

It Was the Jest of Times, It Was the Cursed of Times

Written by Alex Baer

Thursday, 13 December 2012 17:00

One of the problems with any sort of a year-end wrap-up is knowing where to start. One other problem is knowing when to stop.

Look at it this way: When faced with a category called Most Objectionable Republican, you know you've got a really long slog ahead of you. In all fairness, in a case like this, the possibilities really start opening up and the skies are not just the limit, they're the jumping-off point.

And, if you want to dabble and play around with the assorted fallacies of appearing to falsely balance out the piece, by dragging in an opposing member of the Democratic Party, your list of contenders is going to be far, far shorter. Even if you count in all the bland, worthless, back-slapping, glad-handing, fence-sitting Blue Dogs.

Where do you begin in Republican Land, wellspring and headwaters of rivers and torrents of crazed, craven candidates created without end? Do you begin with the assorted herd of offensive numbskulls and nincompoops who have idiotic, insensitive, and ridiculously incomplete information on the subject of rape?

Or, do you start with the plethora of oafs, schmucks, twits, ninnies, blockheads, and goofs who deny elementary science and plain-as-day scientific evidence? You know, those who insist people rode dinosaurs, and who are waiting for God to fix global climate change -- providing it's in the Big Guy's plans?

As my parents used to say: It's always nicer to laugh *with* someone than *at* them. Usually, I'd agree. But, what can you do when you hear someone supposedly important say, in a press briefing at the nation's capitol, that there will be only one goal pursued for the next four years of the Nation's and the People's business, and that job is definitively limiting another guy's term in *his* job? That all other agenda items, and all Americans, can just go hang?

I mean: It's difficult to maintain fury or rage at someone once you realize they are completely insane and are no more responsible for their actions than, say, Mitch McConnell.

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But, any year-end wrap-up can't be just about The Turtle Mumbler or even The Orange Weeper, no matter how much they go out of their own ways to make themselves out to be dorks, dolts, and dunces.

Some of it should be about Broader Stuff -- things out there, in the real world. And, the minute you start looking around in earnest at a planet of more than 7 billion people and 12 months' worth of days, it's real easy to see there's going to be a lack of time and space, working as just one person on donated time here and there.

Not to mention all the categorizing problems.

For example: Warren Buffet has been after Congress to raise his taxes since Zeus was in short pants. He is worth from \$44 to \$46 billion, depending on who, how, and when you ask. He is no fool, and understands our nation's budget problems come from spending too much and having too little come back in revenues.

Buffett is a skilled man, and can work vast sums in his head when he has to. On this one, he doesn't have to. Anyone can see that if you combine two wars of choice, along with bank bailouts and crony giveaways, during a time of historically low tax rates, there's going to be Big Trouble.

And that's before you start talking about the trillions of dollars that individuals and companies have stashed offshore to keep from paying their fair share of taxes. And that's also before you start talking about massive, record profits for corporations at a time when their effective tax rates are in single digits -- for those who are not receiving staggering subsidies, kickbacks, special loopholes, and refunds.

So, when a pinheaded piss-weasel like Grover Norquist comes along, waving around his No-Taxes-Ever pledge, like a belle coyly flying her handkerchief at the debutante's ball, you know you're going to have challenges conjuring up exactly how many personal insults you can come up with that are *truly* creative. Along with pointing out the glaringly obvious flaws in the *pinwheelingly*

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asinine reasoning, of course.

As for itemizing the betrayal in thinking here, one need not go much further than pointing out the all-too obvious: Taxes are the price we pay for civilization -- the price of admission to the game of life. *Right from the Oliver Wendell Holmes playbook, that one.*

(For those of you who still feel You Built Your Own All Your Own Bad Self, without any help from infrastructure and services, put away your feelings and start doing some thinking. It's how the adults come up with facts and ideas, by using our minds. When it comes to facts, how you feel about it is *never* going to be as important as *what actually is.*)

As for personal insults for Norquist: He looks like an escaped psycho, about to have another seizure or episode, while he's straining on the john with his patented, pained expression -- the one also showing his angry confusion after realizing what a waste of human organs and skin he really, really is.

You see how fast this gets out of hand? And we're only on *taxes*, for crying out loud -- and we haven't even gotten started on that one, not yet, not really. A really good list, you can see by now, would take decades to do, and decades to read -- by which time, *dementia has kicked-in and we're asking each other in our flying cars if anybody cares about this old-fashioned stuff anymore.*

It's an inane year, like so many are: Divisive, acidic, compassionless, and without mercy or heart. Probably more flaccid than firm in our resolve, and very likely more feeble than forceful in our actions.

But, we always manage to salvage something from the wreckage we call life, and we cling to that like mad -- especially when the increasingly numerous and horrific drones show up at our side, be they the explosive sort, or office drudges armed with boredom, ready to accidentally kill, from across the room. In the end, you do what you can in this life, like throwing together a half-baked list from zillions of squirreled-away sticky notes, and in less than 12 hours of work.

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Another problem with these crazy things? They're like emails. As soon as you hit *SEND*, that's when the first regrets start kicking-in -- you know, when the *really*

brilliant thoughts start occurring to you, way too late. When you start whacking your forehead for all the Broader Stuff you meant to put in, but accidentally left out.

Plus, these year-end summaries are like the Oscars -- almost all of it comes from the last few months, because of the success of current distractions and the failure of memory. And, you know what else?

These year-enders are like passive-aggressive shopping notes and to-do lists, with your brother-in-law's weird sense of humor tossed in on the side.

2012 "MUSTS," MEMORIES, and MEMORABILIA:

A few of the many "must reads" of 2012:

Low IQs & Republicans:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/01/27/intelligence-study-links-prejudice_n_1237796.html

"Fox" Holes: <http://www.alternet.org/media/how-fox-news-created-new-culture-idiots>

Schizos & Psychos: <http://truth-out.org/opinion/item/13099-schizophrenics-psychopaths-holdin-g-america-hostage>

Dealing with Psychos: <http://www.alternet.org/visions/how-will-99-deal-psychopaths-1>

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102 Things: <http://www.addictinginfo.org/2012/09/01/102-things-not-to-do/>

Rightwing, unzipped: <http://fabiusmaximus.com/2012/02/15/35479/>

Why are educated Republicans still so dumb? http://www.alternet.org/story/154252/the_republican_brain%3A_why_even_educated_conservatives_deny_science_--_and_reality

Watching Fox makes you dumber:

<http://www.thenation.com/blog/167999/its-official-watching-fox-makes-you-stupider>

Rich scofflaws: <http://newscenter.berkeley.edu/2012/02/27/greed/>

Climate change:

<http://readersupportednews.org/news-section2/312-16/11994-scientists-if-we-dont-act-now-were-screwed>

and: <http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/global-warmings-terrifying-new-math-20120719>

Why are we in Afghanistan? <http://whowhatwhy.com/2012/09/10/the-real-reason-for-the-afghan-war/>

Callenbach's last: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ernest-callenbach/epistle-to-the-ecotopians_b_1495948.html

A declaration of self-evident truths:

<http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/articles/article/6916>

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Greatest Hits - a small *historical* collection:

Vintage Truth 1, c. 2010:

<http://www.alternet.org/speakeasy/2010/11/02/message-to-the-tea-party-what-took-you-so-long-to-get-angry>

Vintage Truth 2, c. 2010: <http://www.thomhartmann.com/forum/2010/11/thanksgiving-debate-a-mmo-what-have-republicans-ever-done-letter>

Vintage Truth 1, c. 2011: <http://thinkprogress.org/climate/2011/11/22/374434/fox-news-viewers-misinformed-study-jon-stewart/>

and: http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/political-animal/2011_11/the_most_misinformed_news_cons033634.php

Vintage Truth 2, c. 2011 -- re: Gilding: http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/08/opinion/08friedman.html?_r=0

Vintage Truth, c. 2005: <http://www.homelandstupidity.us/2005/09/10/bush-disaster-image-from-the-uk/>

Vintage Truth, c. 2003: <http://www.deliberation.info/the-14-characteristics-fascism/>

Vintage Truth: <http://thetensuggestions.com/>

Awards:

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Best Political Satire: <http://www.theonion.com/articles/florida-to-experiment-with-new-600lever-voting-mac,29699/>

Best Political Humor Piece: <http://www.timesunion.com/default/article/Brooks-I-know-the-real-Mitt-Romney-3819569.php>

Most Fondly Remembered Column or Blog: <http://robertreich.org/post/29139429043>

Most Generally-Prescient Column or Blog:

http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/political-animal/2012_01/worst_congress_ever_1034447.php

Best Recent Butt-Paddling-of-the-Press Column or Blog - co-winner: <http://krugman.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/12/11/delusions-of-wisdom/?src=recg>

Best Recent Butt-Paddling-of-the-Press Column or Blog - co-winner: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dan-froomkin/republican-lies-2012-election_b_2258586.html

Worst News Ruling (for the period 2002 - 2012): <http://www.projectcensored.org/top-stories/articles/11-the-media-can-legally-lie/>

Most Outlandish Republican Lunacy: <http://www.motherjones.com/mojo/2012/11/georgia-senate-gets-52-minute-briefing-united-nations-takeover>

Most Outlandish Republican Hallucination: <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/content/charisma-de-mon-rape-make-you-gay>

Most Magnetic Minefield for Rightwing Hypocrites:

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<http://www.alternet.org/news-amp-politics/another-right-wing-phony-embroiled-sex-scandal-why-does-sexual-hypocrisy-flourish>

Best Question: <http://www.alternet.org/why-are-americans-so-easy-manipulate-and-control>

Best Question - Runner-up: <http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2012/06/28/wtf-is-wrong-with-america/>

Worst Question: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2184658/Is-joining-Facebook-sign-you-are-psycho-path-Some-employers-psychologists-say-suspicious.html>

Most Revealing Statement by a Rightwinger - *Special Family Edition!*

- 1: Mitt -

<http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2012/09/watch-full-secret-video-private-romney-fundraiser>

- 2: Ann - http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/07/19/ann-romney_n_1685735.html

Most Revealing Statement by a Rightwinger - Runner-up:

<http://thinkprogress.org/economy/2012/08/06/644091/murdoch-sick-days-absurd/>

Least Surprising Poll of 2012:

<http://www.alternet.org/election-2012/shocking-poll-more-two-thirds-republican-voters-believe-demonic-possession>

Most Surprising Poll of 2012:

<http://www.politico.com/blogs/on-congress/2012/06/surprise-congresss-approval-rating-ticks-up-125855.html>

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Worst Tragedy Waiting to Happen Again: <http://www.npr.org/2012/08/16/158025375/when-this-oil-spills-its-a-whole-new-monster>

Worst Ongoing Situation Likely to Keep On Going - co-winner:

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/christopherhelman/2012/03/12/epa-doubts-its-own-anti-fracking-study-while-ohio-determines-fracking-did-not-spawn-earthquake-swarm/>

Worst Ongoing Situation Likely to Keep On Going - co-winner: <http://truth-out.org/news/item/13136-bayou-frack-out-the-massive-oil-and-gas-disaster-youve-never-heard-of>

Best Committee Appointment and Trend:

<http://bostonglobe.com/news/nation/2012/12/12/elizabeth-warren-gets-picked-for-banking-agin-g-and-health-committees/sRfwyAPNldQGws4u3cZpN/story.html>

Worst Committee Appointment and Trend:

<http://thinkprogress.org/climate/2012/11/28/1248751/rep-lamar-smith-who-criticized-the-idea-of-human-made-global-warming-set-to-be-chair-of-house-science-panel/>

Most Surprising / Least Welcome Return of a Medical Condition (CAUTION - some may find photo disturbing):

<http://abcnews.go.com/Health/oregon-man-survives-black-plague-lose-fingers-toes/story?id=16806758#.UMkCUq6qL3B>

Most Illegal Proposal (that we know about - *gulp*): <http://www.thenewamerican.com/usnews/foreign-policy/item/11588-cfr-us-army-chief-of-staff-use-army-for-domestic-enforcement>

Most Disturbing Legal Trend: http://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2012/08/12/Under-the-US-Supreme-Court-Drones-in-the-sky-over-America/UPI-40661344756600/?spt=htsv=7

Most Disturbing General Trend: <http://warisacrime.org/content/minnesota-town-bans-signs-yar>

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[ds-unless-theyre-pro-war](#)

Most Disturbing Employment Trend - co-winner: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/18/business/economy/unions-past-may-hold-key-to-their-future.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

Most Disturbing Employment Trend - co-winner: http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/group-s-vow-to-push-right-to-work-in-other-states/2012/12/12/2310311a-447c-11e2-8061-253bccfc7532_story.html?hpid=z4

Most Disturbing Employment Trend - co-winner: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/31/business/majority-of-new-jobs-pay-low-wages-study-finds.html?_r=2&ref=business

Most Mind-Numbing New Product: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-17290153>

Most Mind-Numbing New Product - Runner-up: <http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2012-05-31/ledix-origine-the-312-000-phone>

Most Reasonable Person - Mr. Buffet: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/26/opinion/buffett-a-minimum-tax-for-the-wealthy.html?_r=0

Least Reasonable Person - Mr. Norquist:
<http://truth-out.org/opinion/item/13259-bill-moyers-the-truth-behind-grover-norquists-pledge>

The Most Surprisingly Reasonable Statement from a Republican: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/11/11/bill-kristol-taxes-millionaires_n_2113671.html

The Most Surprisingly Reasonable Statement from a Democrat: <http://www.politicalruminations.com/harry-reid-quotes/>

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Best New Political Idea by a Regular Person: http://www.pennlive.com/letters/index.ssf/2012/12/impeach_signers_of_norquist_pl.html

Best New Political Idea by Politicians:

<http://tpmdc.talkingpointsmemo.com/2012/12/grover-norquist-pledge-defectors-complete-list-se-nate-house.php>

Good Moment of Talkin' Bad Award:

<http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2012/06/quote-of-the-day-harry-reid-calls-out-a-clown-question-bro/258705/>

Bad Moment of Talkin' Bad Award: <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0812/80311.html>

Strangest (non-Eastwood) Republican Convention Moment Anywhere: <http://2012.talkingpointsmemo.com/2012/06/montana-gop-convention-features-obama-library-riddled-with-fake-bullet-holes.php>

Strangest Democratic Convention Moment Anywhere: <http://www.11alive.com/news/article/263132/186/NC-man-drives-trailer-with-effigies-of-Obama-other-officials>

and: *Double Winner!* Most Bizarre Attention-Seeker: <http://www.buzzfeed.com/andrewkaczynski/man-travels-the-country-in-trucks-hanging-obama-fr>

Worst Overall Religion / Religious Representative:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/06/08/obama-effigy-hanged-outside-church_n_1581272.html

Best Overall Religion / Religious Representative:

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http://www.churchofreality.org/wisdom/the_understanding_of_understanding/

Least Probable Story -- Proud to be Somali: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-18117255>

Most Uplifting & Amazing Tale of 2012:

<http://www.treehugger.com/natural-sciences/man-single-handedly-plants-entire-forest.html>