

# The Debt We Leave Behind

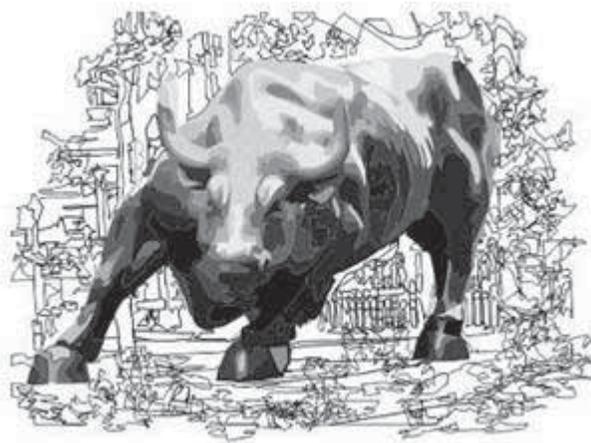
BY Donato (Danny) Pietrodangelo

Yes, we are leaving a weighty debt to our children and grandchildren.

But, it has nothing to do with money or the national deficit. Rather, it's a country forgetting the moral imperative of helping, – loving one's place at risk of losing the core principles of social responsibility and economic possibility accepting, instead, business and economic inequity which holds: what's mine is mine and what's yours is, well, as little as possible especially if it threatens what's mine.

It's a country that takers and scorns handout, a culture sanctions corporate healthcare for the accepts underfunded as providing centers conscience and as fiscal trade high paying jobs.

We're at risk of Gekko world that casts government as



sees the struggling as public assistance as a which tacitly greed, reserves well-heeled and higher education, not for the evolution of knowledge, but rather schools that lead to

passing on a Gordon celebrates greed and the work of the devil.

It doesn't need to be like that.

That world view or variations on the theme seem to be at the core of Mr. Moore's recent and previous essays in the Democrat (Tallahassee Democrat, December 30, 2012 )

You talk of unbridled free enterprise, lower taxes and less government as the magic elixir for economic growth and higher employment. Really? Last year, corporate profits were the highest in history with 500 companies in the US – including Apple, Microsoft Google and Cisco – socking away as much as \$5 trillion in surpluses. Let me write that out: \$5,000,000,000,000. That's nearly a third of the nationally debt.

They did though, spread some of it around to the CEOs, like JPMorgan Chase's, Jamie Dimon who, according to Forbes was paid \$42,000,000 last year – an unconscionable \$807.692.00 per week, At the same year, the average worker was taking home about \$662 a week. Then there's Wal-Mart's Michael Duke whose 2012 salary was \$23,100,000. That's \$2,230 per hour; the average employee wage at Wal-Mart is \$8.84 per hour. That means for every \$250 given to the CEO, an employee earns one penny - .01 cents.

So please, tell me this: instead of squirreling it away, why haven't these corporations taped into their trillion dollar nest egg and put it to work in our country? Why haven't they used it to retool and retrain workers and bring off-shore jobs -- and off-shore bank accounts -- back home? Why hasn't it been used for higher wages and better health insurance plans?

The short answer would be greed; the earlier mentioned what's mine is mine....

So why should we believe that lower taxes on the wealthy and unbridled corporate profits will have us singing happy days are here again?

As to excessive government regulation, I won't toss around the

common clichés like fresh water and bridges and roads and safe foods and oil spills and Katrina and Sandy. But let's use an example of something simple, some of which are just down the road from here: wetlands. These seas of grass, mangrove and marsh, like the Everglades, are vital to the state's ecosystem and economy, a few examples being water quality, tourism and commercial and recreational fishing.

If not for the foresight of Florida lawmakers in the 1970s and 80s and all those pesky regulations they put in place,

the St. Marks's lighthouse would be surrounded by Taco Bells and timeshares, and the Everglades, by now would be a fully toxic bog of pesticides and insecticides – where there weren't casinos and condos – one that even the pythons wouldn't want.

And, blaming Presidents Carter and Clinton for the mortgage debacle is way off the rails. As the risk of oversimplification, yes, regulations opened up access to mortgages, but no one made the banks write bad loans -- except their own Gekko-greedy bankers.

It seems Thomas Jefferson was peering into the future when he wrote, “I believe that banking institutions are more dangerous to our liberties than standing armies....”

Finally, your contention, no your snicking about voter expectations for success given over success earned. As a struggling small businessman – and voter -- I find that statement demeaning and offensive.

Please, take a look around you Mr. Moore: Empty storefronts, bare parking lots, and buildings with the lights off and for sale signs out front, foreclosure notices on front doors.

What were these owners and tenants given?

You've had the good fortune and skill to operate successful businesses. Not so for many of the rest of us. Hard work, high skills, great ideas are no longer synonymous with earning success. In this economy the only thing that's been readily given are hard times and more debt.

So let's agree to disagree, you, with your Adam Smith viewpoint, and me holding as true the words of a wartime president.

Too much government regulation? Well, as James Madison wrote “If men were angels, no government would be necessary.”

Along the same lines, again with all due respect sir, you seem to whine a lot about the trials and tribulations of development and permitting. But didn't you recently get 175 acres rezoned at I-10 and Mahan to development something called an “outdoor life mall.”

That would suggest the process is not all that onerous. Bemoaning development woes is so yesterday. Really. Look around. Does Tallahassee look development deprived?

And I find all of this, “What would the Founding Fathers think?” tiring. What would our Founding Fathers think if they were told that 200 years later their lofty ideal would be a nation where about 17 million kids go around hungry every day, where 15 percent of the nation lives below the poverty level, a country that ranks about two in infant mortality among the top 33 industrialized nations in world and 17th in education.

Indeed, WWOFFT?

Let's keep it real here: The Founding Fathers suspicion of government was warranted. They had lived under the tyranny of a king and the eyes of an occupying army. When it comes to the role of government today, in a democratic, hyper-tech America, comparisons are a bit absurd.

“The legitimate object of government, is to do for a community of people, whatever they need to have done, but cannot do, at all, or cannot, so well do, for themselves - in their separate, and individual capacities.” Amen, Brother Abraham.