

October 30, 2011

Robert Samuelson says default is what happened to Greece.

There's an Orwellian quality to Europe's [latest financial rescue](#). Words lose their ordinary meaning. Greece, for example, has clearly defaulted, but no one says so. In July, private lenders agreed "voluntarily" to accept an estimated 21 percent reduction in their loans to Greece. Now that's been [pushed to 50 percent](#), and private lenders' consent is still described as "voluntary." Well, it's about as "voluntary as when one hands over one's wallet in response to the choice of, 'Your money or your life,'" notes [Douglas Elliott of the Brookings Institution](#).

What constitutes a default? Here is Standard & Poor's definition: "We generally define a sovereign default as the failure to meet [the] interest or principal payments . . . contained in the original terms of the rated obligation." Not much doubt there: A [50 percent "haircut"](#) wasn't part of the original bonds. But for political and legal reasons, it's inconvenient to declare a default. Instead, the Europeans call the write-down "private-sector involvement," or PSI. How reassuring.

Europe's problem is to prevent Greece's fate from befalling any of the other 16 countries using the euro — most obviously, Ireland, Portugal, Spain and Italy, but also Belgium and France. If investors believe that default (or PSI) is unavoidable, they will desert the debts of these countries. A financial implosion could become unavoidable. ...

Mark Steyn calls our attention to the need for the government to provide diapers.

Last Thursday was officially "Diaper Need Awareness Day" in the state of Connecticut. Were you aware of it? There are so many awareness-raising days, it's hard to keep track. Maybe we could have an Awareness-Raising Day Awareness Day. At any rate, the first annual Diaper Need Awareness Day was proclaimed by Dan Malloy, governor of the Nutmeg State, and they had a big old awareness-raising get-together in New Haven. It's not clear yet whether they've got an official ribbon. We're running a bit low on ribbon colors these days: It's not just pink ribbons for breast cancer, but also teal for agoraphobia, periwinkle for acid reflux, pink and blue ribbons for amniotic fluid embolisms, and pinstripe ribbons for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. We could use a Ribbon-Hue Awareness Day to raise awareness about how we're falling behind in the race for more ribbon colors.

If you're wondering what sentient being isn't aware of diapers, you're missing the point: Connecticut Rep. Rosa DeLauro is raising awareness of the need for diapers in order to, as Politico reported, "push the Federal Government to provide free diapers to poor families." Congresswoman DeLauro has introduced the "DIAPER" Act — that's to say, the Diaper Investment and Aid to Promote Economic Recovery Act Act. So don't worry, it's not welfare, it's "stimulus." As Fox News put it, "A U.S. congresswoman in Connecticut wants to boost the economy by offering free diapers to low-income families." And, given that sinking bazillions of dollars into green-jobs schemes to build eco-cars in Finland and a federal program to buy guns for Mexican drug cartels and all the other fascinating innovations of the Obama administration haven't worked, who's to say borrowing money from the Chinese Politburo and sticking it in your kid's diaper isn't the kind of outside-the-box thinking that won't do the trick?

Bart Hinkle compares Obama to Hoover.

Last week the White House picked a Virginia fire station as the venue for the president's principal campaign stop—er, legislative sales pitch. The choice was apt. At roughly the same time the president was lamenting how "cities and states like Michigan and New Jersey . . . have had to lay off big chunks of their forces," Sen. Majority Leader Harry Reid declared, "It's very clear that private-sector jobs have been doing just fine; it's the public-sector jobs where we've lost huge numbers."

Oh. Guess you can go home now, Wall Street occupiers! All those unemployment reports? False alarms.

To be fair to Reid—which may be more than he deserves—he was defending the part of the American Jobs Act that would appropriate \$35 billion for state and local government hiring. That might help offset the savage cuts of the past year, except for one thing: The cuts have not been that savage. From September of last year to this past month, state and local payrolls have shrunk by 260,000 positions out of more than 20 million. That comes to roughly 1 percent of the work force.

The situation looks much worse for the private sector. It has added jobs at an anemic rate in the past few months, but it still has far to go before it claws its way back to the employment peak of November 2007. At that time total non-government employment stood at 124 million. It's now 109 million. ...

The constant campaigning gets comment from **Karl Rove**.

According to Mark Knoller, CBS Radio News White House Correspondent, President Obama has attended 60 campaign fund-raisers this year. That's one every four days since he kicked off his re-election on April 4. By comparison at this point in 2003, President George W. Bush had appeared at only 28 fund-raisers.

Mr. Obama has done more than lap Mr. Bush in raising campaign cash. He's also already eagerly barnstorming critical battleground states via Air Force One or Bus One. His goal is another term, though his ostensible reason for the trips is to push for passage of Stimulus II.

His renewed enthusiasm shows that nothing rejuvenates this president more than leaving Oval Office duties behind to reprise his role as stump speaker. We're even seeing snappy new slogans: the latest is "We can't wait," a clever way to hide Mr. Obama's discomfort with the business of convincing Congress to pass his bills.

This slogan unintentionally showcases an essential truth about the Obama presidency: comfortable on the political hustings, he's uncomfortable doing the job. Energetic at campaigning, he's lethargic at governing. From the start of his administration, he has left the policy details and heavy lifting to others. ...

According to [Charlie Gasparino](#), the Occupy Wall Street thugs have friends in the executive suite.

... the elite media has constantly vilified the peaceful Tea Party as right-wing rabble for prodding politicians to do nothing more than reduce the bloat of government.

Meanwhile, politicians, the press -- and now CEOs -- have generally celebrated Occupy Wall Street as the second coming of the civil-rights movement -- no matter how many times its followers have clashed with police in the name of Mao and Che Guevara.

And the worst part about these unfair depictions of the Tea Party and Occupy Wall Street?

There's no end in sight.

I can't remember a single instance in which the chief executive of a major bank or conglomerate has said something nice about the Tea Party's goals of limited government, lower taxes and free markets -- the very things upon which this country was founded.

But such business leaders as GE chief executive Jeffrey Immelt and Blackrock chief Larry Fink have been falling all over themselves trying to say nice things about the OWS protesters, their grievances and rants against capitalism -- even while the unwashed mob is nearly rioting not far from their corporate headquarters. ...

[Journal article](#) has new revelations about dogs and humans.

Chauvet Cave in southern France houses the oldest representational paintings ever discovered. Created some 32,000 years ago, the 400-plus images of large grazing animals and the predators who hunted them form a multi-chambered Paleolithic bestiary. Many scholars believe that these paintings mark the emergence of a recognizably modern human consciousness. We feel that we know their creators, even though they are from a time and place as alien as another planet.

What most intrigues many people about the cave, however, is not the artwork but a set of markings at once more human and more mysterious: the bare footprints of an 8- to 10-year-old torch-bearing boy left in the mud of a back chamber some 26,000 years ago—and, alongside one of them, the paw print of his traveling companion, variously identified as a wolf or a large dog.

Attributing that paw print to a dog or even to a socialized wolf has been controversial since it was first proposed a decade ago. It would push back by some 12,000 years the oldest dog on record. More than that: Along with a cascade of other new scientific findings, it could totally rewrite the story of man and dog and what they mean to each other. ...

Cool map of the scary things in the United States from [Pleated Jeans](#).

Washington Post

A Greek default in all but name

by Robert J. Samuelson

There's an Orwellian quality to Europe's [latest financial rescue](#). Words lose their ordinary meaning. Greece, for example, has clearly defaulted, but no one says so. In July, private lenders agreed "voluntarily" to accept an estimated 21 percent reduction in their loans to Greece. Now that's been [pushed to 50 percent](#), and private lenders' consent is still described as "voluntary." Well, it's about as "voluntary as when one hands over one's wallet in response to the choice of, 'Your money or your life,' " notes [Douglas Elliott of the Brookings Institution](#).

What constitutes a default? Here is Standard & Poor's definition: "We generally define a sovereign default as the failure to meet [the] interest or principal payments . . . contained in the original terms of the rated obligation." Not much doubt there: A [50 percent "haircut"](#) wasn't part of the original bonds. But for political and legal reasons, it's inconvenient to declare a default. Instead, the Europeans call the write-down "private-sector involvement," or PSI. How reassuring.

Europe's problem is to prevent Greece's fate from befalling any of the other 16 countries using the euro — most obviously, Ireland, Portugal, Spain and Italy, but also Belgium and France. If investors believe that default (or PSI) is unavoidable, they will desert the debts of these countries. A financial implosion could become unavoidable. Markets would dump government bonds, sending their interest rates soaring. European banks — big investors in government bonds — would suffer huge losses that might trigger a panic.

Europe's banking system is much larger than the United States' and gets three-fifths of its funds from the "wholesale" market of big deposits, commercial paper and the like, [writes Olivier Sarkozy](#), head of financial services for the private equity firm the Carlyle Group, in the Financial Times. If these big investors fled en masse, Europe's financial system would collapse. "The parallels to 2008" — when Lehman Brothers' failure caused a panic — "are too stark to be ignored," he says. (Sarkozy, an American, is the half-brother of French President Nicolas Sarkozy.)

To prevent this, Europe's leaders adopted a new package of measures. In addition to the 50 percent write-down of Greek debt, the plan would:

1. Expand the existing rescue fund, called the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF). It would provide insurance against losses of about 20 percent on purchases of European government bonds, presumably those of Spain and Italy. This protection would supposedly reassure investors, who would continue to lend at low interest rates. An estimated \$1.4 trillion of bonds might be covered. (The EFSF is already lending directly to Greece, Ireland and Portugal.)
2. Require European banks to increase their "core tier-one capital" — generally stockholders' equity — to 9 percent of assets. A larger amount of capital acts as a buffer against losses and is intended to reassure banks' depositors and wholesale investors. According to Brookings's Elliott, the extra capital would total about 100 billion euros (about \$140 billion) over the existing capital of 1 trillion euros.

3. Create “special purpose vehicles” (SPVs) that could seek investments from cash-rich countries, such as China, and private investors.

Initial reaction to the package was favorable. [American stocks soared](#) after the announcement. But details are murky (regarding the bond insurance and the SPVs, for starters), and skeptics abound. “I’m surprised that the markets are so relaxed,” says economist [Desmond Lachman of the American Enterprise Institute](#). Two large problems loom.

The first is the specter of default. Greece crosses a line, because many European leaders long maintained that no euro-using country would be permitted to default. Now that this has happened, some investors may sell other weak European bonds and set up the feared chain reaction. The extra bank capital may not provide much protection. Elliott fears the added 100 billion euros is too small to be reassuring.

The second problem is austerity. Like Americans, Europeans face a contradiction: To reduce budget deficits, they need to cut spending and raise taxes; but more taxes and less spending may depress their economies, increasing budget deficits. Higher bank capital ratios pose a similar problem. One way to increase those ratios is to raise capital from private investors or governments. Another way is to cut lending; the size of the existing capital increases in relation to loans. But less lending would hurt the economy. “They’re setting themselves up for a credit crunch,” says Lachman.

What Europe really needs is a massive, though temporary, global bailout that would give it time to adjust. Lacking that, it’s unclear whether the latest package is a genuine solution or just a stopgap.

Orange County Register [Diaper change we can believe in](#)

by Mark Steyn

Last Thursday was officially “Diaper Need Awareness Day” in the state of Connecticut. Were you aware of it? There are so many awareness-raising days, it’s hard to keep track. Maybe we could have an Awareness-Raising Day Awareness Day. At any rate, the first annual Diaper Need Awareness Day was proclaimed by Dan Malloy, governor of the Nutmeg State, and they had a big old awareness-raising get-together in New Haven. It’s not clear yet whether they’ve got an official ribbon. We’re running a bit low on ribbon colors these days: It’s not just pink ribbons for breast cancer, but also teal for agoraphobia, periwinkle for acid reflux, pink and blue ribbons for amniotic fluid embolisms, and pinstripe ribbons for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. We could use a Ribbon-Hue Awareness Day to raise awareness about how we’re falling behind in the race for more ribbon colors.

If you’re wondering what sentient being isn’t aware of diapers, you’re missing the point: Connecticut Rep. Rosa DeLauro is raising awareness of the need for diapers in order to, as Politico reported, “push the Federal Government to provide free diapers to poor families.” Congresswoman DeLauro has introduced the “DIAPER” Act – that’s to say, the Diaper Investment and Aid to Promote Economic Recovery Act Act. So don’t worry, it’s not welfare, it’s

"stimulus." As Fox News put it, "A U.S. congresswoman in Connecticut wants to boost the economy by offering free diapers to low-income families." And, given that sinking bazillions of dollars into green-jobs schemes to build eco-cars in Finland and a federal program to buy guns for Mexican drug cartels and all the other fascinating innovations of the Obama administration haven't worked, who's to say borrowing money from the Chinese Politburo and sticking it in your kid's diaper isn't the kind of outside-the-box thinking that won't do the trick?

In fact, the Federal Government already provides free diapers for at least one lucky American. Stanley Thornton Jr. of California receives Supplementary Security Income disability checks from the Social Security Administration in order to sit around the house all day, wearing a giant diaper and a giant onesie, sucking on a giant pacifier and playing with a giant baby rattle. Stanley Jr. runs a website for fellow "adult babies" called BedWettingABDL.com. I believe I first heard of the "adult baby" phenomenon some years ago in London. If memory serves, there was a club, and the members lay around in giant cribs being read bedtime stories by a bosomy nanny. Minor celebrities and possibly backbench Tory Members of Parliament may have been involved. In those days, it was what we called a "fetish" and you had to do it on your own dime. Now it's a "disability" and the United States Government picks up the tab. And, if that's not progress, what is?

Sen. Tom Coburn happened to catch Stan with his baby sitter and fellow disability-check recipient on a reality show, and wondered how a chap capable of running a popular website and doing such complicated carpentry jobs as his own giant high chair could be legitimately classified as "disabled." But the Social Security Administration said Junior qualifies, and Sen. Coburn was condemned as heartless: Why, if those mean Republicans got their way, the streets would be crawling with giant babies, bawling, "I want my Mommy!" Conversely, if Congresswoman DeLauro gets her way, and the stampede for government Huggies gets going, Stanley Thornton Jr. will still be entitled to park his giant pedal car in the disabled space while the penniless single mom from Hartford has to leave the Toyota at the back of the lot and hike in.

An able-bodied man paid by the government of the United States to lie in a giant crib, wetting his diaper week in week out, is almost too poignant an emblem of the republic at twilight. But, as Hillaire Belloc wrote, "Always keep a hold of Nurse/For fear of finding something worse." Only last week, ABC News reported:

"At a million-dollar San Francisco fundraiser today, President Obama warned his recession-battered supporters that if he loses the 2012 election it could herald a new, painful era of self-reliance in America."

Oh, no! The horror!

"Self-reliance" is now a pejorative? Nice to have that clarified. And San Francisco, a city that registers more dogs than it has kids enrolled in its schools and in which adults are perforce the children they never bothered having, seems as good a place as any to make it official. In less enlightened times, "self-reliance" was the great animating principle of the American experiment. By the standards of the day, George III was one of the most benign, caring rulers on Earth: You were his mewling charges, and he was the regal babysitter. Then a bunch of settlers in small towns clinging to wilderness and thousands of miles from His Majesty The Nanny decided they didn't need him and they could stand on their own. What's the word for that? Oh, yeah: self-reliance.

Is it too late for a Self-Reliance Awareness Day? No, there's no ribbons. Make your own damn ribbon. If that's too much to hope for, how about a Multi-Trillion-Dollar Debt Awareness Day? The ribbon starts out black but turns deeper and deeper red. How about a We've Spent All The Money Including The Money For An Awareness-Raising Ribbon Day? An Impending Societal Collapse Awareness Day?

Yes, yes. I'm aware the cost of diapers adds up over a month, and you can't use your food stamps to pay for them. Tough. This country's broke. As I said last week, it has to pay back \$15 trillion just to get back to having nothing at all. And that's more money than anyone ever has had to pay back. Were you aware of that? Distressingly large numbers of Americans still pining for ever more swaddling in the government cradle seem entirely unaware.

Congresswoman DeLauro is thinking too small: Maybe we could all be issued with free diapers. As a casual glance at the headlines suggests, there's almost nothing you can't get government to pay for, but that's no reason not to demand more. At its core, the "Occupy Wall Street" movement (in the political rather than the diaper-filling sense) is a plea for ever more extended adolescence funded at public expense. Don't knock it. Dozing around listening to drum circles all day is more dangerous than it looks. Last week, several dozen members of "Occupy Las Vegas" occupying land located under the final approach to Runway 19 at McCarran International Airport narrowly missed being hit by a 50-pound slab of what's euphemistically known as "blue ice" that fell from the bathroom of the president's plane. Perhaps, as a symbol of the new post-self-reliant America of adult babies, Air Force One should be fitted with a giant diaper.

Reason

Obama's Great Depression

The president is following in Herbert Hoover's footsteps.

by A. Barton Hinkle

Last week the White House picked a Virginia fire station as the venue for the president's principal campaign stop—er, legislative sales pitch. The choice was apt. At roughly the same time the president was lamenting how "cities and states like Michigan and New Jersey . . . have had to lay off big chunks of their forces," Sen. Majority Leader Harry Reid declared, "It's very clear that private-sector jobs have been doing just fine; it's the public-sector jobs where we've lost huge numbers."

Oh. Guess you can go home now, Wall Street occupiers! All those unemployment reports? False alarms.

To be fair to Reid—which may be more than he deserves—he was defending the part of the American Jobs Act that would appropriate \$35 billion for state and local government hiring. That might help offset the savage cuts of the past year, except for one thing: The cuts have not been that savage. From September of last year to this past month, state and local payrolls have shrunk by 260,000 positions out of more than 20 million. That comes to roughly 1 percent of the work force.

The situation looks much worse for the private sector. It has added jobs at an anemic rate in the past few months, but it still has far to go before it claws its way back to the employment peak of November 2007. At that time total non-government employment stood at 124 million. It's now 109 million. Barack Obama has joined George W. Bush in a dubious category. They are the only two presidents besides Herbert Hoover to see the number of job-holding Americans decline on their watch.

The parallels with Hoover don't end there. It's commonly believed Hoover took a hands-off approach to the country's economic distress, and that his administration's tight-fisted refusal to spend prolonged the misery. But Hoover was about as stingy with a government dollar as "Jersey Shore" is with hairspray.

Hoover increased federal spending by more than 50 percent, signed the biggest peacetime tax increase to that point, lavished money on public works, and signed the disastrous Smoot-Hawley protectionist tariff. FDR slammed Hoover's "reckless and extravagant" spending and accused him of wanting to "center control of everything in Washington as rapidly as possible." Roosevelt's running mate, John Nance Garner, denounced Hoover for "leading the country down the path of socialism."

Hoover's massive government interventionism did not end the Great Depression. George W. Bush's rapid spending increases did not forestall the current malaise. And the massive government outlays of the past three years—federal spending has increased 30 percent; despite layoffs, state and local spending has grown, not shrunk—have not cured the country's economic ills, either. Yet the answer, say countless voices in the prestige press, is to stop Washington's ruinous "austerity" and start spending.

How many moons orbit the planet they're living on? If a \$900 billion spending hike is austerity, what in the world does extravagance look like?

Actually, it looks something like the \$440,000 Washington spent on a museum for antique bikes. Or the half-million-dollar federal outlay for beautifying decorative rocks. Those are some of the things Sen. John McCain recently urged Congress to stop using tax dollars for—along with the National Corvette Museum in Kentucky and a giant coffee pot in Pennsylvania—on the theory that maybe the money could be used better elsewhere. The Senate didn't buy it, and last Wednesday his colleagues shot down his proposal 59-39.

This kind of thinking shows why the congressional super-committee has deadlocked. The super-committee is supposed to hash out a deal by Thanksgiving to reduce the deficit. According to the narrative in the prestige press, blame for the impasse falls on the GOP's tax intransigence. Democrats won't agree to spending cuts until Republicans agree to revenue hikes, goes the story, and Republicans are fanatical. But that narrative—like Hoover's austerity and the austerity of this summer's recent budget deal—is a myth. Given the recent spending explosion, blaming the GOP for not meeting Democrats halfway is like blaming the victim of a mugging who hands over 95 dollars and then refuses to go halves on the last five bucks. Man, what kind of selfish jerk isn't willing to meet his opponent halfway?

As even *The New York Times* conceded a couple of months ago, "There is something you should know about the deal to cut federal spending that President Obama signed into law on Tuesday: It does not actually reduce federal spending. By the end of the 10-year deal, the

federal debt would be much larger than it is today. Indeed, both the government and its debts will continue to grow faster than the American economy."

That story also noted, "The Congressional Budget Office estimates that the federal debt is likely to exceed 100 percent of the nation's annual economic output by 2021." Well. According to the latest figures, U.S. debt is on track to exceed GDP by Halloween—this Halloween.

Herbert Hoover would be proud.

WSJ

The President Who Hates to Govern

The president now says he wants to rebuild our roads. So why has he been stalling on the highway bill since 2009?

by Karl Rove

According to Mark Knoller, CBS Radio News White House Correspondent, President Obama has attended 60 campaign fund-raisers this year. That's one every four days since he kicked off his re-election on April 4. By comparison at this point in 2003, President George W. Bush had appeared at only 28 fund-raisers.

Mr. Obama has done more than lap Mr. Bush in raising campaign cash. He's also already eagerly barnstorming critical battleground states via Air Force One or Bus One. His goal is another term, though his ostensible reason for the trips is to push for passage of Stimulus II.

His renewed enthusiasm shows that nothing rejuvenates this president more than leaving Oval Office duties behind to reprise his role as stump speaker. We're even seeing snappy new slogans: the latest is "We can't wait," a clever way to hide Mr. Obama's discomfort with the business of convincing Congress to pass his bills.

This slogan unintentionally showcases an essential truth about the Obama presidency: comfortable on the political hustings, he's uncomfortable doing the job. Energetic at campaigning, he's lethargic at governing. From the start of his administration, he has left the policy details and heavy lifting to others.

Which brings us to this week's campaign appearances. The topic was infrastructure. In Las Vegas on Monday, Mr. Obama called for "funding to rebuild our roads and our bridges and our airports." At a Los Angeles fund-raiser on Tuesday, the president was more expansive, saying "Let's get construction workers . . . and let's put them back on the job rebuilding our roads and our bridges and our hospitals and our schools." By week's end, Mr. Obama could be promising to rebuild corner gas stations and ugly backyard storage sheds in swing states.

The problem with the president's pitch is that it's disconnected from reality. Where exactly has Mr. Obama been the last several years? Washington pays for highway and airport construction through multiyear bills—normally six and four years in length, respectively. This makes it possible for states and highway contractors to know how many dollars will be available for the foreseeable future.

The highway bill lapsed shortly after Mr. Obama took office in 2009. That June, his transportation secretary announced with great fanfare that the administration opposed the

renewal being introduced the next day by the Democratic chairman of the House Transportation Committee. Fair enough. There can be disagreements about legislation even among political allies.

But the Obama administration then failed to work with the Democratic Congress to reach an accommodation. Though Democrats had big majorities in both houses, the highway bill renewal has languished since then with only eight temporary extensions keeping the program alive.

There is a price for Mr. Obama's failure in 2009 to get it renewed for six years. State officials would have had the confidence to commit to projects. Contractors would have the incentive to purchase more equipment and hire more people, providing more certainty for one important part of the economy.

Mr. Obama's indifference to governing has led him to outsource the drafting of the key legislation. That happened with both the Stimulus I and ObamaCare, resulting in ineffective, unpopular and unworkable laws. This also explains his diffidence towards the government's incompetence in arenas as different as lending to Solyandra and curing the housing markets. There are exceptions here and there, of course, but the pattern is unmistakable.

It's an odd, even jarring, combination: Mr. Obama embraces hyperkinetic government spending and a powerful and all-intruding federal state while having a hands-off attitude toward its workings. More and more, Mr. Obama looks like a one-trick pony—a man who is good at giving campaign speeches but very little else. He would much rather talk about legislation than have a hand in crafting it. He's much more comfortable attacking political opponents than negotiating with them.

That might be fine if he were the challenger in 2012. But Mr. Obama's problem is he's the incumbent. To paraphrase what Joe Louis said of Billy Conn, he can run from his record but he can't hide from it. Mr. Obama is past the point of being judged mostly on words. This time around, he'll be judged mostly on competence. Americans expect more of their chief executive than a passion for the campaign stump.

NY Post

[Protesters' corporate pals](#)

by Charles Gasparino

The Tea Party and Occupy Wall Street movements were both born out of the despair following the 2008 financial crisis, and both have tapped into the public's anger over the unfairness of bank bailouts and huge bonuses for the risk takers while the rest of the country has struggled with unemployment, falling home prices and anemic economic growth.

Yet the elite media has constantly vilified the peaceful Tea Party as right-wing rabble for prodding politicians to do nothing more than reduce the bloat of government.

Meanwhile, politicians, the press -- and now CEOs -- have generally celebrated Occupy Wall Street as the second coming of the civil-rights movement -- no matter how many times its followers have clashed with police in the name of Mao and Che Guevara.

And the worst part about these unfair depictions of the Tea Party and Occupy Wall Street?

There's no end in sight.

I can't remember a single instance in which the chief executive of a major bank or conglomerate has said something nice about the Tea Party's goals of limited government, lower taxes and free markets -- the very things upon which this country was founded.

But such business leaders as GE chief executive Jeffrey Immelt and Blackrock chief Larry Fink have been falling all over themselves trying to say nice things about the OWS protesters, their grievances and rants against capitalism -- even while the unwashed mob is nearly rioting not far from their corporate headquarters.

Even worse is the political correctness of the warped media coverage. Reporters covering the Tea Party, no doubt in hopes of delegitimizing its goals, have almost never missed an opportunity to point out that the majority of its followers were older, "angry" white men.

But when was the last time you heard them describe the squatters in Zuccotti Park as young and white?

By any objective measure, that's what the protesters are -- but somehow that's missing from the coverage.

Also missing is some real, in-depth reporting on the protests. While the media couldn't wait to find out which conservative kingpins allegedly were behind the Tea Party rallies, they have almost no interest in describing how organized labor is arguably becoming the largest backer of Occupy Wall Street.

New York City's United Federation of Teachers, for instance, is donating tens of thousands of dollars in office space and food to make life easier for the protesters -- but that somehow doesn't qualify as front-page news.

What does is pretty much a joke. Reporters from such respected business publications as the Financial Times and the Economist are demanding to know from Goldman Sachs, a firm high on Occupy Wall Street's list of evil-doers, whether its CEO Lloyd Blankfein will join Immelt and Fink in supporting the movement, I am told.

Goldman so far is staying quiet, but given the pressure to say something positive about the protests, it's anyone's guess how long Blankfein will hold out.

Maybe the biggest irony in all of this is that while Occupy Wall Street demands justice in the name of Mao and turns Zuccotti Park into a cesspool, one of the biggest achievements of the Tea Party is that it has long stopped being solely a "protest" movement. There are now Tea Party members of Congress, and both parties have been forced to consider fiscal restraint because of the power of the Tea Party message.

Imagine how much the Tea Party would have achieved if it had even half of the media support of Occupy Wall Street.

WSJ

[From the Cave to the Kennel](#)

What the evolutionary history of the dog tells us about another animal: ourselves. From a cave in France, a new picture has emerged of canines as our prehistoric soulmates.

by Mark Derr

Chauvet Cave in southern France houses the oldest representational paintings ever discovered. Created some 32,000 years ago, the 400-plus images of large grazing animals and the predators who hunted them form a multi-chambered Paleolithic bestiary. Many scholars believe that these paintings mark the emergence of a recognizably modern human consciousness. We feel that we know their creators, even though they are from a time and place as alien as another planet.

What most intrigues many people about the cave, however, is not the artwork but a set of markings at once more human and more mysterious: the bare footprints of an 8- to 10-year-old torch-bearing boy left in the mud of a back chamber some 26,000 years ago—and, alongside one of them, the paw print of his traveling companion, variously identified as a wolf or a large dog.

Attributing that paw print to a dog or even to a socialized wolf has been controversial since it was first proposed a decade ago. It would push back by some 12,000 years the oldest dog on record. More than that: Along with a cascade of other new scientific findings, it could totally rewrite the story of man and dog and what they mean to each other.



Wolf

For decades, the story told by science has been that today's dogs are the offspring of scavenger wolves who wandered into the villages established by early humans at the end of the last ice age, about 15,000 years ago. This view emphasizes simple biological drive—to feed on human garbage, the scavenging wolf had to behave in a docile fashion toward humans. And—being human—we responded in kind, seeking out dogs for their obsequiousness and unconditional devotion.

As the story goes, these tame wolves bred with other tame wolves and became juvenilized. Think of them as wolves-lite, diminished in strength, stamina and brains. They resembled young wolves, with piebald coats, floppy ears and shorter, weaker jaws. Pleading whiners, they drowned their human marks in slavish devotion and unconditional love. Along the way, they lost their ability to kill and consume their prey.

But it was never clear, in this old account, just how we got from the scavenging wolf to the remarkable spectrum of dogs who have existed over time, from fell beasts trained to terrorize and kill people to creatures so timid that they flee their own shadows. The standard explanation was that once the dump-diver became a dog, humans took charge of its evolution through selective breeding, choosing those with desired traits and culling those who came up short.



German Shepard

This account is now falling apart in the face of new genetic analyses and recently discovered fossils. The emerging story sees humans and proto-dogs evolving together: We chose them, to be sure, but they chose us too, and our shared characteristics may well account for our seemingly unshakable mutual intimacy.

Dogs and humans are social beings who depend on cooperation for their survival and have an uncanny ability to understand each other in order to work together. Both wolves and humans

brought unique, complementary talents to a relationship that was based not on subservience and intimidation but on mutual respect.

It seems that wolves and humans met on the trail of the large grazing animals that they both hunted, and the most social members of both species gravitated toward each other. Several scholars have even suggested that humans learned to hunt from wolves. At the least, camps with wolf sentinels had a competitive advantage over those without. And people whose socialized wolves would carry packs had an even greater advantage, since they could transport more supplies. Wolves benefited as well by gaining some relief from pup rearing, protection for themselves and their offspring, and a steadier food supply.

The relationship between dogs and humans has been so mutually beneficial and enduring that some scholars have suggested that we—dog and human—influenced each other's evolution.

The Chauvet Cave "dogwolf"—the term I use for a doglike, or highly socialized, wolf who kept company with humans—is controversial, but it cannot easily be dismissed. Over the past three years, it has been grouped convincingly with a number of similar animals that have been identified in Belgium, the Czech Republic, Ukraine and the Altai Mountains in Southern Siberia, dating from 33,000 to 16,000 years ago.

Identification of these early dogs, combined with recent genetic evidence and a growing understanding of animals not as stimulus-response machines but as sentient beings, has broken the consensus model of dog domestication—leaving intact little more than the recognition of the grey wolf, *Canis lupus*, as progenitor of the dog. Everything else, it seems, is up for grabs.



Border Collie

According to the old view, the dog arose around 15,000 years ago in the Middle East. (Or in China, south of the Yangtze River, an alternate possible origin point added in the last decade in an attempt to reconcile archaeological evidence with emerging DNA evidence.)

The first major challenge to the consensus came in 1997, when an international team of biologists published a paper in the journal *Science* placing the origin of the dog as early as 135,000 years ago. Their date was based on analysis of mitochondrial DNA, which is passed on to offspring through females and is believed to change little from generation to generation; it allows scientists to calculate the time when populations or species separated genetically. This analysis suggested that wolves could have become dogs wherever in Eurasia they associated closely with early humans, and that even after the split was made, dogs and wolves continued to interbreed.



Chihuahua

In short, because of their natural affinities, wherever and whenever wolves and humans met on the trail, some of them began to keep company. Often, when socialized wolves died, there were no others immediately available to replace them. But sometimes several socialized wolves would mate or a socialized female would mate with a "wild" wolf and then have her litter near the human camp. The pups would stay or go, according to their natures. This kind of arrangement could have continued for a considerable period. Any number of them could ultimately have produced dogwolves or dogs. Most of those lines would have vanished over time.

The DNA evidence remained controversial for years, even as most major studies placed the genetic separation of wolf and dog at earlier dates than those favored by archaeologists. Hard proof was slow to appear. The Chauvet Cave paw print once provided the only physical evidence for the existence of dogs before 15,000 years ago—and it was, at best, an indirect piece of support.

Then in 2008, Mietje Germonpré, a paleontologist at the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Science and the leader of an international team of scientists, re-examined fossil material excavated from Goyet Cave in Belgium in the late 19th century and announced the identification of a 31,700-year-old dog, a large and powerful animal who ate reindeer, musk oxen and horses. The dogwolf from Goyet Cave was a creature of the Aurignacian culture that had produced the art in Chauvet Cave.

Last July, another international team identified the remains of a 33,000-year-old "incipient dog" from the Altai Mountains in southern Siberia. This month, Ms. Germonpré confirmed another find, this one in the Czech Republic, of the remains of a 26,000- to 27,000-year-old dog that had been buried with a bone in its mouth—perhaps to fuel it as it accompanied its human companion to the afterlife.

While the old consensus model held that the first dogs were small, these and other recently identified early dogs are large animals, often with shorter noses and broader faces than today's wolves. These early dogs appear in the camps of hunters of horses, reindeer, mammoths and other big game. From all appearances, they were pack animals, guards, hunters and companions. They are perhaps best viewed as the offspring of highly socialized wolves who had begun breeding in or near human camps.

Our view of domestication as a process has also begun to change, with recent research showing that, in dogs, alterations in only a small number of genes can have large effects in terms of size, shape and behavior. Far from being a product of the process of domestication, the mutations that separated early dogs from wolves may have arisen naturally in one or more small populations; the mutations were then perpetuated by humans through directed breeding. Geneticists have identified, for instance, a mutation in a single gene that appears to be responsible for smallness in dogs, and they have shown that the gene itself probably came from Middle Eastern wolves.

All of this suggests that it was common for highly socialized wolves and people to form alliances. It also leads logically to the conclusion that the first dogs were born on the move with bands of hunter-gatherers—not around semi-permanent pre-agricultural settlements. This may explain why it has proven so difficult to identify a time and place of domestication.

Taken together, these recent discoveries have led some scientists to conclude that the dog became an evolutionary inevitability as soon as humans met wolves. Highly social wolves and highly social humans started walking, playing and hunting together and never stopped. The dog is literally the wolf who stayed, who traded wolf society for human society.

Humans did wield a significant influence over dogs, of course, by using breeding to perpetuate mutations affecting their shape, size and physical abilities. Recent studies suggest that the dog has unique abilities among animals to follow human directions and that its capacity for understanding words can approach that of a two-year-old child. To various degrees, humans appear to have concentrated those and other characteristics and traits through selective breeding.

Since the advent of scientific breeding in the late 18th century, humans have altered the look and temperament of the dog more than they had over thousands of preceding years. A team of gene-sequencers at the Broad Institute of Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of

Technology estimated that the dog lost 4% of its genetic diversity during its initial separation from the wolf. Much greater losses have occurred as a result of modern breed formation, one result of which is the more than 400 inheritable diseases to which purebreds are uniquely vulnerable.

Recent genetic evidence has confirmed that certain basic types—pariah dogs, sight hounds, mastiffs, spitz-type dogs and small dogs—arose very early in the transformation of wolf to dog. These dogs adapted to their homelands and often had special talents as hunters, guards and eventually herders. These characteristics were often perpetuated over time.

Scientific breeders believed they could improve on nature by consolidating several similar types into one breed or isolating a few prize specimens from a larger population. In both cases, they relied on inbreeding to create and perpetuate the look and talents they wanted. With the advent of kennel clubs in the mid-19th century, the pace of breed creation picked up.

Breeders began to create dogs to fit the needs of the wealthy—from sporting dogs that could point and retrieve fowl, to little puppy-like lap dogs. The dog proved to be a wonderful animal for testing the skill of breeders, since it could be stretched in size from two to 200 pounds.

Purebred dogs were expensive commodities until after World War II, when they became symbols of arrival in the middle class. Increased demand led to increased breeding, often in puppy mills. The resulting dogs had health and behavior problems from bad breeding and the poor care of pregnant females and newborn puppies.

In some cases, the traits that breeders desire are inherited along with unwanted, debilitating conditions—such as when blindness and epilepsy accompany particular coat styles and eye colors. In many regards, the original, naturally occurring breeds were healthier and better at their appointed tasks than their purebred heirs.

But this is just the most recent chapter of a long tale. The tableau in the mud of Chauvet Cave is a stark reminder that dogs and humans have traveled together for tens of thousands of years, from ancient hunting camps to farms, ranches cities and suburbs—from the tropics to the poles. The relationship has endured not because dogs are juvenilized wolves but because they are dogs—our faithful companions.

Mr. Derr's most recent book is "How the Dog Became the Dog: From Wolves to Our Best Friends."

Pleated_Jeans.com

[The United States of Scary Things](#)

by Jeff Wysaski

Halloween is creeping up! In honor of the scariest of all holidays, here's a map that shows you've got something to be scared about no matter which state you live in.





