown to deeply admire for her vocal advocacy against ObamaCare, has taken the next step in her battle -- our battle.

Last week, she wrote a letter to Aetna insurance company terminating her participation in its program because of unilateral changes she said the company had made to its contract with her.

In her letter, Dr. Held informed Aetna that "ObamaCare, the 'law of the land,' contains ever-changing-at-the-whim-of-HHS, politically expedient mandates, rewards, penalties, rules and regulations with which I cannot rationally or morally treat my patients and run a practice, much-less interpret, implement, or comply."

She continued with something that cannot be said often and

Thayer's Wild Bunch

strongly enough, if for no other reason than President Obama will simply not acknowledge it and callously glosses over it, whether in his self-serving State of the Union speech or in his painfully evasive interview with Fox News' Bill O'Reilly. "Millions of Americans," wrote Dr. Held, "have lost coverage because of the healthcare law and must now shop on a defective, insecure government website and sign up for more expensive policies through Federal and State exchanges."

Next, she described how she only accidentally found out that the insurance company with which she had enjoyed a contractual relationship for years had changed the contractual terms in the middle of the stream without her knowledge, much less with her consent.

"Only by logging in as a prospective patient," said Dr. Held, "did my office manager and I discover that Aetna was selling plans for which I am a provider -- effectively selling my services without even asking, much less informing me that my services would be sold on such a site, under the auspices of new terms with which I will not comply."

Bravo!

She said that "after the fact," she received a "form letter" informing her of the company's "new allowables." She told the company in no uncertain terms that she would not be treated this way.

"I will not sell my services under such terms," she wrote. "While treated as such, patients and doctors are not commodities worthy of such impersonal, inconsiderate, and cavalier treatment. We choose dignity and personal service over disrespect and form letters."

She went on to scold the company for "getting new business

Thayer's Wild Bunch

offering health insurance plans featuring (her) services with (her) consent under terms which are unacceptable to (her)."

In closing, she wrote, "It saddens me to think of the decreased access to care from actual physicians and the shockingly increased costs Aetna patients will now experience because of your choice to collude with big government rather than collaborate with patients and physicians."

Dr. Held wrote in her blog on Dec. 21, 2013: "ObamaCare empowers a few political elites, their operatives, and cronies to do whatever they want to the American people on the false promise of access to 'free', 'quality' 'medical care', AKA tyranny-through-medicine. They write and rewrite the deceitfully-passed law for political expediency, power, and money; patients are an afterthought, an annoying impediment to their ultimate goal -- socialized medicine, the keystone in the arch of Socialism. ... Our current Federal government is the antithesis of all that composes American medicine and the sacred patient-doctor relationship."

Dr. Held is exactly right. This law was deceitfully passed, and patients are the last things ObamaCare's designers and supporters are concerned about. In their obsession to continue with this law's implementation, they are obliterating the nation's health care system, forcing millions off their plans and apart from their chosen physicians, and then disgracefully pretending it hasn't happened. They are ensuring that patients will have less access to and fewer choices of care, despite promising more of both, and that their health care costs are increasing, despite explicitly guaranteeing cost reductions.

Please don't assume that Dr. Held is exaggerating when she says that the goal of these statistis is to impose socialized medicine on America. It's not deniable. They can no longer credibly say they are pushing this system for the reasons they

Thayer's Wild Bunch

initially claimed, because every one of those has proved to be false -- and they knew it ahead of time.

I watched a debate between Obama's radical friend Bill Ayers and Obama critic Dinesh D'Souza over the greatness of America. Guess which one touted America's greatness and uniqueness? D'Souza, of course, credited America's founding, and Bill Ayers claimed, essentially, that any greatness America possesses comes from its radicals and activists against the government.

Well, let's take a page out of the Ayers-Obama-Alinsky community organizing playbook and, like Dr. Held, exercise our own form of activism to fight the lawless tyranny of the current federal government. Except that when we engage in activism, as it was with Dr. Held, it will be within the law.

God bless Dr. Held for standing up to tyranny and fighting for her patients, her profession and the unique protections of God-given liberty enshrined in our Constitution.

LIGHTS OUT REVISITED

J E Ted Thayer | Feb 13, 2014

I wrote about this issue on June 2nd of 2013, and it's finally caught the eye of the mainstream media.

Probably the most vulnerable part of America is the power grid. Terrorists have already hacked into a couple of electric company computer systems that control power distribution yards, according to some news reports. The experts are saying it won't be long before some bright kid figures out how to control the entire American power grid. And therein lies the threat.

I wrote the following article about computers last year:

Recalling the '80s at the University of Arizona, I was a manager at a technical development operation, the University Instrument Shop, charged with helping Principal Investigators create new and unique ways, means and equipment to do their research.

I came on board with no more credentials than hands-on experience in management and engineering - no degree - just a high school diploma, years of experience in electronic/electrical engineering, and management experience in my own business. I beat out dozens of applicants from across the world - each qualified with a Masters Degree and/or PHD in management and/or engineering. I qualified by virtue of equivalency to a Masters/PHD in Electrical Engineering and a PHD/Masters in Business Management.

One of the things I discovered as a business owner was how long it took to get things done when the government was involved. Licensing, inspections, you name it - time is money in small business, so you can imagine the amount of cash the government "money-suckers" extracted from my operation with their incessant foot-dragging.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

At any rate - one of the first things my boss wanted at the U of A was a computer system that could interact with the (DEC10) University Data Center via (300 baud) PaxLine. We had two Altairs - one a rack-mount, the other a desk-top, predecessors to Apple and the IBM-PC. My job was to obtain an operating system (CPM), create printer drivers and a system of labor time and inventory control that could bill Principal Investigators for the work we did for them and the materials they used from our inventory. Wow! What a challenge! There we were, right on the cusp of technical innovation using non-main-frame computers!

On the website I continued the issue with a second story about power problems. Let's take it up from there.

One of the problems we had at the UofA was power outages, especially in the summer when thunderstorms would rip through the city causing damaging power bumps and black-outs. Back in 1980 they didn't have inexpensive Un-interruptible Power Supplies (UPS) so it was important to back up data every day and shut the system down whenever mother nature started working her magic. This was back when a slight interruption in power could crash a hard drive in an instant.

We were beginning to rely more and more on computers in the early '80s, so that got me to thinking. What if the power went off all over the city for two or three days?

While pocket calculators had come into common use a few years earlier, most young people could still use a pencil and paper to do math. Shopping and regular commerce might be troublesome and paying the utility bills would be a problem. Since most water was delivered using electric pumps, that could pose a large challenge. Other than air-conditioning and heating, probably the only major difficulty would be getting

Thayer's Wild Bunch

fuel. They were pretty inventive back in the day, so I figured they'd break out the hand pumps from the hardware stores and gasoline would be available on a limited basis - public safety vehicles having a priority.

Fast-forward over thirty years. What would the scenario be today - 2014 - if the power went off for two or three days locally - worse, all over the country?

We had a three day power problem in Globe-Miami when it snowed hard on a winter day not-so-many years ago. Portable generators were put into service, the Red Cross and Emergency Services got to work helping house stranded folks at the Apache Gold Casino and Globe High School. Motels were packed. Fuel was available, but only in small quantities in a couple of locations where generators provided juice for the pumps. It was very difficult for many people, but there were no catastrophes. But then, it was winter. Food didn't spoil in the fridge and freezers pretty much stayed cold enough, provided they were not opened a lot. Had it been summer, it could have been a disaster.

What if all the power failed today? All over the western United States?

Transportation would come to a halt very quickly and there would be no food or fuel within just days. Even with the extensive Emergency Services networks in place, people would be in dire straits. Food spoilage would be astronomical. And shopping, for those who could manage to get to a store, would be a huge problem. With no electricity to power the computers and the cash registers attached to them there would be chaos. Young cashiers have become accustomed to swiping bar codes instead of pushing adding machine buttons. Many can barely write, much less put pen or pencil to paper and do the math necessary to total a bill for groceries. Many folks would run

Thayer's Wild Bunch

out of cash because plastic cards are used extensively, even by the poorest of the poor. Water, sewage, food and fuel would become major issues.

We need to be prepared for a disaster caused by a terrorist crash of the power grid, whether localized or nation-wide.

Non-perishable food and drink; cash on hand; heat sources, a portable radio, flashlight and batteries; toiletries, first aid supplies and every-day medications; blankets, tarps and heavy-duty plastic bags; protective gear and changes of clothing - all need to be on hand for any extended emergency, but especially one like a big power failure.

The experts are no longer asking *if* - but rather *when* such a thing will happen.

Best regards, my friends.

HOUSE OF CARDS RETURNS TO NETFLIX

J E Ted Thayer | Feb 16, 2013

The second season of *House of Cards*, starring executive producer Kevin Spacey, returned to cable TV Valentine's day. In the new season our boy takes the position of Vice President and continues his ruthless quest for ultimate power. Spacey chats occasionally with the audience (a la Ferris Bueller), a hit from the first season.



All episodes are available for viewing one at a time or all at once. **NETFLIX*** episodes run 49 minutes with no commercials, but cut to allow insertion when they get to syndication. We found three episodes at a time were just about right.



House of Cards earns **FOUR THUMBS UP** from the Thayer Clan.

*We subscribe to Netflix on the Internet for \$8.68 per month.

MINIMUM WAGE TO KILL JOBS

J E Ted Thayer | Feb 20, 2013

A good friend and I were discussing the Congressional proposition to raise the minimum wage and the President's Executive Order last week to do so for workers receiving federal money. Here's the text from the first two sections:

Executive Order -- Minimum Wage for Contractors

EXECUTIVE ORDER

ESTABLISHING A MINIMUM WAGE FOR CONTRACTORS
By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act, 40 U.S.C. 101 et seq., and in order to promote economy and efficiency in procurement by contracting with sources who adequately compensate their workers, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Policy. This order seeks to increase efficiency and cost savings in the work performed by parties who contract with the Federal Government by increasing to \$10.10 the hourly minimum wage paid by those contractors. Raising the pay of low-wage workers increases their morale and the productivity and quality of their work, lowers turnover and its accompanying costs, and reduces supervisory costs. These savings and quality improvements will lead to improved economy and efficiency in Government procurement.

Sec. 2. Establishing a minimum wage for Federal contractors and subcontractors. (a) Executive departments and agencies (agencies) shall, to the extent permitted by law, ensure that new contracts, contract-like instruments, and solicitations

Thayer's Wild Bunch

(collectively referred to as "contracts"), as described in section 7 of this order, include a clause, which the contractor and any subcontractors shall incorporate into lower-tier subcontracts, specifying, as a condition of payment, that the minimum wage to be paid to workers, including workers whose wages are calculated pursuant to special certificates issued under 29 U.S.C. 214(c), in the performance of the contract or any subcontract thereunder, shall be at least:
(i) \$10.10 per hour beginning January 1, 2015 ...

Tip earners' pay will rise to \$4.90/hr as of February 1, 2015 according to the order.

As of January 1, 2016 the order calls for annual pay increases tied to the Consumer Price Index, rounded to the nearest five cents.

Should the President's order be applied to federal workers (which it is not) it would guarantee that the lowest pay grade (GS-1) is \$10.10 per hour. Currently, GS-1 is \$8.62 as of January 1, 2014. Applying the federal "Locality Pay Schedule" for 2014, federal GS-1 employees in Phoenix make a minimum of \$10.06 today.

The Federal Minimum Wage today is \$7.25 per hour. Arizona's minimum wage increased automatically January 1, 2014 to \$7.90 per hour.

With his Executive Order, the President is simply playing political games with the Congress to placate Labor Unions.

The Fair Minimum Wage Act (H.R. 1010, now H.R. 3746), pending before the U.S. House of Representatives, would increase the Federal minimum wage in three steps, to \$10.10 per hour. The rate would increase, indexed to inflation, each year after its imposition. H.R. 1010/3746 was referred to the

Thayer's Wild Bunch

House Education and The Workforce Committee December 12, 2013. The line gives the bill a 2% chance of it getting out of committee and 0% chance of it actually passing the House, much less the Senate.

My friend the businessman said he would have to cut his employee roster by one because of the 27.8% (\$88.00) mandated increase to weekly pay per employee. That means he'll have to lay off one-quarter of his four person crew if H.R. 1010/3746 becomes law. Keeping the fourth employee would cost almost \$4,600 more for the year - not counting matching 7.65% employment taxes. How much more he'll have to cut to accommodate the Affordable Healthcare Act is another story for another day.

Extending my friend's dilemma, mom-and-pop stores nationwide could be cutting their employment by up to 25% to accommodate a \$10.10 federally mandated minimum wage. The Congressional Budget Office estimated that some 500,000 workers would lose their jobs if the \$10.10 proposition were passed. That may just be the tip of the iceberg. That's why H.R. 1010/3746 will never be heard from again.

INFRASTRUCTURE FAILURE

Last time, you'll recall, we were talking about the results of a massive power outage.

My brother Bill replied with an interesting take on infrastructure failure: *If they could get it together, they would forget about the grid, and focus on blowing up, or damaging all the bridges, both vehicular and railroad, that cross the Mississippi River. With those bridges out of commission, the nation would come to a total standstill.*

Thayer's Wild Bunch

I spent some serious thinktime working on his observation and decided we could be in for more trouble than anyone thought. Think about it: The EPA has been doing all in its power to shut down the coal-fired power plant on Arizona's Navajo Indian Reservation. That nation not only contributes a critical source of electric power to the west, it is also one on very few suppliers of coal in the west. The government has been messing with coal in the eastern U.S. for years. That part of the country provides the fuel for power plants all over the country.

What would happen if truck and rail traffic could not cross the Mississippi? How would produce from the west get to the eastern seaboard? How would processed meat move westward? Forget about banking ... how about pharmaceuticals? Would the air-transportation infrastructure come even close to being able to carry the loads trucks and trains routinely move between the four points of the American compass?

Finally, does our Emergency Services System have the capacity to cope with such massive shortages? Does the military have contingencies designed to cover nation-wide disruptions? Does the NSA have a clue? The NTSB? And the TSA? Is FEMA anywhere close to capable of coping with a national disaster? Oh, boy!

Just food for thought. Best regards.

MINIMUM WAGE REDUX

J E Ted Thayer | Feb 27, 2014

Last time, you'll recall, we shared what would happen if the proposed minimum wage Bill H.R. 1010/3746 got out of committee and actually passed.

This week the Congressional Budget Office estimated that some 300,000 jobs would be lost if the minimum wage for all workers was raised to \$10.10 per hour. Maybe so, but I think the CBO estimate was low by about 200,000 for two reasons:

First - Mom and Pop operations will account for some 250,000 people laid off because of the mandated payroll increase; second, another 250,000 chronically unemployed will become permanently unemployed and drop from the rolls completely.

Of course, that half-million person workforce change would be offset by the usual batch of phony numbers from the Department of Labor, portraying a net *decrease* in unemployment of about a tenth of one per-cent.

This week, the odds-makers still give H.R. 1010/3746 a 2% of chance getting out of committee and a 0% chance of passing if it actually gets to the floor for a vote.

Even so, it's still a good fluff story - right?

As I promised a while back ...

An excerpt from Caca Pasa:

Warning: This story is somewhat graphic and it deals with bodily functions. Some folks might find the

Thayer's Wild Bunch

following offensive, but it contains a good lesson about getting regular medical check-ups.

Globe-Miami Arizona is about two hours east of Phoenix, Arizona's Capitol, where summer temperatures can reach upwards of 120 degrees. These old mining towns sit at 3500 feet in the foothills of the Pinal Mountains. The canyons leading down from the mountains provide natural cooling so it's always about ten degrees cooler than Phoenix.

It was the summer of 1997. Nothing out of the ordinary. Just hot and sweaty outside as usual. Every evening, though, all summer and into the fall, I noticed that my underpants were soiled ever so slightly as I chucked them into the dirty clothes. I chalked it up to the heat and the resultant sweaty private parts guys get when it's hot out. When fall prepared to turn to winter and it began to cool, I still had those little tracks in my drawers, so I asked the doctor if there was something we should be doing. He referred me to a Doctor in the Radiology Department at Cobre Valley Community Hospital where I was to have what they called a Barium Enema.

"Go-lytely" is the name of the stuff they prescribe these days. It's been much too long ago to recall the name of the gallon container with the powder in it back then, but it reminded me of the main ingredient in anti-freeze. You added water to it, shook it, and watched as this light green-colored liquid was created out of nowhere. Then you had to drink it all, eight ounces at a time, every fifteen minutes until it was all gone.

By the end of the four hours it had begun. "It" being the trips to the john very few minutes. The green Go-lytely liquid is designed to cause a complete flushing of the gastro-intestinal system from the tummy to the "back-door" of the patient. The whole preparation takes about eight hours and requires that the patient have nothing but clear liquids after a light lunch and

Thayer's Wild Bunch

nothing to eat or drink for the eight hours before the medical procedure. By the morning of the hospital visit, the patient is thoroughly cleaned out but exhausted, famished and bone-dry. So it was with my own self.

A Barium Enema involves the insertion of a tube up the back-side and the injection of a chalky liquid infused with Barium, a radioactive element that makes it easy for radiology "see" the insides of the lower intestinal tract. X-rays are taken of the Lower G.I., as it's called. The radiologist then "interprets" the resultant films to determine if there are any lesions or polyps.

In my case, the prognosis was colon polyps. A large one was located close to the internal exit of my back door, possibly causing leakage earlier thought to be sweaty privates. An appointment was made to visit a specialist in Phoenix to discuss what to do next.

After trading information with my physicians about my condition, the Phoenix doctor, an Internal Medicine specialist, set up a colonoscopy to look into (to coin a phrase) what was causing the distress.

The procedure involves inserting through the patient's anus a long narrow, flexible tube containing a bright light source, air tubes, and tiny electronic and mechanical surgical tools, all of which can be manipulated from the outside. The doctor maneuvers the six-foot tube through the full length of the colon, checking every inch, every nook and cranny, looking for problems. He can remove a polyp with a tiny wire snare, burn off its connection and cauterize the wound using the colonoscope's tools – and while he works he can watch the whole thing on a big computer monitor in the operating room. After an overnight stay in a Phoenix hotel while the green stuff worked its magic (again), I submitted to a sedated trip into the twilight zone. Seventeen polyps were removed from

Thayer's Wild Bunch

my colon before the doctor called a halt to the procedure. Later, after I had recovered from the sedative, he said that when he was near my appendix, he became worried that the work area was too confined and required a surgeon with better skills than he possessed. (I have the highest respect for a professional who has no qualms about admitting his shortcomings!) He said there were still at least four more polyps left in there. And this guy specialized in colonoscopies!

Two months later they knocked me out again and a highly skilled surgeon with a charming Indian name deftly removed the remaining polyps – ten of them! After a week of recuperation I had a follow-up visit with the family doctor. We discussed the two colonoscopies and the unusual quantity of material that had been removed. He said none of the doctors had ever seen a patient with so many polyps. He also reported that a couple had come back identified as pre-cancerous. They had been caught before mutating into the dreaded killer. With that, I reminded my doctor that my complaint about dirty drawers led to the two procedures that had born such fruit, but the problem with my shorts persisted. That resulted in a third trip to Phoenix and a stay in the hospital under the knife.

Rectal surgery removed an early-stage cancerous lesion just inside my little bunghole! The first week in March found my underwear without blemish and my body rid of a threat that could have lead to a painful death. After that, I was referred to a new Internal Medicine specialist closer to home, and every year since 1998 I've reported dutifully to him for an annual colonoscopy. The procedure has become almost routine, with at least one new polyp turning up each year. No sweat. It's a piece of cake - but that evil green stuff still sucks!

SHOOTING WAR COULD HAPPEN BY ACCIDENT

J E Ted Thayer | Mar 6, 2014

This incident, reported in the New York Times, happened Tuesday morning.

Even as President Putin of Russia tried to [tamp down fears](#) of a shooting war in Crimea, the potential flashpoints for greater violence across the region — and eastern Ukraine — multiplied as Russian and Ukrainian forces [faced off](#) at numerous bases and on ships in the Black Sea. For instance, at a base near the Belbek airport, several hundred Ukrainians, from the Belbek garrison in Lubimovka, and Russians were in a [standoff overnight](#).

Then, at about 9 A.M. on Tuesday, after playing the Ukrainian national anthem, a column of Ukrainian troops set out — without weapons — with the flags of Ukraine and the Soviet Union at their head.

The men periodically sang as they marched. As they marched past half-hidden Russian troops screened behind rusting radar dishes, one man began to sing the famous Soviet partisan song, “Smuglianka, moldovanka.”

The column of roughly 200 Ukrainian troops approached the Russian positions, where a Russian Humvee and three men stood blocking the road. As they came within about 50 yards, one Russian began to fire into the air, others swiftly took up firing positions along one side of the Ukrainian column.

At the first shot, the Ukrainians flinched but then picked up the pace. At the second and third shots, the men clutched their heads and ducking, began to run. One man, pulling himself up, yelled, “We are the masters here!”

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Another, brandishing the red Soviet flag, yelled "This is the Soviet flag, are you going to shoot at the Soviet flag!"

The troops got within three feet of the man firing directly over their heads, before they pulled up. There had been 4 or 5 warning shots. The Russians continued to scream they would fire; the Ukrainians replied "Go on shoot!"

The commander of the base, Col. Yuli Mamchur, began negotiating with a Russian officer who identified himself only as Roman. After about thirty minutes, a dozen Ukrainian troops were allowed to enter the base, marching through the cordon of Russians.

The rest of the Ukrainians remained outside with the Russian guns trained on them. Two truckloads of Russian troops arrived and took up positions in the surrounding bushes.

— Patrick Reeve

JULY 1, 2014 TAX CHANGE COULD BE TROUBLE

Porter Stansberry, one of the investment world's most respected analysts, has been harping on the potential effects this year of a new law originally enacted in 2010. Just as the Affordable Care Act came to bear, FATCA has gradually been imposed on investors who might have interests in companies with overseas investments.

Read the following summary carefully. It may provide an appreciation of how devastating wholesale withdrawal of foreign investments by American individuals and corporations could be to the U.S. and European markets ... much less the possible domino effects on South American, Asian, middle-Eastern and African economies.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

The following IRS Summary is reprinted word-for-word from:
<http://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Corporations/Summary-of-Key-FATCA-Provisions>

Summary of Key FATCA Provisions

The Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA), enacted in 2010 as part of the Hiring Incentives to Restore Employment (HIRE) Act, is an important development in U.S. efforts to combat tax evasion by U.S. persons holding investments in offshore accounts.

Under FATCA, certain U.S. taxpayers holding financial assets outside the United States must report those assets to the IRS. In addition, FATCA will require foreign financial institutions to report directly to the IRS certain information about financial accounts held by U.S. taxpayers, or by foreign entities in which U.S. taxpayers hold a substantial ownership interest.

Reporting by U.S. Taxpayers Holding Foreign Financial Assets

FATCA requires certain U.S. taxpayers holding foreign financial assets with an aggregate value exceeding \$50,000 to report certain information about those assets on a new form (Form 8938) that must be attached to the taxpayer's annual tax return. Reporting applies for assets held in taxable years beginning after March 18, 2010. For most taxpayers this will be the 2011 tax return they file during the 2012 tax filing season. Failure to report foreign financial assets on Form 8938 will result in a penalty of \$10,000 (and a penalty up to \$50,000 for continued failure after IRS notification). Further, underpayments of tax attributable to non-disclosed foreign financial assets will be subject to an additional substantial understatement penalty of 40 percent.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Reporting by Foreign Financial Institutions

FATCA will also require foreign financial institutions (“FFIs”) to report directly to the IRS certain information about financial accounts held by U.S. taxpayers, or by foreign entities in which U.S. taxpayers hold a substantial ownership interest. To properly comply with these new reporting requirements, an FFI will have to enter into a special agreement with the IRS by June 30, 2013. Under this agreement a “participating” FFI will be obligated to:

- (1) undertake certain identification and due diligence procedures with respect to its accountholders;
- (2) report annually to the IRS on its accountholders who are U.S. persons or foreign entities with substantial U.S. ownership; and
- (3) withhold and pay over to the IRS 30-percent of any payments of U.S. source income, as well as gross proceeds from the sale of securities that generate U.S. source income, made to (a) non-participating FFIs, (b) individual accountholders failing to provide sufficient information to determine whether or not they are a U.S. person, or (c) foreign entity accountholders failing to provide sufficient information about the identity of its substantial U.S. owners.

Notice 2011-53 provides the phased-in timeline of key FATCA implementation dates for FFIs. It is important to note that many details of the new reporting and withholding requirements pertaining to FFIs must be developed through Treasury regulations. Proposed regulations were issued on Feb. 8, 2012. Published IRS Notices accessible from this FATCA internet site provide currently available information and guidance.

Page Last Reviewed or Updated: 29-Nov-2013

CLIMATE CHANGE IS REAL

J E Ted Thayer | Mar 13, 2014

I was born in 1941, two years after a couple of the warmest years on record in the USA. The following year, 1942, saw the warmest continental temperatures ever recorded . . . in Asia.

The warmest temperature ever recorded in the United States was in 1934 at Furnace Creek Ranch on July 10, 1913. The coldest temps on record in the US were in the mid-70s, when scientists wrung their hands over an impending Ice age. The same name-calling and political gobbledygook about cooling was around in the 70s as exists today about warming. There was a sharp trend leading up to the mid-90s that helped support the warming theory. However, that trend stopped and temps have been relatively stable - or even in decline - for the last dozen years.

The facts over extended periods simply don't support a causal relationship between human development and global temperatures. So, global cooling and global warming theorists finally had to agree some time ago that it was politically expedient to call environmental cooling/warming what it has always been - Climate Change.

Mankind is not doomed, as the theorists claim, because quantities of CO₂ exist in our atmosphere. Every kid in school knows that Carbon Dioxide is what supports plant life, which in turn creates the Oxygen we breathe. When one looks back across the eons of warming and cooling, it's clear that many people perished during massive treks to find moderate climes.

The point is that mankind did not disappear from the face of the earth during the current ice age (Pliocene-Quaternary glaciation), which began about 2.58 *million* years ago. People simply moved.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

When it gets too warm, we move north; too cold, we move south. Too wet causes moves to desert climes, too dry forces movement to more verdant areas. Nowadays, people have the ways and means to move very quickly to evade changes in climate. Neither naysayers nor professors of the climatological sciences can successfully come up with a workable plan to avoid climate change other than the one that works.

Take heart, troops, we all have the same choice great plains residents made when they migrated from the dust bowl to the west coast during the 30s. Just pack up your stuff and move.

A couple of recent Newspaper Articles ...

STATE DEPARTMENT: 42,100 KEYSTONE JOBS

By Sean Higgins MARCH 1, 2013

One of the more interesting takeaways from the State Department's 2,000-page report [02-28-2014] on the impacts of the proposed US-Canada pipeline project is that it predicts the project will create more than 42,000 jobs over a two-year period. That is more than twice the figure commonly associated with the project.

The executive summary of the report states:

Construction of the proposed Project would generate temporary, positive socioeconomic impacts as a result of local employment, taxes, spending by construction workers, and spending on construction goods and services. **Including direct, indirect, and induced**

Thayer's Wild Bunch

effects, the proposed Project would potentially support approximately 42,100 average annual jobs across the United States over a 1-to 2- year construction period (of which, approximately 3,900 would be directly employed in construction activities). This employment would potentially translate to approximately \$2.05 billion in earnings. (Emphasis added.)

TransCanada said the project would create 20,000 jobs, a figure often repeated by other supporters of the project. As CNNMoney notes that figure includes temporary 13,000 construction jobs. TransCanada also predicted 120,000 indirect jobs. As you'll note above the State Department summary rolls its indirect jobs estimate into its total, which presumably explains the difference between its total and the industry's.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch ...

OBAMA KNOCKS KEYSTONE ESTIMATE IN INTERVIEW

By ALEX GUILLEN | 2/3/14

President Barack Obama questioned how many construction jobs the Keystone XL pipeline would create in an interview shown on Fox News on Monday [03-03-2014] night.

In the interview taped Sunday, "O'Reilly Factor" host Bill O'Reilly said the proposed pipeline would create 42,000 jobs, but Obama cut in. "First of all, it's not 42,000. That's not correct. It's a couple thousand to build the pipeline," he said.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

The final Environmental Impact Statement released Friday [02-28-2014] by the State Department concluded that building the pipeline would support 42,100 jobs during construction. However, critics of the proposed pipeline have long pointed out that those jobs are short lived. Once built, Keystone XL would support just 35 permanent workers and 15 temporary jobs, according to the State Department.

Obama has long been skeptical of the job creations claims. Last July, Obama called the jobs created by the pipeline “a blip relative to the need.”

In the Fox interview, Obama avoided indicating how his administration would rule on whether to approve Keystone XL. “The bottom line is, what we’re going to do is the process now goes, agencies comment on what the State Department did,” he said, pointing also to the coming public comment period and Secretary of State John Kerry’s ultimate recommendation.

“We’ll take a look at it,” Obama said.

“OK, I’ll take that as a yes,” O’Reilly replied, prompting the president to laugh.

The State Department’s final environmental assessment released Friday concluded that there is little evidence the pipeline, which has been proposed by TransCanada and would stretch from oil fields in Alberta to refineries on Texas’s Gulf Coast, would worsen climate change by spurring a huge increase in oil production.

Both pipeline supporters and environmental opponents have cited the environmental assessment as providing plenty of ammo for their sides.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Nice to know that State and POTUS are on same page ...

CLIMATE CHANGE OOOPS

J E Ted Thayer | Mar 13, 2014

The warmest temperature ever recorded in the United States was 134 at Furnace Creek Ranch on July 10, 1913.

None of the rest of it matters much.

You think?

Whew.

DEJA VU JUST KEEPS ON KEEPIN' ON

J E Ted Thayer | Mar 20, 2014

There is an imaginary place called Mudville - named by one of my long lost relatives by the name of Earnest Lawrence Thayer. He was the one who penned the famous poem *Casey at the Bat*. Baseball-Almanac.com provides the following offering:

"It all started in 1885 when George Hearst decided to run for state senator in California. To self-promote his brand of politics, Hearst purchased the San Francisco Examiner. At the completion of the election, Hearst gave the newspaper to his son, William Randolph Hearst.

"William, who had experience editing the Harvard Lampoon while at Harvard College, took to California three Lampoon staff members. One of those three was Ernest L. Thayer who signed his humorous Lampoon articles with the pen name Phin.

"In the June 3, 1888 issue of The Examiner, Phin appeared as the author of the poem we all know as Casey at the Bat. The poem received very little attention and a few weeks later it was partially republished in the New York Sun, though the author was now known as Anon.

"A New Yorker named Archibald Gunter clipped out the poem and saved it as a reference item for a future novel. Weeks later Gunter found another interesting article describing an upcoming performance at the Wallack Theatre by comedian De Wolf Hopper - who was also his personal friend. The August 1888 show (exact date is unknown) had members from

Thayer's Wild Bunch

the New York and Chicago ball clubs in the audience and the clipping now had a clear and obvious use.

"Gunter shared Casey at the Bat with Hopper and the performance was nothing short of legendary. [...]"

You can read the whole thing at http://www.baseball-almanac.com/poetry/po_case.shtml and there is an original audio recording available at the bottom of the web page wherein Hopper recites the poem before the 1888 audience that included players from the New York Giants and the (then) Chicago White Stockings.

I liken President Obama to the mighty Casey because he regularly appears to make a valiant effort to do the job. I truly believe in my heart that he really tries! But somehow, he always seems to come up short when it comes to delivering the goods.

*Oh, somewhere in this favoured land the sun is shining bright,
The band is playing somewhere, and somewhere hearts are light;
And somewhere men are laughing, and somewhere children shout,
But there is no joy in Washington — mighty 'Bama has struck out!*

FISHY, I SAY!

Fishy. It smells! Stinky doesn't quite cover it. Just fishy.
Lookie here ...

It seems like every time I turn around ... another government official is caught telling another whopper!

Is it just me? Or what?

THE SEARCH GOES ON ...

J E Ted Thayer | Mar 27, 2014

This business with the Boeing tripple-seven has reached epic proportions. How do you search for something missing in an area three times the size of the United States? It took over three-quarters of a century to find the Titanic and the searchers actually had a clue to where it might be located.

The missing airplane is almost the size of a football field, so how could it be so hard to locate? Simple. Try finding the Waikiki Natatorium. It's four times bigger than a football field. But unless you have it programmed into Google Earth, you're not going to find it. Same thing happens if you're looking for the Tehachape Loop ... if you don't know it's part of the Southern Pacific rail line located in the mountains six-and-a-half miles north-west of Tehachape, California you'll never find it. And it's over a quarter-mile across!

Maybe some day, decades from now, a dedicated team of treasure-hunters will find the missing Malaysia Flight 370.

That's who found the Titanic, right?

CONGRESS SHALL MAKE NO LAW ...

respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

Those words from the first amendment to the Constitution of the United States are clear and unequivocal. The House and Senate are forbidden from making any law that will affect our

Thayer's Wild Bunch

religious rights, our language, or our ability to gather together in peace. It's clear as a bell. The Congress can't mess with American citizens when it comes to religion, speech and assembly.

Those words are also very clear by their omission. Neither of the other two branches of the federal government is forbidden there from creating regulations or interpreting existing laws in ways that abridge those rights.

Thomas Jefferson wrote, "Religious institutions that use government power in support of themselves and force their views on persons of other faiths, or of no faith, undermine all our civil rights. Moreover, state support of an established religion tends to make the clergy unresponsive to their own people, and leads to corruption within religion itself. Erecting the 'wall of separation between church and state,' therefore, is absolutely essential in a free society."

James Madison wrote the following: "The purpose of separation of church and state is to keep forever from these shores the ceaseless strife that has soaked the soil of Europe in blood for centuries."

And it was Justice Sandra Day O'Connor who penned, "Those who would renegotiate the boundaries between church and state must therefore answer a difficult question: why would we trade a system that has served us so well for one that has served others so poorly?"

The fact remains that, despite the writings of beloved historical figures such as O'Connor, Madison and Jefferson, there is no such specific as "Separation of Church and State" in the American Constitution. Even so, this catchy phrase has been used argue distortions to law that were never intended by

Thayer's Wild Bunch

the framers of the Constitution, else they would have been included.

The contention that the first amendment doesn't apply to the Executive and Judicial branches of the federal government, nor to state governments, has been argued before the Supreme Court of the United States. And the separation of powers argument has come up again in the Hobby Lobby case before the SCOTUS. It remains to be seen whether the High Court will uphold the provisions of the First Amendment or the contentions of the misinformed.

THIS ONE'S FOR THE LITTLE GUYS

J E Ted Thayer | Apr 3, 2014

Regular folks who want to invest in the Stock Market *need to be taught* how to do it.

Most folks *can afford* to put away \$100 a month. Some find it more difficult than others, but it can (and should) be done as a regular part of each month's budget. **CAUTION:** Today, a monthly investment of \$100 will cost little investor \$10 (check out E*trade, for instance) which means that only \$90 will actually get invested. But One can wait six months, put the money in a bag (that's about as profitable as a savings account these days!) and invest \$600 for the same \$10 fee, meaning the investment is \$590 every 6 months instead of \$500 over the same period at \$100 per month. Someone with the discipline to stash \$100 in cash every month and not touch it will be able to invest that \$1200 for the same \$10, buying \$1190 worth of stock. **CAUTION:** Buy one stock for each investment - if each transaction costs \$10 - two \$600 transactions will cost \$20.

The trick is to invest regularly in what are called **WORLD DOMINATORS**. These are the corporations that everybody knows, that are positioned worldwide, and pay ever-increasing dividends. In other words - bet your money on a sure thing and let the dividends help your nest-egg grow over time. And **DON'T CASH OUT - NO MATTER WHAT.**

That's the way it works!

World Dominators? Here are some examples: Wal Mart (WMT), Hershey (HSY), Johnson & Johnson (JNJ), Microsoft (MSFT), Coca Cola (KO). Each one of these outfits has a huge

Thayer's Wild Bunch

presence across the world. Each pays regular dividends, which can be automatically reinvested to increase holdings without incurring brokerage fees.

Fortunes are built by little guys over the long haul by regular, smart investments with low or no brokers' fees, and regular, automatic reinvestments of the dividends.

MILITARY GEARING UP FOR 2014 ELECTIONS

I don't know who originated the following tome, but I want you to have it whether you've read it before or not. As a former Republican (and Democrat) political leader, I feel it merits attention.

The 2014 United States elections will be held on Tuesday, November 4, 2014. During this midterm election year, all 435 seats in the United States House of Representatives and 33 of the 100 seats in the United States Senate will be contested in this election.

A movement has been started by our armed forces to get out the vote in 2014. They are organizing themselves, but this can be done by all of us.

The President, the Commander in Chief, has made the Rules of Engagement (ROE) so difficult, that our troops are often killed before they can even get permission to fight. Nothing has been done to stop our troops from being murdered by the Afghans they are training, either. Now, the President wants the US to sign on to the UN's International Criminal Court (ICC), which would allow the UN's ICC to arrest and try US troops for War Crimes, without the legal protections guaranteed under US Law, and from which there is no appeal.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

The President, with his Democratic control of the Senate, has nearly all the power. If the Non-Establishment Republicans, and Conservatives, can take back the Senate in 2014, our troops can once again be protected from unnecessary danger. Interestingly enough, when GWB was president you heard about the military deaths in Iraq and Afghanistan almost daily. With Obama in the White House, the mainstream media has been strangely quiet. More than 1,000 American soldiers have lost their lives in Afghanistan in the last 27 months. This is more than the combined total of the nine years before. Thirty have died in August. During the last month, over 50 additional NATO and US servicemen have been murdered, inside jobs by those who are hired to be a force for good in Afghanistan.

The commander in chief is AWOL. Not a peep, although he ordered the White House flag flown at half-staff for the Sikhs that were killed. There is a deep disgust, a fury, growing in the ranks of the military against the indifferent incompetence of this president.

It has taken on a dangerous tone. No one knows what to do about him, but the anger runs deep as the deaths continue with no strategic end in sight to the idiocy of this war. Obama has had 4 years to end this futile insanity, during which time he has vacationed, golfed, campaigned, and generally ignored the plight of our men and women in uniform.

But, there is now a movement afoot in the armed services to launch a massive get out the vote drive against this president. Not just current active duty types, but the National Guard, Reserves, the retired, and all other prior service members. This is no small special interest group, but many millions of veterans who can have an enormous impact on the outcome of the November election if they all respond.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

The one million military retirees in Florida alone could mean an overwhelming victory in that state if they all show up at the polls. It might not keep another one hundred U.S. troops from dying between now and November, but a turn out to vote by the military against this heart breaking lack of leadership can make a powerful statement that hastens a change to the indifference of this shallow little man (this term used lightly) who just lets our soldiers die.

It matters little to me what your political persuasion happens to be ... this issue transcends Republican, Democrat, Independent and non-partisan politics. There is no such thing as a "former Marine", contrary to what you hear regularly from the mainstream media. That alone offends me beyond comprehension. The fact that anyone would have to plead with loyal Americans, much less fellow Marines, to exercise their right to vote is so offensive it makes me want to puke! They say, "Once a Marine, always a Marine." If you are a Marine, know a Marine or have a friend or relative in the Marine Corps, I want you to give them a copy of the above letter.

Nothing motivates folks like a pissed-off Marine. I think it's time to do some motivation.

Let's get busy, troops.

BUNDY

J E Ted Thayer | April 17, 2014

The confrontation in Nevada over federal vs. individual rights has yet to come to fruition.



I'm of the opinion that the feds are not going to let some pipsqueak who represents less than 5% of cattle ranchers in the country get away with making government forces stand down.

The Bundy ranch raises beef on land it claimed back in the late 1800s, long before the feds decided it belonged to them and long before the State of Nevada took it under its wing.

Whether Bundy has a legitimate claim to the grazing land is still debatable, even though a Federal Court has found for the feds.

Bundy claims that the feds tried an end-run around the state by alleging that the land in question was covered by EPA statutes protecting the Desert Tortoise and therefore fell under the protective umbrella of the federal government, no matter who claims ownership. Whether the state or the county or the Bundys are the lawful owners of the land, the feds could care

Thayer's Wild Bunch

less and it appears that they are willing to spill civilian blood to make the point. They just aren't very fond of the kind of media attention that appeared out of nowhere just after they started a court-ordered roundup of Bundy's animals.

I think the feds are going to lay back in the weeds until the heat chills down. Then I think you'll see arrests of Bundy, his family and his hands so nobody will be around to contest the taking of the land, the ranch, and all of the Bundy estate to settle the case.

I hope I'm wrong.

WESTERN LAND OWNERSHIP

J E Ted Thayer | April 24, 2014

The confrontation in Nevada between the Bundys and the BLM has brought to the fore an almost completely ignored fact about the West. In the dozen Western states, the federal government owns just under half (49.88%) of all the land.

In five of those states, the feds claim more than half - Nevada (84.5), Alaska (69.1), Utah (57.4), Oregon (52.1) and Idaho (50.2).

In five more states the federal government claims over 40% - Arizona (48.1), California (45.3), Wyoming (42.3), New Mexico (41.8) and Washington (41.3).

The feds claim 36.6% of Colorado and 29.9% of Montana. Four Eastern states fare much better than the West, claiming less than one per-cent federal property: Iowa (0.8), New York (0.8), Rhode Island (0.4) and New Jersey (0.4).

There are five states east of the Mississippi with less than two per-cent federal lands: Maine (1.1), Alabama (1.6), Ohio (1.7), Illinois (1.8) and Massachusetts (1.9).

Four mid-western states - including Kansas (1.2), Nebraska (1.4), Texas (1.9) and Indiana (2.0) - comprise the remainder of the states with two per-cent or less federally-controlled property.

Arizona presents a shining example when it comes to government-owned real estate. While the BLM and Interior Departments claim 18%, the Bureau of Indian Affairs takes 30%, National Parks, Forests and refuges account for 19%, another 5% are claimed by the military, and federal reclamation, flood control and power projects take 2% of the

Thayer's Wild Bunch

available land in Arizona. The State itself claims another 14%, leaving a grand-total of just 12% in private hands. (The 48.1% openly claimed by the feds does not include the military, reclamation, or BIA holdings.)

Gila County in Arizona has perhaps the worst situation when it comes to private land ownership. According to District One Gila County Supervisor Tommie Martin, of the County's approximately 5,000 square miles, 96% is owned by the federal government or the state. Of the 4% remaining, over half is used by the mining industry. That leaves a tiny 1½ percent for private land ... and the good, hard working folks who pay the highest property taxes in the state of Arizona. Makes you wonder how they're faring in the rest of the West.

CACA PASA?

Now, then ... I got the following note [in part] the other day from my good friend Roberto A Reveles in response to last week's broadcast:

Who but the federal court has constitutional authority? The loonies in the state legislature? The dentist who plays congressman? The self-styled broadcaster who illustrates that yes, caca pasa?

Mr. Reveles is a well-respected Miami-born Gold Canyon, Arizona resident who is the founder of *Somos America - We are America ... promoting civic participation by Latinos*. I'm toying with the idea of including Roberto as a regular contributor - as sort of a point-counterpoint, if you will.

Your email comments are welcome, also. For publication - or not - you choose.

NO RULER

J E Ted Thayer | May 1, 2014

Well, I finally finished writing the book. I missed my self-imposed completion date by just shy of a week. Can't complain. I started on it in 2010.

The really difficult part started the other day - proofing it. Over the past half-decade, whenever I finished a story I'd read it to Claudette. If I missed a word or phrase, I'd catch it by reading out loud. Wrong words, mis-spellings, awkward phrases were caught with this technique.

I also emailed stories to my sister, Mandy, the retired teacher. She was worse than Mother Theresa! What a wonderful asset to have a smart sister, bless her heart. Only thing missing was the wooden ruler across the knuckles!

Now, to finish the job, I have to read every word two or three times and make corrections. Most writers pay publishers to do this work. But, I'm a cheap S.O.B and won't pay somebody to do what I've been doing most of my life!

The task at hand is to get it ready for publication on Amazon - first as a Kindle work, later as a download and perhaps down the line as an audio book.

BENGAZI

J E Ted Thayer | May 8, 2014

I was researching fellow Monterey Union High School graduate Leon Panetta and happened upon this article written by Washington Post Fact Checker Glenn Kessler. Nice that some belated facts about the Benghazi attack are getting out there ...

The Washington Post

ISSA'S 'SUSPICIONS' THAT HILLARY CLINTON TOLD PANETTA TO 'STAND DOWN' ON BENGAZI

Glenn Kessler | February 21 at 6:00 am

"We need to have an answer of when the secretary of defense had assets that he could have begun spinning up. Why there was not one order given to turn on one Department of Defense asset? I have my suspicions, which is Secretary Clinton told Leon [Panetta] to stand down, and we all heard about the stand-down order for two military personnel. That order is undeniable. They were told not to get on — get off the airplane and kind of stand by — and they're going to characterize it wasn't stand down. But when we're done with Benghazi, the real question is, was there a stand-down order to Leon Panetta or did he just not do his job? Was there a stand-down order from the president who said he told them to use their resources and they didn't use them? Those questions have to be answered." Rep. Darrell Issa (R-Calif.), remarks during a GOP fundraising dinner, Concord, N.H., Feb. 17, 2014

Thayer's Wild Bunch

The Fact Checker has written at length on the 2012 tragedy at Benghazi, Libya, in which four Americans, including the U.S. ambassador, were killed. Some readers may think it is old news. But every so often a new allegation emerges.

During a fundraising dinner for New Hampshire Republicans, Rep. Darrell Issa (R-Calif.) raised a startling allegation: "I have my suspicions, which is Secretary Clinton told Leon [Panetta] to stand down."

Issa is chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee and thus has every right to raise provocative questions. But while allegations of a "stand-down" order periodically emerged during the months-long investigation of the incident, recent congressional reports have cast serious doubt on those claims.

A report by Republicans on the Armed Services Committee recently declared: "There was no 'stand down' order issued to U.S. military personnel in Tripoli who sought to join the fight in Benghazi." A bipartisan Senate Intelligence Committee report released in January said: "The Committee has reviewed the allegations that U.S. personnel, including in the IC [Intelligence Community] or DOD, prevented the mounting of any military relief effort during the attacks, but the Committee has not found any of these allegations to be substantiated."

Issa actually appears to acknowledge that, saying that it was not characterized as "stand down." But then he uses the phrase again in a series of questions: "Was there a stand-down order to Leon Panetta or did he just not do his job? Was there a stand-down order from the president who said he told them to use their resources and they didn't use them?"

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Granted, Issa is speaking off the cuff in response to a question, so maybe precise clarity should not be expected. But he clearly suggests that someone — in particular possible presidential candidate Hillary Rodham Clinton or even President Obama — told Panetta not to act. As he put it, “Why there was not one order given to turn on one Department of Defense asset?”

Frankly, it would be rather surprising for a secretary of state to tell a defense secretary how to deploy his troops. What does the evidence show?

The Facts

The official timeline of DOD actions on Sept. 11-12, 2012, shows that the incident began at 3:42 p.m., Washington time, and that by 5 p.m., Panetta and Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, were at the White House discussing possible options with Obama. A Predator drone arrived over the Benghazi facility at 5:10 p.m. Between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m., Panetta convened a series of meetings and gave verbal authorization for the following actions:

1. A Fleet Anti-Terrorism Security Team (FAST) platoon, stationed in Rota, Spain, is told to deploy to Benghazi, while a second FAST platoon in Rota is told to prepare to deploy to the embassy in Tripoli.
2. A Special Operations force training in central Europe, known as the Commander's In-Extremis Force (CIF), is told to prepare to deploy to a staging base in southern Europe.
3. A Special Operations force based in the United States is told to prepare to deploy to a base in southern Europe. (Separately, six U.S. security personnel left the U.S. Embassy in Tripoli for Benghazi and landed by 7:30 p.m., and “performed heroically,” the report says. Four other personnel

Thayer's Wild Bunch

had hoped to join them but were told to remain behind to defend diplomats there. That incident later led to allegations that they were ordered to “stand down,” but the Special Operations commander later told investigators that the decision was correct in hindsight because otherwise his team would not have been there to deal with the wounded arriving from Benghazi.)

The House Armed Services report makes it clear that Obama told Panetta to do what he needed to do — and that Clinton did not speak with him on Sept. 11 as deployment decisions were made:

“[A]s to specifics” of the U.S. reaction, Secretary Panetta testified to the Senate that the President “left that up to us.” Secretary Panetta said the President was “well informed” about events and worried about American lives. He and General Dempsey also testified they had no further contact with the President, nor did Secretary of State Hillary Clinton ever communicate with them that evening.

A footnote added: “Secretary Clinton testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in January 2013 that she and General Dempsey spoke about the attack on September 12. Furthermore, she said on the day of the attack she participated in a ‘secure video conference’ which included ‘senior officials’ from DOD.”

Here’s how Panetta described Obama’s instructions in his testimony: “He basically said, do whatever you need to do to be able to protect our people there.”

Of course, the deployment of forces by Panetta turned out to be pretty poor. It took six hours just for the units to prepare to depart for Libya. Not until 17 hours after Panetta issued the order did the CIF finally make it to the staging base in

Thayer's Wild Bunch

southern Europe. An hour later, one FAST platoon arrived in Tripoli. Thirty minutes after that, the Special Ops force from the United States arrived in Europe.

The Armed Services report also says one FAST platoon was delayed because the troops had to pause at a base to change clothes because of a request from the Libyan government, which it said apparently feared combat-ready troops would “unduly alarm or inflame” Libyans.

So, contrary to Issa's claim that “not one order” was given to deploy one DOD asset, there were plenty of orders. Meanwhile, there appears to be no evidence that Clinton spoke directly with Panetta, in an apparent effort to override Obama's instructions. So what is Issa talking about?

Frederick Hill, a spokesman for the Oversight Committee, said that Issa was speaking of Clinton and Panetta as “institutional actors” operating at the “highest levels of the State Department and the Department of Defense.” He suggested the shorthand of “Clinton” and “Leon” was used because it was easier for the audience to understand than “State” and “DOD.”

Hmm. Is this credible? After all, Issa was speaking to a political audience, and he just happened to evoke the name of the leading Democratic candidate for president. Last time we checked, the “State Department” was not a potential candidate for president.

(Issa previously has said he personalizes institutions. Speaking on the Rush Limbaugh show in 2010 he once said Obama “is one of the most corrupt presidents in modern times” but then later told CNN that he meant to say “one of the most corrupt administrations.”)

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Hill said: "Chairman Issa is asking a very straightforward question: Did high-level figures at the State Department, working under Secretary Clinton's direction, impede the military response to Benghazi or was this only about the military not being prepared and positioned to respond?"

Hill noted that the Armed Services report "does not draw a conclusion about whether the State Department sought to discourage, limit or constrain a military response." He added that it "is undeniable that a Special Operations commander in Tripoli was given an alternative order when he intended to take his team to Benghazi as the attack raged," though "Chairman Issa acknowledged in New Hampshire that many do not consider this to have been a 'stand-down' order." He added that "the record is also clear that the State Department delayed the deployment of a Marine team that arrived in Tripoli the next day" — this is in reference to the request from the Libyan government to remove military uniforms — and that State "stopped the deployment of a multi-agency response team." (The CBS report that Hill cited also said the White House believed the Foreign Emergency Support Team (FEST) was not necessary.)

Hill said none of Panetta's orders directed units to Benghazi as fighting occurred: "If you're fixated on the term 'turn on,' remember that military units frequently reposition — the chairman is clearly talking about why a DOD combat asset was not directed to go to Benghazi."

"All of this is relevant to the state of mind among officials that night and whether they did everything they could to respond to the Benghazi attack or whether other factors were considered that led to a more cautious approach," Hill said.

The Pinocchio Test



When The Fact Checker gave Four Pinocchios to Issa for claiming that Clinton signed a cable denying security for Benghazi, we said: “He would be on stronger ground if he didn’t claim that she wrote this or signed it, but that it was fishy and he was seeking more information.”

Hill suggests that Issa’s reference to “suspicions” that Clinton told Panetta to “stand down,” as well as his series of questions, represent that sort of caveat.

It is correct that Issa poses a series of questions, but his repeated use of the phrase “stand down” and his personalizing of the alleged actions (“Secretary Clinton;” “Leon”) leave a distinct impression that either Clinton or Obama delivered some sort of instruction to Panetta to not act as forcefully as possible. He even incorrectly asserts that not a single order was given to use any DOD asset. One could argue the response was slow, bungled or poorly handled. But Issa is crossing a line when he suggests there was no response — or a deliberate effort to hinder it.

VOTER REGISTRATION

J E Ted Thayer | May 15, 2014

So, I asked my friend Roberto A Reveles to help me with this week's broadcast, but he said he couldn't because he was grandchild-sitting in Virginia. Then I asked Arizona State Senator and US Congressional Candidate Steve Gallardo if he'd like to participate. Gallardo is one of the plaintiffs in a suit filed in Kansas about laws in Arizona and Kansas requiring prospects to provide proof of Citizenship when registering to vote. As of this writing I hadn't heard from him. And that's ok.

Here's the copyrighted AP story from the April 19, 2014 **Wall Street Journal**:

KANSAS, ARIZONA PREVAIL IN VOTER CITIZENSHIP SUIT

A federal judge on Wednesday ordered the U.S. Election Assistance Commission to help Kansas and Arizona enforce laws requiring new voters to provide proof of their U.S. citizenship.

U.S. District Judge Eric Melgren in Wichita, Kan., ruled the commission has no legal authority to deny requests from Kansas and Arizona to add state-specific instructions to a national voter registration form. Mr. Melgren ordered the commission to immediately revise the national form.

The states and their top election officials—secretaries of state Kris Kobach of Kansas and Ken Bennett of Arizona, both conservative Republicans—sued the agency to force the action.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Both states require new voters to provide a birth certificate, passport or other documentation to prove their U.S. citizenship to election officials. The federal registration form requires only that prospective voters sign a statement declaring they are citizens.

While most voters in both states register with state forms, their officials said the availability of the federal form created a loophole as they tried to enforce the proof-of-citizenship requirements. Mr. Kobach and others argue that the requirements preclude voter fraud by preventing noncitizens from voting, particularly those in the country illegally. "This is a really big victory, not just for Kansas and Arizona but for all 50 states," Mr. Kobach told the Associated Press. "Kansas has paved the way for all states to enact proof-of-citizenship requirements."

Arizona Attorney General Tom Horne, another conservative Republican, said election fraud is a serious problem but that "a cover-up by the media" has prevented people from knowing the true extent of the problem.

Critics argue that proof-of-citizenship requirements make it harder for people to register and suppress voter turnout, and contend that the potential for noncitizens to vote is remote enough that it doesn't justify such steps.

Democratic Arizona state Sen. Steve Gallardo, who joined the lawsuit on the side of the Election Assistance Commission, said a proof-of-citizenship requirement makes it harder for minorities and the elderly to register. He said it is also designed to weed out progressive voters, particularly college students.

"These are new voters that are getting active," Mr. Gallardo said. "They tend to be a lot more progressive and

Thayer's Wild Bunch

liberal...particularly when it comes to issues like medical marijuana, same sex marriage, more progressive-type issues. That's what this ruling does now—it makes it more difficult for this segment of voters, students, to vote."

In Kansas, the registrations of nearly 15,700 prospective voters—enough to decide a close statewide race—remained on hold Wednesday because they hadn't yet complied with the proof-of-citizenship requirement.

Election Assistance Commission spokesman Bryan Whitener said in an email only that the ruling is "under review" by the agency. However, it can appeal Mr. Melgren's decision to the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, based in Denver.

Mr. Melgren said the U.S. Constitution gives states the power to set voter qualifications, and Congress hasn't pre-empted it, even in enacting a federal voter-registration law in the 1990s. "Because the Court finds that Congress hasn't pre-empted state laws requiring proof of citizenship through the National Voter Registration Act, the Court finds the decision of the EAC denying the states' requests to be unlawful and in excess of its statutory authority" Mr. Melgren wrote.

The case arose after the U.S. Supreme Court last year struck down part of Arizona's 2004 proof-of-citizenship law. The Kansas voter ID law took effect last year.

The high court said Arizona couldn't reject the registrations of voters who used the national form if they weren't accompanied by documents proving U.S. citizenship. But the court also said Arizona could return to the EAC to request a modification of the form.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Under Kansas' law, election officials don't reject the national forms outright but put those registrations on hold until proof of U.S. citizenship is provided.

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Since this continuing Arizona voter registration story has been portrayed by some as polarizing, I thought it would be good to discuss the core issue here without the usual inflammatory rhetoric.

Both the Arizona and Kansas laws require positive identification to register to vote. The US Supreme Court had no problem with the states requiring proof of Citizenship to register for state elections, but since the Federal Registration Forms do not have the requirement for documentation currently, it is not required for Federal elections. The states can request the Federal Elections Commission to include the requirement in the future. The EAC has taken no action on the issue thus far.

Voters who use the Arizona form will be able to vote in all races, from Congress to governor to the state Legislature.

According to the **Arizona Republic** newspaper's **AzCentral.com** website, "[Arizona] is proceeding with plans to implement a dual-track system for this year's primary and general elections. There will be separate ballots for voters who used the federal form, and those voters will only be able to vote in federal elections, which this year means the nine congressional races.

"... elections officials must continue to accept registration forms issued both by the state and the federal government. Both forms require voters to sign under penalty of perjury that their information -- including citizenship -- is true. But Arizona and Kansas want voters to provide documents that

Thayer's Wild Bunch

prove that status." Both states will have the opportunity to argue the point of requiring documentation in front of the 10th US Circuit Court of Appeals as the result of a Stay issued May 8th.

Many see the law as little different than the one requiring proof of date of birth from those buying cigarettes or alcohol. Requiring documentation is a simple way to assure that the applicant is a US citizen of an age qualified to vote. Others see the law as an effective means of cowing prospective voters, pressuring those with any doubts about their qualifications to shy away from registration, thus depriving them of their otherwise Constitutional right to vote.

I can see the Arizona Legislature's intent: Since those seeking election are exempt from most laws barring deceptive practices, it could be argued that voters have no more skin in the honesty game than elected officials.

By the same token, why can't the elections commission take my word for it that I am a citizen of these United States of America. I was born here, I was naturalized here, or I was born to American parents - specifically where or when is nobody's business except the Social Security Administration and the Internal Revenue Service.

As a conservative - I can make the argument that having to provide more information to the government than I need to make a living is just adding fuel to the fire that's fast undoing the God-given privacy to which all Americans are entitled. I can also argue to the contrary - that Americans have one right that preempts all others granted by our Constitution ... the right to vote. Nothing can stand in the way save one thing: Lack of an Official Certificate proving US Citizenship.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Some argue that there is no right to vote guaranteed by the US Constitution. But, according to writer Tom Donnelly of the **Constitutional Accountability Center** on September 18, 2012, *"... not only is there a right to vote in the Constitution, but it's the single right that appears most often in the Constitution's text – five times in all. In fact, four separate Amendments – the 15th, 19th, 24th, and 26th – even use the same powerful language to protect it: 'The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged ...'"*

Proof of citizenship is not mentioned in the Constitution. However, a brief last updated in September of 2006 by New York University Law School's **Brennan Center for Justice** says, *"Non-citizens who vote illegally risk 5 years in prison and a \$10,000 fine and could face immigration-related consequences such as deportation or removal, all for the chance to cast one incremental vote."*

Are there actually non-citizens out there who would vote whatever the cost? If you listen to the arguments from one side, the definitive answer is, "You bet! That's why they need to provide proof of citizenship." Listen to the other side and you'll get, "Absolutely. And that's why they are already required to attest to their citizenship."

The other part of the discussion is about minorities, young people and older people. One argument is that providing documentation makes it difficult for members of those groups to register to vote if they have to produce documentation. Of course, without registration they can't exercise their right to vote.

Eligible minorities, of necessity, carry documentation on their person and keep copies at home under lock and key.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Unfortunately for many, it's one of the only things that keeps them out of trouble with law enforcement.

College kids have to have documentation just to be on campus and intelligent young adults carry ID for the same reason most minorities do. Asking either of these groups to add a copy of their birth certificate to their pile of papers is hardly an imposition.

As for old folks, find me an old person that doesn't vote and I'll find you some kind of a homebound vegetable with a very meager support system. Little old ladies are perhaps the most active voting bloc any party can claim and they rarely need to re-register. In any case, most older people have their birth certificates at the ready for their families when the "time" comes.

Whatever the cause celebre . . . *To document or not to document?* That appears to be the question. The SCOTUS may eventually decide the issue for us. Or not.

JUST HERE TO HELP

J E Ted Thayer | May 22, 2014

President Ronald Reagan exclaimed at a Small Business Conference in 1986, "... *government's view of the economy could be summed up in a few short phrases: If it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving, regulate it. And if it stops moving, subsidize it.*"

Reagan also famously stated that, "*The nine most terrifying words in the English language are: I'm from the government and I'm here to help.*"

Quoting columnist Derek Hunter, "... *this is how government works. It creates a problem, then offers a solution. Meanwhile, that solution creates more problems, for which the government offers even more solutions...*"

In view of the VA problems, I see no reason to pursue this week's subject further.

MONTEL WILLIAMS

J E Ted Thayer | May 28, 2014

Many of you heard about Montel Willimas' rant about the VA, but few have seen more than just clips from the news. Here's the whole interview from YouTube:

<http://youtu.be/NZJaEQmhlGY>

Semper Fi.

SCHUMER PUSHES FOR MID-TERM DEM LOSSES!

J E Ted Thayer | May 27, 2014

An ill-informed article circulating via email appears to be a tome written by a novice with little or no knowledge of the Constitution and its provisions. It's based on a May 6th, 2014 Tea Party News Network (TPNN) panic piece on Sen. Ted Cruz' (R-TX) fussing over Chuck Schumer's (D-NY) plans to have Democrats in the Senate vote on a proposed Constitutional amendment that would "*give Congress the plenary power ... to regulate political speech.*" Why any Senate Democrat in his right mind would vote for such a proposition is beyond my comprehension. Schumer must think Democrats have no 2014 election prospects at all!

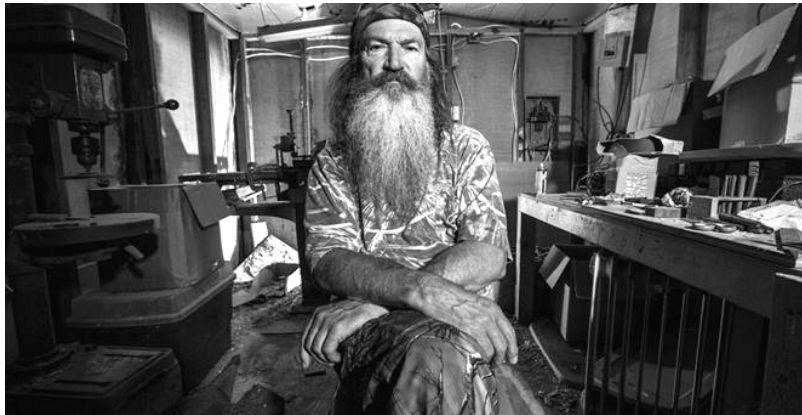
A recent article on the subject in the Wall Street Journal spells out the requirements pretty clearly. A successful Constitutional amendment requires no less than 67 aye votes in the Senate (two-thirds of the 100 members) and 290 affirmative votes in the House (two-thirds of the 435 eligible members) followed by ratification by a minimum of 38 state legislatures (three-quarters of the 50 states). There is simply no scenario where all three of those requirements can be met.

Apparently Schumer thinks his party pals in the Senate need to aggravate their base by voting on this loony measure co-sponsored by 41 Democrats. Pundits are concerned that the Republicans need all the help they can get during this 2014 election cycle. However, it certainly looks to me like the GOP got a nice leg up from this juicy little tidbit from Chuck Schumer!

PHIL ROBERTSON REFUSES TO BE INTIMIDATED

Jeff Crouere | May 25, 2014 Townhall.com

It is refreshing to see a public figure with enough guts to take on the liberals in our society today. Most celebrities who are criticized for making a politically incorrect statement will fold like a tent and immediately issue an apology. The aim is to rebuild their reputation with the media elite and get back in their good graces.



Such pandering is not in the make-up of Phil Robertson, star of the TV reality show Duck Dynasty. In an interview with GQ published in December, Robertson ruffled feathers when he commented that homosexuality was sin. He quoted from the Bible, specifically, 1 Corinthians 6-9.

Robertson recited Paul's biblical warnings, "Neither the sexual immoral, nor the idolaters, nor adulterers, nor male prostitutes, nor homosexual offenders, nor thieves, nor greedy, nor druggards, nor slanderers, nor swindlers will inherent the kingdom of God." For those comments, Robertson was suspended by the A&E network, which airs Duck Dynasty, for

Thayer's Wild Bunch

9 days. The network distanced itself from the remarks and the resulting hoopla may have led to a ratings decline for the show.

The negative reaction obviously did not discourage Robertson from his mission of spreading the good news of the Bible. On Easter Sunday, he spoke to the Whites Ferry Road Church in West Monroe, LA. During his 42 minute sermon, Robertson addressed the media's reaction to his interview and maintained his position that behavior such as homosexuality is sin.

Robertson remarked with irony, "The news media didn't even know it was a verse! They thought I was just mouthing off. Is homosexual behavior a sin? The guy asked me. I said do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Don't be deceived."

If people have a problem with these comments, they have a problem with the Bible for all Robertson is doing is reiterating Paul's message. Now that the sermon has been posted online, the familiar response from liberals is that Robertson is "anti-gay." On the contrary, Robertson specifically told the audience that he "loves" everyone, including homosexuals.

Robertson is not being anti-gay; he is being true to his faith and consistent in his message. He obviously has a passion for his Christian faith and believes this country is headed down the wrong direction in many areas, not just the gay agenda.

As Robertson noted, he was once engaged in the behavior that, according to the Bible, will lead to damnation. He reformed his ways, turned his life around and dedicated himself to Jesus Christ. So, today, he is trying to convince Americans to follow his lead. Robertson admitted that the "list of sins covered me in my past life. We've all been there. The reason we're here today is to remind us of the gospel that's preached."

Thayer's Wild Bunch

This is a man who cares for his fellow citizens and the plight of his country, not someone who is filled with hate. Nevertheless, the media is jumping on this new story to whip up animosity toward Robertson. Radar Online, which publicized the new video, believes that this is a “new homophobia scandal,” which they hope will be the “final nail” in the coffin of the show.

It remains to be seen whether these new comments will hurt the program in the ratings or lead to more reprimands from A&E; however, Robertson has done nothing wrong. It is inspiring that in this suffocating climate of political correctness Robertson is willing to challenge the media elite and the liberals that try to stifle free speech.

Robertson has a right to air his views whether during an interview or at church. Thank goodness he is not bashful about exercising those God given rights.

NOT MY JOB, MAN

J E Ted Thayer | June 5, 2014

I want to expand on the comments on the VA situation that I sent to our Congressional Delegation and the papers a while back. Back on May 12th I wrote:

The problem with the Veterans Administration Healthcare in Phoenix – and much of Arizona – is worse than you can imagine.

At the core of the problem is not an administration hiding information, but rather huge annual ebbs and flows of retired people from the northern climes of America (the snowbirds, as they're called) moving back and forth between their home states and Arizona as the seasons change.

Late in the Fall each year hordes of American retirees migrate from North and South Dakota, Minnesota, Montana and Wisconsin to escape the cold winter and take in the relative warmth and comfort of the Southwest. Come the Spring thaws, these patriotic Americans migrate "back home" to the Northern mid-West. Most travel in fifth-wheel trailers or RVs, but some have Winter homes in Arizona.

The VA Hospitals are not equipped to handle the overload from out-of-state. There are shortages of physicians, support personnel and beds every Winter. The VA has not recognized that medical care for Vets is available at home – but "home" is not always where the care is available.

An old Vet friend told me the cure is obvious and relatively simple – send staff and services from over-staffed VA Hospitals in the North to the short-staffed areas of the Southwest as the seasons change. Summer medical care for

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Vets in Arizona, according to my sources, is just ducky. It's the Fall and Winter when things get out of hand.

The problem is that managers can't get cooperation from higher-ups, as it is in most government positions of responsibility for those not politically connected.

I want to expand on that last statement regarding managers versus higher-ups.

Anybody who has ever worked in a bureaucratic environment knows there are three types of workers. There are the worker-bees who do the busy-work and take care of light interaction with the public; the supervisors call the shots and herd the worker-bees; and managers interact with the supervisors and those poor souls who come to them with "issues" mostly involving "*You can't do that.*"

The fact is that the Union workers I've come in contact with - whether government or private - are the most hard-working, devoted people I've ever run into with the exception of my Marine Corps Brothers. The problem with the VA and many other government outfits is that when nobody takes charge everyone goes into the "not my job" mode.

As a rule, when a supervisor sets out work expectations for the troops, stuff gets done quickly and efficiently with the highest levels of quality. With namby-pamby or wishy-washy management (or nobody in charge), the troops have no direction, so they just hang out.

The most common phrase I heard at the University of Arizona, Hughes Aircraft, and Gila County was, "Hey, man, that's not my job." In more formal environments it was, "I'm sorry, but that doesn't fall within the purview of my authority." Excuse me! That's the direct result of management and/or supervision

Thayer's Wild Bunch

that doesn't create a clear view of job expectations. There is no difference between this sort of lax work environment and the old computer saying: "Garbage in, garbage out."

The VA and other government offices need to get their stuff together by assuring that supervisors and managers insist on dedication to clear expectations. Those that won't manage such a positive environment need to move on as soon as possible.

VA CHIEF: 100,000 VETS WERE ON FAKE WAIT LISTS

Dennis Wagner and Paul Giblin

The Republic | azcentral.com

June 5, 2014 | 11:24PM

More than 100,000 of America's military veterans were victims of bogus waiting lists for medical appointments, according to a Department of Veterans Affairs inquiry, and acting VA Secretary Sloan Gibson said the nation will learn Monday how many patients in each city were relegated to "secret lists."

During a news conference Thursday at the Carl T. Hayden Medical Center in Phoenix, where the VA scandal erupted, Gibson also disclosed that at least 18 Arizona veterans died while waiting for doctor appointments, though it remains unclear whether delayed care was to blame for the deaths. Gibson vowed to immediately care for neglected veterans, fix a broken health-care system and punish employees who contributed to the falsification of records knowingly or by gross negligence.

"In far too many circumstances, we have let our veterans down," Gibson said. "In too many instances, we have behaved in ways that are not consistent with our values."

Gibson's visit came amid new allegations and revelations that VA facilities produced phony records on patient wait times, a practice that the Office of Inspector General says in some cases endangered the health and lives of veterans. The misrepresentations were motivated, at least in part, by a VA policy of giving bonuses and promotions for meeting department goals for patient access.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

The uproar over care for veterans spurred inspector-general investigations at more than 42 VA medical centers and spawned a flurry of congressional investigations.

Gibson was appointed last week to replace VA Secretary Eric Shinseki, who stepped down after more than 100 members of Congress called for his firing or resignation.

At times Thursday, Gibson showed anger about mistakes, negligence and misconduct in a health-care system that serves nearly 8.8 million Americans per year. "This is not what our veterans deserve," he said. "We're going to have change in this organization."

The wrongdoing came to light when a physician in Phoenix, Dr. Sam Foote, filed complaints alleging that up to 40 veterans had died awaiting care in a system that intentionally placed some patients on secret lists where they were not in line to receive care.

Inspector-general investigators confirmed that up to 1,700 veterans were kept off the electronic wait list for first-time appointments and that scheduling records were falsified and manipulated in other ways. An interim report said that those veterans were "at risk of being forgotten or lost" and concluded that the problems were "systemic."

In at least some instances, investigators determined that patients suffered negative health impacts as a result. On Thursday, authorities announced that an estimated 800 more Arizona veterans had been kept off appointment lists for specialist care.

Gibson said the VA has contacted nearly all the patients in the initial group of 1,700 and is working to get them doctor visits

Thayer's Wild Bunch

within 30 days. He said the department has not found, so far, that any of the 18 fatalities were because of delays in care.

However, if that proves true, he added, victims' families will be informed, and "I will come personally and apologize to those survivors."

Gibson said there is evidence that more than 100,000 patients were caught up in the nationwide web of improper scheduling practices. The VA will provide details on Monday when it releases findings from audits at roughly 150 medical centers. Also on Monday, Gibson said, the VA will disclose patient wait-time statistics for many VA facilities across the country. Rep. Jeff Miller, R-Fla., chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, told *The Republic* he remains skeptical of department data.

"I have no faith that the bureaucracy yet understands the need to tell the truth. I will say this: The interim (inspector general) report was pretty damning, and had they wanted to cover up numbers, they could have done it in the interim report."

Gibson dealt with the VA dilemma in a point-by-point address, saying the department's systemic breakdown involves multiple causes and will demand reforms in culture, policies, leadership and spending. Here are some of the key points, by topic:

VA culture, integrity and accountability: Gibson said his job is to cure a sick organization dominated by employees who already are dedicated to caring for veterans.

"We're setting expectations," he said. "Where folks won't change their behavior, you change folks."

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Shinseki initiated termination proceedings against Sharon Helman, director of the Phoenix VA Health Care System, as well as her deputy, Lance Robinson, and the Health Administration Services director, Brad Curry. Those three were placed on administrative leave late last month. Gibson said employees are entitled to due process before firing and can appeal.

Gibson said he speaks with the acting inspector general almost daily about the investigations at each problem facility so he can begin holding culpable employees responsible.

He also said he realizes the VA has a reputation for retribution against employees who point out wrongdoing and vowed to protect whistle-blowers.

VA bonuses and evaluations: Gibson said he has ordered a stop to all bonuses for VA senior executives and has suspended extra performance pay to other employees. He said the perception that VA officials were "gaming the system" to get financial rewards has been particularly damaging.

Coping with demands for care: Gibson said the VA in Phoenix was clearly overloaded with patients and was short of staff. When he realized the health-care system had more than 300 unfilled staff positions, he said he couldn't believe it.

Phoenix VA officials have said they suffered an exodus of medical staffers because of work pressures, low pay, retirement and other factors. Gibson said he would expedite recruiting.

Meantime, he said, the Southwest Regional VA Health Care Network, which covers Arizona, New Mexico and western Texas, already has begun expanding patient referrals to physicians and medical labs in the private sector.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Congressional oversight and transparency: Gibson said he met this week with chairmen of the Senate and House Veterans' Affairs committees and assured them he will be forthcoming with records that were withheld.

In response to a subpoena from Miller, Gibson said he already has provided 6,000 pages of materials.

Miller indicated the VA has yet to provide information about the possible destruction of a secret waiting list of patients in Arizona.

"This would be very easily resolved if somebody would tell the committee: What was on the list? Who authorized the destruction of the list? And when was it destroyed? VA will not tell us the answers to those three very simple questions," Miller said. "He (Gibson) obviously thinks that they're providing me the information that we're asking for, and somebody is misinforming him — again."

Gibson also vowed to root out the VA practice of denying and stonewalling public-records requests from veterans' advocates, researchers and the media.

Arizona Republic reporter Craig Harris contributed to this article.

GWB SOCKS

J E Ted Thayer | June 12, 2014

Thing one: Caca Pasa is for sale now as a Kindle Book on Amazon.com. If you have a Kindle you can borrow it and check it out for free. (There's a link at the bottom of the page if you'd like to go see ...) Thank heavens it's finally finished and

I've started work on a second book.

Thing two: Claudette and I paid \$35 each for pairs of George Bush socks offered last month by the GOP. We thought, since the Prez was into socks, that a few extra bucks to get something historically unique wouldn't be a bad way to support conservatism. Our credit cards were charged on May 12th. Guess what? We don't have the socks yet!

Getting ripped off by the RNC is not my idea of a good way to make friends and influence enemies. This socks deal appears to have fallen way short of its goal of creating a republican keepsake like the Barry Goldwater AuH₂O Zippo lighters. But, quite frankly, I'd just as soon not be bothered by politicians who make promises they can't keep. I actually thought that the GOP was better than that. Being the naive old fart that I am, I must have been mistaken.

I've been both a Republican and Democrat party leader, but I've never made an offer I couldn't honor, nor a promise I couldn't keep. I guess things have changed so much that even the staunchest of American conservative leaders don't know right from wrong anymore.

I write this thing each week because it's a fun and regular challenge. Getting stiffed by the GOP makes me want to throw it all in, crawl back into my hole, and only come out to play

Thayer's Wild Bunch

golf with my friends. And all I want is my stinkin' GWB socks!

Thing three: Next week we'll talk immigrant children.

Better'n damned socks!

IMMIGRATION

J E Ted Thayer | June 19, 2014

Last time, I promised a broadcast on immigration. Well this one's a doosey!

We in Arizona have been targeted without our knowledge or consent as a dumping-ground for children who have traveled huge distances to join relatives or friends in the United States.

The problem is that they are all illegal immigrants and would not be here if the federal government had done its job. Now that they are here (and still coming), the feds still refuse to stop them at the border - not with the Border Patrol, not with National Guard troops, not with cooperation from Mexican authorities. Instead they are shipping them deep into a country that doesn't want them.

The problem for Arizonans - and all Americans for that matter - is that we must pay these kids' every expense until (and unless) they hook up with a family member that can (and will) take custody. We pay for the housing, food, clothing, medical care, and education of these kids. Even if they hook up with family, they will still get free medical care and education (at least) at the expense of the state and local citizenry.

We Americans have always taken care of the downtrodden, both here and abroad. We will continue to provide safe haven for those whose futures have little prospect. We hold a special place in our collective hearts for children, so this massive influx and subsequent warehousing of these little people is perplexing - at best - and certainly has the potential to create national insurrection - at worst.

What follows are a number of expert observations on this problem collected over the last week.

MILITARY BASES: OBAMA'S NEW ILLEGAL ALIEN DUMPING GROUNDS

Michelle Malkin | June 11, 2014

A source tipped me off last week to a curious occurrence: It seems that two planeloads of illegal aliens were recently shipped to Massachusetts. The first reportedly landed at Hanscom Air Force Base in Bedford. According to my tipster, approximately 160 illegal immigrants arrived on that flight and stayed nearly a week before being transferred to a Department of Homeland Security site and then released.

The second flight reportedly was diverted from Hanscom to Boston's Logan Airport this past weekend. I am told that both Massachusetts and New Hampshire officials were on hand. I reached out to Hanscom AFB for confirmation, but did not receive a call back by my deadline.

Question: How many other military bases are stealthily being used to redistribute, house, process and release illegal border crossers?

What we do know for sure is that the Obama administration already has converted several other military bases across the country into outposts for tens of thousands of illegal aliens from Central and South America.

San Antonio's Lackland Air Force Base opened its doors as an illegal immigrant camp last month. Port Hueneme Naval Base in Ventura County, Calif., will shelter nearly 600 illegal border-crossing children and teens. The Fort Sill Army post in Lawton, Okla., was ordered on Friday to take in 1,200 illegal aliens despite the objections of GOP Gov. Mary Fallin, who

Thayer's Wild Bunch

blasted the White House, saying, "The Obama administration continues to fail in its duty to protect our borders and continues to promote policies that encourage, rather than discourage, illegal immigration."

A makeshift detention center in Nogales, Ariz., is being used as the central clearing station for the latest illegal alien surge. The deluge is a threat to national security, public safety and public health -- not to mention a slap in the face to the law-abiding men and women in uniform on those bases and a kick in the teeth to law-abiding people around the world patiently waiting for approval of their visas.

Meanwhile, a law enforcement source in Texas tells me this week that countless illegal aliens are being released into the general public despite testing positive for tuberculosis. "The feds are putting them on public transportation to God knows where," he said.

Another source, working in the border patrol in south Texas, tells me: "Our station, along with every other station, is flooded with women and small children. One lady yesterday had a baby as young as 8 months. And they're coming over with pink eye and scabies. So getting them medically cleared becomes a priority. They'll be here for almost a week, so we provide them with formula and diapers. We have a catering service contracted to feed them because it's too many for us to feed on our own. And of course, they end up being released because every family housing facility is full. They're supposed to show up for immigration court at a later date, but they don't."

Same old, same old. I've reported for years on the feds' catch-and-release games and deportation Kabuki. The "notice to appear" letters -- known as "run letters" -- are a notorious joke in open-borders circles.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

The latest "crisis" is a wholly manufactured byproduct of White House administrative amnesties, which are supported by a toxic alliance of ethnic-vote-seeking Democrats and cheap-labor-hungry Big Business Republicans. The flood comes just as Obama's DHS announced a two-year extension for beneficiaries of the "Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals" (DACA) program. A whopping 560,000 illegal aliens have been granted amnesty under DACA and also have received employment authorization.

As I've said for two decades, illegal alien amnesties guarantee two things: more illegal immigration and more Democratic voters. Now we have a White House forcing U.S. military bases to provide interminable benefits and services to illegal aliens for political gain, while said White House evades responsibility for allowing military veterans to die waiting for the most basic of medical services.

And where's the GOP "leadership" in this country? Doing the bidding of the amnesty-loving U.S. Chamber of Commerce and demonizing Republican candidates at every level who are sick and tired of giving away the store and the country.

God save us from bipartisanship.

FOR CANTOR, NO AMNESTY ON IMMIGRATION

Rich Lowry | June 11, 2014

The seeds of House Majority Leader Eric Cantor's shocking primary loss may have been sown in January.

That's when House Republican leaders insisted on floating a set of immigration principles at the party's retreat as a gesture toward acting on the Senate Gang of Eight immigration bill. The principles — misspelled "principals" in an initial draft — were misbegotten from beginning to end. They were poorly

Thayer's Wild Bunch

formulated as a matter of policy and signaled a vague desire to move on an immigration bill that had looked terminally stalled.

The principles were shelved at the retreat, but they stoked the worst fears of opponents of the Gang of Eight bill — that no matter how dead the bill seemed, it still had life. It could come back after the Republican primary season, during a lame-duck session or at any other time of the leadership's choosing.

The principles helped keep the issue of immigration alive, and in so doing, lit the long fuse on the stick of dynamite that ignited in Virginia's 7th Congressional District this week.

Eric Cantor wouldn't be on the top of anyone's list of victims of an immigration backlash. He's not John McCain or Lindsey Graham. His offense was speaking in favor of an unspecified version of the DREAM Act and making occasional favorable sounds about more far-reaching legislation, including by signing off on those January principles.

The standard for convicting Cantor, it turns out, wasn't guilt beyond a reasonable doubt, or preponderance of evidence. It was simple suspicion. Conservatives suspected that the House leadership wanted to pass immigration reform, no matter what it might say, and suspected that Cantor would be part of it, no matter what he might say. The message of the district's primary voters to Cantor and to the broader political class on immigration was "We don't trust you."

There are few issues in American life that so justify a thoroughgoing cynicism as immigration. The political elite has never cared about enforcing immigration laws; it invariably sells whatever is the latest version of "comprehensive" reform in dishonest terms by insisting there is no amnesty and touting Potemkin enforcement; and it has an ill-disguised contempt

Thayer's Wild Bunch

for the alleged boobs who take immigration enforcement seriously.

Anyone who thinks immigration wasn't the driving issue in Cantor's defeat is whistling past the graveyard. The Democratic firm Public Policy Polling got a result showing majority support for immigration reform in Cantor's district, but only by framing the question in the most positive way possible. If it had asked people whether they want higher levels of low-skilled immigration at a time of slow-to-nonexistent wage growth for American workers — as Dave Brat did on the campaign trail — the poll would have returned an entirely different result.

Another argument is that it was Cantor's equivocation on immigration that hurt him (he portrayed himself on fliers as a deadly earnest opponent of amnesty), not his position itself. But any equivocating surely played into the larger fears that the House GOP might move on a bill.

Of course, Cantor couldn't have possibly lost, let alone lost by double digits, if he wasn't vulnerable more broadly (which was evident, it must be said, to almost no one as of two days ago). Compared with his underfunded, underdog opponent, Cantor was the well-heeled Big Dollar candidate, the powerful Inside Washington candidate, the highly connected Big Business candidate. In most circumstances, these are formidable strengths. But Brat used them against Cantor in an act of populist jujitsu.

The insurgent candidate's opposition to amnesty was part of a larger anti-Washington and anti-Wall Street working-class message. Brat constantly linked immigration to jobs and wages. In his closing argument, he said, "Cantor continues to work with multinational corporations to boost the inflow of low-wage guest workers to reduce Virginians' wages and employment opportunities." He attacked the Chamber of

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Commerce and the Business Roundtable, GOP establishment strongholds. He tweeted out a picture of Cantor posing with Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg — an enthusiast for the importation of more foreign workers — with the caption “Eric Cantor doesn’t represent you.”

In a nutshell, Brat took a version of the populist conservatism championed by Alabama Sen. Jeff Sessions (and the influential, Brat-supporting talk show host

Laura Ingraham) and weaponized it against Cantor. It proved incredibly powerful.

The Brat message is one that all Republicans should heed. If the GOP is ever going to become identified as the pro-worker party again, it must oppose flooding the labor market with new, wage-suppressing foreign labor at the behest of business interests. But obviously this can’t be the entirety of the Republican agenda. The irony is that Cantor has been one of the Republicans trying to fill in the rest of the picture with a bread-and-butter economic agenda aimed at ordinary workers.

Indeed, Eric Cantor’s contributions to the party have been considerable. He rose in the House as a young reformer when the House Republicans had a literally corrupt establishment, in bed with the likes of Jack Abramoff. A tireless party-builder and committed (if realistic) conservative, he did much to nurture the Republican candidates who took the House in 2010. In the 48 hours since his defeat, he has been unfailingly gracious and upbeat.

If he and other members of the leadership had unmistakably slammed the door on the Gang of Eight bill or any permutations of it, he would probably still be on his way to the speakership. Now, the bill is finally dead — at the cost of Cantor’s House career.

Rich Lowry is editor of National Review.

BORDER FLOOD STRAINING RESOURCES:

HOMELAND SECURITY CHIEF

Pete Williams - NBC News | June 11, 2014

Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson called the influx of children from Central America into the U.S. a “problem of humanitarian proportions,” and told lawmakers Wednesday that resources are being strained addressing immigration on the border.

“We’ve had to surge resources normally dedicated to things like border security,” Johnson told the Senate Judiciary Committee.

His appearance before Congress comes a day after a Senate appropriations panel voted to approve an Obama administration request for \$2 billion to handle the increase.

The number of children without parents crossing the border has grown rapidly in recent years — and government facilities are overwhelmed trying to process them all and temporarily care for them.

Federal statistics show about 6,000 to 7,500 children arrived illegally from 2008 to 2011 — but the number jumped to 13,625 in 2012 and to more than 24,000 in 2013, The Associated Press reported.

This year, the number could swell to an estimated 90,000.

The Obama administration is asking Congress for another \$116 million to deal with the surge.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Johnson said the surge of children from countries such as Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador is being driven by violence and poverty in their home nations.

Republican senators told Johnson that one of the big factors leading to the surge of children arriving at the border is the administration's failure to be clear that illegal immigration of any kind will not be tolerated.

"We're having a humanitarian disaster, caused by a legal disaster. You and the president have failed to send a message that people cannot come here lawfully," said Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala.

The government is still looking for more space — beyond the three military facilities already being used to process the children before they are turned over to the Department of Health and Human Services.

Johnson said he called Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer over the weekend to tell her that some of the unaccompanied children are being taken to Nogales, Arizona, for processing, but that none of them will be released into the state.

Charities, meanwhile, have been pitching in: The Red Cross has provided blankets and the Texas Baptist Men is supplying shower trailers.

The U.S. is also running Spanish-language radio, print and TV ads in Central America to talk about the dangers of sending children over the border and into the hands of criminal smugglers.

UPHOLDING OUR IMMIGRATION LAWS

Congressman Paul Gosar | June 14, 2014

This week brought us more information on the lawlessness of the administration and Attorney General Eric Holder in regards to illegally transporting immigrants to Arizona cities. The administration continues to use taxpayer dollars to transport and house detained illegal immigrants flooding across our porous southern border. I am encouraged to see this egregious violation of the rule of law receive more national attention from major news outlets. Pictures of illegal immigrants being released into the public at bus stops as well as inhumane, overcrowded detention facilities are being broadcast on the nightly news. The only way we can make our elected leaders uphold the rule of law is if the people of this nation are engaged in the issue and hold them accountable.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP IMMIGRANT KIDS

Megan Finnerty,

The Republic | azcentral.com | June 15, 2014

For weeks, Valley residents have been moved by stories of unaccompanied children traveling from Central America to the United States to escape gang violence in their schools and neighborhoods.

Some Arizonans are wondering how they can help.

"It's an all-hands-on-deck situation, and it is a humanitarian crisis, and we're working on the best way to deal with it," said Greg Chen, the director of advocacy for the Washington, D.C.-based American Immigration Lawyers Association.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

According to Customs and Border Protection, in the past eight months, agents have apprehended more than 47,000 unaccompanied minors who crossed the border into the U.S. illegally from Mexico. Apprehensions of minors this year may reach 90,000.

The surge has so overwhelmed the U.S. Border Patrol in Texas' Rio Grande Valley that officials have transported more than 750 children to be temporarily sheltered at Border Patrol facilities in Nogales, Ariz.

Some of the children will be moved out of the state to military bases in California, Texas and Oklahoma.

And for much of their time in the U.S., the children will be in the custody of various federal agencies, so opportunities for public help are limited.

The Florence Immigrant and Refugee Rights Project, based in Florence, is the state's only organization providing free legal services to the unaccompanied immigrant children detained in Arizona on any given day.

The group offers these suggestions on helping:

- Donate to the project. There is no public-defender system in immigration, so money goes toward providing legal assistance to a person who wouldn't otherwise have a lawyer. Donations go toward direct case costs, which are \$350 to \$500 per child pursuing the Special Immigrant Juvenile Visa.
- Take on a case. Attorneys can volunteer with the project. Contact pro bono program director Tally Kings-north at tkingsnorth@firrp.org to start the process.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

- Volunteer at or donate to the Phoenix Restoration Project or Casa Mariposa in Tucson. These sister organizations assist people released from detention to Greyhound bus stations in Phoenix and Tucson, whether directly from the Border Patrol, from long-term immigrant detention centers in Florence and Eloy or from shelters for unaccompanied minors.

The Phoenix Restoration Project can be reached on Facebook. Casa Mariposa can be reached at restorationproject340.wordpress.com.

Checks can be made out to "*Restoration Project, Florence*" and mailed to:

Casa Mariposa, 127 N. Palomas Ave., Tucson, AZ 85745.

What worries me is something I wrote at the beginning of this presentation: "... this massive influx ... has the potential to create national insurrection ..." It scares the Hell out of me. Between the Affordable Care Act, the Veterans' Administration debacle, the EPA's massive over-regulation of our energy resources, our elected officials' inability to recognize anarchy-in-the-making, and our Federal Administration's lawlessness and disregard for the basics of the American Constitution, I'm scared to death.

Insurrection may be too strong a word ... but somebody other than crazy old Glenn Beck needs to urge Americans to be ready for big trouble. Cloward and Piven preached the way to get the job done was to "*overwhelm the system.*"

"Well," as Ronald Reagan exclaimed, "There you go ..."

FAILURE TO COMMUNICATE

J E Ted Thayer | June 26, 2014

The nameless Captain (the prison warden played by Strother Martin) in *Cool Hand Luke* said words that apply the world over today: "*What we've got here is a failure to communicate.*"

What we have in the middle-east is a war to reconstruct the Ottoman Empire, which was disbanded as a result of the First World War. The Ottoman Empire was run by the Ottoman Caliphate.

According to Wikipedia:

Besides the control of the physical lands, another question of importance was originated from the Ottoman Caliphate. The Ottoman Caliphs never claimed to be religious descendant of the Prophet but they were nonetheless an important authority figure within the Ottoman Empire. Muslims of India and of Anatolia supported and recognized the Ottoman caliphate for instance. As Sultans of the Empire, the Ottoman rulers had a very strong position, but the Sultan of Morocco, the Mahdists of the Egyptian Sudan, the Senussi in the Libyan Desert, the Wahabis in central Arabia, never acknowledged the title of Caliph as being higher than the Sultans' as the leader of state. Such recognition was also not given by the Arabs of the Hedjaz, Palestine, and Syria, which contain the holy places of Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem.

The last official remnant of the empire—the title of caliphate—was constitutionally abolished on 3 March 1924 ... with the abolishment of the Ottoman Caliphate by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey ...

Townhall.com columnist Austin Bay this week wrote:

Thayer's Wild Bunch

In summer 1914, political instability, institutional decline, fear and bitter grievance gripped Europe. In 2014, the same afflictions vex the globe. Perhaps World War One isn't over; it is just entering another phase.

In my opinion, it will take another regional conflict such as those during WWI to avoid reconstruction of the Ottoman Empire and the resultant authority of the Caliphate. Without a world-wide cooperative effort, the Caliphate will rule its Ottoman Empire again.

Remember: *"What we've got here is a failure to communicate."*

J E Ted Thayer | July 3, 2014

WHAT ACTRESS AMY ADAMS DID FOR ONE OF OUR SOLDIERS WAS PRETTY COOL

Doug Giles | June 20, 2014

It's Friday afternoon and I've just sat down to write my column. I've got my Safari Cigar .500Nitro Toro blazing and a nice, ice-cold Angry Orchard sitting next to me at an outdoor dive bar in Miami.

As God would have it, in His sovereignty, He's blessed me with a little corner at this establishment away from a group of deranged and roomy, over-tatted chicks yelling at the horse races they're watching via a big screen TV while they swill down buckets of Ultra Lite beer. I know. Go figure, eh?

Anyway, all things are good and I'm ready to unleash my brutal prose on some jacked up stuff Obama has done/is doing to intentionally derail this unique and grand experiment in self government.

However, in this brief window that I have to write I'm finding it a wee bit difficult to fix my dancing crosshairs on a particular target because BHO's been a busy boy and his BS is plenteous and dizzying. What's a crotchety writer to do with the tyranny of so many options?

Doing what I normally do when I get mired down, I go shopping on ongunsinternational.com and then I checked some of my favorite news feeds to see what was happening now. Lo and behold ... I found a nugget that grabbed my attention that had nada to do with how Hussein and his ilk are gutting our

Thayer's Wild Bunch

country. It was actually something positive, dare I say touching, that grabbed my attention.

Check it out: Golden-Globe-winning, Oscar-nominated actress Amy Adams, made the news Friday by quietly and classily giving up her first-class seat to a soldier on a flight. This stunned me because most actors in Hollywood work their butts off and visit many a casting couch to get a first-class seat tucked away from the cattle in coach. Truth be told, so do a lot of conservative pundits that I've had the misfortune to meet in my foray into this field.

Now, granted Miss Amy didn't sell everything she had to work with lepers in India, but in a day where our troops are crapped on by the VA, slighted by our President and dissed or misrep'ed repeatedly by Hollywood, I found her simple act of respect a beautiful stab in the right direction in our rank day.

Miss Adams was not only classy in giving up her first class seat to one of our warriors, but she also didn't pimp out her good deed on Instagram with a selfie as some Kardashian stunt to solicit high praise for a staged act. Matter of fact, we wouldn't even know about what she had done had not ESPN's Jemele Hill recognized her, watched the seat exchange go down and then tweeted about it.

What Adams did was old school stuff folks. It's called honor. It's called respect. It's called knowing your place in the pecking order of life and through an act of kindness giving those who have afforded us the wherewithal to live in this amazing land a little bit of the luxury their efforts have afforded us.

I'd like to thank Miss Amy for her grace and may God help us to follow her lead.

YOUR TURN TO OPINE

J E Ted Thayer | July 10, 2014

In my estimation, this year's news - so far - has been a mess.
Major issues - in no particular order - include:

1. Middle-east in turmoil at hands of Islamist fanatics
2. Disputes between Israel and Hamas continue to escalate
3. Ukraine teetering on civil war with Russian support
4. Southwest being overrun by foreign children and drug-runners
5. Coal- and Oil-related energy costs rising steeply
6. Inflation causing Fed to consider higher interest rates
7. Stock Market crash predicted due to excess cash & bond rate bubbles
8. Negative 2.9% 1st Quarter GNP precursor to stagnation or recession
9. 6.1% unemployment rate from massaged data - NBC reports U-6 12.1%
10. 85% of Affordable Care Act enrollment inconsistencies "unfixable"
11. Health Insurance rates to soar this Fall [perhaps after elections]
12. U.S. House and POTUS at war - GOP, Senate leaders eschew blame
13. SCOTUS finds Presidential Executive Order authority abused
14. VA, IRS, NSA, DHS corruption investigations ramping up
15. Cover-up of IRS-as-political-weapon now before Federal Court
16. Benghazi result of Ahmed Abu Khattala plan; internet video ignored
17. Top administration officials under scrutiny for incompetence
18. Media fuels confusion over policy vs. politics

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Rather than comment on the importance or relevance of any of the above issues, I thought it might be more interesting to do a story on what ***you*** feel are the most pressing challenges facing us. Are we headed to Hell in a handbasket? Is revolution just around the corner? Are we really in a bad way? Is the media highlighting bad stuff just to sell papers? Are mice in France really running the world? Or is it merely Life, The Universe and Everything?

Please send me an email tedthayer@cableone.net with your observations - terse or in-depth - you choose. No names will be used in putting together a report slated (hopefully) for next Thursday (07/17) to expose how folks in this audience feel about their future prospects as a result of issues beyond our individual control, for the most part.

I give you my take each week - now it's ***your*** turn to opine!

SPECIAL REPORT – TRANSPARENCY

J E Ted Thayer | July 10, 2014

Professional Journalists sent the following letter to the President this week. This is a very long letter with attached documentation gathered from the SPJ.org website and blog:

President Barack Obama
The White House
Washington, D.C
July 8, 2014

Mr. President,

You recently expressed concern that frustration in the country is breeding cynicism about democratic government. You need look no further than your own administration for a major source of that frustration – politically driven suppression of news and information about federal agencies. We call on you to take a stand to stop the spin and let the sunshine in.

Over the past two decades, public agencies have increasingly prohibited staff from communicating with journalists unless they go through public affairs offices or through political appointees. This trend has been especially pronounced in the federal government. We consider these restrictions a form of censorship -- an attempt to control what the public is allowed to see and hear.

The stifling of free expression is happening despite your pledge on your first day in office to bring “a new era of openness” to federal government – and the subsequent executive orders and directives, which were supposed to bring such openness about.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Recent research has indicated the problem is getting worse throughout the nation, particularly at the federal level. Journalists are reporting that most federal agencies prohibit their employees from communicating with the press unless the bosses have public relations staffers sitting in on the conversations. Contact is often blocked completely. When public affairs officers speak, even about routine public matters, they often do so confidentially in spite of having the title "spokesperson." Reporters seeking interviews are expected to seek permission, often providing questions in advance. Delays can stretch for days, longer than most deadlines allow. Public affairs officers might send their own written responses of slick non-answers. Agencies hold on-background press conferences with unnamed officials, on a not-for-attribution basis.

In many cases, this is clearly being done to control what information journalists – and the audience they serve – have access to. A survey found 40 percent of public affairs officers admitted they blocked certain reporters because they did not like what they wrote.

Some argue that controlling media access is needed to ensure information going out is correct. But when journalists cannot interview agency staff, or can only do so under surveillance, it undermines public understanding of, and trust in, government. This is not a "press vs. government" issue. This is about fostering a strong democracy where people have the information they need to self-govern and trust in its governmental institutions.

It has not always been this way. In prior years, reporters walked the halls of agencies and called staff people at will. Only in the past two administrations have media access controls been tightened at most agencies. Under this

Thayer's Wild Bunch

administration, even non-defense agencies have asserted in writing their power to prohibit contact with journalists without surveillance. Meanwhile, agency personnel are free to speak to others -- lobbyists, special-interest representatives, people with money -- without these controls and without public oversight.

Here are some recent examples:

- The New York Times ran a story last December on the soon-to-be implemented ICD-10 medical coding system, a massive change for the health care system that will affect the whole public. But the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), one of the federal agencies in charge of ICD-10, wouldn't allow staff to talk to the reporter.
- A reporter with Investigative Post, an online news organization in New York, asked three times without success over the span of six weeks to have someone at EPA answer questions about the agency's actions regarding the city of Buffalo's alleged mishandling of "universal waste" and hazardous waste.
- A journalist with Reuters spent more than a month trying to get EPA's public affairs office to approve him talking with an agency scientist about the effects of climate change. The public affairs officer did not respond to him after his initial request, nor did her supervisor, until the frustrated journalist went over their heads and contacted EPA's chief of staff.

The undersigned organizations ask that you seek an end to this restraint on communication in federal agencies. We ask that you issue a clear directive telling federal employees they're not only free to answer questions from reporters and the public, but actually encouraged to do so. We believe that is one of the most important things you can do for the nation

Thayer's Wild Bunch

now, before the policies become even more entrenched.

We also ask you provide an avenue through which any incidents of this suppression of communication may be reported and corrected. Create an ombudsman to monitor and enforce your stated goal of restoring transparency to government and giving the public the unvarnished truth about its workings. That will go a long way toward dispelling Americans' frustration and cynicism before it further poisons our democracy.

Further examples on the issue are provided as well as other resources.

Sincerely,

David Cuillier
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Thayer's Wild Bunch

Gil Gullickson
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Alexandra Cantor Owens
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American Society of Journalists and Authors

Janet Svazas
Executive Director
American Society of Business Publication Editors

David Boardman
President
American Society of News Editors

Hoda Osman
President
Arab and Middle Eastern Journalists Association

Kathy Chow
Executive Director
Asian American Journalists Association

Diana Mitsu Klos
Executive Director
Associated Collegiate Press

Paula Poindexter
President
Association for Education in Journalism and Mass
Communication

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Miriam Pepper
President
Association of Opinion Journalists

Lisa Graves
Executive Director
Center for Media and Democracy

Rachele Kanigel
President
College Media Association

Gay Porter DeNileon
President
Colorado Press Women

Sue Udry
Executive Director
Defending Dissent Foundation

Mark Newton
President
Journalism Education Association

Mark Horvit
Executive Director
Investigative Reporters and Editors

J.H. Snider
President
iSolon.org

Phyllis J. Griekspoor
President
North American Agricultural Journalists

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Carol Pierce
Executive Director
National Federation of Press Women

Robert M. Williams Jr.
President
National Newspaper Association

Bob Meyers
President
National Press Foundation

Charles Deale
Executive Director
National Press Photographers Association

Diana Mitsu Klos
Executive Director
National Scholastic Press Association

Mary Hudetz
President
Native American Journalists Association

Jane McDonnell
Executive Director
Online News Association

Patrice McDermott
Executive Director
OpenTheGovernment.org

Tim Franklin
President
The Poynter Institute

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Danielle Brian
Executive Director
Project on Government Oversight

Jeff Ruch
Executive Director
Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility

George Bodarky
President
Public Radio News Directors Incorporated

Mike Cavender
Executive Director
Radio Television Digital News Association

Herb Jackson
President
Regional Reporters Association

Christophe Deloire
Secretary General
Reporters without Borders

Frank LoMonte
Executive Director
Student Press Law Center

Roy S. Gutterman
Director
Tully Center for Free Speech at Syracuse University

David Steinberg
President
UNITY Journalists for Diversity

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Monday, July 7, 2014

Examples of Interference with Reporting

Surveys Show The Blockages

Surveys by Carolyn Carlson, assistant professor at Kennesaw State University, show that 40 percent of PIOs admit to blocking reporter when the PIOs have had “problems” with their stories. The surveys also show that most reporters dealing with federal issues believe the restraints are censorship.

Her 2014 surveys found that across the country political and general assignment reporters see the restraints on reporting as increasing in recent years and say the current level of media control is an impediment to getting information to the public. Her report on political and general reporters includes 26 pages of anecdotes of control, such as:

“A few years ago, top officials for a city government I covered told staff members they were not to talk with me. Myself and another reporter had exposed a corrupt nonprofit housing agency and mismanagement of millions of dollars in federal housing funds the city had received. Our editors and I complained about the situation, we filed numerous public records requests for the information we were seeking, and eventually the city relaxed the restrictions. The department manager over the city’s housing programs never agreed to interviews with me again.”

Similar anecdotes are in Carlson’s report on education reporters.

Native American Journalists and Department of Interior

As journalists who cover Indian Country, we know very well the hurdles journalists can face in seeking public information when there are policies such as the ones described in [the letter the President Obama] in place. The Bureau of Indian Affairs under the Department of Interior has conducted business this

Thayer's Wild Bunch

way for years, and I personally believe it has hurt our tribal communities and our community members' access to information.

--*Mary Hudetz, President, Native American Journalists Association, July 2014*

EPA Working to Promote the President's Agenda

SEJ leaders held a conference call with EPA's public affairs chief Tom Reynolds June 25, hoping to advance the case for more open EPA media policies and procedures. While Reynolds said he would try to improve EPA's performance, he did not commit to specifics and defended a practice that SEJ members have complained about.

While espousing better public information for the US public via the press, Reynolds also acknowledged that "we are working to promote and advance the agenda of the president and the administrator."

SEJ leaders asked Reynolds why the agency needed to do a background briefing where briefers could not be identified during the recent rollout of EPA's carbon rule, and Reynolds said one main reason was to keep focus on the agency's administrator, Gina McCarthy.

.....

"SEJ leaders were not satisfied with Reynolds' answers, and they asked what harm would come from opening briefings up.....

[Reporter] Don Hopey pointed to the practical problems the background briefing had caused in producing his own story. His editors would not accept unattributed information, and he spent considerable time overcoming their objections. He said the small amount of information he used from the briefing

Thayer's Wild Bunch

barely justified the extra time it cost him.

Reynolds defended background briefings by saying they were “standard practice across this administration and in others” and that “they are done regularly and routinely by the White House and other agencies.” He said “top tier media -- AP, Reuters, New York Times, CNN, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal -- all use background sourcing in their reporting.”

SEJ had complained about EPA's refusal to identify sources in a June 2 briefing, which supplemented on-record speeches and interviews about the carbon rule. Links to the exchange of letters between SEJ and EPA are on the SEJ website.

.....

“We are trying to do better,” Reynolds told SEJ leaders. “I will work -- we will work -- to do more to ensure there are on the record opportunities for outlets.” Reynolds did not go farther than that or make specific commitments on press office openness, however, noting that the agency made those decisions on, “a case by case basis.”

--*Joe Davis, Society of Environmental Journalists, June 2014*

ICD-10 Experts Can't Talk

In December a New York Times reporter emailed CMS asking to talk to someone about the coming implementation of ICD-10.

He was never allowed to speak to anyone.

I asked CMS why, related to an article I was doing. Over about eight contacts over a month, the public affairs officer did not answer me. Sometimes there was no answer at all. Sometimes she said the NYT reporter had been given a written

Thayer's Wild Bunch

statement. Written statements in no way substitute for talking to an expert.

I referred the matter to the main HHS public affairs office and that did not help.

ICD-10 will have impact on the whole public and HHS agencies have staff members who have long worked on it and are at the center of information about it.

--*Kathryn Foxhall, July 2014*

Staff Silenced at EPA

For years EPA has not allowed reporters to speak to staff without the public information offices overseeing the contact. Last fall it was revealed that a top EPA official had fooled the agency into thinking he was off doing work for the CIA when he was doing whatever he wished, for 13 years. An executive assistant had suspected, but reporters no longer have access to the facilities that might allow them to get to know staff. And all staff are specifically prohibited from communicating with journalists without oversight on behalf of the bosses.

Lack of Response at the Veterans Administration

In 2012, prior to the current revelations about the Veterans Administration, the House Committee on Veterans Affairs began a compilation of news reports that stated the VA did not respond to reporters. The list is now up to dozens of instances.

PIO of the Homeland Security

At a debate the National Press Club in August 2014, a public information officer for the Department of Homeland Security argued for the agencies' policies of forcing reporters to go through press officers. He said that he worked to get the news out to reporters and when there was bad news the agency got it out quickly, rather than keeping it hidden.

A few weeks later the federal Office of Special Counsel said that there had been profound and entrenched abuse of

Thayer's Wild Bunch

overtime at the agency, based on the testimony of seven whistleblowers.

--*Kathryn Foxhall, July 2014*

Major Scientist Can't Talk

The New York Times did a profile of John Holdren, the White House Science Advisor, July 4, 2014. The article stated the White House declined to make Holdren available to be interviewed. One of the most prominent scientists in the country is prohibited to speak without political control.

One Conversation Is Enough

A PIO at FDA told me I did not need to talk to an expert at the agency on pediatric drug research because I had already talked to one other expert at another agency.

--*Kathryn Foxhall, July 2014*

Limit Speech to Whistleblowers

A reporter filed a petition challenging the rule forcing reporters to go through the press office at FDA. The denial of the petition, which came after four years, says, among other things, that if FDA employees have anything to say they can become public whistleblowers.

--*Kathryn Foxhall, July 2014*

EPA: Only Senior Management Can Talk

I spoke with EPA's media relations director, George Hull, on Thursday and Friday (June 26-27, 2014) after several days of trying to get clarification about a few technical details regarding state CO2 emissions cuts goals in the Clean Power Plan. First, I sent emails and made calls to Julia Valentine and Hull at the EPA on Wednesday. Though Valentine more than a week earlier promised me answers regarding the unrelated Indian Country Minor New Source Review Program by last week, when I followed up with her Wednesday about that and to ask additional questions about the Clean Power Plan, her

Thayer's Wild Bunch

email said she was out on extended leave. Hull did not respond on Wednesday, and as of Friday, after about two weeks of trying, I still have no response on my Indian Country questions.

Hull responded on Thursday, and I was promised answers that day, but by 6 p.m., Hull said he had nothing, but I could talk to an expert on the phone early Friday morning. I called him at 9 a.m. Friday, and he said he'd have several officials willing to answer specific questions shortly. Then he said, "this is gonna be on background." I said, nope. I'm not speaking to anybody on background. Hull uttered a surprised "Oh!" then hung up and called me back a few minutes later and to tell me that only senior management at the EPA can go on the record with a reporter, and senior management isn't available today. Maybe next week, he said.

I told him speaking on background for a story he knows has to run today is wasting my time and it contributes nothing to my story, and I won't do it. I said I'm going to note in my story that the EPA refused to provide answers on the record and that the EPA won't comment.

"I'll have to see what I can do and get back to you," he said. A short while later, he called back and said he'll send me a canned statement from PA acting assistant administrator Janet McCabe and can't do much else for me right now.

---Bobby Magill, senior science writer covering energy and climate change for Climate Central

Hidden Newborn Circumcision Experts

I asked the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to allow me to speak to its experts on newborn circumcision 20 times over five weeks. I had identified three experts who had been key to the agency's work on the issue. CDC wanted me to speak only to a public relations person and never allowed

Thayer's Wild Bunch

me to speak to anyone else. I declined to speak to the PR person. I put out a press release on the issue.

--*Kathryn Foxhall*

HHS Not Talking about Not Talking

Neiman Reports recently did an article on blockages that public health reporters are finding at public agencies. Health and Human Services would not do an interview with the reporter. A public affairs person wrote a statement instead.

Sent Back to The Stonewall at CDC

As chronicled in the Neiman Reports article, in the midst of the January 2014 chemical spill in West Virginia reporters repeatedly asked the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention how it calculated acceptable toxicity levels. After nearly a week one reporter called the CDC director at home. "The CDC chief told him to contact the press office and hung up," according to the article.

Fear of Speaking

Floridaenvironments.com editor Bruce Ritchie says that a wetlands expert at the Florida Department of Environment Protection left a social gathering to avoid speaking to him. The department has a "protocol" in which employees contacted by reporters are to refer them to press officers.

A number of similar stories on being blocked are at:

<http://blockingreportingusa.blogspot.com/>

HHS Ethics Office Won't Talk

The Office of Human Research Protections is working on one of the most important medical research ethics questions in years, having to do with what parents are told about research on their newborns. Last fall I called to speak to someone to get an update and was not allowed to talk to anyone at all.

The PIO said, "OHRP has not been giving interviews on the

Thayer's Wild Bunch

topic, other than to say it is working on the draft guidance. It has not set a deadline for issuing the guidance.”

So we don't know who OHRP is talking to, if anyone. Forty-two years ago the nation discovered the US Public Health Service had experimented on 399 African American men by not treating them for syphilis and not telling them what was happening. Government officials continued the Tuskegee experiment until the Associated Press, tipped off by a former employee, covered the story. The incident became the basis of many of the medical research ethics standards, continuing until today.

Ironically, now government ethics officials are specifically blocking the press from speaking people who might tell them what is happening.

---Kathryn Foxhall, 2014

Opacity on Clinical Trials Transparency

Five years after Congress had called for new rules on ClinicalTrials.gov, the registry for medical studies, had not come out.

Last year I asked about the rules, to give my readers an update. What is happening? Who is the agency talking to, if anyone?

The Food and Drug Administration and National Institutes of Health would not allow anyone to talk about the rules and became angry when I continued to ask.

ClinicalTrials.gov is meant to make medical research more transparent.

--Kathryn Foxhall, July 2014

COMMENTS

J E Ted Thayer | July 17, 2014

As expected, I heard from about two percent of the Wild Bunch in response to last week's challenge. It's kinda like club membership and volunteers: Ten percent will volunteer, ten percent of that group will actually do something significant! Our two percent actually was significant - the comments were, for the most part, thoughtful and well-informed.

Here are a couple of examples:

The frustration I feel over all these teenagers coming into our country is immense. We have such high taxes already and ... this mess boggles my mind. How can we stop this madness...?

I think we are faced with many more issues ... such as infrastructure decay; poor education system(s); incompetent bureaucracies. Our military is mired in cultural chaos ... Twenty-first century terrorist tactics are ignored ... Our troops are being trained for WWII when we haven't had a "front-line battle field since 1953.

The consensus appears to be disappointment. While a tiny sample of our bunch actually responded, their remarks revealed the general frustration I keep running into "out there" with our public institutions. It remains to be seen whether this consensus will be powerful enough to turn out more than the usual minority of registered voters for the coming mid-term elections.

J E Ted Thayer | 07-24-2014

We have a great commentary this week written by an old friend from Gold Canyon ... followed by my politically incorrect observations about this election cycle's voters.

BABEU'S RECKLESS RHETORIC

Roberto Reveles | 07-21-2014

This past week the small town of Oracle found itself at the center of media attention in the ongoing crisis of Central American children seeking refuge in our country.

Sadly the Oracle experience once more underscores that Sheriff Paul Babeu will manufacture a crisis for political publicity even at the unconscionable risk of placing children in harm's way, and doing so with the blatant misuse of costly taxpayer resources.

Fortuitously, however, the Oracle event proved that a community of citizens representing real American humanitarian values of compassion and fairness can silently out-shout Babeu's loudest hateful merchants of fear.

Even as some border-crossing children were disclosing unspeakable suffering at the hands of inhumane criminals in their home countries, an opportunity for political exploitation did not escape Babeu's craven ambitions—for whom image is everything.

Babeu's contrived concern for Oracle residents was actually shameless fear-mongering—using the refuge-seeking children as pawns in his all-important imaging campaign. A campaign

Thayer's Wild Bunch

forced on him by disclosure of his internet male sex solicitation which ended his last political race for Congress and that is still an impediment to his reaching a higher political office.

The prospect of manipulating an expected relocation of refugee children in Pinal County proved too tempting for our county's power-hungry Republican political boss. What's to lose when the unprincipled sheriff can create the appearance of a public safety crisis requiring a full-blown law enforcement response? And the response was underwritten by county taxpayers beguiled by Babeu's self-absorbed charisma.

Disregarding his role as the county's chief peace-keeping officer, Babeu publicly revealed the site of the Central American children's intended refuge and then goaded fear-infused residents to protest and block the expected busload of children.

Thankfully, the busload of already traumatized refugee children did not materialize last Tuesday, thus saving them from the hateful reception mobilized by the shameless and irresponsible Sheriff Babeu.

Once more, Babeu's penchant for fabricating costly political theater has not only wasted law enforcement manpower and equipment, piling yet uncounted expenses onto our already overburdened taxpayers, but his show has recklessly placed our professional law enforcement personnel at risk.

This time his overblown rhetoric has set in motion a dangerous outpouring of anti-immigrant hatred that increasingly threatens to use force and firearms. From here on, the Pinal County Sheriff's Office owns the violence that is more likely to materialize as a result of Paul Babeu's almost psychotic inflammatory rhetoric.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Sheriff Babeu, you dishonor professional law enforcement and you debase honest political dialogue by seriously creating doubt in our communities that your office is truly committed to equal protection under the law.

If you were a principled public official you would apologize to the public and resign from office so that trust can be re-established for genuine community policing in support of safer communities.

Your disgraced past will continue to follow you so long as you continue using your official authority to promote fear-mongering and disrespect for the humanity that binds us all, immigrant and non-immigrant.

Oracle does not deserve the notoriety to which your actions have subjected it. And may the community yet escape the disorder you promoted.

Shame on you, Paul Babeu.

POLITICALLY INCORRECT

J E Ted Thayer | July 24, 2014

Come election time every other year or so, we hear the same words from political parties and organizers: *It you don't vote, don't complain.* And every couple of years we hear the same old saw from disgruntled voters: *Why should I vote? It doesn't make any difference anyway.*

There have been a few times when a single vote made the difference in an election ... very few. But, each incident was memorable. Back in 1880 one ballot in the U.S. Electoral

Thayer's Wild Bunch

College made Abe Lincoln President instead of Aaron Burr. In 1923 one single vote made Adolph Hitler the leader of Germany's Nazi Party. More recently, the largest tax increase in American history was decided in 1993 by Vice President Al Gore's tie-breaking vote as presiding officer of the U.S. Senate.

Hope and Change was the rallying cry of the first Obama presidential campaign. The meaning of the slogan was clear: If you have been hoping for a change in your circumstances, your vote can make the difference. So many Americans had been pining for change for so long that *Hope and Change* became the convincing clarion call that one individual could actually turn the lives and fortunes of millions around with a single check mark. Massive changes have happened because people who had never voted before turned out in droves in the hope of creating better lives and prospects for themselves and their families as a result.

The 2014 mid-term election cycle may be as important as the 2008 presidential election because many of the changes that so many had hoped for have not come to fruition. By the same token, it could mean that hope can be renewed for millions of Americans seeking gainful employment, expanded opportunities and freedom from government intrusion. Conservatism, liberalism and pragmatism could well go out the window as the result of a pitched battle between Americans who receive entitlement payments and those who don't.

After all, while it's not said out loud in most political circles, the only issue in 2014 mid-term elections across America revolves around the postulate that people receiving government benefits are more easily motivated to vote to protect their entitlements than those who do not qualify. True, the politically correct will not say it out loud. However, it's

Thayer's Wild Bunch

important that you understand the issue clearly. So, let me repeat it another way:



(Bingo!

The article extracted exactly the response I expected!

I want every adult to vote because it's still possible to get it right. Getting folks to think about it might make them vote the mid-terms.)

Thayer's Wild Bunch

J E Ted Thayer | 07-31-2014

Let's share some information about the minimum wage ...

SEATTLE'S NEW LIVING WAGE

Dustin Hurst | June 5, 2014

It's easy enough to discuss what could happen under a controversial policy, but it's a little more difficult to provide evidence after enactment to prove a claim.

In the case of SeaTac and its newly minted \$15-per-hour minimum wage, the proof comes from a single photo of a parking receipt:

Northwest Watchdog called Masterpark to verify the authenticity of the receipt. Kevin, the attendant on duty Wednesday afternoon, confirmed the charge is real.

To deal with the higher wage, enacted on Jan. 1, Masterpark is charging customers an additional 99 cents per parking day, a surcharge that comes on top of other taxes and fees.



Don't quit now!

Here's pro and con articles by Mike Konczal and Tom Sowell.

MINIMUM WAGE MADNESS

Thomas Sowell | Sep 17, 2013



Political crusades for raising the minimum wage are back again. Advocates of minimum wage laws often give themselves credit for being more "compassionate" towards "the poor." But they seldom bother to check what are the actual consequences of such laws.

One of the simplest and most fundamental economic principles is that people tend to buy more when the price is lower and less when the price is higher. Yet advocates of minimum wage laws seem to think that the government can raise the price of labor without reducing the amount of labor that will be hired.

When you turn from economic principles to hard facts, the case against minimum wage laws is even stronger. Countries

Thayer's Wild Bunch

with minimum wage laws almost invariably have higher rates of unemployment than countries without minimum wage laws. Most nations today have minimum wage laws, but they have not always had them. Unemployment rates have been very much lower in places and times when there were no minimum wage laws.

Switzerland is one of the few modern nations without a minimum wage law. In 2003, "The Economist" magazine reported: "Switzerland's unemployment neared a five-year high of 3.9 percent in February." In February of this year, Switzerland's unemployment rate was 3.1 percent. A recent issue of "The Economist" showed Switzerland's unemployment rate as 2.1 percent.

Most Americans today have never seen unemployment rates that low. However, there was a time when there was no federal minimum wage law in the United States. The last time was during the Coolidge administration, when the annual unemployment rate got as low as 1.8 percent. When Hong Kong was a British colony, it had no minimum wage law. In 1991 its unemployment rate was under 2 percent.

As for being "compassionate" toward "the poor," this assumes that there is some enduring class of Americans who are poor in some meaningful sense, and that there is something compassionate about reducing their chances of getting a job.

Most Americans living below the government-set poverty line have a washer and/or a dryer, as well as a computer. More than 80 percent have air conditioning. More than 80 percent also have both a landline and a cell phone. Nearly all have television and a refrigerator. Most Americans living below the official poverty line also own a motor vehicle and have more living space than the average European -- not Europeans in poverty, the average European.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Why then are they called "poor"? Because government bureaucrats create the official definition of poverty, and they do so in ways that provide a political rationale for the welfare state -- and, not incidentally, for the bureaucrats' own jobs.

Most people in the lower income brackets are not an enduring class. Most working people in the bottom 20 percent in income at a given time do not stay there over time. More of them end up in the top 20 percent than remain behind in the bottom 20 percent.

There is nothing mysterious about the fact that most people start off in entry level jobs that pay much less than they will earn after they get some work experience. But, when minimum wage levels are set without regard to their initial productivity, young people are disproportionately unemployed -- priced out of jobs.

In European welfare states where minimum wages, and mandated job benefits to be paid for by employers, are more generous than in the United States, unemployment rates for younger workers are often 20 percent or higher, even when there is no recession.

Unemployed young people lose not only the pay they could have earned but, at least equally important, the work experience that would enable them to earn higher rates of pay later on.

Minorities, like young people, can also be priced out of jobs. In the United States, the last year in which the black unemployment rate was lower than the white unemployment rate -- 1930 -- was also the last year when there was no federal minimum wage law. Inflation in the 1940s raised the pay of even unskilled workers above the minimum wage set in 1938.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Economically, it was the same as if there were no minimum wage law by the late 1940s.

In 1948 the unemployment rate of black 16-year-old and 17-year-old males was 9.4 percent. This was a fraction of what it would become in even the most prosperous years from 1958 on, as the minimum wage was raised repeatedly to keep up with inflation.

Some "compassion" for "the poor"!

Well, there's more, pilgrim ...

ECONOMISTS AGREE: RAISING THE MINIMUM WAGE REDUCES POVERTY

Mike Konczal | January 4, 2014

One funny part of watching journalists cover the minimum wage debate is that they often have to try and referee cutting-edge econometric debates. Some studies, notably those lead by UMass Amherst economist Arin Dube, argue that there are no adverse employment effects from small increases in the minimum wage. Other studies, notably those lead by University of California Irvine economist David Neumark, argue there is an adverse effect. Whatever can we conclude? But instead of diving into that controversy, let's take a look at where these economists, and all the other researchers investigating the minimum wage, do agree: They all tend to think that raising the minimum wage would reduce poverty. That's the conclusion of a major new paper by Dube, titled "Minimum Wages and the Distribution of Family Incomes."

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Let's first highlight the major results. Dube uses the latest in minimum-wage statistics and finds a negative relationship between the minimum wage and poverty. Specifically, raising the minimum wage 10 percent (say from \$7.25 to near \$8) would reduce the number of people living in poverty 2.4 percent. (For those who thrive on jargon, the minimum wage has an "elasticity" of -0.24 when it comes to poverty reduction.)

Using this as an estimate, raising the minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour, as many Democrats are proposing in 2014, would reduce the number of people living in poverty by 4.6 million. It would also boost the incomes of those at the 10th percentile by \$1,700. That's a significant increase in the quality of life for our worst off that doesn't require the government to tax and spend a single additional dollar. And, given that this policy is self-enforcing with virtually no administrative costs while challenging the employer's market power, it is a powerful complement to the rest of the policies the government uses to boost the living standards of the worst off, including the Earned Income Tax Credit, food stamps, Medicaid, etc.

Now, this is normally the part where we'd have to go through the counter-arguments, using different data and techniques from different economists, to argue that the minimum wage wouldn't do this. But this is the fun part: Dube's paper finds a remarkable consistency across studies here. For instance, in a 2011 paper by minimum-wage opponent David Neumark, raising the minimum wage 10 percent would reduce poverty 2.9 percent (an elasticity of -0.29) for 21-44-year-old family heads or individuals. That's very similar to what Dube finds. Neumark doesn't mention this directly in the paper however; Dube is able to back out this conclusion using other variables that are listed.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Indeed, Dube digs out the effects of the minimum wage on poverty from 12 different studies in the new wave of literature on the topic that started in the 1990s with David Card and Alan Krueger field-creating research. Of the 54 elasticities that Dube is able to observe in these 12 papers, 48 of them are negative. Only one study has a sizable positive one, a 2005 one by David Neumark, a study that stands out for odd methodology (it lacks state and yearly fixed effects, it assumes quantiles are moving in certain directions) that isn't standard in the field or in his subsequent work. (Indeed, it is nothing like Neumark's standard 2011 study, mentioned above, which finds that the minimum wage reduces poverty.) Including that study, there's an average elasticity of -0.15 across all the studies; tossing it, there's one of -0.20 across the 11 studies, similar to what Dube finds.

However these previous studies also have issues which Dube's new study examines. This paper uses data up through 2012, so there is much more substantial variations to examine between states' minimum wages compared to earlier studies from the 1990s. Meanwhile there are additional controls added, including those that deal with the business cycle as well as regional effects. The range of controls provide 8 different results, all of which are highlighted.

Now, as a general rule with these numbers, you should never observe too far away from the mean — that is, you shouldn't take the effects of small changes to see what would happen if we, say, increased the minimum wage 500 percent, or to levels that don't actually exist right now. But the results are promising.

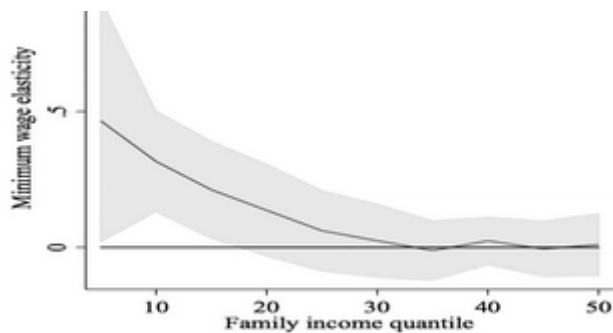
Indeed, they are promising on three different measures of poverty. There's the normal definition of poverty established in the 1960s as a result of how much food costs takes up in your family budget. But the relationship is both relevant and

Thayer's Wild Bunch

even stronger for the poverty gap, which is how far people are away from the poverty line, and the squared poverty gap, which is a focus on those with very low incomes. The elasticities here are -0.32 and -0.96 respectively, with the second having an almost one-to-one relationship because the minimum wage reduces the proportions of those with less than one-half the poverty line.

What should people take away from this? The first is that there are significant benefits, whatever the costs. If you look at the economist James Tobin in 1996, for instance, he argues that the “minimum wage always had to be recognized as having good income consequences.... I thought in this instance those advantages outweighed the small loss of jobs.” Since then there's been substantially more work done arguing that the loss of jobs is smaller or nonexistent, and now we know that the advantages are even better, especially when it comes to boosting incomes of the poorest and reducing extreme poverty.

The second is that this isn't a thing that people proposing an inequality agenda just happened to throw on the table. A higher minimum wage is a substantial response to the challenges of inequality. Opponents of a higher minimum wage focus on the idea that it largely won't benefit the worst off. However, look at this graphic from the study:



Thayer's Wild Bunch

A higher minimum wage will lead to a significant boost in incomes for the worst off in the bottom 30th percent of income, while having no impact on the median household.

As many economists have argued, the minimum wage "substantially 'held up' the lower tail of the U.S. earnings distribution" through the late 1970s, but this effect stopped as the real value of the minimum wage fell in subsequent decades. This gives us an empirical handle on how the minimum wage would help deal with both insufficient low-end wages and inequality, and the results are striking.

Charles Darwin once wrote, "If the misery of the poor be caused not by the laws of nature, but by our institutions, great is our sin." One of the key institutions of the modern economy, the minimum wage, could dramatically reduce the misery of the poor. What would it say if we didn't take advantage of it?

Mike Konczal is a fellow at the Roosevelt Institute, where he focuses on financial regulation, inequality and unemployment. He writes a weekly column for Wonkblog.

OPEN YOUR MIND

J E Ted Thayer | 08-07-2014

Let's share some historic information ... and a video ... with open minds.

It's too bad that the message of moderate Islam is lost in this sad incident. What the man in this video says is true from the Quran's view of Islamic history. He quotes from 19:30:

*"I [Jesus] am a servant of Allah. He has given me revelation and made me a prophet:
And He has made me blessed wheresoever I be:
And hath enjoined on me Prayer and Charity as long as I live:
[He] hath made me kind to my mother, and not overbearing and miserable.
So peace is on me the day I was born, the day that I die, and the day that I shall be raised up to life [again]."*

God - Allah, if you will - the great creator of the Universe, gave us his only begotten son and admonished Him to show mankind the way to everlasting life. He was born, lived, died and was born again - all the while living up to His Father's admonition to love one another - a stellar example of how we all should travel through life, no matter the Faith we profess. After all, the basic tenants of all Faiths are the same: Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you; Love thy neighbor as thyself; and so on ...

Sadly, this misguided soul chose the wrong venue and, rather than giving it to a crowd assembled to hear his sermon, he chose to impose it on a captive audience. They did what he would do in similar circumstances - they rejected his imposition.

Now, watch this lesson on how NOT to proselytize.

<http://www.safeshare.tv/w/cqjiYhtiXs>

THE KEY TO A LASTING MIDDLE EAST PEACE IS TOTAL VICTORY

Kurt Schlichter | Aug 04, 2014

Here's a wacky idea. Let's win the war against our *jihadi* enemies.

Yeah, it's certainly an outside the box idea. All we hear right now – in fact, all we've heard for decades – is about peace processes and negotiations and cease-fires. On and on they go, one after another, always crashing on the rocks of intransigence by people who hate our allies and who hate us. Maybe we need some fresh new ideas, some outside-the-box thinking.

How about we and our allies destroy our enemies? After all, the best peace plan is victory.

Wait, hear me out. You know, it wasn't that long ago that we Americans and our allies won wars. Sure, it's unfashionable to talk about winning today, but we have much to learn from history. And history teaches that if you pummel your enemies into submission, they tend to submit and stop trying to murder you and your kids.

I'm not necessarily talking about emulating the original Middle East peacemakers, the Romans, who got tired of Carthage's attitude and leveled the city, killed the men, sold the women and children into bondage and sowed the fields with salt. But then, on the other hand, we haven't had a lot of problems with the Carthaginians in the last couple millennia.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Let's look closer to our own time. Ulysses S. Grant famously refused to accept anything except unconditional surrender, and set about grinding his Confederate opponents into dust. General Grant was quite popular around the old Schlichter family place, the rebels having burned down the town of Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, where my family lived. Note that Chambersburg hasn't been burned down since.

Also note that Grant and his Union troops faced brave, determined and skilled warriors in the Confederates. Today, we and our allies typically face untrained, gutless losers who cower behind women and children when they aren't trying to talk them into blowing themselves to bits inside a school bus.

Even Democrats used to embrace the idea of victory. As hard as that is to believe, it was Democrat Harry Truman who decided that, given the choice of either a whole bunch of the enemy dying or a whole bunch of the enemy dying plus a whole bunch of Americans and allies also dying, since the enemy started it they could do the dying alone. He nuked Hiroshima, and when the Japanese didn't give up, he nuked Nagasaki. And the Japanese gave up. And they haven't been a problem since.

When our enemies decide to embark on a war, someone's going to die. I vote that it be them instead of us. Sadly, many of our political leaders and media mavens don't see it that way. They whine because so few Israelis have died in comparison to Hamas. They seem to think we have some sort of moral obligation to suffer casualties. Perhaps they'd feel differently if they had even been around any.

My great-great grandfather was in the Union Army. I expect he was quite pleased that he didn't have to go for round two with the rebels. Both of my grandfathers were in the Pacific getting ready to help invade Japan when Harry tossed the hot

Thayer's Wild Bunch

rocks. There's a fair chance at least one of yours was too. I'm glad they didn't have to hit those beaches – an invasion of Japan would have been an unspeakable bloodbath, both for the military and civilians of Japan and, more importantly, for the warriors of the United States and our allies.

Yeah, I place a higher value on the lives of our troops and those of our courageous allies than upon those of our enemies. Call me crazy.

One should ask presumptive President Hillary Clinton about that. A tape from September 10, 2011, just came out with Bill Clinton talking in Australia about how he could have killed Osama bin Laden in the 1990s, but held back because it might cause perhaps 300 civilian casualties. Of course, the next day bin Laden killed 3000 Americans. Was that the right choice, Ms. Clinton? What would you do? Do you think Bill made the right choice in not taking out bin Laden because he bravely surrounded himself with 300 civilians even though it cost us 3000 Americans?

That's a really good question. And that's why no one in the mainstream media will ever ask it. Okay, Jake Tapper might, but that's why he'll never get within 10 miles of Her Majesty.

War is an ugly and terrible thing. That's why you should avoid it. But the only thing worse than getting sucked into a war is not winning one. We went into Korea, stopped short of victory, and we're still there dealing with that freak show dynasty. We refused to achieve victory in Vietnam, and millions died throughout Southeast Asia when the communists proceeded to do what communists always do. We have refused to do what was needed to achieve victory in Afghanistan and that garden spot is already reverting to the Stone Age.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

We had victory in Iraq, but squandered it. All that blood spilled for nothing – pathetic. Now the *jihadis* are sweeping in and conducting a real war on women. Even the most dedicated single payer health care advocate has to recoil from ISIS's mandatory cliterodectomy program.

Our leaders insist Israel show “restraint” and urge a truce. Except everyone knows that the only chance for peace in the long term is the utter destruction of Hamas. You can't negotiate peace where the other side's bottom line bargaining position is that you die.

We need to unequivocally and unreservedly support our allies in their war against our shared enemies. As I discuss in my new book, *Conservative Insurgency*, a speculative future history of the struggle to restore our system and culture, we need to rebuild our shrunken military and aggressively confront and destroy threats to our nation. We can't wish away the fact that our enemies want us dead. What we can do is make it clear that if they choose to make war upon us, overt or covert, they are the ones who will get to do the dying.

WHAT'S IN A WORD?

J E Ted Thayer | 08-21-2014

Comprehensive: *including everything that is necessary; complete*

Comprehensive tax reform?

Comprehensive immigration reform?

Comprehensive Administrative Law?

Administrative Law: *the body of rules and principles that governs the duties and operations of federal or state administrative agencies, as commissions and boards*

Congress vs. Administrative Law?

Constitution vs. Administrative Law?

Supreme Court vs. Administrative Law?

Presidential Fiat: *a command given by a president which must be carried out*

Congress vs. Presidential Fiat?

Constitution vs. Presidential Fiat?

Supreme Court vs. Presidential Fiat?

NO GUFF

J E Ted Thayer | 08-28-2014

I wrote the following before ISIS/ISIL spread from Syria into Iraq and Jordan; before the President authorized "advisors" and air strikes to "protect U.S. citizens and interests."

The middle east has been in turmoil for some 2000 years and there is nothing we can do to change that. What we need to do is impress the entire population there that we will not put up with any moves that threaten the United States or its citizens. We made them leave us alone almost two-hundred years ago when the Marines went ashore in Tripoli and killed anything that moved because we would not pay ransoms nor put up with kidnapers.

These people know that we want peace. They also know that we have the power to kill anyone who dares to wear black and cover their face and threaten any American.

We must send the message to all in the the middle east - in no uncertain terms - that we do not need their riches or their oil, and we don't need their crazy ways of worship on our shores.

It needs to be clear to everyone - not just in the middle east, but all over the earth - that we will kill anything with a black outfit and face cover, whither soever disbursed around the globe, should they make any attempt to invade our shores or violate our soil with their nonsense.

These freaks of history need to know this: Don't even think about killing American infidels because we will come for you and kill you [and your families] and your animals [and we will] feed you to the pigs!

J E Ted Thayer | 09-04-2014

Sorry I didn't get this one up last week. It sounds like Rev. Al Sharpton has finally accepted the Bill O'Reilly challenge to take up where Bill Cosby left off. Question is - can he stick with it?

REV. AL GETS IT RIGHT

Michael Reagan | Aug 28, 2014

The Rev. Al Sharpton is getting the right kind of grief. This time it's not from conservatives for being a race hustler who exploits every white-on-black killing to raise money for his civil rights group National Action Network or to boost his miserable ratings on MSNBC.

This time Sharpton is being criticized by other blacks - liberal blacks - who didn't like the tough sermon he preached at Michael Brown's funeral on Monday [08-25-2014]. Sharpton's fiery eulogy was not the familiar Gospel of the Rev. Al.

Sure, he quoted the Bible and criticized Ferguson police for allowing a young black man's body to lie in the middle of the street for more than four hours.

But after calling for major reforms in policing, Sharpton pulled a switcheroo. He pointedly condemned the violence and rioting that came in response to Brown's death.

Then he surprised everyone in the church by bringing up a subject that too few black leaders - particularly the part-time one in the White House - are brave enough to bring up on a public stage.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Sharpton said blacks have to take responsibility for the chronic violence and bad behavior in their community that creates so much police attention in the first place.

"We have to be outraged at a 9-year-old girl killed in Chicago. We have got to be outraged by our disrespect for each other, our disregard for each other, our killing and shooting and running around gun-toting each other..."

As Sharpton said, "Blackness has never been about being a gangster or a thug." It has been about rising up, fighting against discrimination, building churches and black colleges and succeeding in life and never giving up.

"And now," he said, "we get to the 21st Century, we get to where we've got some positions of power. And you decide it ain't black no more to be successful. Now, you want to be a n--- and call your woman a 'ho.' You've lost where you're coming from."

The New Rev. Al had Spike Lee and other sensible blacks standing in pews when he declared, "We've got to clean up our community so we can clean up the United States of America!"

But since Monday Sharpton has been rapped by "progressive" blacks for using Brown's funeral and the notoriety of a tragic police shooting to scold the black community for its own sins.

The Rev. Al's critics say the issue of black-on-black crime is irrelevant to Brown's death. Brown was shot by a white cop, not another young black male, they argue.

BS, I say. Sharpton was right to use a national pulpit to challenge black leaders to address the black-on-black killing spree that has been decimating the youth of our inner cities for decades.

Thanks to the attention of the national media and professional race-card players like Sharpton, everyone in America knows

Thayer's Wild Bunch

about Michael Brown's tragic death. Soon we'll know how it actually happened.

Meanwhile, have you ever heard of Dorval Jenkins, Marcus McCarty or Antonio Smith?

They're just three of the 26 murder victims in Chicago since Aug. 9, the day Brown was killed in suburban Ferguson.

All but one or two of the 26 dead Chicagoans were young black males. All but one or two were shot to death deliberately or by accident by other black males.

Jenkins was 19. McCarty was 14. Antonio Smith, deliberately gunned down by local gangsters in a dead-end alley for unknown reasons, was 9.

Al Sharpton didn't show up at their funerals. Neither did Spike Lee or Snoop Dogg. Neither did several underlings from the White House. Neither did Brian Williams and Anderson Cooper.

Black-on-black gang murders are too common. They're not news. So they don't bring good ratings or network camera teams.

It's great to see the Rev. Al's call for blacks to man-up and address the violence and gang culture that's destroying their community and tainting their entire race.

Now, if he's really serious, he needs to take it to the streets and churches of Chicago.

Whether the cameras follow him there or not.

J E Ted Thayer | 09-11-2014



Scurvy dog that I am, I just couldn't let this one go by ...

WHERE'S THE 'AFFORDABLE' IN AFFORDABLE CARE ACT?

Tom Jenney | *Arizona Republic* AZ I See It |
August 31, 2014

There's a reason Obamacare's authors formally named it the "Affordable Care Act:" The legislation was supposed to make health care reasonably priced.

Washington politicians promised the legislation would save the average family as much as \$2,500 a year in premiums. For Arizona — where we spend \$5,400 on health care per capita — this seemed too good to be true.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

It was.

Last month, Arizonans learned that next year's health-care premiums for plans purchased on the Obamacare exchange will rise by an average of 11 percent. Arizonans with policies from Health Net, Cigna, and Humana will likely face even steeper increases. Health Net — the state's largest provider — may see 14 percent spikes, Cigna 14.4 percent, and Humana's premiums may jump a whopping 25.5 percent.

So much for that \$2,500 in savings we were promised. This further confirms what we learned last year: Washington politicians broke their promise that Obamacare would make health care affordable. Right now, Arizonans are paying 51 percent more for health care than they were before Obamacare went into effect on Jan 1. Our state's increases last year were some of the highest increases in the country.

No matter where you look, the Affordable Care Act isn't living up to its name. Around the country, deductibles for the cheapest health care plans are, on average, 40 percent higher than they were before Obamacare's implementation. Co-insurance fees jumped, too. Whereas many pre-Obamacare plans covered 100 percent of costs after deductibles, many post-Obamacare plans only cover 80 percent.

These two increases can add thousands of dollars to family budgets already stretched to the max. Add in higher premiums, and an Arizona family's health-care costs may have doubled — or worse — in the past nine months.

By 2017, the year of full implementation of Obamacare, the cheapest plans available on the Arizona exchange — individual "Bronze" plans — could see premiums skyrocket 94 percent, jumping from \$2,150 a year to \$4,150. Those estimates come from a recent study by the Medical Industry

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Leadership Institute, which used an economic model supported by the Department of Health and Human Services — the federal agency that is implementing Obamacare.

Family plans could suffer a similar fate. The cheapest policies available could increase by more than 50 percent, costing the typical Arizona family nearly \$17,000 per year. To put that number in context, it's over a third of Arizona's median household income.

The MILI study indicates that federal subsidies won't keep up with these ever-increasing costs. Even if they do, Arizona families are still shouldering the costs from higher deductibles, co-pays, and co-insurance, and more.

No matter how you look at it, the Affordable Care Act simply isn't making health care more affordable for Arizonans. The politicians who passed Obamacare — including Arizona Representatives Ron Barber and Ann Kirkpatrick — promised that it would fundamentally change American health care. They just never told us the changes would be for the worse.

Tom Jenney is the Arizona state director for Americans for Prosperity.

Our Doctor is Hudson Lee, an Osteopath (cross between MD, Chiropractor and Naturopath.) He doesn't like Medicare, Medicaid or Obamacare. He likes cash. For an office visit we usually take a \$50 bill and Shrimp-fried-rice from the China Taste Restaurant at Hill and Ash in Globe. He's such a sweetheart that Claudette demands a hug when we visit. For those of you who live in the area, Dr. Lee practices in the old Gila General Hospital with Dr. Michael Durham at 5th and Monroe. 425-3995. Our original Globe physician, Dr. McLaren Ruesch, recommended Dr. Lee when he retired.

IS IT NEWS?

J E Ted Thayer | 09-18-2014

I have to agree with a remark I heard the other day on the O'Reilly Factor from Fox News commentator Bernie Goldberg. To paraphrase: "This Rice thing has taken reporting from newsworthy to beyond disgusting."

First, the media jumps all over a sports team owner for uttering racial slurs in the [supposed] privacy of his own home. He is effectively crucified by the press. The pressure is so great from the media, his wife sells the business! The result of relentless persecution, not lawful prosecution.

Then a cop, who's been beaten by a kid in his own cop car, shoots and kills the kid. The media gets a whiff and away we go again! The resultant cop-kills-kid story attracts troublemakers like bees to honey to riot in the streets. There is no possibility of justice for the kid or the cop. Again, it's media persecution in lieu of prosecution.

Next, we get the scoop on this guy Rice popping his lady and dragging her supposedly unconscious from an elevator in an egregious act of domestic violence. The not-so-private video of the crime goes viral and another poor clown gets the shaft at the hands of our over-zealous mainstream media. No trial; no hearing. Guilty, not guilty, or nolo contendere, this guy is singled out for persecution NOT prosecution!

When did media persecution become the news? Good Lord!
When is the media going to get back to reporting real news?

There's certainly no lack of it these days!

Welcome Fall!

Autumnal Equinox 9/23/2014 2:29am UTC

ROOSEVELT SERIES BIG HIT!

J E Ted Thayer | 09-25-2014

PBS ran a wonderfully produced seven-part series last week on the Roosevelts. It followed the diverse members of the huge family from the earliest days of Theodore Roosevelt to the last days of FDR's wife Eleanor. Filmmaker Ken Burns pulled out all the stops in creating the series using every visual trick in the book from slowly moving sepia stills ... to scratchy old black-and-white expedition footage ... to brilliant color film taken in the days leading up to and during World War Two. The series begins with the birth of Theodore Roosevelt in 1858 and concludes with the passing of Elanore (Teddy's niece and Franklin's wife and fifth cousin) in 1962.

The series is peppered with some of today's greatest voices representing the prime characters: Patricia Clarkson plays the voice of Daisy Suckley, one of FDR's closest confidants; Meryl Streep delivers a wonderful rendition of Eleanor; Paul Giamatti is the voice of TR; Edward Herrmann does a credible job as the voice of Franklin Roosevelt; and the series' narrator is the ubiquitous Peter Coyote. Scattered throughout the series are appearances by commentators George Will, Clay Jenkinson, William Leuchtenburg, and David McCullough.

The voices and talking heads add creative depth and color to the presentation that only a Ken Burns could have created.

Geoffrey C. Ward, like Roosevelt a Polio survivor, collaborated with Burns to create *The Roosevelts: An intimate History*. PBS played each two-hour installment twice each

Thayer's Wild Bunch

night, back to back, Sunday September 14th through Saturday September 20th at 7:00pm local time. When the series will run again has not been announced. It pulled a 5 share rating, an almost unheard-of 9.5 million PBS viewers.

The seven-disc DVD set, ROSV654 lists for \$99.99, yet it is available online at <http://www.shoppbs.org/> for \$69.99 with free shipping. The set comes with a complimentary tote bag. Watch the YouTube trailer from PBS here: <http://youtu.be/5F16pnOgq3E>

GAGA OVER GAGA

Tuesday (9/23/2014), a new music presentation became available offering the classic musical stylings of 88-year-old Italian pop singer Anthony Dominick Benedetto and 28-year-old rock icon Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta. You know them as Tony Bennett and Lady Gaga. The pair were featured on this week's edition of *CBS News Sunday Morning*.

Last year Gaga almost broke during an appearance on the *YouTube Awards* show and realized she needed something different. She and Bennett live across the street from each other on New York's Central Park and over the last five years they have become close friends. They met at a charity benefit and he immediately said, "Let's do an album together." Gaga told *Sunday Morning* that she developed a love for Jazz at a very young age and was especially fond of Ella Fitzgerald's music.

After Gaga's near breakdown Bennett suggested again that she take advantage of her love for Jazz and old Standards and do an album with him. Bennett has done a number of sides of duets over the last decade with other star performers. Together Bennett and Gaga created a masterpiece. "*Cheek to Cheek*" is

Thayer's Wild Bunch

available in two CD versions ... and also on vinyl! According to *Billboard* magazine, there's another American Songbook album in the works.

Here's a YouTube sample: http://youtu.be/Rad_04RMPn4

THE BORDER IS SECURE? MY FOOT!

J E Ted Thayer | 10-02-2014

Dr. Paul Gosar (who used to be my Congressman until blatant gerrymandering gave us back Ann Kirkpatrick) toured the Arizona border near Arivaca in late September. Congressman Gosar included an article about the adventure in his September 27th email newsletter. Included in the article was a photo taken of him and a local rancher next to a sign erected near there by our government. TRAVEL CAUTION, it said, **SMUGGLING AND ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION MAY BE ENCOUNTERED IN THIS AREA**



I remember the days when I would take my wife and kids to Nogales, where we would shop and barter with the local merchants, and then take a short side trip to a fish market buried on a back street to buy dozens of *Camarones Gigantes*, giant shrimp not generally available at home in Tucson. Claudette, after all these years, still has one of several extraordinary dresses we bought in Nogales. The folks in

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Nogales were always very kind and did their best to make us feel at home. We never, ever felt unwelcome ... or in danger.

One of the great Thayer 70s adventures involved a trip to a border crossing south and east of Patagonia. We had bought a new 1973 Ford Club Wagon 12-passenger van for our business and a field trip was in order to break it in. With a basket full of picnic goods and the two kids on board, we headed down I-10 to Arizona 83. That stretch of blacktop took us south past Sonoita to a turn-off, taking us over back-country dirt roads to a tiny spot named Lochiel, at the time a couple of houses and a wooden gate at the border-crossing.

Today it's a ghost town. We were out in the sticks and, after looking at today's maps, I have no idea how we got there and back! At no time were there any bad guys lurking, no bandidos, nothing but the friendly faces of cowboys, ranchers, mexicans and indians. We had a fun trip in the new van, enjoyed a nice picnic, and returned to Tucson through beautiful territory ... now defiled by signs warning of danger from drug and human smugglers.

I have no idea when the Arizona border became so porous. I think I remember hearing that enforcement efforts in Southern California and West Texas had driven illegals to brave the bleak Arizona border. I recall stories of people dying of thirst in the desert south and west of Tucson. Having lived two hours north of The Old Pueblo for over two decades now ... has insulated me some from the dangers to the south. Yet ...

I can't adequately express, even in four-letter words, how angry Dr. Gosar's photo makes me! The colorful expletives that cross my mind don't come close to expressing the disappointment that floods my brain so deeply I want to kneel on the ground, bang my palms in the dirt, scream at the top of my lungs and weep bitter tears. I feel betrayed by our

Thayer's Wild Bunch

government and the leaders we've elected over the years to protect us - leaders who have routinely and blatantly lied to and betrayed those of us who make the Southwest our home.

Did it really take over two decades for our government to loose control of the border?

Were we so callous to the plight of others that we failed to notice our own government selling us out?

Is it any wonder I'm angry?

Shouldn't you be angry, too?

The question is: What are we going to do about it?

Oh, yeah?

When ...?

ENTER NOW ... THE TWILIGHT ZONE

J E Ted Thayer | 10-09-2014

It's a biggie this time!



Watch full O'Reilly interview with Leon Panetta here:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0sVbqlOaiTM&feature=player_detailpage#t=51



Thayer's Wild Bunch

"My proudest accomplishment in which I take the most pride, mostly because of the opposition it faced early on, you know ... the remnants of prior situations and mindsets that were too narrowly focused in a manner whereby they may have overlooked the bigger picture and we didn't do that and I'm proud of that. Very proud. I would say that's a major accomplishment."

Hillary Clinton 11 March 2014

Snopes.com "... found no record of Clinton's having engaged in any public appearance or interview on 11 March 2014 during which she might have said what is attributed to her, nor any news account or transcript that references such a quote (from that date or at any other time)."

But, it sure is a cool quote, huh?

Table 15 BLS [Bureau of Labor Statistics] Alternate Measures of Unemployment

Measure	Not seasonally adjusted			Seasonally adjusted					
	Sept. 2013	Aug. 2014	Sept. 2014	Sept. 2013	May 2014	June 2014	July 2014	Aug. 2014	Sept. 2014
U-1 Persons unemployed 15 weeks or longer, as a percent of the civilian labor force	3.7	2.8	2.7	3.8	3.1	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.8
U-2 Job losers and persons who completed temporary jobs, as a percent of the civilian labor force	3.5	3.0	2.7	3.7	3.2	3.1	3.1	3.1	2.9
U-3 Total unemployed, as a percent of the civilian labor force (official unemployment rate)	7.0	6.3	5.7	7.2	6.3	6.1	6.2	6.1	5.9
U-4 Total unemployed plus discouraged workers, as a percent of the civilian labor force plus discouraged workers	7.5	6.7	6.2	7.7	6.7	6.5	6.6	6.6	6.4
U-5 Total unemployed, plus discouraged workers, plus all other persons marginally attached to the labor force, as a percent of the civilian labor force plus all persons marginally attached to the labor force	8.4	7.5	7.1	8.6	7.6	7.3	7.5	7.4	7.3
U-6 Total unemployed, plus all persons marginally attached to the labor force, plus total employed part time for economic reasons, as a percent of the civilian labor force plus all persons marginally attached to the labor force	13.1	12.0	11.3	13.6	12.2	12.1	12.2	12.0	11.8

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Table A-15 [above] is where [we] find a *better* approximation of ... the unemployment rate ...

Notice I said "better" approximation not to be confused with "good" approximation.

The official unemployment rate is 5.9%. However, if you start counting all the people who want a job but gave up, all the people with part-time jobs that want a full-time job, all the people who dropped off the unemployment rolls because their unemployment benefits ran out, etc., you get a closer picture of what the unemployment rate is. That number is in the last row labeled U-6.

U-6 is much higher at 11.8.0%. Both numbers would be way higher still, were it not for millions dropping out of the labor force over the past few years.

Labor Force Factors

1. Discouraged workers stop looking for jobs
2. People retire because they cannot find jobs
3. People go back to school hoping it will improve their chances of getting a job
4. People stay in school longer because they cannot find a job
5. Disability and disability fraud

Were it not for people dropping out of the labor force over the past several years, the unemployment rate would be well over 9%. Some of those dropping out genuinely retired. However, millions retired involuntarily. That is, they needed to retire and collect social security because they had no job and no income.

Such folks are no longer in the labor force even if they want a job. The falling unemployment rate is very deceiving, painting a picture of improvement that simply does not exist.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

A Gallup survey on the economy better reflects how the average Joe feels: 38% Think Economy Getting Better, 56% Say Worse.

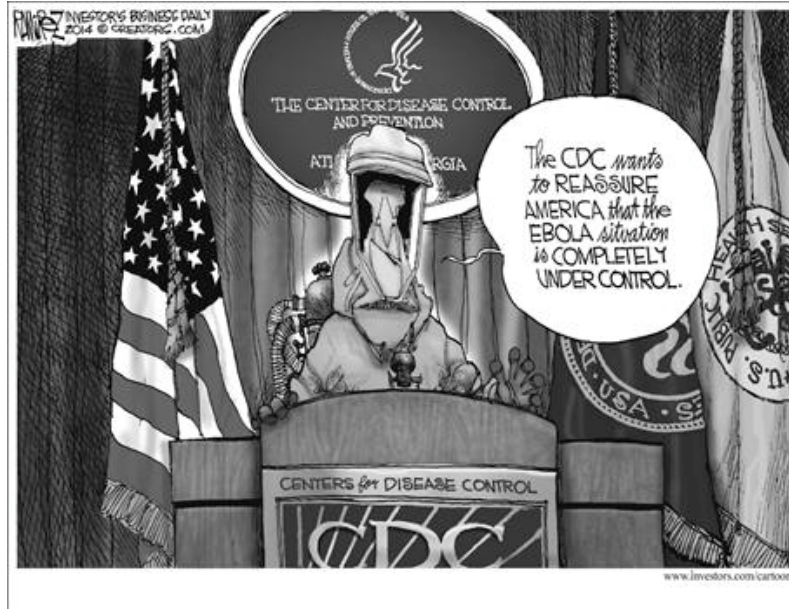
Mike "Mish" Shedlock



Recently released surveys from Federal Reserve Banks in New York, Philadelphia and Atlanta confirmed that businesses are cutting employment and shifting workers to part-time positions because of ObamaCare. According to the New York Fed, 21 percent of manufacturers and 17 percent of service companies have reduced the size of their workforce because of the law. In addition, roughly 20 percent of both manufacturers and service companies said that they have shifted workers from full- to part-time jobs. The New York survey also indicated that roughly a third of businesses were raising prices to offset some of the law's costs.

ObamaCare's first year...wasn't quite as bad as some critics predicted. *New York Post (Online)*

Thayer's Wild Bunch



POVERTY

John Stossel | Oct 08, 2014

Fifty years ago, President Lyndon Johnson declared "War on Poverty." It sounded great to me. I was taught at Princeton, "We're a rich country. All we have to do is tax the rich, and then use that money to create programs that will lift the poor out of poverty." Government created job-training programs for the strong and expanded social security for the weak.

It seemed to work. The poverty rate dropped from 17 percent to 12 percent in the programs' first decade. Unfortunately, few people noticed that during the half-decade *before* the "War," the rate dropped from 22 percent to 17 percent. Without big government, Americans were already lifting themselves out of poverty!

Johnson's War brought further progress, but progress then stopped. It stopped because government is not good at making

Thayer's Wild Bunch

a distinction between needy and lazy. It taught moms not to marry the father of their kids because that would reduce their welfare benefits. Welfare invited people to be dependent. Some people started to say, "Entry-level jobs are for suckers."

Many could live almost as well without the hassle of work.

Despite spending an astonishing \$22 trillion dollars, despite 92 different government welfare programs, poverty stopped declining. Government's answer? Spend more!

Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wis.), chairman of the House Budget Committee, points out that government measures "success" by the growth of programs: "based on inputs, how much money are we spending, how many programs are we creating, how many people are we putting on these programs -- not on outcomes -- how many people are we getting out of poverty? ... Many of these programs end up disincentivizing work -- telling people it pays *not* to go to work because you'll lose more in benefits than you gain in earning wages."

That doesn't mean the poor are lazy. It means they respond to incentives. They are rational about choosing behaviors that, at least in the short term, pay off.

It's not only welfare that makes it harder for the poor to climb the ladder of success. Well-intended laws, such as a minimum wage, hurt, too.

But most people don't understand that. Even Republicans, according to opinion polls, support a higher minimum wage. A minimum sounds compassionate. It's hard to live on \$7.25 an hour.

But setting a minimum is anything *but* compassionate because that eliminates starter jobs. The minimum wage is why kids

Thayer's Wild Bunch

don't work as apprentices anymore, nor clean your windshield at gas stations. They never get hired because employers reason, "If I must pay \$9, I'm not taking a chance on a beginner."

To most economists, the claim that the minimum wage kills starter jobs is not controversial. But it is among the general public. And so politicians pander.

On my TV show this week, Rep. Jim McDermott (D-Wash.) says that people like Paul Ryan and I "just want to cut the size of government. And trust the private sector to do everything."

Well ... yes. The private sector does just about everything better.

McDermott says, "This whole business about somehow raising the minimum wage causes a loss of jobs -- if that's true, why don't we just drop the minimum wage altogether and let people work for a dollar a day or \$1 an hour?"

OK, let's do it! It's not as if wages are set by the minimum wage.

That is a great conceit of the central planners: thinking that only government prevents employers from paying workers nearly nothing. But the reason Americans don't work for \$1 an hour is competition, not government minimums. Competition is what forces companies to pay workers more. It doesn't much matter that the law says they can pay as low as \$7.25. Only 4 percent of American workers now make that little. Ninety-five percent make *more*.

The free market will sort this out, if politicians would just let it. Left free, the market will provide the greatest benefit to

Thayer's Wild Bunch

workers, employers and consumers, while allowing charity as well.

It would all happen faster if politicians stopped imagining that they are the cause of everything

IMAGINE - TO OPINE OR ...

J E Ted Thayer | 10-16-2014

The greatest comedic line of Fall, 2014:

Imagine a place far away where people value your opinion.

That off-the-wall remark is why people like me can feel free to write about all sorts of subjects. We know there are others of like minds (and not ...) in places near and far. This weekly email broadcast elicits terse remarks as well as lengthy tomes from folks from every niche and clime. It does my heart good to know that there are people "out there" who actually think about stuff and are willing to open their hearts and minds to a variety of ideas and opinions. It's a comfort to know that there are good people in the world who feel strongly about diverse subjects and have no qualms about sharing those thoughts via return email. That Fall 2014 comedy put-down line serves well to redirect attention from the very mundane to the excitement of participation in life! Next ...

QE ENDS WITH A THUD

John Ransom | 10-14-2014

[...] despite the experts' protestations that we are in a recovery, the first quarter of the year was more like a mini-recession than it was a recovery. While job creation has picked up a little, the non-recovery recovery has lasted so long that it will be years before the job market gets real tight.

That means wages will be [still] lower, job creation slower.

That means that a robust economy is not in the offing anytime real soon. That's because jobs and wage gains are needed to fuel organic economic growth.

THE USA AS KEYNESIA

J E Ted Thayer | 10-16-2014

I was reading an article on Keynesian economics the other day and discovered that, contrary to what modern "experts" are espousing, Keynes did not look at lower interest as a way out of a slow economy. Quite the contrary. Keynes said of smoothing the ripples of economic bust and boom, "*The remedy for the boom is not a higher rate of interest but a lower rate of interest! For that may enable the boom to last.*" [General Theory, p. 322].

Isn't that just swell? Here we are, slightly above the bottom of one of the longest busts in American history and interest rates for the nation's banks are close to zero! Meanwhile, I'm getting a whopping .5% (1/2 of one per-cent) interest on my savings account. If you follow Keynes' way of thinking, we're in hog heaven! The economy has never been better!

Peel back the pages of time about fifty years. I bought my first house for \$100 down and \$97 a month at 3.5% (yes, three-and-a-half per-cent) interest. I owned a car that was financed at 6% add-on (roughly 11.9% apr). It was unlawful almost everywhere for lenders to charge more than 18% interest - it was called usury, a crime pre-dating Jesus Christ and the money-changers. And my savings account paid just over 3%. It was 1964 and the Federal Funds Rate (the amount the government charged banks) was 3%. Inflation hovered around 1.5%.

Today, a high-yield savings account will pay around .95%. Home mortgages are going for 3.5% to 4.5%. Credit card interest rates average about 11%, but can run as high as 29.99% (the Mafia charged less in the 70s!) An unsecured bank loan or personal line of credit, if you can get one, will

Thayer's Wild Bunch

run you between 6 and 20% depending on your credit history - about the same as a credit card. A new car loan (with the dealership brokering the agreement) will run between 2 and 5%. The Fed Funds Rate, depending on the financial institution, is somewhere between 0.00% and 0.25% (zero per-cent to one-quarter of one per-cent.) Inflation is just under 2%.

The big difference between 1964 and today is the amount of money being pocketed by the banking industry. You can't borrow money from the Fed at a quarter per-cent and sell it at 29.99%. You'd be in prison in a New York minute! However, the biggies like Capital One Bank do it all the time. Today's economic environment doesn't come close to an application of Keynes' theories. It's more like big government gone stark-raving insane!

GOOD ENOUGH

J E Ted Thayer | October 18, 2014

I don't usually forward this kind of story because the source is generally clouded. It came from my brother, was forwarded to him by a trusted Marine and Sonoita, Arizona businessman who wrote that it came to him via "a trusted compatriot." That's good enough for me, Troops. tt

I wanted to clear up a few black and white questions and answers. The things I state are facts. They are not downloaded from some media website, not propaganda, just observations from a 70 year old black man, born in America.

I was told by my parents (yes, a married man and woman with my last name), that I was nigger. We lived in "Nigger Town" in a small Texas town, no A/C, grass growing through the floor, no car, no TV. We washed our bodies with lye soap that my mother made, by hand. I thought I was a nigger, until I graduated high school, went to college, did an enlistment in the Army, and got a job. I am now retired, own my own home, have 6 children by ONE WOMAN, and we all have the same last name. I have a Bachelor's Degree in Liberal Arts, a Master's Degree in Sociology. My retirement, VA disability from combat in the Korean War (I only have one leg), and part-time pay in a local college, is about \$125,000 a year. From dirt poor nigger, to old, black, proud American.

Yes, I am black, and I can say "nigger", because I understand the true meaning of the word.

Let's clear up a few things about the Michael Brown incident. -Fact: It is not called "shoplifting or stealing", it's called "robbery", which is a felony. Brown stole something and assaulted someone, that means ROBBERY. It's on video, and it's a fact. Not shoplifting, not theft, not "lifting" a few cigars,

Thayer's Wild Bunch

but ROBBERY!

-Michael Brown, like Trayvon, was portrayed by the media as a “little black boy”, cute little headphones, and his cap and gown photo, gunned down by a ruthless police assassin, executed by “whitey”. First, I have never seen a cop drag a person into their car’s driver door to arrest them.

So, let us be clear, Michael Brown was a nigger; a sorry assed, criminal, hoodlum, nigger. Nobody wants to say that, but I will. He had a criminal record a mile long, was known for numerous assaults, robberies, including the one you saw with your own eyes, and still refuse to call it a robbery. He was, like so many others, living a life that he thought he was “entitled” to, just for being alive. Gangsta rap, weed, drinking, guns, and those stupid-assed low profile rims, makes him some kind of bad-ass nigger.

-I have fought communist Chinese and North Korean soldiers in the 1950’s with more honor than that nigger. Yep, I peeled potatoes and shot communists. That’s the only job a nigger soldier could get.

-Rodney King? Black Riots!

-Trayvon? Black Riots!

-Hurricane Katrina? Black Riots! Stealing TV’s, designer clothes, etc.

-O.J. Simpson kills white man and white woman, found NOT GUILTY? Did white folks riot? Nope!

-In fact, when is the last time white people rioted? Civil War, maybe? That’s because they are, relatively, civilized people, much like many black Americans. Protesting is one thing, hell,

Thayer's Wild Bunch

I'm all for it. Even if you are an ignorant idiot, you have a right to protest.

-Stop only showing the young black "cap and gown" photos of Michael. Charles Manson may have a few of those laying around, as well. Show the nigger "gangsta" photos of the "poor unarmed teenager" (grown man) pics that have been removed from his Facebook page, holding the loaded pistol, smoking weed, with a mouthful of money.

-Militarization? The stupid-assed media that publicizes this has no idea what "militarization" really is. Cops wear helmets and vests, and drive armored vehicle because unemployed niggers thrown bricks at them, moron! You put on an "Adam 12" uniform and walk down the streets of Ferguson during the criminal riots. I can guarantee that you'll jump into the first armored "military tank" that you see.

-You only "want the police" when you "need the police", otherwise, you mock and fear what you do not understand about the police. And by the way, the police are trained to take your shit, but I wouldn't fuck around with those Army National Guard, they aren't as well disciplined "culturally" to take your shit like police do every day. They will ventilate your black asses with M-16s, with military precision and extreme prejudice.

-And finally, the way we protest and demand justice, is run down the streets breaking shit, looting stores, and acting like a bunch of untrained monkeys? Hell, after Rodney King, criminal niggers were actually killing people, thinking they were entitled to be worse criminals than they already were. For those black criminals that do that, you are a disgrace to your race, inflamed by idiots like Al Sharpton, instead of listening to logic from proud black Americans, like Bill

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Cosby, Samuel Jackson, Colin Powell, Allen West, me, etc.

-You blame white people for your ignorance, criminal acts, unemployed laziness, etc.

-You blame white people for 89% of the prisons in America being full of blacks. They did nothing wrong, the racists white cops framed them all, right? No chance at school, no chance for college, military, employment? BULL SHIT!

-More niggers kill niggers, than niggers killing whites, whites killing niggers, and whites killing whites....COMBINED. I find this astounding.

-It's not white peoples' faults, the Emancipation Proclamation was signed by a white man years ago. You can go to school, get a job, buy a house, and vote, JUST LIKE WHITE FOLKS!!!! You are not a slave, you are not discriminated against! Slavery is abolished, and nobody alive today, was alive when it was popular. Get over it! You are discriminated against because you are a criminal, sorry-assed nigger. Otherwise, black Americans are treated like everyone else.

-If you choose to create "baby daddy and baby mama", and fake disabilities as an excuse for laziness to draw social security disability..... instead of husband, wife, family, job, mortgage, it's YOUR FAULT, not white folks. And there are a lot of proud black Americans that will tell you the same, as I AM ONE OF THEM!!!

-Remember, the way you act on the camera, is remembered by everyone who sees it. They will never forget it. It shows them how you, as the black race, responds to situation that don't particularly go the way you think they should. It will become a reference standard, something they expect from you when the next media report doesn't go your way. Stop being stupid

Thayer's Wild Bunch

niggers, and be a proud black American.

My parents raised me well, but they were wrong about one thing, I am not a nigger.

I will not be around long. While my mind is still sharp, and my aim is still good, my body is eating away with cancer. It started in the prostate, and is spreading rapidly. After I die, I have asked my children to publish my writings, and include my name. Although I am not expecting any miracles, I can only hope that Americans will stop blaming color, start blaming criminals, and see people for what they really are. We have too many countries that want us dead.

We should not be fighting each other.

BEWARE OF BADWARE ...

J E Ted Thayer | 10-23-2014

Good grief, Charlie Brown! I thought I had a handle on viruses and malware. Apparently not.

My computer slowed to a crawl last year as a result of lots of software and Trend-Micro's humongus database of malware traps (conveniently stored on my computer). I found that the machine would take over three minutes (MINUTES) to boot up with Trend-Micro active - just under two minutes without it running. So I backed up everything and reloaded my Windows Xp Service Pack 3. WOW! That sucker was booting up in just over 45 seconds! I started running Trend-Micro's Housecall regularly to keep the bad guys away. I seemed to work.

Then, one day I got a Blue Screen that froze the machine and demanded a payment of \$300 to let me use my computer again. Having hacked viruses away before (remember, I've been playing with these things since 1980 - starting with an Altair and CPM!), I went after that sucker like it was the plague. I finally determined that the only way to loose it was to format one of my 7 drives (yeah, seven!) and reinstall XP. Well, by this time, Microsoft had discontinued support for Xp, so I had to find and download a copy of Service Pack 3. Well, I got it working. And again, it not only booted like lightning, but also ran like a dream.

Well, last week I got an email from GoDaddy.com, my web hosting provider (ISP), which said that Google had flagged tedthayer.com as risky. "*We have detected that your domain tedthayer.com is associated with a web site that may contain malware. Your site is listed on the Google® malware list and people visiting your site are being notified by their browsers that your site is not safe ...*" Well, now, isn't that JUST

Thayer's Wild Bunch

DUCKY! I went fishing around Google® and found a note that said there was an instance on seven TedThayer.com pages that linked to a site that *might* contain some "badware" and they'd be happy to help remove the notice if I'd just jump through hoops.

Meanwhile, I had run three different malware scanners, found some old dust waayyy back in the dregs of one of my copious drives, nuked them puppies and had a completely clean, lightning fast machine.

(Hold on there, hoss. It gets better!)

I figured out that I had a link to a local website that had apparently been abandoned and may have been infected. The infection supposedly came to visitors' computers when they linked to that abandoned site via my Links page. And all of my web pages referred to my Links Page.

The cure was simple: remove the dead website link. But there's more! I'm dumping the INTERESTING page from my site, as well as the LINKS page. So the source of the Google® bad boy notice will be completely gone. Yet to happen is the begging and pleading with Google® to lift the "*This Site May Harm Your Computer*" notification from Google® search results. Meanwhile, back at the ranch ... the <http://www.jetedthayer.com> reference to my book *Caca Pasa* now rates the Google® notice because those are BAD WORDS, and therefore BADWARE! Good grief, Charlie Brown!

Well, even though it makes my emails look like SPAM to a lot of mail handlers out there, I've installed Avast! to keep an eye out for malware AND badware, so you don't have to worry about infections from any links on <http://www.tedthayer.com>.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

BTW - with the crashes, reformatting and so forth, my most current email list got lost. If you don't want to get these weekly broadcasts, drop me a line by *Reply to Sender* and I'll take you off the Wild Bunch broadcast list.

Sorry for the inconvenience.

HAPPY HALLOWEEN!

J E Ted Thayer | 10-13-2014

Preparing for "Unrest"

Folks all over the country have been stockpiling food, water, supplies and ammunition for the last few years based on dire predictions of economic instability, public unrest and government repression. Doom-sayers see the market crashing again "soon" - far worse than it did in 2008. There are predictions of widespread unrest due to shortages of food and fuel brought on by attacks on the American infrastructure.

Such attacks could bring communications, the electric power grid and transportation to a screeching halt. The latest prediction is that we will be living under martial law before the 2016 election cycle is complete, resulting in suspension of the elections and rationing of food, water and currency. As far-fetched as these prognostications may seem, a cursory look at events driving them may precipitate good reason for pause.

The stage is set for martial law by the President's plan to issue an executive order giving as many as 34 million aliens a pass to legal status. Many view this promise as an unconstitutional circumvention of the new Congress' authority before it can take its seats in January. 9 million people with sudden legal rights to seek work will overwhelm employment offices nation-wide (the first year) and create a flood of part-timers ready to replace today's full-time employees. In a matter of months this act could push the limits of the nation's unemployment safety net and force millions of otherwise law-abiding American citizens into the streets. Just a few weeks of unrest could lead to militarization of law enforcement and, in short order, martial law spreading across the country.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Recent credible news reports have the federal government, via draft RFP, preparing to order millions of blank work permits and green cards in anticipation of an expected crush of people seeking legal authority to join the American workforce.

Does this lend credence to gloom-and-doom scenarios of martial law? Probably not, but a major change in the workforce could create an unwanted Christmas present in markets where cheap labor is an economic driver.

Everything [You] Need To Know About Politics And Economics in 25 Quotes

John Hawkins | Oct 25, 2014

1) No one will really understand politics until they understand that politicians are not trying to solve our problems. They are trying to solve their own problems — of which getting elected and re-elected are number one and number two. Whatever is number three is far behind. — **Thomas Sowell**

2) We tolerate, even promote, many things we once regarded as evil, wrong, or immoral. And then we seek “explanations” for an act that seems beyond comprehension. Remove societal restraints on some evils and one can expect the demons to be freed to conduct other evil acts. —**Cal Thomas**

3) What would you think of a person who earned \$24,000 a year but spent \$35,000? Suppose on top of that, he was already \$170,000 in debt. You'd tell him to get his act together — stop spending so much or he'd destroy his family, impoverish his kids and wreck their future. Of course, no individual could live so irresponsibly for long. But tack on

Thayer's Wild Bunch

eight more zeroes to that budget and you have the checkbook for our out-of-control, big-spending federal government. —
John Stossel

4) As my father-in-law once said, when they talk about taxes it's always for teachers, firemen, and police – but when they spend your taxes, it always seems to go to some guy in a leather chair downtown you never heard of. —**Glenn Reynolds**

5) America's abundance was created not by public sacrifices to "the common good," but by the productive genius of free men who pursued their own personal interests and the making of their own private fortunes. They did not starve the people to pay for America's industrialization. They gave the people better jobs, higher wages and cheaper goods with every new machine they invented, with every scientific discovery or technological advance—and thus the whole country was moving forward and profiting, not suffering, every step of the way. — **Ayn Rand**

6) If there is no moral foundation for a system of laws, then the law is reduced to "These are the rules. They're the rules because I say so, and I control all of the guys with guns." We can ask those who survived Pol Pot, Stalin, or Mao how that worked out...

So the law is either codification of morality or it is thuggery. The real argument is about which moral code will be implemented by the law. To claim to reject a moral underpinning for the law is either a wish to live in a place where the law is whatever one guy says it is today, or else it is a disingenuous attempt to substitute your own moral code for the one that has already been codified. —**Beregond**

Thayer's Wild Bunch

7) A rising tide (in the economy) lifts all boats. — **John Kennedy**

8) I am for doing good to the poor, but I differ in opinion of the means. I think the best way of doing good to the poor, is not making them easy in poverty, but leading or driving them out of it. In my youth I traveled much, and I observed in different countries, that the more public provisions were made for the poor, the less they provided for themselves, and of course became poorer. And, on the contrary, the less was done for them, the more they did for themselves, and became richer. —**Ben Franklin**

9) When everybody owns something, nobody owns it, and nobody has a direct interest in maintaining or improving its condition. That is why buildings in the Soviet Union — like public housing in the United States — look decrepit within a year or two of their construction... —**Milton Friedman**

10) Repeatedly asking for government help undermines the foundations of society by destroying initiative and responsibility. It is also a fatal blow to efficiency and corrupts the political process. When everyone gets something for nothing, soon no one will have anything, because no one will be producing anything. —**Charles Koch**

11) Right now, politicians have the power to suddenly decide to tax us all at 100% and then spend the money replacing all of our roads with a high-speed rail system. What keeps them from doing that? Common sense? Come on, look at the morons we have in government – Congress is filled with idiots who couldn't run a lemonade stand and who have grand visions to transform the nation. No, the only thing stopping them is that they're divided into two parties who viscerally hate each other. If they ever got along, a big new government overreach like the Patriot Act or a giant boondoggle like

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Obamacare would be passed every couple weeks. By the end of the year, we'd have the government spying on our every movement as we lived flat broke in shanty towns, eating our government-allotted corn cob half we'd get every other day.

—**Frank J. Fleming**

12) Far from having the 21st-century equivalent of an Edwardian class system, the United States is characterized by a great deal of variation in income: More than half of all adult Americans will be at or near the poverty line at some point over the course of their lives; 73 percent will also find themselves in the top 20 percent, and 39 percent will make it into the top 5 percent for at least one year. Perhaps most remarkable, 12 percent of Americans will be in the top 1 percent for at least one year of their working lives. --**Kevin Williamson**

13) Yet the basic fact remains: every regulation represents a restriction of liberty, every regulation has a cost. That is why, like marriage (in the Prayer Book's words), regulation should not "be enterprised, nor taken in hand, unadvisedly, lightly, or wantonly" —**Margaret Thatcher**

14) "The larger the percentage of the national income taken by taxes the greater the deterrent to private production and employment. When the total tax burden grows beyond a bearable size, the problem of devising taxes that will not discourage and disrupt production becomes insoluble." —**Henry Hazlitt**

15) Millions of individuals making their own decisions in the marketplace will always allocate resources better than any centralized government planning process. —**Ronald Reagan**

16) By government giveaway programs, individuals are often hurt far more than they are helped. The recipients of these

Thayer's Wild Bunch

programs become dependent on the government and their dignity is destroyed. Is it compassionate to enslave more and more people by making them a part of the government dependency cycle? I think compassion should be measured by how many people no longer need it. Helping people to become self-sufficient is much more compassionate than drugging them with the narcotic of welfare. —**Rush Limbaugh**

17) With regard to the idea of whether you have a right to health care, you have to realize what that implies. It's not an abstraction. I'm a physician. That means you have a right to come to my house and conscript me. It means you believe in slavery. It means that you're going to enslave not only me, but also the janitor at my hospital, the person who cleans my office, the assistants who work in my office, the nurses. —**Rand Paul**

18) There used to be no income inequality in China because everyone was poor. This is a tradeoff you accept for growth and freedom. —**Michele Caruso-Cabrera**

19) Out of every hundred new ideas ninety-nine or more will probably be inferior to the traditional responses which they propose to replace. No one man, however brilliant or well-informed, can come in one lifetime to such fullness of understanding as to safely judge and dismiss the customs or institutions of his society, for those are the wisdom of generations after centuries of experiment in the laboratory of history. —**Will and Ariel Durant**

20) The total present value of payments expected under Social Security and Medicare beyond what is expected to be collected under current tax laws is about \$100 trillion. One way to put that amount of money in context is to note that it is about twice the amount of all the net private assets that exist in America today. To answer cw's question directly, the best

Thayer's Wild Bunch

back-of-envelope estimate is that meeting this unfunded portion of our Social Security and Medicare commitments would require roughly an immediate 80 percent increase in federal income taxes, sustained forever. —**Jim Manzi**

21) The real story is that our social safety net was supposed to be like one of those, “Take a Penny, Leave a Penny” tills that depend on the honor and neighborliness of a community. And we don't have that community. What we have is a fragmented mess of givers and takers who are not the same people. —
Daniel Greenfield

22) If a nation values anything more than freedom, it will lose its freedom; and the irony of it is that if it is comfort or money that it values more, it will lose that, too. — **Somerset Maugham**

23) Suppose I hire you to repair my computer. The job is worth \$200 to me and doing the job is worth \$200 to you. The transaction will occur because we have a meeting of the mind.

Now suppose there's the imposition of a 30 percent income tax on you. That means you won't receive \$200 but instead \$140. You might say the heck with working for me – spending the day with your family is worth more than \$140. You might then offer that you'll do the job if I pay you \$285. That way your after-tax earnings will be \$200 – what the job was worth to you. There's a problem. The repair job was worth \$200 to me, not \$285. So it's my turn to say the heck with it. This simple example demonstrates that one effect of taxes is that of eliminating transactions, and hence jobs. — **Walter Williams**

24) Is there no virtue among us? If there be not, we are in a wretched situation. No theoretical checks-no form of government can render us secure. To suppose that any form of government will secure liberty or happiness without any virtue

Thayer's Wild Bunch

in the people, is a chimerical idea, if there be sufficient virtue and intelligence in the community, it will be exercised in the selection of these men. So that we do not depend on their virtue, or put confidence in our rulers, but in the people who are to choose them. -- **James Madison**

25) Freedom is messy. In free societies, people will fall through the cracks — drink too much, eat too much, buy unaffordable homes, fail to make prudent provision for health care, and much else. But the price of being relieved of all those tiresome choices by a benign paternal government is far too high. Big Government is the small option: it's the guarantee of smaller freedom, smaller homes, smaller cars, smaller opportunities, smaller lives. – **Mark Steyn**

AGREE TO DISAGREE

J E Ted Thayer | 11-06-2014

In last week's email broadcast John Hawkins listed 25 paragraphs depicting everything anyone needs to know about American politics and economics. My favorite was #25, penned by Canadian-born writer and conservative columnist Mark Steyn: *Freedom is messy. In free societies, people will fall through the cracks — drink too much, eat too much, buy unaffordable homes, fail to make prudent provision for health care, and much else. But the price of being relieved of all those tiresome choices by a benign paternal government is far too high. Big Government is the small option: it's the guarantee of smaller freedom, smaller homes, smaller cars, smaller opportunities, smaller lives.*

The 2014 mid-term elections, I think, were about Big Government. The battle lines were not drawn clearly around the issues that consume us today ... they were about balance. When one party can control the national agenda, things can get out of hand. So, while the rhetoric was mostly about the incumbents' poor performance and lack of character, the real issues of the day were hardly mentioned. The GOP's thrust across the nation was to turn out the vote and overturn the Democrat majority in the Senate.

Maybe I missed it in the heat of the campaign rhetoric, but I don't recall hearing the specifics of any kind of political agenda - a plan for the future, if you will. Remember when J.D.Hayworth was the GOP's darling - the spokesman for common sense governance? That was the election that gave the Republicans command of the Congress. The big difference between the 1994 election and the one just past was the theme penned by Newt Gingrich who became one of the most influential House Speakers in history. It was the Republican

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Contract with America, a document that laid out specific legislative goals for the Congress.

Hayworth touted the virtues of bipartisan cooperation between members of the two major parties, extolling at every turn the idea that politicians could "*agree to disagree*" as the civilized way to open the doors to future political and economic growth. With the 1994 elections the GOP won control of both the House and Senate and commenced to enact the legislation promised. All but two Republican Congressmen had signed the *Contract with America* just six weeks before the election.

The GOP won 230 of the 435 seats in the House of Representatives, giving them a 26 vote majority. The Senate also went to the Republicans, giving them a 54 to 48 majority. Newt Gingrich was elected Speaker of the House and Bob Dole became Senate Majority Leader. President Bill Clinton, rather than fight the tide, himself agreed to disagree and worked to promote cooperation between disparate factions in the House and Senate. Clinton's rein is described by historians as one of the most productive of all of America's Chief Executives.

The question is this: Will President Obama walk Clinton's path and pursue excellence or use his pen to obstruct compromise?

GOD BLESS OUR VETERANS

A friend of mine, an Air Force veteran who served in Viet Nam, sent this to me. I want you to have it. In return, I ask only that when you approach a Vet, extend your right hand and offer sincere thanks for serving. Semper Fi.

tt

Burial at Sea

Lt Col George Goodson, USMC (Ret)

In my 76th year, the events of my life appear to me, from time to time, as a series of vignettes. Some were significant; most were trivial...

War is the seminal event in the life of everyone that has endured it. Though I fought in Korea and the Dominican Republic and was wounded there, Vietnam was my war.

Now 42 years have passed and, thankfully, I rarely think of those days in Cambodia , Laos , and the panhandle of North Vietnam where small teams of Americans and Montangards fought much larger elements of the North Vietnamese Army. Instead I see vignettes: some exotic, some mundane:

- *The smell of Nuc Mam.
- *The heat, dust, and humidity.
- *The blue exhaust of cycles clogging the streets.
- *Elephants moving silently through the tall grass.
- *Hard eyes behind the servile smiles of the villagers.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

- *Standing on a mountain in Laos and hearing a tiger roar.
- *A young girl squeezing my hand as my medic delivered her baby.
- *The flowing Ao Dais of the young women biking down Tran Hung Dao.
- *My two years as Casualty Notification Officer in North Carolina, Virginia and Maryland.

It was late 1967. I had just returned after 18 months in Vietnam. Casualties were increasing. I moved my family from Indianapolis to Norfolk, rented a house, enrolled my children in their fifth or sixth new school, and bought a second car. A week later, I put on my uniform and drove 10 miles to Little Creek, Virginia.

I hesitated before entering my new office. Appearance is important to career Marines. I was no longer, if ever, a poster Marine. I had returned from my third tour in Vietnam only 30 days before. At 5'9", I now weighed 128 pounds - 37 pounds below my normal weight. My uniforms fit ludicrously, my skin was yellow from malaria medication, and I think I had a twitch or two.

I straightened my shoulders, walked into the office, looked at the nameplate on a Staff Sergeant's desk and said, "Sergeant Jolly, I'm Lieutenant Colonel Goodson. Here are my orders and my Qualification Jacket."

Sergeant Jolly stood, looked carefully at me, took my orders, stuck out his hand; we shook and he asked, "How long were you there, Colonel?"

I replied "18 months this time." Jolly breathed, you must be a slow learner Colonel." I smiled.

Jolly said, "Colonel, I'll show you to your office and bring

Thayer's Wild Bunch

in the Sergeant Major.

I said, "No, let's just go straight to his office." Jolly nodded, hesitated, and lowered his voice, "Colonel, the Sergeant Major. He's been in this job two years. He's packed pretty tight. I'm worried about him." I nodded.

Jolly escorted me into the Sergeant Major's office. "Sergeant Major, this is Colonel Goodson, the new Commanding Office. The Sergeant Major stood, extended his hand and said, "Good to see you again, Colonel."

I responded, "Hello Walt, how are you?"

Jolly looked at me, raised an eyebrow, walked out, and closed the door.

I sat down with the Sergeant Major. We had the obligatory cup of coffee and talked about mutual acquaintances. Walt's stress was palpable.

Finally, I said, "Walt, what's the h-ll's wrong?" He turned his chair, looked out the window and said, "George, you're going to wish you were back in Nam before you leave here. I've been in the Marine Corps since 1939. I was in the Pacific 36 months, Korea for 14 months, and Vietnam for 12 months... Now I come here to bury these kids. I'm putting my letter in. I can't take it anymore."

I said, "OK Walt. If that's what you want, I'll endorse your request for retirement and do what I can to push it through Headquarters Marine Corps."

Sergeant Major Walt Xxxxx retired 12 weeks later. He had been a good Marine for 28 years, but he had seen too much death and too much suffering. He was used up.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Over the next 16 months, I made 28 death notifications, conducted 28 military funerals, and made 30 notifications to the families of Marines that were severely wounded or missing in action. Most of the details of those casualty notifications have now, thankfully, faded from memory. Four, however, remain.

MY FIRST NOTIFICATION

My third or fourth day in Norfolk, I was notified of the death of a 19 year old Marine. This notification came by telephone from Headquarters Marine Corps. The information detailed:

- *Name, rank, and serial number.
- *Name, address, and phone number of next of kin.
- *Date of and limited details about the Marine's death.
- *Approximate date the body would arrive at the Norfolk Naval Air Station.
- *A strong recommendation on whether the casket should be opened or closed.

The boy's family lived over the border in North Carolina, about 60 miles away. I drove there in a Marine Corps staff car. Crossing the state line into North Carolina, I stopped at a small country store / service station / Post Office. I went in to ask directions.

Three people were in the store. A man and woman approached the small Post Office window. The man held a package. The Store owner walked up and addressed them by name, "Hello John. Good morning Mrs. Cooper."

I was stunned. My casualty's next-of-kin's name was John Cooper!

I hesitated, then stepped forward and said, "I beg your

Thayer's Wild Bunch

pardon. Are you Mr. and Mrs. John Cooper of (address.)?

The father looked at me - I was in uniform - and then, shaking, bent at the waist, he vomited. His wife looked horrified at him and then at me. Understanding came into her eyes and she collapsed in slow motion. I think I caught her before she hit the floor.

The owner took a bottle of whiskey out of a drawer and handed it to Mr. Cooper who drank. I answered their questions for a few minutes. Then I drove them home in my staff car. The store owner locked the store and followed in their truck. We stayed an hour or so until the family began arriving.

I returned the storeowner to his business. He thanked me and said, "Mister, I wouldn't have your job for a million dollars." I shook his hand and said; "Neither would I."

I vaguely remember the drive back to Norfolk . Violating about five Marine Corps regulations, I drove the staff car straight to my house. I sat with my family while they ate dinner, went into the den, closed the door, and sat there all night, alone.

My Marines steered clear of me for days. I had made my first death notification.

THE FUNERALS

Weeks passed with more notifications and more funerals. I borrowed Marines from the local Marine Corps Reserve and taught them to conduct a military funeral: how to carry a casket, how to fire the volleys and how to fold the flag.

When I presented the flag to the mother, wife, or father, I always said, "All Marines share in your grief." I had been

Thayer's Wild Bunch

instructed to say, "On behalf of a grateful nation...." I didn't think the nation was grateful, so I didn't say that.

Sometimes, my emotions got the best of me and I couldn't speak. When that happened, I just handed them the flag and touched a shoulder. They would look at me and nod. Once a mother said to me, "I'm so sorry you have this terrible job." My eyes filled with tears and I leaned over and kissed her.

ANOTHER NOTIFICATION

Six weeks after my first notification, I had another. This was a young PFC. I drove to his mother's house. As always, I was in uniform and driving a Marine Corps staff car. I parked in front of the house, took a deep breath, and walked towards the house. Suddenly the door flew open, a middle-aged woman rushed out. She looked at me and ran across the yard, screaming "NO! NO! NO! NO!"

I hesitated. Neighbors came out. I ran to her, grabbed her, and whispered stupid things to reassure her. She collapsed. I picked her up and carried her into the house. Eight or nine neighbors followed. Ten or fifteen later, the father came in followed by ambulance personnel. I have no recollection of leaving.

The funeral took place about two weeks later. We went through the drill. The mother never looked at me. The father looked at me once and shook his head sadly.

ANOTHER NOTIFICATION

One morning, as I walked in the office, the phone was ringing. Sergeant Jolly held the phone up and said, "You've got another one, Colonel." I nodded, walked into my office, picked up the phone, took notes, thanked the officer making the call, I have no idea why, and hung up.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Jolly, who had listened, came in with a special Telephone Directory that translates telephone numbers into the person's address and place of employment.

The father of this casualty was a Longshoreman. He lived a mile from my office. I called the Longshoreman's Union Office and asked for the Business Manager. He answered the phone, I told him who I was, and asked for the father's schedule.

The Business Manager asked, "Is it his son?" I said nothing. After a moment, he said, in a low voice, "Tom is at home today." I said, "Don't call him. I'll take care of that." The Business Manager said, "Aye, Aye Sir," and then explained, "Tom and I were Marines in WWII."

I got in my staff car and drove to the house. I was in uniform. I knocked and a woman in her early forties answered the door. I saw instantly that she was clueless. I asked, "Is Mr. Smith home?" She smiled pleasantly and responded, "Yes, but he's eating breakfast now. Can you come back later?" I said, "I'm sorry. It's important. I need to see him now."

She nodded, stepped back into the beach house and said, "Tom, it's for you."

A moment later, a ruddy man in his late forties, appeared at the door. He looked at me, turned absolutely pale, steadied himself, and said, "Jesus Christ man, he's only been there three weeks!"

Months passed. More notifications and more funerals. Then one day while I was running, Sergeant Jolly stepped outside the building and gave a loud whistle, two fingers in his mouth. I never could do that(!) and held an imaginary

Thayer's Wild Bunch

phone to his ear.

Another call from Headquarters Marine Corps. I took notes, said, "Got it." and hung up. I had stopped saying "Thank You" long ago.

Jolly, "Where?"

Me, "Eastern Shore of Maryland . The father is a retired Chief Petty Officer. His brother will accompany the body back from Vietnam ..."

Jolly shook his head slowly, straightened, and then said, "This time of day, it'll take three hours to get there and back. I'll call the Naval Air Station and borrow a helicopter. And I'll have Captain Tolliver get one of his men to meet you and drive you to the Chief's home."

He did, and 40 minutes later, I was knocking on the father's door. He opened the door, looked at me, then looked at the Marine standing at parade rest beside the car, and asked, "Which one of my boys was it, Colonel?"

I stayed a couple of hours, gave him all the information, my office and home phone number and told him to call me, anytime.

He called me that evening about 2300 (11:00 PM). "I've gone through my boy's papers and found his will. He asked to be buried at sea. Can you make that happen?" I said, "Yes I can, Chief. I can and I will."

My wife who had been listening said, "Can you do that?" I told her, "I have no idea. But I'm going to break my ass trying."

Thayer's Wild Bunch

I called Lieutenant General Alpha Bowser, Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force Atlantic, at home about 2330, explained the situation, and asked, "General, can you get me a quick appointment with the Admiral at Atlantic Fleet Headquarters?" General Bowser said, "George, you be there tomorrow at 0900. He will see you."

I was and the Admiral did. He said coldly, "How can the Navy help the Marine Corps, Colonel." I told him the story. He turned to his Chief of Staff and said, "Which is the sharpest destroyer in port?" The Chief of Staff responded with a name.

The Admiral called the ship, "Captain, you're going to do a burial at sea. You'll report to a Marine Lieutenant Colonel Goodson until this mission is completed..."

He hung up, looked at me, and said, "The next time you need a ship, Colonel, call me. You don't have to sic Al Bowser on my ass." I responded, "Aye Aye, Sir" and got the h-ll out of his office.

I went to the ship and met with the Captain, Executive Officer, and the Senior Chief. Sergeant Jolly and I trained the ship's crew for four days. Then Jolly raised a question none of us had thought of. He said, "These government caskets are air tight. How do we keep it from floating?"

All the high priced help including me sat there looking dumb. Then the Senior Chief stood and said, "Come on Jolly. I know a bar where the retired guys from World War II hang out."

They returned a couple of hours later, slightly the worst for wear, and said, "It's simple; we cut four 12" holes in the outer shell of the casket on each side and insert 300 lbs of

Thayer's Wild Bunch

lead in the foot end of the casket. We can handle that, no sweat."

The day arrived. The ship and the sailors looked razor sharp. General Bowser, the Admiral, a US Senator, and a Navy Band were on board. The sealed casket was brought aboard and taken below for modification. The ship got underway to the 12-fathom depth.

The sun was hot. The ocean flat. The casket was brought aft and placed on a catafalque. The Chaplain spoke. The volleys were fired. The flag was removed, folded, and I gave it to the father. The band played "Eternal Father Strong to Save." The casket was raised slightly at the head and it slid into the sea.

The heavy casket plunged straight down about six feet. The incoming water collided with the air pockets in the outer shell. The casket stopped abruptly, rose straight out of the water about three feet, stopped, and slowly slipped back into the sea. The air bubbles rising from the sinking casket sparkled in the in the sunlight as the casket disappeared from sight forever....

The next morning I called a personal friend, Lieutenant General Oscar Peatross, at Headquarters Marine Corps and said, "General, get me out of here. I can't take this anymore." I was transferred two weeks later.

I was a good Marine but, after 17 years, I had seen too much death and too much suffering. I was used up.

Vacating the house, my family and I drove to the office in a two-car convoy. I said my goodbyes. Sergeant Jolly walked out with me. He waved at my family, looked at me with tears in his eyes, came to attention, saluted, and said,

Thayer's Wild Bunch

"Well Done, Colonel. Well Done."

I felt as if I had received the Medal of Honor!

A veteran is someone who, at one point, wrote a blank check made payable to 'The United States of America ' for an amount of up to and including their life.

That is Honor and there are way too many people in this country who no longer understand it.

AD HOMINEM

J E Ted Thayer | 11-13-2014

Democrats had a tough mid-term election season for one reason: *ad hominem* - verbal attacks or fabrications about a person or subject rather than reasoned arguments supported by irrefutable facts or logic. In short, deceit presented as truth did them in.

There is no national "*war on women*" nor is there any "*culture of rape*" on college campuses. *Carbon Dioxide* is not a pollutant and *Quinine* for nighttime leg cramps won't kill you. Minorities are not being "*held down*" by Whitey. *Global warming, global cooling, and climate change* are not pending disasters. The *Snail Darter* needs no more protection than the *Ferruginous Pygmy Owl*, the *Southwest Willow Flycatcher* or the *Hedgehog Cactus*. *Whole-wheat bread* does not prevent obesity any more than *one-per-cent milk*. "*Big Brother*" is not watching you and there is no "*vast conspiracy*" out there. Washes in America's deserts are not "*navigable waters*" and *clean hands* do not prevent the spread of childhood diseases. Each of these absurdities is based on *ad hominems* that are not upheld by tests of time. They were made up by fakirs looking to pad their wallets at taxpayer expense.

One stark example of *ad hominem* is the Food and Drug Administration's 1994 declaration that quinine is a dangerous drug and must not be sold over-the-counter, but rather prescribed by a physician. There were 23 quinine-related deaths in the twenty-three years between 1969 and 1992, precipitating the FDA declaration. The FDA's *ad hominem* was not based on long-term double-blind studies collected over decades, but rather on a number of observations and reports.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Quinine is one component of a cocktail dating back to British colonial days in India when soldiers mixed antimalarial quinine tonic and gin - creating the gin-and-tonic. Quinine has been a treatment for malaria in the West since the 17th century, and its use dates to the 4th century in China. Much like acetylsalicylic acid (Aspirin), quinine is an antipyretic (fever-reducer), analgesic (painkiller), and anti-inflammatory. In addition to malaria, quinine is used to treat lupus and arthritis.

Until the FDA's declaration, quinine - a natural muscle relaxant - was recommended for relieving nocturnal leg cramps. The National Poisons Information Service Centre of the United Kingdom prescribes 200mg-300mg of quinine daily for relief of muscle cramps, but cautions that while a fatal dose for an adult is around 8 grams, it could be as low as 1.5 gram (900mg for a child.) In other words, it would take about five times the daily maximum recommended dose of quinine to endanger an adult with a low tolerance for it.

According to the FDA, *"In 2011, an estimated 51,800 patients received a dispensed prescription for quinine from U.S. outpatient retail pharmacies. In contrast, an estimated 206,000 patients received a dispensed prescription for quinine in 2008."* In 2011 there were 1925 confirmed cases of malaria in the United States.

The lowest over-the-counter price of a bottle of 100 325mg quinine sulfate tablets before the restriction was \$3.50. After the medication was declared a prescription drug the price for 100 tabs jumped some twenty-two-fold to \$78.00. Today Wal Mart offers it at a discount for \$158.85. Today it appears that there were no winners except the pill packagers who had no research-and-development costs to recoup (usually cited as the reason for the exorbitant cost of prescription drugs in the United States which are sold elsewhere for much less.)

Thayer's Wild Bunch

It would be untoward to accuse anyone of padding their wallets at taxpayer expense in this instance, but it sure does look like a duck and it definitely quacks like a duck, wouldn't you agree?

The 2014 mid-term *ad hominem* began years ago with "*Hope and Change*" and the slogan *Si, se puede* - *Yes, we can!* It continued with "*shovel ready*" construction projects, the Fed's "*quantitative easing*" and our President's promises that "*You can keep your health plan.*" The ol' buck-'n'-wing kept going with allegations that *a video* was responsible for the killing of four Americans in Bengazi. By this Fall, the heaps of caca had spread so widely that almost anyone who dared speak for the government had to dodge razor-sharp questions from unbelievers in the press corps. Is it any wonder that a majority of Americans have lost confidence in their government and rate the 113th Congress among the worst in history? The Republicans have a long way to go to clean up the mess. And the Democrats are going to have to roll up their sleeves and pitch in, too.

An administration that goes to extreme lengths to share truth might be able to earn the electorate's renewed trust, but probably not for a long time. The *ad hominem* approach to governance has failed miserably. "*Stupid American Voters*" sent that message loud and clear Election Day.

EXECUTIVE AMNESTY

J E Ted Thayer | 11-20-2014

Townhall Deputy News Editor Daniel Doherty wrote Tuesday (November 18th) *"President Obama's plan to sign an executive order on immigration, expected as early as this week, will meet more resistance than support, a new USA TODAY Poll finds. Close to half of those surveyed, 46% say he should wait for the new Republican-controlled Congress to act, and another one in 10 are unconvinced either way. [Some] 42% of Americans say he should take action now, findings that reflect a familiar partisan divide between Democrats and Republicans. The president is considering an order that would prevent as many as 5 million people from being deported."*

I believe that the Democrats were so soundly defeated in the Mid-term elections because of the President's stand on immigration. Drubbed may be a better term. There have not been as many Republicans in Congress since the end of World War II. The incredible gains made by the GOP may have come about because the President decided to use Executive Orders as a political weapon.

The wages earned by the average middle-class family - the working man if you will - have deteriorated on the order of ten per-cent since the "Great Recession." The average annual income of a middle-class family has declined over \$5,000 in the six years since the President and Democrats took control of the government in 2009. Many have seen their jobs disappear in favor of lower-paid foreign workers holding Green Cards. The fear is that if the President gives amnesty to some 5 million workers in the country unlawfully that five million full-time, middle-class jobs will evaporate in favor of

Thayer's Wild Bunch

an equal number of low-paid part-time jobs held by newly-legalized immigrants.

The fact that the President put off Executive Amnesty, as they're calling it now, convinced many loyal Democrats that their jobs would be in jeopardy if they didn't vote the Party candidates. A large per-centage of Dem voters jumped ship, joined by a majority of Independents, because they wanted to send the President a clear message. Many more just stayed home rather than vote to kill middle-class jobs.

I firmly believe that jobs were the deciding issue in the 2014 midterms - the economy was #1 across the board in pre-election polls. It's too bad that one person could influence an election so negatively. Too bad the President couldn't recognize that two-thirds of Democrats didn't vote because of his not-so-subtle threats to middle-class jobs.

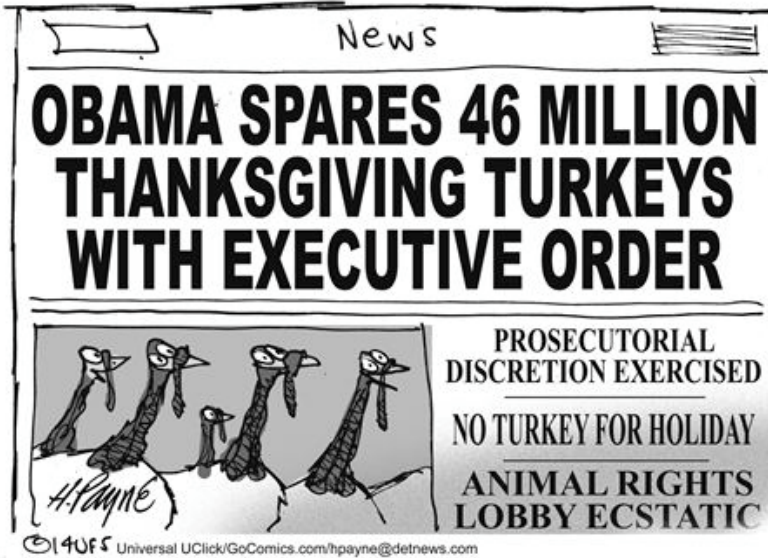
HAPPY THANKSGIVING

J E Ted Thayer | 11-27-2014

Claudette and I send our kindest regards to you and yours.

We are thankful that we can do this when others elsewhere cannot.

Pray we develop a nation-wide mind-set of kindness and humility.



Happy Thanksgiving, troops. Semper Fi.

I OBJECT!

J E Ted Thayer | 12-04-2014

Last Thursday, Jonah Goldberg - editor-at-large of National Review Online - wrote, "[...] *there is a huge chasm between the way the talking heads and politicians talk about America and the way Americans actually live their lives. ... The national media -- on the right and left -- has an insatiable desire for storylines so clear-cut they might as well be allegories.*"

As usual, I'm a day late and a dollar short. But after the performance of the media in Ferguson last week, I object! Without question, the media is responsible for the rioting, looting and burning of the St. Louis suburb. I spoke in person and by email with two very liberal friends on the issue and we three (gasp!) agreed. Naive fool that I am, I asked them to contribute this week.

You may stop laughing now. That any liberal would agree with (much less write about ...) any of my political nonsense is downright astounding! And vice-versa.

Do you remember Lou Waters? Lou was the handsome, neatly-coifed anchor at CNN back in that network's heyday. Lou, never the mere newsreader, prided himself with presenting fact-filled, interesting, unslanted news stories. He was one of the network's original anchors in 1980, hosting *CNN Today*. The public loved him. In short, he was the Walter Cronkite of cable news. Now, the Lou Waters I knew was a modest, intelligent, principled gentleman with a twinkle of mischief in his eyes and an engaging smile. One day in 2001, Lou was gone - like a dandelion in the wind, whisked away to oblivion. My understanding is that he left CNN because of a

Thayer's Wild Bunch

principle: Balance. You see, the network decided to change its approach, its writers' guide - if you will - and it began slanting its new stories. Liberalism became policy and Lou was not willing to read as fact anything slanted or untrue. There was no negotiating the issue of balance. So he left.

It wasn't long after Lou Waters' departure from CNN that the Fox News Network began making a name for itself. Contrary to CNN's new liberal philosophy, Fox - openly declaring a conservative political agenda - sought to report the news from both liberal and conservative viewpoints. While CNN never declared its liberalism openly, Fox declared itself America's news source. "*Fair and Balanced*" became the banner that propelled Fox to the number one source of network news.

Sadly, the Fox reporters in Ferguson forgot the key word that made the network such a powerhouse: Balance. Instead, Fox joined the other networks' chorus of bias, distortion, fabrication and sensationalism. *Fair and Balanced* fell to "the sweeps". Even though there were cries of foul from across the world, Fox ignored its fans - just as CNN ignored Lou Waters - and for a time, joined the carnival-barkers of the mainstream media. Too bad. It will never be the same .. for me or my liberal friends.

On a lighter note ... something for my sister Mandy:

The Owl and the Pussy-Cat

By Edward Lear 1812–1888

Random House Book of Poetry for Children

I

*The Owl and the Pussy-cat went to sea
In a beautiful pea-green boat,
They took some honey, and plenty of money,
Wrapped up in a five-pound note.*

Thayer's Wild Bunch

*The Owl looked up to the stars above,
And sang to a small guitar,
"O lovely Pussy! O Pussy, my love,
What a beautiful Pussy you are,
 You are,
 You are!
What a beautiful Pussy you are!"*

*II
Pussy said to the Owl, "You elegant fowl!
How charmingly sweet you sing!
O let us be married! too long we have tarried:
But what shall we do for a ring?"
They sailed away, for a year and a day,
To the land where the Bong-Tree grows
And there in a wood a Piggy-wig stood
With a ring at the end of his nose,
 His nose,
 His nose,
With a ring at the end of his nose.*

*III
"Dear Pig, are you willing to sell for one shilling
Your ring?" Said the Piggy, "I will."
So they took it away, and were married next day
By the Turkey who lives on the hill.
They dined on mince, and slices of quince,
Which they ate with a runcible spoon;
And hand in hand, on the edge of the sand,
They danced by the light of the moon,
 The moon,
 The moon,
They danced by the light of the moon.*

Now, then ...what the hell is a runcible spoon? (*Think spork.*)

UP-SIZING?

J E Ted Thayer | 12-11-2014

The other day my wife brought me the tube from the recently used-up roll of toilet paper. She said the old TP tube (that was still in the bathroom trash at the time) fit inside the one she had in her hand. The difference between the two tubes was a seemingly insignificant quarter-inch. Yet, she wondered if we were being ripped off by the manufacturer. What a concept! Increase the size of the tube, but not the roll - charge the same amount - make big bucks off the savings! Taking advantage of consumer toilet habits strikes me as pretty low. Even with strict truth-in-advertising and product labeling laws, does the manufacturer have an obligation to tell the world it has decided to short-change its customers for their potty-paper?

The TP tube size differential brought up another issue. What ever happened to the half-gallon ice-cream container? Not that long ago, ice-cream manufacturers began offering their products in metric containers. The half-gallon slowly gave way to the 1.5 liter container. I just recently noted that it's back to US measurements - 1.5 quarts. One-point-five QUARTS! Down again ... to 1.41 liters. Have you noticed any significant change in the overall price of ice-cream?

The classic size change happened in the early '70s when Wrigley changed the chewing gum package from five sticks to seven and almost doubled the price. They discontinued the five-stick pack at the same time. After many months of consumer complaints, Wrigley came out with the new five-stick package selling for a little more than the original, but less than the seven-stick, which was discontinued for a time. They changed the packaging again in 2005 but retained the seven-stick package. The EPA made a case study of Wrigley's change in packaging. The original gum sticks came wrapped

Thayer's Wild Bunch

in aluminum foil-backed paper inside a second paper label. The manufacturer was able to save gobs of paper (and capital) by eliminating the paper labels. That simple sleeve elimination reduced the weight of the basic 5-stick pack by 37%, avoiding some 34.5 metric tons of waste per 100,000 cases of gum sold. The EPA was delighted and consumers didn't complain a bit because ... the price didn't change!

The same soft-shoe shuffle happened with liquor and soda-pop. You can't buy a quart of whiskey or Coca-Cola any more. And you won't find a half-gallon of table wine these days. The preferred size is 1.75 liters, more costly by the ml than it used to be by the oz. Funny - you can still buy liquor labeled by the pint and half-pint - only they aren't what they seem.

Associated Press writer Louise Cook penned an article March 10th of 1980 on the liquor industry's conversion to the metric system. She wrote that the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) required all manufacturers to convert to metric packaging by January 1st, 1979. Included in the article was a list of before and after size comparisons as follows:

Before 1980 ...	After ...
Miniature - 1.6oz	50ml - 1.7oz
Half-pint - 8oz	200ml - 6.8oz
Pint - 16oz	500ml - 16.9oz
Fifth - 25.6oz	750ml - 25.4oz
Quart - 32oz	1 Liter - 33.8oz
Half-gallon - 64oz	1.75 Liter - 59.2oz

I think John Stossel should look into this.

HIGHER GAS TAXES?

J E Ted Thayer | 12-18-2014

No sooner had Americans begun to notice the precipitous drop in the price of a gallon of gas than some Congressional ne'er-do-wells were proposing an increase in the federal gas tax. We need additional revenue to repair our pot-hole covered interstate highway system and replace ancient, rusting bridges, they said.

Since the government began imposing emissions standards and mileage requirements on the auto industry, cars and trucks have gradually consumed less fuel and created less pollution. This, coupled with new oil gushing from state and private holdings rather than federal lands, has resulted in an abundance of fuel. Increased fuel production has the effect of lowering prices at the pump. Prices can continue to drop as long as the price of a barrel of crude stays above about \$45. January contracts for Light Crude were selling for \$56 and change per barrel on the New York Merchantile floor yesterday. That price is mind-boggling since it wasn't that long ago that Light Crude was going for over \$107 a barrel!

The meteoric drop in the price of U.S. oil has caused oil cartels to drop the price of crude to keep up. At one time there was gloom and doom about the unrest in the Middle-east. The fear was that ISIL would cause massive disruptions in oil production resulting in much higher prices. American oil production has stopped that run-away train in its tracks and backed it onto a siding.

American consumers have realized massive savings because of the recent price reductions. It's not uncommon to spend \$10

Thayer's Wild Bunch

per fill-up compared to just six months ago. This has helped boost tourism as well as new car sales because people have more to spend. However, those savings could disappear if the Congress decides to increase the federal fuel tax, which remains at 18.4 cents per gallon for gas and 24.4 cents for deisel - no matter the price at the pump.

Could congressional liberals convince their compatriots in the House and Senate to increase highway funding with a raise in gas taxes? *The Washington Post* reported June 18th that "A bipartisan Senate proposal emerged Wednesday to rescue beleaguered federal transportation funding by raising the tax on gasoline by 12 cents a gallon." According to a recent edition of *Forbes Magazine*, "...the gas tax's problems started when Congress raided the trust fund to keep the government solvent. In 1990 Congress approved an increase in the gas tax but allotted only half of the new revenue to building projects. The other half was dedicated to deficit reduction..."

There is every reason to believe we'll soon hear the argument that the decrease in oil prices has caused a precipitous drop in revenues from the federal gas tax. Of course, we all suspect that's probably a load of baloney - kinda like "You can keep your Doctor." Consumers can stop this kind of nonsense in its tracks by simply remembering, "Cave canem."

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Papa Panov's Special Christmas

A story by Leo Tolstoy

It was Christmas Eve and although it was still afternoon, lights had begun to appear in the shops and houses of the little Russian village, for the short winter day was nearly over. Excited children scurried indoors and now only muffled sounds of chatter and laughter escaped from closed shutters.

Old Papa Panov, the village shoemaker, stepped outside his shop to take one last look around. The sounds of happiness, the bright lights and the faint but delicious smells of Christmas cooking reminded him of past Christmas times when his wife had still been alive and his own children little. Now they had gone. His usually cheerful face, with the little laughter wrinkles behind the round steel spectacles, looked sad now. But he went back indoors with a firm step, put up the shutters and set a pot of coffee to heat on the charcoal stove. Then, with a sigh, he settled in his big armchair.

Papa Panov did not often read, but tonight he pulled down the big old family Bible and, slowly tracing the lines with one forefinger, he read again the Christmas story. He read how Mary and Joseph, tired by their journey to Bethlehem, found no room for them at the inn, so that Mary's little baby was born in the cowshed.

"Oh, dear, oh, dear!" exclaimed Papa Panov, "if only they had come here! I would have given them my bed and I could have covered the baby with my patchwork quilt to keep him warm."

He read on about the wise men who had come to see the baby

Thayer's Wild Bunch

Jesus, bringing him splendid gifts. Papa Panov's face fell. "I have no gift that I could give him," he thought sadly.

Then his face brightened. He put down the Bible, got up and stretched his long arms to the shelf high up in his little room. He took down a small, dusty box and opened it. Inside was a perfect pair of tiny leather shoes. Papa Panov smiled with satisfaction. Yes, they were as good as he had remembered—the best shoes he had ever made. "I should give him those," he decided, as he gently put them away and sat down again.

He was feeling tired now, and the further he read the sleeper he became. The print began to dance before his eyes so that he closed them, just for a minute. In no time at all Papa Panov was fast asleep.

And as he slept he dreamed. He dreamed that someone was in his room and he knew at once, as one does in dreams, who the person was. It was Jesus.

"You have been wishing that you could see me, Papa Panov." he said kindly, "then look for me tomorrow. It will be Christmas Day and I will visit you. But look carefully, for I shall not tell you who I am."

When at last Papa Panov awoke, the bells were ringing out and a thin light was filtering through the shutters. "Bless my soul!" said Papa Panov. "It's Christmas Day!"

He stood up and stretched himself for he was rather stiff. Then his face filled with happiness as he remembered his dream. This would be a very special Christmas after all, for Jesus was coming to visit him. How would he look? Would he be a little baby, as at that first Christmas? Would he be a grown man, a carpenter - or the great King that he is, God's Son? He must watch carefully the whole day through so that he recognized

Thayer's Wild Bunch

him however he came.

Papa Panov put on a special pot of coffee for his Christmas breakfast, took down the shutters and looked out of the window. The street was deserted, no one was stirring yet. No one except the road sweeper. He looked as miserable and dirty as ever, and well he might! Whoever wanted to work on Christmas Day - and in the raw cold and bitter freezing mist of such a morning?

Papa Panov opened the shop door, letting in a thin stream of cold air. "Come in!" he shouted across the street cheerily. "Come in and have some hot coffee to keep out the cold!"

The sweeper looked up, scarcely able to believe his ears. He was only too glad to put down his broom and come into the warm room. His old clothes steamed gently in the heat of the stove and he clasped both red hands round the comforting warm mug as he drank.

Papa Panov watched him with satisfaction, but every now and then his eyes strayed to the window. It would never do to miss his special visitor.

"Expecting someone?" the sweeper asked at last. So Papa Panov told him about his dream.

"Well, I hope he comes," the sweeper said, "you've given me a bit of Christmas cheer I never expected to have. I'd say you deserve to have your dream come true." And he actually smiled.

When he had gone, Papa Panov put on cabbage soup for his dinner, then went to the door again, scanning the street. He saw no one. But he was mistaken. Someone was coming.

Thayer's Wild Bunch

The girl walked so slowly and quietly, hugging the walls of shops and houses, that it was a while before he noticed her. She looked very tired and she was carrying something. As she drew nearer he could see that it was a baby, wrapped in a thin shawl. There was such sadness in her face and in the pinched little face of the baby, that Papa Panov's heart went out to them.

"Won't you come in," he called, stepping outside to meet them. "You both need a warm by the fire and a rest."

The young mother let him shepherd her indoors and to the comfort of the armchair. She gave a big sigh of relief.

"I'll warm some milk for the baby," Papa Panov said, "I've had children of my own- I can feed her for you." He took the milk from the stove and carefully fed the baby from a spoon, warming her tiny feet by the stove at the same time.

"She needs shoes," the cobbler said.

But the girl replied, "I can't afford shoes, I've got no husband to bring home money. I'm on my way to the next village to get work."

Sudden thought flashed through Papa Panov's mind. He remembered the little shoes he had looked at last night. But he had been keeping those for Jesus. He looked again at the cold little feet and made up his mind.

"Try these on her," he said, handing the baby and the shoes to the mother. The beautiful little shoes were a perfect fit. The girl smiled happily and the baby gurgled with pleasure.

"You have been so kind to us," the girl said, when she got up with her baby to go. "May all your Christmas wishes come

Thayer's Wild Bunch

true!"

But Papa Panov was beginning to wonder if his very special Christmas wish would come true. Perhaps he had missed his visitor? He looked anxiously up and down the street. There were plenty of people about but they were all faces that he recognized. There were neighbors going to call on their families. They nodded and smiled and wished him Happy Christmas! Or beggars - and Papa Panov hurried indoors to fetch them hot soup and a generous hunk of bread, hurrying out again in case he missed the Important Stranger.

All too soon the winter dusk fell. When Papa Panov next went to the door and strained his eyes, he could no longer make out the passers-by. Most were home and indoors by now anyway. He walked slowly back into his room at last, put up the shutters, and sat down wearily in his armchair.

So it had been just a dream after all. Jesus had not come.

Then all at once he knew that he was no longer alone in the room.

This was not dream for he was wide awake. At first he seemed to see before his eyes the long stream of people who had come to him that day. He saw again the old road sweeper, the young mother and her baby and the beggars he had fed. As they passed, each whispered, "Didn't you see me, Papa Panov?"

"Who are you?" he called out, bewildered.

Then another voice answered him. It was the voice from his dream - the voice of Jesus.

"I was hungry and you fed me," he said. "I was naked and you

Thayer's Wild Bunch

clothed me. I was cold and you warmed me. I came to you today in everyone of those you helped and welcomed."

Then all was quiet and still. Only the sound of the big clock ticking. A great peace and happiness seemed to fill the room, overflowing Papa Panov's heart until he wanted to burst out singing and laughing and dancing with joy.

"So he did come after all!" was all that he said.

*Here's wishing you and yours a blessed Christmas season.
Ted and Claudette Thayer*

Thayer's
Wild Bunch

By J E Ted Thayer

