

**Miscellany 43: Fertility Doctors Should Pay for Babies; Send the Liberians Home Immediately; Legalize Drugs; Eugenics and Cannibalization Are Alive and Well in the United States; William Shatner's Response to an Awkward Question; The Novotel – Designed for Natural Living; The US Treats Its Clowns Better than Its Philosophers; A Good Wine; Bill Clinton: "Don't blame me -- it's not my fault"; A Question for President Obama; Increases in Postal Rates**

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Commentary on recent news, reading and events of personal interest.

**Contents**

Fertility Doctors Should Pay for Babies .....	1
Send the Liberians Home Immediately .....	2
Legalize Drugs .....	2
Eugenics and Cannibalization Are Alive and Well in the United States .....	3
William Shatner's Response to an Awkward Question .....	5
The Novotel – "Designed for Natural Living" .....	5
The US Treats Its Clowns Better than Its Philosophers .....	6
A Good Wine.....	6
Bill Clinton: "Don't Blame Me -- It's Not My Fault" .....	6

**Fertility Doctors Should Pay for Babies**

The bizarre case of Nadya Suleman of Bellflower, California, who on January 26, 2009, bore eight babies from in-vitro fertilization, raises an interesting point. Ms. Suleman is a single mother, heavily dependent on public welfare and with virtually no prospect of paying for the care and raising of her eight babies. Before having these babies, she had already had six previous babies, also by in-vitro fertilization. The public will have to bear most of the expense of medical care and raising of these children (estimated at several million dollars). Also, the existence of each of them will cause the destruction of approximately one acre of natural land (by conversion to infrastructure).

Had Ms. Suleman's pregnancy been caused by a young man, US society would be going after him with a vengeance. He would be required to pay for the medical costs and child support until the children were raised, or he would go to jail. But in this case, there was no natural father. The fertility doctor, Dr. Michael Kamrava (Medical Director of the West Coast IVF Clinic in Beverly Hills) caused the births. As the perpetrator of these pregnancies, he should have to pay for the consequences. (He is reported to having impregnated a 49-year old with quadruplets – I wonder who is paying for that!) He, and all other fertility doctors and accomplices, should be required to pay the cost of medical care and raising of the children that they generate, if the mother is unable or refuses to do so. The cost of having these babies was entirely discretionary, and should not be foisted on the public. Suleman should be in stocks or pillory, not moving into a free half-million dollar home.

Instead of being hailed as a blessed event and a modern medical miracle (“assisted reproductive technology,” previously known as infertility treatment), this outrageous practice, designed to transfer wealth from the US taxpaying middle class to the medical establishment, should be ridiculed as a vile, planet-destroying practice. The human population is exploding, and causing the sixth mass species extinction. When the population of dogs, cats, rabbits and rats explodes to the detriment of the environment, we take effective measures in population control. In the case of the human population explosion, we provide venal practitioners such as Dr. Kamrava with large financial rewards, paid out of public coffers.

This incident shows the perverse nature of US medical care. The benefits are given to the medical establishment and the costs are imposed on the middle-class taxpayers and the planet’s environment and ecology.

## **Send the Liberians Home Immediately**

It was reported by the Associated Press on March 15, 2009, that eight years ago the US granted 3,600 Liberians temporary visas to settle in the US during a civil war in Liberia. The civil war is long over, and there is no longer any justification for allowing these people to remain in the US. Yet President George W. Bush granted an 18-month extension of their visas, allowing them to stay here until March 31. An effort has now been launched to persuade President Barack Obama to extend the visas for another 18 months, or even to grant permanent residency.

There is no rational basis for allowing these people to remain in the US. Every additional person added to the US population causes the destruction of approximately one acre of natural land (though conversion to infrastructure such as houses, schools, businesses, and roads). Furthermore, recent immigrants to our country have high birth rates, and the original population of 3,600 will explode to many more. Under current US policies, all of the offspring of these refugees will be US citizens. The basis for allowing these people to stay in the US is gone. Someday, the US may want to grant refuge to others. It has already destroyed 3,600 acres of natural land to accommodate the Liberians. This destruction of natural land must not continue. The 3,600 Liberians should be deported immediately, to make room for future refugees without requiring the destruction of more of our land. They should be sent back to Liberia immediately, along with their “anchor baby” children.

I worked for a time last year in Liberia. There is no longer any civil war. It is high time for these people to go home.

## **Legalize Drugs**

The cover article of the March 7-13, 2009, issue of *The Economist* is “How to stop the drug wars.” The proposed solution is to legalize drugs. *The Economist* has held this position for a long time (twenty years). It views that legalization is not a “good” solution, but is the “least bad” solution. The basis for this view is that the criminalization of drugs has led to extremely high prices for illegal drugs, massive amounts of criminal activity by drug users to support their habit, a massive growth in organized crime, and the destabilization of many countries that support or transship drugs.

I agree with the position advocated by *The Economist* (and have done so for far longer than they have). Although legalization of drugs would dramatically reduce the amount of associated criminal activity and the power of organized crime, it is unlikely that the US will adopt this solution. The primary goal of the US is to promote economic activity, and the illegal drug trade generates a massive amount of it – the salaries paid to law enforcement and legal-system personnel, and the cost to incarcerate large numbers of drug users and peddlers (a half a million of them). The US alone spends 40 billion dollars each year in illegal-drug-related activities. The total value of the industry is estimated at USD320 billion per year. The US government is not about to kill this “golden goose.”

(Update 6 April 2009.) On the March 25, 2009, edition of The Cafferty File (on CNN's Wolf Blitzer's Situation Room), Jack Cafferty asked viewers to comment on the legalization of drugs. He pointed out that the criminalization of drugs causes massive levels of crime, corrupts governments and destabilizes societies. It would be better, he observed, to legalize drugs and remove the criminal element from drug abuse. At the end of the hour, when he “tallies” the e-mails, he observed that an overwhelming proportion of the e-mails were in favor of legalizing drugs.

Cafferty has observed on previous occasions that an overwhelming proportion of Americans do not want a massive invasion of illegal immigration, yet the government insists on it. He wonders aloud why the government continues to force positions that are very unpopular.

The explanation is simple. The government is the servant of the wealthy elite, who control the country. Criminalization of drugs and massive illegal immigration profit the wealthy elite very much.

## **Eugenics and Cannibalization Are Alive and Well in the United States**

You hear on a daily basis of the cannibalization of body parts in the US for transplant operations. This cannibalization (“harvesting body parts”) is promoted because of the large amount of money it generates for the medical establishment. The practice of eugenics – genetic modification or culling to reduce unwanted traits or promote desired ones – is also thriving. One hears more and more of “selectionization” of embryos to destroy undesirable traits. What the agricultural sector has practiced for a long time – selective breeding – is now standard practice in the US medical establishment.

These practices, once frowned upon, are now thriving in the US because the medical establishment makes “big bucks” from them. When they were not so lucrative, they were discouraged or even proscribed.

It is interesting to observe the changing moral status of these and other practices, and how they are determined by economics. Slavery was once widespread because it was economically profitable. When the Industrial Revolution occurred and slavery become economically inefficient, it was banned by the economically developed nations. Cannibalization and eugenics were once banned, when there was little money to be made from these practices. Now that the medical establishment can profit handsomely from them, they are not only condoned, but encouraged. The charging of interest was once proscribed by all three Abrahamic religions

(although Jews could charge interest to enemies). When, half a millennium ago, society desired large-scale lending to promote world trade, Christianity and Judaism promptly dropped their objection to it.

Now that the country is very wealthy, incredible amounts of money are spent to keep highly defective children alive. When I was a boy, this was not done. Joan Tollifson, author of *Bare-Bones Meditation: Waking Up from the Story of My Life* (Bell Tower, 1996) recounts the following interesting personal story, which illustrates well how mores have changed in just the past half-century.

"I was born in Chicago in 1948. I was born without a right hand. It had been amputated in the uterus by a strand of ruptured amnion. Newborn, I was brought to a room where there was a large pillow. My father was called out of the waiting area and taken to this room by the doctor. My father was left alone in there with me and the large pillow. He understood finally that he was being given the chance to smother me. But he didn't do it.

"The doctor knocked. "Are you finished yet?"

"My father didn't answer. The doctor came in and my father was still standing there. Together they brought me to my mother. I don't know what she felt. She has told me that this was the only time she ever saw my father cry. He wept. And then he went out and got drunk. It was probably the only time he ever got dead drunk.

"My aunt Winifred had a psychotic breakdown at the sight of me, and my uncle Harold insisted on always photographing me from the left side. In some of my childhood pictures my right arm is outside the frame or in the next room.

"People want babies, and females in general, to be unblemished. I soaked in everyone's responses to my imperfect reality. I was a kind of oxymoron. Sometimes strangers on the street would tell my mother that we were being punished by God.

"Cripples were mostly invisible back then. If you saw them at all they were begging on the streets, or they were the Easter Seal poster children inspiring pity and charity, or they were evil villains like Captain Hook. But they certainly weren't anything you'd want to be, not just because of the physical loss or difficulty involved, but because somehow the whole thing was tinged with creepiness. Disability was one of those things you weren't even supposed to talk about. The central theme of my life was thus in place early: I was different, asymmetrical, imperfect, special. I was born without the hand that signifies purposeful doing. My life was about unraveling rather than producing, subtracting rather than accumulating. When I was very small and first heard about death, I dreamed recurrently about a person whose arm fell off, then the other arm, then each leg, until nothing was left. I was already on my way toward this mysterious disappearance.

"I had a boyfriend in the second grade who loved my arm with the missing hand. He called it my power bomb. "Hit me with your power bomb," he'd whisper, and I'd slug him gently in the stomach, and he'd grin from ear to ear with wild pleasure. In the third grade he proposed to me, perhaps because of my magical arm.

"But more often this arm was a source of humiliation. Children would stare and point and ask me about it. Adults would hush them up. I was the last to be chosen by the boys in dancing

school, and I felt that I would not qualify as a woman. Women were supposed to be beautiful. They were not supposed to be missing body parts.

“My absent hand was a kind of ticket as it turned out. I was given a passport to marginal worlds, to the realms of the dispossessed, to the secret rooms of people's hearts where something is always missing or misshapen. But it was many years before I realized this. In the beginning, I just knew that I stood out like a sore thumb and that nobody was supposed to mention it.”

Whenever a baby was born to the native Hawaiians, it was examined by the tribe elders for birth defects. If it was defective in any way, it was placed on a small raft and sent out to sea.

In primitive societies, infanticide was common whenever a child was born who could not be adequately nurtured. Infanticide (including abortion) is used in China simply to improve the odds that a first-born is male. How social perspectives change. In many cases, the morality of industrialized society are guided by “what makes money” for the medical establishment. When global oil production starts to decline, there will be a return to traditional morality, because the current morality is economically unsustainable.

## **William Shatner’s Response to an Awkward Question**

The February 5, 2007, issue of *Time Magazine* reports an interview with William Shatner, who played Captain Kirk of the *Star Trek* television series. His response to a question about an unwanted advance is interesting:

“Interviewer: Babylon 5 actress Claudia Christian recently gave an interview in which she accused you of once making advances on the set of *T. J. Hooker*.

“Shatner: Well, who am I to tell a lady that she’s a liar. I have no recollection. I’m sure it was memorable for her, though.”

## **The Novotel – “Designed for Natural Living”**

I recently spent two weeks consulting in Ghana, where I stayed at the Novotel City Centre Hotel. The hotel is very nice. Everything works, the food is good, and the staff are friendly. The *café au lait* is excellent.

The only thing that was objectionable were two pictures, one in the lobby and one at my elevator. They show deer standing in a motel lobby, with the caption, “Novotel: Designed for Natural Living.” There is nothing natural about the scene. It is not natural. It is obscene. Perhaps it was meant by the author to emphasize the total destruction of nature by civilization’s edifices.

It was interesting to see how thoroughly western culture has annihilated Ghanaian culture. In Accra, the country’s capital, there is not a shred of traditional African culture. There is not a hint that African culture contributed anything at all to the city. One may wonder whether this is a symptom of the complete fecklessness of African culture, or a tribute to its total inconsistency with modern civilization.

It was interesting to see the composition of travelers on the Delta flight from JFK airport to Accra. They were almost all Ghanaian stock. The US is wasting its valuable resources promoting useless travel of Ghanaians back and forth to the US, when it should be applying those resources to solve critical planetary problems, such as the sixth extinction and global warming. Why would US society promote such a waste? For the money. The long-term destruction of the planet's biosphere is not a consideration to those who would generate monetary profit in the short term no matter what the long-term cost to the environment.

## **The US Treats Its Clowns Better than Its Philosophers**

A couple of weeks ago (March 4, 2009) I heard on television that the LA Dodgers are planning to pay a baseball player, Manny Ramirez, 45 million dollars to play baseball for two years. Given that many Americans are losing their jobs and their homes, this allocation of society's resources is hard to imagine. It is, of course, a natural result of the US government's granting of sports franchises to the wealthy elite, and the use of public funds and right of eminent domain to construct (and tear down and rebuild again) massive sports stadiums (socialize the costs and privatize the benefits).

The US indeed treats its clowns (entertainers, sports figures) better than its philosophers (scientists). Why? To what good purpose?

## **A Good Wine**

While in Ghana, a business acquaintance gave me two bottles of Lutzville Cape Diamond Vineyards Oliphant River Valley (South Africa) 2007 Merlot (750 ml, 14% alcohol by volume, preservative A210 (benzoic acid)). This wine is excellent. Since it was a gift, I have no idea what it cost. Since it did not contain preservatives 223 (sodium metabisulfite) or 224 (potassium metabisulfite), it did not give me a headache (those additives give me a two-day headache).

## **Bill Clinton: “Don’t Blame Me -- It’s Not My Fault”**

On television a couple of weeks ago (CNN's Larry King Live, early March, 2009), former president Bill Clinton asserted that the current financial crisis was “not his fault.” He says, “Don't blame me – I ran a surplus!” That he is not to blame is a lie. The global financial collapse was not entirely his fault, to be sure. But as president he actively promoted the financial-sector liberalizations that facilitated the crisis. He promoted deregulation, leading to massive use of financial instruments such as credit default swaps. He is very much to blame.

The financial sector and the wealthy elite are very mindful of Clinton's role in promoting their massive scam. After leaving office, he was rewarded by about 100 million dollars in “speaking fees” and other emoluments.

The February 23, 2009, issue of *Time Magazine* lists 25 people who are very much to blame for the crisis. They are Angelo Mozilo, Phil Gramm, Alan Greenspan, Chris Cox, American Consumers, Hank Paulson, Joe Cassano, Ian McCarthy, Frank Raines, Kathleen Colbert, Dick

Fuld, Marion and Herb Sandler, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Stan O'Neal, Wen Jiabao, David Lereah, John Devaney, Bernie Madoff, Lew Ranieri, Burton Jablin, Fred Goodwin, Sandy Weill, David Oddsson, and Jimmy Cayne. These people either directly defrauded the public or orchestrated financial scams that were bound to fail and bound to cost the US taxpayer massive loss. These people did this knowingly and willfully. In effect, they stole from the US taxpayer. The amazing thing is that in most cases the US government is taking no steps to strip them of their ill-gotten gains. If any sense of justice prevailed, these robber-barons would be stripped of their wealth and exiled to a place like Sudan or Rwanda, penniless, with nothing more than the shirts on their backs. They are traitors to the American people, and do not deserve to be allowed to remain in America, among the people that they have deceived and robbed.

## **A Question for President Obama**

On March 24, 2009, President Barack Obama gave a televised speech to the US people, in the evening. Earlier in the day, on Wolf Blitzer's CNN Situation Room on March 24, 2009, Jack Cafferty asked the question, "What question would you ask the President, in his talk tonight?"

The President is always touting "economic growth." But it is economic growth that is destroying the biosphere and causing the sixth mass species extinction. My question to the President would be, "Why are you always touting economic growth, when it is destroying the planet?"

## **Increases in Postal Rates**

Postal rates are continually increasing in the US. When I was a boy, the postal rate was three cents for a first-class letter. It had been three cents for many years. Before that, it had been one cent and then two cents, for many decades. Now, there are postal rate increases about every year.

This seems very inefficient. In earlier times, the rate was changed very infrequently, and by a large amount (e.g., from two cents to three cents is a fifty percent increase). Now the rate increases are very frequent and very small (e.g., from the current 41 cents to 42 cents on May 12, 2009, is a 2.44 percent increase). It seems that the rate is changing now about every year, and by a trivial amount. What a waste of money.