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The official newsletter of  
Fellowship of Reason, Inc.

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## Celebration of Political Entrepreneurs

By Larry Woods

Thursday Evening I had dinner with a couple older than me, and married longer. Instead of the usual grunts and snaps of the long-married, my Friend was saying Sweetheart, Honey, Pumpkin, Sugar Bunny the whole evening. When we were alone, I said "Jim, I've never heard you use pet names like this. You sound like a newlywed." He replied, "Well, to tell you the truth, I forgot her first name."

Our search for truth is complicated by the April Fools week that just was. One again I am delusionally honored to be chosen by you for this task.

Hopefully, you did not try to buy the "Beard Swipe" app featured in an April 1 press release. It allegedly would "allow bros with facial hair to unlock their iPhones simply by rubbing them across their beard."

Here are three other stories from the April Fool's week past.

#1—Netflix released more original content on April 1, and gushed: "The boundaries of TV and time go up in smoke that takes the viewer out of the fire and into the frying pan," It was a 20-minute show of sizzling bacon. The reviews were better than those for its companion release of "Rotisserie Chicken". An ungrateful Reviewer of the 73-minute show of chicken roasting called it a "Poor use of T-H-Y-M-E ... a narrative arc that could use more

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garlic".

#2—In Iowa, Joni Ernst released an ad for her campaign for the US Senate: "I grew up castrating hogs on an Iowa farm, so when I come to Washington, I'll know how to cut pork," later adding, "Washington is full of big spenders. Let's make 'em squeal."

#3—Amid growing sentiment the Drug War is a disruptive failure, Drug Enforcement Administration Head Michelle Leonheart had to defend her 2014 Budget in Congress: that is \$2,068,000,000 to fund 4003 agents, 7847 support staff, and 71 lawyers. To justify her budget, Leonhart cited the death of two dogs. USA Today had reported they died because marijuana hinders vomiting things like butter that could kill them. The DEA will keep nauseated chemotherapy patients from slathering pot-laced butter to save their selfish lives. For a trifling \$1,032,000,000 per dog saved, budget approved.

Now, my April Fool's joke on you is, with a mixture of delight and regret: All of these stories are true. It is likely the Netflix Bacon stream will be on a phone near you before I can finish.

However, our Country's biggest April Fool's scam runs all year. This is a typical version of it from Dallas Federal Reserve Bank President Richard Fisher. On April 4 in a question and answer session, he referred to "our feckless Congress and poor government leadership" as needing to get their act together. "Someone has to provide the incentive to step on the accelerator and move the economy forward. And right now they're stepping on the brakes," he said. "And that's Democrats and Republicans and the lower and the upper house and a president that just don't work together. Until we have that, we will not have the confidence we

### About the name "The Eudaimonist"

A eudaimonist (pronounced "yoo-DIE-mon-ist") is one who believes that the highest ethical goal is individual happiness and personal well-being. The term derives from the ancient Greek word eudaimonia, which means, roughly, "well-being."



### Disclaimer

The opinions expressed in the columns appearing in this newsletter are those of the author and not necessarily the views of the organization. The Fellowship of Reason, Inc speaks only through its Articles of Incorporation, the Bylaws, and the actions taken by the Board of Trustees as a board and recorded in the minutes of the corporation.

**Fellowship of Reason, Inc.****Mission Statement**

The Fellowship of Reason® is dedicated to the personal flourishing of our members through reason.

**Fellowship of Reason, Inc.** is a Georgia nonprofit corporation and a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) corporation

**Fellowship of Reason**  
P.O. Box 28891  
Atlanta, Georgia 30358  
(770) 471-9800

E-mail  
info@fellowshipofreason.com

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need to proceed."

I posit Mr. Fisher is dead wrong, or a co-conspirator in the mind games played by Political Entrepreneurs. They desperately want to obscure their success and methods in accumulating wealth and power. Like an alligator in a petting zoo, the Political Class depends on an aura of languid stupidity to avoid having their mouth taped shut and being tossed out.

For this discussion, I include these in the Political Class—the DemoPublican party apparatus, related consultants, lobbyists, campaign committees, victory committees, political action committees, foundations set up by these entities, presidential libraries, and public sector union leadership. I should also include captive industries.

Closely affiliated are media providers. Most are dependent on revenue from political ads, plus the low-cost content created by politicians. Some must access the politically allocated broadcast spectrum. Other players are the educational, legal, drug, tobacco, alcohol, and medical monopolies, plus affiliated charities, foundations and legal counsel to all of the above.

Like pro-baseball and por-football, the two wings of the DemoPublican party nurture choreographed charades of competition. They share the work of keeping a fan base active, and the suppression of competing political enterprises. Unlike the sports leagues, the DemoPublicans have not formally merged their two divisions.

Creating an illusion of competition may not be necessary. The billion+ dollars of annual revenue of professional wrestling proves

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fans buy into theatric competitions universally known to be staged. The same human foibles spur us to vote in political ratifications.

The second myth nurtured by the Political Class is that greedy businesspeople line up to bribe Politicians. That claim is not entirely false, but most so-called contributions and lobbying rests on extortion by the Political Class.

To understand the sports business, we would analyze its revenue, i.e. broadcast rights, ticket sales, parking and concessions, subsidized facilities, tax breaks, merchandise royalties, endorsements, etc.

For the Political class, “donations” are the mother lode of revenue, and political power is the club to make them flow. Ed Kangus was Chairman of Deloitte Touche: “I know from personal experience and from other executives that it is not easy to say no to members of Congress or their operatives. The threat may be veiled, but the message is clear: failing to donate could hurt your company”.

As bills that impact businesses approach a vote, congressional and White House staffers work the phones harder. According to OpenSource.com, “contributions” pour in during these squeezes. When the Political Class finds a hot bidding war developing, there is usually a postponement at the last minute. Why? So the process can be repeated. And repeated. Plus, new players such as vendors to affected companies can be identified and squeezed. No gridlock here. The alligator just ate your dog. Again.

Example: The movie industry piled on donations to Democrats in 2008, but lagged in 2012. Joe Biden led a replay of a twice-defeated bill to whack internet providers in the guise of cutting

**“I know from personal experience and from other executives that it is not easy to say no to Members of Congress or their Operatives. The threat may be veiled, but the message is clear: failing to donate could hurt your Company.”**

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**Regular membership:**  
\$35 per year

**Contributing membership:**  
\$70 per Year

**Lifetime membership:**  
\$700

losses from movie piracy. He broke all precedent by attending board meetings of the Motion Picture Association to plot strategy. Yet he and Obama flipped against them when new money poured in from opponents in Silicon Valley. Plus, the movie crowd was maxed out in allowable donations until a new election cycle. The bill died. As consolation, movie moguls were allowed to gang up on a Chinese premier at the White house. They wanted more access to the Chinese market. Never mind China is the epicenter of the piracy they protest. Even better, Washington politicians got access to Microsoft X-boxes and games after Bill Gates was dragged into the fray. Of course, they still get free movies from the motion picture side. The alligator smiles and another child is missing.

John Holmeister, Chairman of Shell recounts the gall of the squeezers. He was one of the oil executives vilified in Congressional show hearings over oil prices in 2008. After the cameras left the room "A lot of those who had been attacking Shell asked me to donate to their campaign or hold a fund raiser for them"

How do you donate? Let me count the ways. Example: House Speaker Boehner has a personal campaign committee, a Leadership Political Action Committee, and a so-called Joint-fundraising committee. He taps donors for all three, and spews tens of millions to colleagues who vote his way. Congressional rules allow this money to be exchanged for specific votes. His counterpart, Nancy Pelosi and most other members of Congress do the same. Typical was Pelosi escalating donations to centrist Democrats wavering on Romneycare legislation, even after it had been re-labeled as Obamacare.

### Contact Information

To talk to somebody about  
Fellowship of Reason call:

Martin at 770-471-9800  
Susan at 678-358-8415

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Personal use of these funds is illegal. Ha-Ha. Example: in 1998, CA Congresswomen Grace Napolitano loaned her campaign committee \$150,000. Every year since, she has paid herself 18% interest, as donors restock her fund. This is widespread, but most have the taste to use a lower interest rate.

Your own Senator Chambliss loves golf. His leadership PAC routinely pays for golf outings that range from \$10,000 to well north of \$100,000.

A second favorite revenue source is the hiring of family and relatives with donated funds, or pressuring others to do so. \$500,000+ payouts are routine: showing up to actually work is not. The alligator belches.

However, that is being supplanted by the fruits of indecipherable complex laws combined with overlapping agencies with conflicting regulation. Former associates, staffers, regulators, and relatives join the churn to be hired as "Consultants". Example: Some large banks abused foreclosure procedures in the wake of the 2008 meltdown. Instead of the criminal charges they deserved, the Department of Justice forced banks to hire Consultants to review every loan for the next two years. The top two politically connected consulting firms got over one billion dollars each. The average abused homeowner got \$868.

How do Politicos bend the Department of Justice to their will? Hint: The top six Obama appointees to that agency bundled an average of \$500,000+ in contributions for the President. The Attorney General, Eric Holder was low man on the list. However, he found ways to make amends.

The Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) is a maddening mish-mash prohibiting US business bribes or involvement in politics abroad. The only hope of compliance is to hire a Department of Justice approved monitor. Miraculously, Holder's old law firm sprouted a new division devoted to FCPA monitoring. The going rate is \$10,000,000 per year, per monitor. A monitor can have multiple clients. Will these grateful monitors make up for Holder's paltry contributions? You betcha. The alligator drifts closer.

Of course, extortion at this level needs a company to be kneecapped as an example. The FCPA honor fell on a company called Innospec. In 2010, they settled for a \$14,100,000 fine plus \$50,000,000 in monitoring. The Federal Judge was limited to a yes or

**FOR's mission is to promote the personal flourishing of our members through reason.**

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no opinion, but she railed at the absurdity of the mentoring costs. Holder did not budge. His dirty dance with Wall Street rolls on. Instead of criminal charges for Corporate Lawbreakers, Stockholders are robbed of scores of millions. In turn, your President says in public he is the terror of finical miscreants. In a private shakedown of bankers in 2009, he told them "My administration is the only thing between you and the pitchforks;". Did they pony up in 2010 and 2012? You betcha. That awful pain in your ankle is the alligator biting your foot.

In private, many US Executives say they hope FCPA restrictions are extended to the US. They want relief from shakedowns.

Or not. Another Political revenue stream is appropriations for useless projects built by favored companies and unions in districts of favored politicians. Of course, grateful recipients donate back. Example: \$77,000,000 to rebuild customs checkpoints on five rural Montana roads to Canada. They are only open for one shift on summer days. At night, three traffic cones in the road seal the border. Now, the alligator has your lower leg in her mouth.

These examples picked from recent events do not imply the Cheney-Obama administration was less competent in gouging from its start in 2000. I could have drawn from the amazing Neo-Conservative rout of good sense in creating the Iraq war, policies that rejuvenated Al Qaeda, and the resulting justification for perpetual military intervention abroad. "Contributions from the Defense industry gushed. We could focus on the destruction of respect for due process in our law enforcement and military, or the tsunami of political graft that was the Troubled Asset and (Goldman Sachs) Relief Program.

Never underestimate the spoor of Neo-Con Loonies mated with Chicago-style political ruffians. They share a vision: contempt of constitutional restrictions, contempt of individual liberty, contempt of private property, and contempt of other nations. The total spent for

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Federal elections in 2000 was roughly 3 billion dollars. Expenditures more than doubled by 2012. The more power they get, the more they can extort. The alligator is pulling you toward the water.

The larger questions are: How do they justify domestic plunder? And, how can we break their grip?

The answer is two words: "I won". That was Obama's response to criticism in 2009. It is how tyrants justify their actions no matter how they seize power. He elaborated later: "we're going to punish our enemies and we're going to reward our friends" That is how corrupt power is maintained.

If our goal were to shut down the charade of professional wrestling, would we buy tickets and hope we could talk the performers into giving up their salary and status? That is what you do if you vote for a DemoPublican. They tell you anything you want to hear to get you to punch the ballot. Afterward it is game on as usual, based on the premise one of them can say, "I won".

If we want to slow political class racketeering, do not vote. If you cannot resist the social pressure, go for a third party, write in, or cast a blank ballot. Show support to the people they bulldoze over, and disdain for their enablers. When possible, remind members of our law enforcement, judiciary, and military of their obligation to rule of law and constitutional restraint. The politicians have set these professions at war with themselves, and the civilized side needs all the help you can give.

If you cannot break old habits of sanctioning plunder, the amazing alligator whispers through its teeth holding your leg, "Do you want be eaten from the left side or the right?"

## Events

For detailed info on all upcoming events, visit  
<http://www.meetup.com/fellowshipofreason>

**Adult Sunday school at FORum:** 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday 10 a.m.

Members and friends of FOR are invited to attend Adult Sunday School before FORum on the first Sunday of every month at 10 a.m. at the Atlanta Freethought Hall, located at 4775 N. Church Lane, Smyrna, GA 30080.

Martin Cowen coordinator: 678-641-9321

**FORum: A Celebration of Human Achievement:** First Sunday 11 a.m.

FOR's premier event. Meet and greet at 10:30 a.m. The program starts at 11 a.m. Presided over by FOR's President, members give presentations such as Celebration of Freedom and Celebration of Talent. A 15 to 20 minute Oratory on an ethical subject highlights the program. A short conversation called FORum during which audience members share their thoughts concludes the program at 12 noon sharp. We enjoy post-program conversation at local restaurant for further fellowship. Children's Program babysitter from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Martin Cowen director: 678-641-9321.

**FOR Runners:** Sunday 8 a.m.

We meet every Sunday morning at 8 a.m., except FORum Sundays, near Candler Park at the Flying Biscuit, 1655 McLendon Avenue Northeast, Atlanta. Breakfast at the Flying Biscuit follows at 9:15 a.m. Breakfast lovers, walkers, and joggers welcome! Martin Cowen: 678-641-9321

**Taped Lectures/Discussion Group:** 1<sup>st</sup> / 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays 7:30 p.m.

A small group of friends listens to taped lectures in a private home on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of each month. Free.

Sally Hull coordinator: 404-257-0454

**Fiction Book Club:** 2nd Tuesday 7:30 p.m.

Fifteen members and friends of FOR meet on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at an undisclosed location.

Sally Hull coordinator: 404-257-0454

**Fiction Book Club—Saturday Edition: 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of even numbered months 11 a.m.**

Members and friends of FOR meet at 11 a.m. on the 2nd Saturday of every EVEN month at Susan Menich's house to discuss a Literary Classic.

Remember it is potluck so bring some breakfast food or drink to share.

Susan Menich, coordinator, 770-396-0483

**Poetry Club:** 4th Saturday, 3:00 p.m.

Members and friends of FOR like to meet on the 4th Saturday of every month at a local coffee shop to share their enjoyment of poetry.

Trent Watkins, coordinator

**Ulysses Study Group: 5<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. Potluck**

Members and friends of FOR are invited to attend a years-long study group of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. We meet at Sally's house on the 5<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays of months with a 5<sup>th</sup> Tuesday.

Remember it is potluck so bring some breakfast food or drink to share. Martin Cowen: 678-641-9321

**Join us for our  
next monthly  
FORum:**

**4775 N. Church  
Lane, S.E., Smyrna,  
GA 30080**

**June 1, 2014  
Sunday 11 a.m.**

(Meet, Greet at 10:30 a.m.)

**FOR Children's  
Babysitter**

from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Organized Educational  
Program from 10:30 a.m. to 11  
a.m.

**Adult Sunday school  
10 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.**

## Birthdays

- May 2 Frank Vickers
- May 21 Dan Barber (Lifetime member)

- June 22 Chris Snider
- June 29 Allison Byrd

## Celebratory Announcements

Do yourself a favor and remember a good thing that happened to you this month:

Please, write it down: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Now do the membership of FOR, Inc. a favor by relating this fact during FORum next month!

**Fellowship of Reason**

P.O. Box 28891  
Atlanta, Georgia 30358

**E-mail**

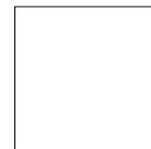
**info@fellowshipofreason.com**

A Reason-Based Moral  
Community



**FELLOWSHIP OF REASON, INC.**

P.O. Box 28891  
Atlanta, Georgia 30358



**We are on the Web!**

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