

GROCERY PRICES AND INDEPENDENCE DAY

From the mundane to the sublime: an epiphany

So here I am at Busch's—a family independent grocery store that sprouted on the corner of Meadowbrook and 10 Mile Road in Novi, Michigan—used to be a Farmer Jack. Not having children, never much of a grocery shopper, my idea of going to stores for things, for nearly 40 years, has been, "That looks really good (or cool, or different); just throw it in the basket. \$19.95 may be a little steep, but that's why God invented MasterCard."

And so it would go... for food, for clothes, for drinks, for car stuff, etc.

But then that other Bush ascended to the throne. The Neocons came home to roost, proceeding to spend/borrow our money like drunken sailors, making up wars and war crimes that most of us had never imagined, killing real jobs and real people, causing prices to climb and potholes to proliferate. [Rule of thumb is when a country spends money it doesn't have, prices go up because of all the currency the government prints to pay the first guys in the welfare line: in Bush's case, mostly military contractors, oil companies, and faith-based snake-oil salesmen.]

Still, despite the inflationary pressure of all the cookie jar raids by the high-level fat cats during the Bushovik years, I never noticed any unexpected pricing until perhaps The Decider's fourth (well, eighth[1]) year. In early 2008, I remember an isolated incident also at Busch's where the tag on a box of the store-brand powdered milk said, like, \$9! Shut up! I had the store manager validate there wasn't some mistake in the markup process, or a gear missing in their stamper gizmo. (Just a few weeks ago, at Kroger, the equivalent eight-quart box was not even half this price.)

So maybe the middle of 2008, I remember being over at my SO's[2]: we're getting eggs and bread at Meijer; she tells me it's scary—sweetie is currently on a decidedly fixed income—how the staples seem to increase a dollar a day... what if you have kids?! It's about that time I start actually looking at prices of things: "Wow, how did Nestle's chocolate bars get so expensive? Guess we can live without those. And I'll get the two-for-one cheap bourbon." After that, I surprised myself for frugality. Heck, I could even go into the Dollar Store[3] and leave without buying anything!

Finally, around election season—through the so-called 2008 Credit Crisis, with its associated taxpayer bailout of needy billionaire bankers in New York, London, and Switzerland (and no doubt Bahrain, etc.)—and becoming decidedly worse in the past few weeks, prices seemed to get just strange. To the point the other day I'm shopping for my routine supply of apples, bananas, and peanut butter, when I remember I've run out of toothpaste: I'll just buy the grocery store brand in Oral-Hygiene, Aisle 3; I notice the national brands, like Colgate, are going for \$4.69!

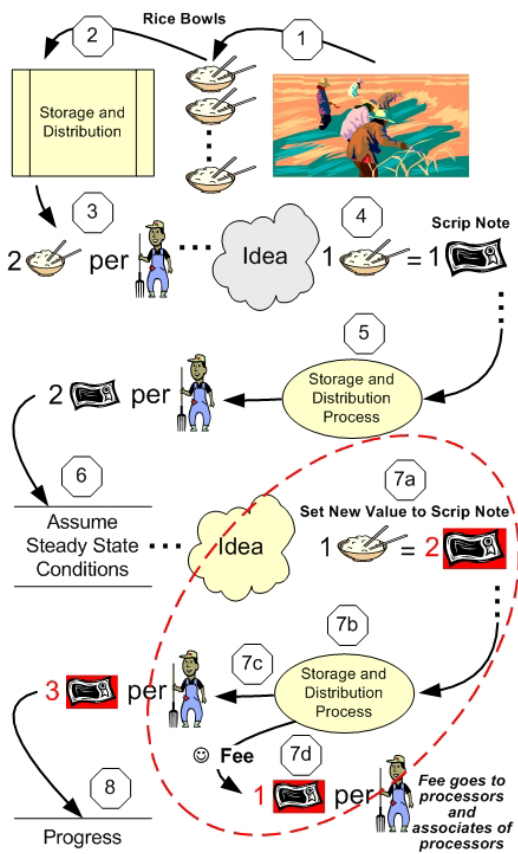
"Yikes! When did toothpaste get to five dollars a tube?!"

Problem is Busch's, which is associated with the Spartan food stores, doesn't carry a cheaper Spartan-brand toothpaste. And NFW[4] am I paying \$5 for that medicine-cabinet luxury (word is that back in the day, people used baking soda; sure enough check out this column from the Frugal Law Student). So I finish up at Busch's then head next door to the Rite-Aid. Not much better over there—to be nicer to the environment I used to like to buy Tom's of Maine, but its 8 oz tubes are closing in on \$6! But because

of a marking error, I walk with a Colgate whitening variety for the retro price of \$1.74! Who says I don't know how to find value.

So where am I going with these Martha Stewart shopping tips? Well, if only toothpaste were going through the roof, I'd say, "Fine, there's a shortage in Borneo of the tree goop that gazinta essential toothpaste chemistry, no big deal. They'll make more goop, or come up with a substitute, and within a month or two, toothpaste will be reasonable again." No worries. Then a couple of days later, I drive to Pete Hendrickson's July 4 Declaration Day party[5], and need some sunscreen. Back to Rite-Aid. You know what they want for sunscreen?!! \$6.35 for 4.5 ounces!! Yikes!

It's a pattern. And when we all put our thinking caps on, it's fairly obvious that general price levels are increasing rather dramatically where we live... on Main Street. Further, if we noodle it out a little more, we see that the reason general price levels are dramatically higher is that the ratio of Federal Reserve Notes (FRNs)[6] to goods and services has increased. And it isn't simply, as indicated above, from the Bush cabal. The Obama cabal—and all the federal cabals in history with access to the Fed cookie jar—are huge borrowers, taxers, and spenders of other people's money (OPM). At root it is simple counterfeiting on a massively centralized scale. Here is a figure, as a primer, from my Sacred Nonaggression Principle:



Okay, a primitive picture, but...

How Prosperity Rests on Freedom

The \$64 Gazillion Dollar question: Who are these "other people" in the OPM? Duh. I've purposefully put my 'man in the street' face on in this column in order, I hope, to demonstrate a heartfelt sensitivity to the very real problems probably 90% of us face...

the better to suggest a solution path that can have some meaning. Fundamentally, what I—and the substantial universe of those I call the "freedom people"—propose is to END THE STEALING! We speak for the "other people" whose wealth is being ripped off by these government Demopublican gangs (and their bankster stakers), and we the people have had quite enough... moreover, we're aiming to get our wealth back from those who stole it.[7]

Which fits in handsomely with my Independence Day message. That link remains a first cut in my effort to define a new spirit of independence that perhaps can accomplish something like the earlier American-Jeffersonian one. Should we seek a severance from the government criminal class or, as some have argued, simply enforce the law of the land on them? [A lot of government murderers' and robbers' heads may have to roll under a strict imposition by the people of our Bill of Rights.][8] I shall continue to develop my Declaration of Independence and set up a system where people can sign and testify to it for themselves.

...I'm leaning toward calling it the Declaration of Personal Sovereignty.

Epiphany—Addressed to my Fellow Freedom Fighters

Just last night I watched, for the umpty-umpth time, one of my favorite movies, JFK. I particularly identify with Jim Garrison (Kevin Costner) in his passion for justice against all odds. Indeed, aside from the courtroom speech—which ranks up there with the inspirational cinematic best, even Jeff Bridges in Tucker or Spencer Tracy in Inherit the Wind—the conflict in Garrison's character is revealed as he's pleading with his non-cause-oriented wife that "someone has to stand up for the obvious truth," or the world won't amount to a bucket of warm spit for their children.

In my own life, and in the lives of of my freedom-movement allies, I feel so many have become locked in to the "isolated outcast passionate bringer of truth" syndrome, and it's been mainly counterproductive. Surely the intensity and dedication and emotion of a Jim Garrison is vital to the fight for truth and justice. And many of us in the freedom movement have that level of desire, that fire in our bellies that will not die while we draw breath. That's good, provided we do not carry the passion into 'fire and brimstone' condemnation of those who demur from agreement with us... or even the many close ones who obstinately refuse to look at or care about the truth or evidence of what we're presenting.

Case in point—and this is hard to connect back to my grocery-price insights except to point out that, in the context of state power, robbers also tend to be murderers—I'm carrying on about the Israelis' genocide in Gaza to someone in my family I deeply care about. A few days ago, Israeli gunboats seized an international humanitarian relief ship, and it was distressing to me how little that incident was covered on national TV news. Further, it is clear the Zionist garrison state of Israel is a particularly vicious criminal government gang (CGG), and has committed atrocities upon the Palestinians equivalent to those committed against Jews by the Nazis in WWII. This family person responded with what I heard as an accusation that I was "seeing things," and that there had to be a reasonable explanation for Israeli snipers gunning down women and children.

Let me tell you. The nuts came off the buggy. I was throwing out charges of "moral and intellectual coward," "accomplice to mass murder," "bystander to slaughter of innocent civilians," even "worthless human being" as if the floodgates of Hell had opened. I got

so beside myself, I could not even be in the presence of this person. On the verge of a Berserker Rage, I walked away. A minute earlier, I was in a great mood.

But I'll wager half the people I know in the Free State have had similar experiences: "How can people be so willfully blind?" "What sort of individual can bear witness torture and not care?" "The police shoot an unarmed civilian in a drug raid, and people make excuses for them." "We've dropped tons of depleted uranium in the Middle East that will kill thousands and affect millions with birth defects." "These morons accept whatever they're told by the authorities, or by TV." "Why is a man a hero if he goes to Iraq or Afghanistan to kill for the Kleptocons?" "How can human beings work for the state and aggress on civilians?"

And, to a person, we freedom-and-justice people get angry at the unthinking, uncaring "human ballast," probably especially if they are kin.

Here's the deal

So to my fellow freedom fighters, let me tell you what I discovered only three weeks ago—and obviously forgot in the onset of my tirade—during the writing of my Fanning the Godspark column. It really comes from Eckhart Tolle, and I'm simply going to reprint the entire quotation from my previous column:

All evils are the effect of unconsciousness. You can alleviate the effects of unconsciousness, but you cannot eliminate them unless you eliminate their cause. True change happens within, not without.

If you feel called upon to alleviate suffering in the world, that is a very noble thing to do, but remember not to focus exclusively on the outer; otherwise, you will encounter frustration and despair. Without a profound change in human consciousness, the world's suffering is a bottomless pit.... Empathy with someone else's pain or lack and a desire to help need to be balanced with a deeper realization of the eternal nature of all life and the ultimate illusion of all pain. Then let your peace flow into whatever you do and you will be working on the level of effect and cause simultaneously.

This also applies if you are supporting a movement designed to stop deeply unconscious humans from destroying themselves, each other, and the planet, or from continuing to inflict dreadful suffering on other sentient beings. Remember: Just as you cannot fight the darkness, you cannot fight unconsciousness. If you try to do so, the polar opposites will become strengthened and more deeply entrenched. You will become identified with one of the polarities, you will create an 'enemy,' and so be drawn into unconsciousness yourself. Raise awareness by disseminating information, or at the most, practice passive resistance. But make sure that you carry no resistance within, no hatred, no negativity. "Love your enemies," said Jesus, which, of course, means "have no enemies." [my italics]

Once you get involved on the level of effect, it is all too easy to lose yourself in it. Stay alert and very, very present. The causal level needs to remain your primary focus, the teaching of enlightenment your main purpose, and peace your most precious gift to the world. — Page 169, *The Power of Now*

And that is the epiphany: As tempting as it may be for the ego to make moral judgments—and, in many cases, the judgments will be correct—do not go there. Think about it: your vituperative judgment amounts to an attack on the level of effect; in only serves to keep all consciousness at that concrete level... not to mention hurting feelings.

Instead, imagine yourself as a Ghandi or a Jesus, let your moral and intellectual certainty manifest itself as a calm, deep peace that beckons others to join you at the level of cause. [By the way, the only political effects that are consistent with fundamental consciousness are those that conform to the nonaggression principle. So, in liberty, as you hold and emanate the nonaggression principle—it's as important how you hold it as that you hold it—realize that only with that principle will humanity evolve.] Remember, nothing real can be threatened, so go there, stay there, be at peace; if you build it they will come. Your blood pressure will benefit, too.

We will have our freedom, and toothpaste will be cheap.

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[1] Can you believe that smarmy, murderous little alien snake lizard was in charge of the country for two full terms!? Sad thing is, Bush's successor is continuing and embellishing every one of Bush's policies... only with a smile instead of a smirk.

[2] significant other

[3] Ever wonder when the Dollar Store will insert a zero after the \$1?

[4] no fundamental way

[5] Pete Hendrickson has simply written the book of the century—at least in the category of "information you can use to restore your personal financial freedom while ending federal tyranny"—namely, *Cracking the Code: The fascinating truth about taxation in America*.

[6] I would say dollars, but a Federal Reserve Note has about as much connection to a real US dollar—"The U.S. dollar was created and defined by the Coinage Act of 1792; it specified a "dollar" to be between 371 and 416 grains (27.0 g) of silver."—as my golf swing has to Tiger Woods'.

[7] As I've mentioned to several in the Free State, what we really need in the movement is a "Wealth Recovery Industry," a coordinated action of accountants and lawyers aiming to associate x amount of FRNs with y individuals who counterfeited them... or who profited by receiving the lower-valued money on the first or second tier of government spoils. Then a recovery arm that returns the value represented by these FRNs to the productive class from whom the value was secretly taken. The amount of money due back to the productive class is easily on the order of \$200 trillion or—assuming the US has an adult population of 200 million—a \$million per adult recipient.

[8] Generally, I do not favor a program that exacts capital punishment even for the high crimes of torture and aggressive war. Yes, for those who conceive and/or authorize torture, rendition, indefinite detention, brutal imprisonment, and so on—by the way, Barack Obama is among them—... it does seem just to subject them to the same treatment. But I'm hoping that when we humans take our world back from the Kleptocons, we simply keep these state criminals humanely confined in, like, a special zoo with windows for public viewing.

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