

THE CARLETON OBSERVER

"TRUTH IS THE MOST SACRED VIRTUE OF THE HUMAN HEART" - SENECA THE YOUNGER

OBAMA, McCAIN, AND THE CAPITAL GAINS TAX

ZACK STARER-STOR

As the election looms, John McCain has stepped up his attacks against Barack Obama. Most of McCain’s criticisms have targeted Obama’s associations, and the only substantial argument against his tax plan has been regarding Obama’s desire to “spread the wealth around.” This is unfortunate; Obama’s positions regarding taxation are deeply flawed in more ways than just income redistribution, and McCain seems to have failed to realize that the American people are swayed more by discussion of the economy than by that of the shady characters that lurk in Obama’s past.

One of the centerpieces of Barack Obama’s tax plan is an increase in the capital gains tax, which is tax on profit due to investment. While there are many arguments for and against raising the capital gains tax in general, it would be a colossal mistake to do so during a recession.

Taxation has several purposes, the most obvious of which is to provide money for the government. However, in other cases, such as the tax on cigarettes, the intent is not merely to provide funds, but rather also to influence behavior, encouraging consumers not to partake in a given activity by means of financial incentives. This behavioral effect is not limited to those cases in which it is desired; any taxation will influence decision making. It is therefore vital to understand the behavioral consequences of proposed taxation in order to properly weigh the costs and benefits of its implementation. While it is not the goal of raising the capital gains tax to reduce investment, this is one of the effects that such an action would have, as the decrease in profitability associated with the tax would discourage investors.

Like the rest of Obama’s tax plan, this hike will primarily target those that make over \$250,000 – those who invest the most. Good investments are made by weighing risks against expected returns, and despite their wealth, those who

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CAVEATS, DISCLAIMERS, AND GENERAL INFORMATION

For a brief foray into the minds behind this publication, we offer a few thoughts. The first thought is based on Wikipedia’s mission statement, which is that Wikipedia does not aspire to be a vehicle for personal opinion to become part of human knowledge. In response, we at the Observer say that we are, in fact, this very sort of vehicle, except we are driving towards human understanding. Our second thought in this invocation is that in the golden years of our publication, there was a Seneca the Younger quote subtitled our header that stated, “Truth is the most sacred virtue of the human heart.” We still really like this. In any case, a lot of people think that the news is getting swallowed by opinions, but we’re not a newspaper, so we are completely off the hook. We’re not politicians—we’re students exploring ideas, searching for truth. Maybe at our ten-year reunion, we’ll retract a few statements. Maybe?

For those of you who are not familiar with the Observer, it has gone in and out of being an operating publication. This is partially due to the “intestinal fortitude” it takes to come out of the intellectual-minority closet issue after issue; when convincing the hesitant to write, we persuade them that social suicide is only a small side effect and being the next William F. Buckley (may he rest in peace) is a much better goal than having friends. The other problem that has hindered the Observer’s publication is some controversy that has surrounded past articles ... let’s not get into that, ahem. Anyway, a lot of people have regarded the Observer as a conservative paper, but in its resurrection we have found a new goal: to publish the opinions of all intellectual minorities. This is meant to be a compilation of various contributions, in pursuit of a greater, more nuanced and open intellectual conversation. In other words, this is not some sort of attempted coup to overthrow reigning ideologies of our fellow students. We should, however, get a lot of praise and adoration just for our existence—people like us ensure that Tocqueville’s tyranny of the masses remains a fear and not a reality.

Best,
The CCU

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MISSION STATEMENT

THE CARLETON OBSERVER IS A SOCIAL AND POLITICAL COMMENTARY FOR MINORITY VIEWS ON CAMPUS, DEALING WITH INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL, OR LOCAL CURRENT EVENTS; PERSPECTIVE AND PHILOSOPHY; PERSONAL EXPERIENCE; OR ANYTHING THAT FURTHERS A VARIED AND PROVOCATIVE CAMPUS-WIDE DISCUSSION OF IDEOLOGY.

POINT AND COUNTERPOINT: WELFARE

LIBERAL VIEWPOINT: PABLO KENNEY

How are societies judged? How should our country be judged? One of the most famous Minnesotans of the last fifty years, Hubert H. Humphrey proposed that: "The moral test of government is how it treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the aged; and those in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy and the handicapped." It is because I agree with Hubert Humphrey that I believe that welfare is important and morally justified.

To be clear, there are welfare programs that do not work and there have been aspects of welfare law that are counter productive. I'm not here to argue about policy prescriptions, because there are all kinds of debate about the best policies and it would require a book to honestly elaborate on the pros and cons of the various options. Instead, I am furthering a defense of the institution of welfare, specifically as cash transfer programs intended to target the poor of our country.

I support welfare for two specific reasons. First, I believe that our society must redistribute the wealth that we have and second, I do not believe that poverty or getting out of poverty is contingent on personal responsibility.

To look at the first argument we have to understand that our country, like every country before us, has to face the fact of increasing income inequality. In the Atlantic Monthly, Ray Boshara reports that "By the close of the 1990s the United States had become more unequal than at any other time since the dawn of the New Deal -- indeed, it was the most unequal society in the advanced democratic world." He goes on to point out that, the top twenty percent of our population earns more than half the nation's income, and eighty-three percent of the nation's wealth. The top one percent "earned about 17 percent of national income and owned 38 percent of national wealth." This growing inequality causes a variety of problems, not the least of which is disparities in political power, educational opportunities, economic opportunities and health. These inequalities further perpetuate

this system of inequalities by providing the opportunities to those who already have them. There are many ways to combat this problem, but the government must provide a safety net for those society leaves behind.

"In the argument against welfare there is a perpetuation of the myth of personal responsibility"

While I acknowledge that many people in that wealthier sector of our population work very hard for their money, I do not believe that hard work alone vaults any individual into those ranks. Instead, those ranks, the richest of the rich, are populated by people or descendants of people who were lucky enough to be born into a particular family, who exploited others to make their money, who found governmental support for their money making operation, or who were at the right place at the right time. In order to provide for a more fair society we should look to redistribute that wealth towards those who fortune did not favor.

Boshara points out that the bottom 40 percent of Americans earned just 10 percent of the nation's income and owned less than one percent of the nation's wealth. Are we to believe that 40 percent of our nation is lazy and uncaring? No, instead we should recognize within this 40 percent that there are many individuals who work more than one job and many individuals who do not have the resources to escape their level of income. It is for these individuals that welfare is essential. Those against welfare argue that it removes the incentive to take responsibility for their personal situation in life, and to work their way out of poverty. Furthermore, they ask that if some people have been able to escape poverty, why can't others? I would argue that those who are able to escape are either individuals of exceptional personal ability, or people who have been given special opportunities. I would argue that these individuals should not be looked at as the examples (because most of their situations are not universally

replicable) but rather they should be seen as the exceptions that prove the rule.

In the argument against welfare there is a perpetuation of the myth of personal responsibility. This myth is that each individual ought to be able to make the "right" choices that enable him or her to escape poverty and all the ills that are associated with that economic condition. In addition, this myth holds the stipulation that by providing "hand outs" (to use their language) the government is against personal responsibility. I would ask that you look at your life and count the number of times that your personal goals were not met, due to opportunities that did not open up, or factors outside of your control. If you are not one of the 40 percent who share one percent of the nation's wealth, I'd ask that you try and imagine the number of opportunities that are denied of these individuals, and the number of factors that lie outside of their control.

Welfare is a program that satisfies our moral responsibilities our government and society have to provide for the plurality our country that has been disadvantaged. I readily admit that there are opportunities to improve Welfare, however, whatever system we use must acknowledge the disparities in the system and the moral duty to provide for those who society has traditionally not provided. By trying to move away from welfare, we will only polarize inequalities and move away from real solutions.

POINT AND COUNTERPOINT: WELFARE

CONSERVATIVE VIEWPOINT: JULIA REID

Intuitively, my response to welfare is based on a belief in personal responsibility. I acknowledge that some people are unable to care for themselves (the ill, the developmentally delayed, the handicapped, the elderly), but a group that I would not include in this category is the poor. Being poor does not, in itself, imply helplessness. In fact, I would argue that needy populations are capable of much more than most people assume. Personal responsibility means taking initiative to improve one's life, despite life's inevitable challenges. There are thousands of individuals born into low-income families who are able to rise out of them through self-determination and their own hard work. Improvement is possible, but welfare is not the solution.

A very important issue for me is family. Personal responsibility extends to family responsibility once children enter the picture. If a person is unable to care for a child, they should not bring one into the world. It's really that simple. I once brought this up in a class in high school, and my teacher responded that "clearly I don't know the complexity of starting a family." Well... how complex is it, really? There's only one way to make a baby, and if you can't financially sup-

"Each individual has the power to take control of his or her life in any way they see fit"

port one... don't do it! Of course there are mistakes, but in that case, a person should take responsibility for their own mistakes rather than turning to the easy alternative of welfare. The role of the family in maintaining a respectable American society cannot be undermined by poor family planning. It might sound insensitive to the many pregnant teenagers in our country who must battle with the prospect of raising a family on their own. Ultimately, however, it boils down to an individual's choice. A choice that could have been made differently for the sake of responsibility. Making and raising a family should not be taken lightly, and we must acknowledge the

role of individual choices in this process.

In response to my beliefs, some might claim that individuals cannot be blamed for their lack of responsibility because being poor is not a choice. This argument is founded on the belief that poverty is essentially a result of classist and racist traditions in our society. I contend that although poverty itself is not the result of irresponsibility, choosing to remain in poverty is. Each individual has the power to take control of his or her life in any way they see fit. Claiming that one cannot have control over his or her own life discounts the efforts of countless individuals who have escaped poverty through their own hard work. Consider, for example, the students here at Carleton who come from low-income families. The road to a private, liberal-arts college is certainly not an easy one, especially when living in a low-income family. But people do it, and they make their lives better as a result. These are individuals who may have been born into poverty or fallen into it at some point, but who chose to take responsibility and get out of it. If society does owe these individuals anything, it is respect and the chance to earn their own living. Allowing continued existence on welfare merely perpetuates the classist and racist traditions that have developed in our society. I'm not suggesting all welfare be removed. I advocate a more calculated look at which individuals end up on welfare, how much they should receive, and how long they should receive it. Without limits on these aspects of welfare, individuals will have no incentive to obtain profitable employment. Our society will be robbing them of what they deserve: respect. Enough respect to consider them people. People who can make choices, take responsibility, and legitimately take control of their own lives.

The Carleton Observer

EDITORS:

JENNIFER HIGHTOWER
DAVID ROSENBERG
ZACK STARER-STOR

GUEST EDITORS:

MAC MCDONALD
CAROLINE GIESE

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THE CARLETON OBSERVER
300 NORTH COLLEGE STREET
NORTHFIELD, MN 55057

(thecarletonobserver@gmail.com)

POINT AND COUNTERPOINT: GUN CONTROL

CONSERVATIVE VIEWPOINT: DAVID ROSENBERG & TATE SORVIG

Our stance on gun control is: (1) it has a very limited effect; (2) to prepare for peace, prepare for war; (3) it is emblematic of a dangerous societal willingness to sacrifice important liberties for increasingly small gains in safety; and (4) it reflects an alarmingly dependent culture.

TATE: Making laws to control the acquisition of firearms for all citizens can only go so far. Criminals already willing to break the law are not going to pay attention to yet another law that requires them to transport their weapons unloaded and cased. Neither will they get those weapons from a source that requires a background check. These guys are going to stick their firearms under their baggy coat, and go shoot someone.

Having background checks and short waiting periods are good ideas because it makes it more difficult for wack-jobs to get guns. However, banning certain types of guns, limiting where properly certified individuals can carry guns (gun free zones), and passing legislation which is impossible to enforce are ridiculous. Unenforceable legislation is a waste of time and money. Gun bans only prevent law-abiding citizens from acquiring firearms. Gun-free zones don't stop wackos – only good people who are now unable to protect themselves.

Political leaders and lobbyists that are proponents of these methods are either stupid or simply trying to get votes by taking advantage of people's fear and ignorance. They play people's emotions by spewing statistics about children being killed by stray bullets in the inner city and say that if only we took guns out of the picture, this wouldn't happen.

Take the Supreme Court case concerning the gun ban in Washington D.C. If it goes through, it would essentially put a ban on handguns, carrying firearms within the home, and possession of loaded or operable firearms for self-defense in the District of Columbia

DAVID: Personally, I think this proposal is emblematic of our entire nation's attitude toward danger and violence right now. We are living in a culture of fear and are willing to create laws that

jeopardize our human rights, like the right to self-defense – just for small gains in societal security. We're talking about a society-wide desire to insulate ourselves from every danger, no matter how improbable or meager.

I mean, where you come from, way up North, guns are tools, to be respected, not flaunted. It is part of the culture. If we want to attack excessive gun violence, we need to attack any culture that portrays violence as a solution. Is this hard? Sure. But this is the most effective way. Instead of reforming gun laws, let's reform a culture that keeps emphasizing violence as a solution. Yet while we are trying to change the culture, we cannot leave victims unarmed, adrift, waiting for reform.

“We are living in a culture of fear and are willing to create laws that jeopardize our human rights”

TATE: The best way to fight criminals is by allowing potential victims to protect themselves. If we were to rely solely upon cops to protect us, we would need one with us all the time. Sirens go off after a crime is committed, not before. There are many different strategies for keeping yourself safe. Pepper spray is a good deterrent – why a gun? Why do we need to use lethal force? Pepper spray is typically a one shot deal. A gun may diffuse a situation without even firing it. The mere threat of deadly force makes a criminal choose between their life or your wallet. Bringing pepper spray to a gun or knife fight is like bringing Febreze to a big farm.

People say you're paranoid if you carry a gun around. I say you're prepared. There will always be heartless criminals, and they will always prey on the weak. Strengthen the weak and the perpetrators will be out of business. To insure peace, prepare for war.

DAVID: We need to ask ourselves what are we willing to give up to make sure that our kid isn't one out of mil-

lion who dies from a stray bullet. In an ideal world, this standard is well and good, but we need to consider the implications of such an attitude. Once we give away the right to bear arms, getting it back will be quite the hard run. I worry we're on a slippery slope. We expect the government to do too much. I realize this particular point – cautioning: let us never grow complacent, dependent, and too vulnerable to the vicissitudes of time and history. It is not just the right to bear arms we are giving away; we also give away the courageous and wary disposition that went into the Second Amendment.

Perhaps we prefer complacency and the obliteration of that particular disposition, which may seem antiquated and even primitive today. But think about what our willingness to practically dispose of the Second Amendment says about us. It reflects a belief that if we throw enough money at the government, eventually all our problems will be fixed.

TATE: The more power we give the government, the less freedom we have. Handing over our right to protect ourselves results in a weak, dependent population.

DAVID: We are in danger of becoming sheep. Gun control is emblematic of this general trend. Let us not permit the government a complete monopoly on force. Does 'civilization' really require neutering this much of the human spirit? Flexible gun laws means we have some control over our destinies. There may be conflict, yes, but we will have pride in our self-sufficiency, and not live in a state of fear and dependence.

POINT AND COUNTERPOINT: GUN CONTROL

LIBERAL VIEWPOINT: LUKE FREEDMAN & STEVE MERRY

LUKE: It seems like an appropriate time to talk about gun control considering the recent incidents of gun violence on college campuses. Additionally, the Supreme Court recently heard a case, *District of Columbia v. Heller*, concerning the constitutionality of Washington DC's strict gun laws. Personally, I think the Second Amendment is not intended to protect an individual's right to bear arms, but I know that's a more controversial subject. It's probably best to look at the issue from a moral perspective as opposed to a constitutional one.

STEVE: As for the moral issue, I think groups like the NRA try to make gun control out to be an oppressive government infringement on the rights and opinions of citizens. This isn't the truth. A majority of Americans agree there needs to be more regulation, for instance 85 percent of citizens want handgun registration to be mandatory, 77 percent want trigger locks to be required. These kinds of regulations aren't drastic, they're common sense safety precautions that almost all Americans agree on.

"If you look at the most objective studies, it is difficult to deny the connection between guns and violent crimes"

LUKE: Also, the current laws often seem ill designed and thus poorly enforced. Almost all gun violations go unpunished. An example of poor enforcement involves the Virginia Tech shooter, Seng-Hui Cho, who was able to buy a gun despite the fact that he spent a night at a mental psychiatric hospital.

STEVE: Current laws are poorly enforced, but it's also because policies have no teeth. For instance, cities cannot share information about how guns used in crimes were obtained. The NRA has fought hard for privacy in regards to gun control, and it prevents

us from being able to obtain information and hold people accountable.

LUKE: David complained that gun control data is often skewed and unreliable, and this is certainly true sometimes. But if you look at the most objective studies, it is difficult to deny the connection between guns and violent crimes. I think a non-partisan study conducted by Congress would be beneficial.

STEVE: These kinds of restrictions aren't always easy to enforce, but they do two things. First, most people will follow regulations because they respect the law. Second, it is a chance for the government to set the public agenda and define what is important. It raises awareness about the issue in the same way that seat-belt laws do.

LUKE: Your general thesis seems to be that if we put aside the political games, this is a fairly straightforward issue, and there are clear steps we can take to address the lack of meaningful gun restrictions. What are examples of relatively simple policies that we could enact that could bring about monumental change.

STEVE: One of the first things is closing the gun show loophole. For one, our current policy in many states allows private individuals to sell a gun at a gun show without any paperwork or background check. I've been to a gun show and had a man offer me a handgun with the selling point being, "there's no paperwork." The guy trying to sell the gun wasn't a bad guy. He was just trying to make some money. I believe with the amended laws/regulations that man would have thought differently about selling me a gun.

LUKE: It seems we really need to come together and work for change. People always think that there is a huge divide on this issue, but there is a lot we can do even without threatening law abiding gun owners.

STEVE: It comes down to education. If everyone took time to learn about the issue, a lot more people would be motivated to take action and things would start to change. Unfortunately, the NRA is really good at just tacking the word freedom onto everything. Like most Americans, I want less gun deaths the whole issue has been so distorted that we cannot enact any meaningful legislation without it being considered an attack on civil liberties.

LUKE: It's interesting that a majority of Americans say they support the NRA, but when asked about specific policies, most disagree with the NRA's stances. It's so important to be involved and educated on the issue, because we have an enormous problem and are not taking the necessary steps to address it.

UNIVERSAL HEALTHCARE IS BAD FOR AMERICA

ZACK STARER-STOR

The current system of healthcare in the United States is failing. Millions cannot afford health insurance and face the dangers associated with inadequate medical care. Many contend that the government of the United States should provide healthcare to all of its citizens. A single-payer system of universal healthcare, they argue, would ensure that everyone is covered while reducing costs. However, by examining the consequences of such a system we can see that the costs involved, financial and otherwise, drastically outweigh the benefits.

In this proposed system, the government would oversee and pay for healthcare services, treatments, and medications. Since this would be a single-payer system, the government would essentially be able to set the price, as it would be the only party buying the product in the United States. Indeed, one of the main arguments made for this system is that the government would be able to eliminate the unnecessary costs involved – one of the most common examples given being corporate profit. So, in this system of healthcare, the government would pay far less than is paid today in an effort to reduce wasteful spending.

However, without this profit, pharmaceutical companies would lose incentive to incur the risks of researching new drugs, and highly talented individuals lose incentive to become doctors and medical researchers. While many factors aid the research process, it is the tremendous profit that comes with a successful product that motivates so many pharmaceutical companies to invest in the search for new cures despite the fact that only 1 in 5000 candidates actually becomes an approved drug. With less return for investments in medical research it becomes less and less practical for companies to enter the field, and thus research slows. This problem has already manifested in the case of low profit medicine, such as vaccines and antibiotics, which currently undergo relatively little development. A slowdown in research would not just damage medicine in America. Foreign drugs are primarily developed for the American market due to the disproportionate share in the sales market that

this country holds, so reducing potential profit would harm foreign pharmaceutical companies as well.

Since a shift to universal healthcare in the United States would reduce financial incentives in the healthcare industry, diminishing the quality of doctors and drugs, such a system would be bad for everyone in the long run, rich and poor alike. Those unconvinced that governmental control would lead to reduced quality would be well served to examine the Veterans' Hospitals, which are run entirely by the government and have recently been the subject of much controversy on account of their ineffectuality and low standards.

“Such a system would be bad for everyone in the long run, rich and poor alike”

There are many other issues with universal healthcare. Due to rationing, waitlists such as those found in Great Britain and Canada would emerge. These waits are often several months long, and in many cases can be years, leaving people in severe pain for extended periods of time while they wait their turn. This often prevents patients from receiving care within the surgical window, which can make more serious operations necessary, or even lead to the death of the patient.

Another problem is that the appearance of free treatment would cause people to make doctor's appointments frivolously, as there would be no financial factor to disincent them from doing so. This would lead to clogging, and reduced doctor availability. In addition, this treatment would not be free, and the higher taxes which would be necessary would cost the very people whom universal healthcare seeks to help.

While universal healthcare would provide every American with healthcare, the negatives would greatly outweigh the positives. However, solutions to the healthcare problem can still be found elsewhere. Ridding the healthcare market of trade barriers would provide more private options, and this new competition would lead

to lower prices and better plans as companies would try to be as appealing as possible.

For decades car insurance was very expensive in New Jersey, to the point where relatively few people could afford it. In 2003, state officials introduced legislation that reduced government regulation, which had been originally set in place to ensure the high availability and low cost of car insurance. In what the New York Times called “a case study in what happens when competitive forces are unleashed and markets are allowed to operate more freely,” prices fell and availability rose, saving state drivers an estimated \$500 million over the next three years.

The healthcare industry in the United States currently suffers from tremendous regulation. Not only do the states prevent out-of-state providers from selling insurance, they also include countless mandates and restrictions that result in higher insurance prices and billions of dollars in tax money spent on oversight.

In addition, the vast majority of consumers currently purchase healthcare through their employer or the government. If tax-exemptions that are only received through these third parties were made more universal it would allow consumers to choose health insurance based on cost rather than simply on availability. This would encourage competition amongst insurance companies, and like the removal of other trade barriers it would result in lower prices.

It is by removing these regulations, not by adding more, that prices will fall. Freer, more competitive markets would provide more options at lower costs to consumers, making health insurance much more affordable to those who currently go without.

ANTIOCH, THE AMERICAN PROBLEM

The end of a school where liberalism went mad

EVERY MORROW

The notice came quite suddenly, a month after the Class of 2007 graduated from 155-year-old Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio. In an e-mail to students and alumni, the Board of Trustees announced their decision to close the college after the 2007-08 school year. The faculty would be fired, and the students would be transferred to other colleges or schools of its parent corporation, the adult education campuses of Antioch University. On June 26, one-fifth of the staff was suddenly fired.

Like many of Antioch's antics in the past 40 years, the closing came with more than its share of absurdity. The board of trustees promised they would reopen the college in 2012 with a revamped "21st Century Campus," but this turned out to be a facade. Just a few weeks before the announcement, many of its alumni received unsolicited fundraising phone calls from student volunteers. However, the students didn't mention the dire financial situation of the college. It wasn't their fault: the students didn't know about the imminent closing. In fact, besides the President, the entire college was kept in the dark while Antioch University officials debated the merits of shutting it down.

Faculty members promised to fight the decision. From students, the reaction was panic—their home was being taken away from them. But there was little bewilderment for Antioch alumni. Most of them agreed that the college had been surviving by a thread for years, and its closing came as no surprise. The college's famous motto, a quote from its founder Horace Mann, was "Be ashamed to die until you have won some victory for humanity." And for its first hundred years Antioch inspired many of its students to do just that. But by 1993, the college's ultra-left follies were landing it on the set of Saturday Night Live. As Antioch professor Hannah Goldberg told the New York Times Correspondent, Michael Goldfarb, "It was liberalism gone mad." The beginning of Antioch's troubles is often dated to the 1970s. James P. Dixon, Antioch alumnus and the president of the college during that tumultuous era, announced programs to recruit lower-class urban students and expand

the college to several campuses around the country. As the Times writer Goldfarb recalls, "Within my first week I twice had guns drawn on me, once in fun and once ... for real by a couple of ex-cons whom one of my classmates, in the interest of breaking down class barriers, had invited to live with her." Meanwhile, due to Antioch's financial trouble, Dixon was unable to fulfill the lower-class scholarships. In response, students held a "strike" which began with nonviolent picketing but soon escalated into graffiti, vandalism, and firebombing. Admissions to Antioch were decimated.

Dixon was ultimately fired by the chairman of the Board of Trustees, who held an illegal, quorumless board meeting to force the firing through. The replacement president implemented Dixon's plan for Antioch University, but with a neat twist: the college would no longer have an independent source of money. The board of trustees would become part of the university and they would have unchecked power against the college. Many of Antioch's tenured faculty members were let go in the late 1970s.

The Antioch University branches gained a better reputation than the college, and unlike the college, it became profitable. None of these new campuses had a tenure program. Meanwhile, the board was running free with its unchecked power. "Among other things I learned," recalls Sara, who worked on the Alumni Board in the late 1980s, "was the truth about what is now called the College Loan scams ... administrators were taking leased Lexus cars in exchange for directing loans." Student loan debt caused some of the bitterness with cash-strapped Antioch alumni. As alumnus Michael Olenic wrote, "Antioch sold me something for the maximum amount they could: that doesn't engender a feeling of financial gratitude." As late as 2003, donors and alumni independently raised \$1.2 million was raised to save the college from its dire financial straits and give it more independence from the university, but the board of trustees demanded control over the money. The argument reached a stand-

still and the money was not granted.

One would expect that the engaged, activist student body would investigate these problems. But the student strike had turned away many of the students who would have lived up to Horace Mann's motto. Those who continued to attend were somehow drawn farther and farther from the school's mission, interested in activism for its own sake rather than as a means to an end. Anastasia Goodstein, journalist with the Huffington Post, recalls that students "seemed more concerned with activism as a form of self expression."

Nowhere is this change more evident than in the college's student newspaper, the Antioch Record. The most recent issue available online, from August 2005, reports on "Dumpster Diving Etiquette" and something called "Camp Trans," which "was organized to fight the unfair and archaic policy that still holds at Michigan Womyn's Music Festival [which] states that the only womyn allowed to attend are women-born."

The college let the students use the campus for unlimited self-expression. Graffiti covered the hallways; entire dorms were shut down for need of maintenance, including buildings dating back to Horace Mann himself. Students were given free rein over Antioch policies as well, which launched the college back into the spotlight when an organization called the Womyn of Antioch created the infamous "Sexual Offense Prevention Policy," which was then made college policy. It required a separate act of verbal consent for "each new level of sexual activity," regardless of "prior sexual history." Journalists from around the country somehow came up with similar mental images of this policy in action: a mind-numbing, bureaucratic process starting out with, "May I hold your hand? May I continue holding your hand? May I put my arm around your back?" treating the entire situation as if a bomb could go off at any minute.

For some people, the "Antioch experience" worked back in the 70s. When it encouraged real diversity, accepting conservative and liberal students alike and admitting a

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ANTIOCH

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raucous variety of traditions, it was an experience that could be both disruptive to stereotypes and intellectually enlightening. Its co-op program, which sent volunteers across the country, and its well-developed international study abroad programs are still well-liked. But as one commenter put it, in its later days Antioch became “intellectually homogeneous and intensely intolerant.”

What happened to the school that produced Stephen Jay Gould and Coretta Scott King? Alumna Susan

Simpson, mocking the mentality of Antioch students, wrote on an Antioch mailing list: “My mind is still reeling. Did the ‘THE MAN’ not want us to continue? Were ‘non-queers’ offended by glbtqiata forming a strong community? Do non-womyn fear different views and beliefs in gender?” It is evident that the students and alumni forgot about the need for transparency in administration or simply lapsed in their guardianship of the college out of apathy. But what’s more, the administration let the inmates run the

asylum. Under the students’ majority rule, anything that made the college more culturally leftist was accepted; anything that made it conservative was thrown out. As the political extremism and identity politics made the college politically irrelevant, it took away any remaining motives to keep it running. It took the combined effort of students, faculty, and staff to bring the once prestigious college to an inglorious end.

CAPITAL GAINS TAX

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fall in the highest bracket are still only interested in making the best decisions regarding their money. Since investment is inherently risky, investors are understandably less likely to chance losses if the rewards for success are reduced. Thus, as an increase in the capital gains tax would diminish returns, fewer people would be willing to invest.

With trust in the economy shattered, the government should aim to encourage investment, not depress it. However, Barack Obama’s plan to increase the capital gains tax would do just that.

Since John McCain obviously

has more resources than a college student, he must be aware of this major deficiency in Senator Obama’s plan. Why, then, does he not press Obama on these issues? The answer becomes evident through examination of McCain’s debate performance. In the third debate, by far his strongest, Senator McCain starts to do just that. Speaking confidently, he defends his positions while criticizing those of Senator Obama on a scale he has never done before. However, as soon as McCain begins to go into the specifics, he falters. Soon, he is left staring awkwardly at the camera, repeating tediously that Barack

Obama wants to take money away from Joe the Plumber and “spread the wealth around.”

John McCain does not understand the economy. While his policies may be correct, he cannot explain why. When McCain won the nomination, the most pressing concern was the outcome of the surge, and his declaration that he does not understand economics as well as he should was not considered terribly important. As the focus of the race has shifted due to the onset of a severe recession, McCain has been left facing the war he is least equipped to fight.

Questions? Comments? Want to submit an article?

We want to hear your opinion.

Contact the Editors:

Jennifer Hightower (hightowj@carleton.edu)

David Rosenberg (rosenbed@carleton.edu)

Zack Starer-Stor (starersz@carleton.edu)