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Subject: Greg Brown's Weekend Reading and Other Things.... 01/13/13

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Attachments: Are 'grand bargains' still possible_C_=?WINDOWS-1252?Q?hris_Cillizza=5FTWP=5FJanuary_6,_2012.pdf?=
Book_review,'The_Insurgents'_by_Fred_Kaplan_and_◆My_Share_of_the_Task'_by_Stanley_A._McChrystal_Greg_Jaffe_TWP_January_5,_2013.pdf;
2012_Hottest_Year_On_Record_For_Lower_48_States_Andrew_Freedman_Huff_Post_Green_01_08-13.pdf;
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Dear Friends....

In the month of going over the "Fiscal Cliff," debt negotiations, gun violence that has the NRA advocating arming teacher and a potential government shutdown so that Republican conservatives can say that the President Obama is a weak leader to assuage their beat-down in the 2012 November Presidential election.... little has changed for the elderly, poor and young. One of the reasons is the immense amount of special interest money that has clouded the issues and facts to the point that few people care about anything that doesn't affect them personally. As a result, since Ronald Reagan's election in 1980, the top one percent of Americans have seen their incomes increase by 275 percent. But after accounting for inflation, the typical hourly wage for a worker has increased just \$1.23 cents. I was taught to believe that America had a level playing field.... For the past 32 years this has not been true... We need to get back to believing that we are our brother's keeper....And in the richest country in the world, there shouldn't be any children going to bed hungry or old people having to choose being buying meds or dinner. Finally.... lets make jobs the country's #1 priority, as we can't grow the economy without expanding employment. To think that the big banks and corporations who are sitting on more than \$2 trillion in cash, can be induced to invest this money with additional tax breaks/incentives, that will stimulate the country's economy is naive.... This is the government's job.... Hopefully our Politicians will allow the government to do its job..... And protecting a\America, should start within the borders (food, lodging, healthcare, education, environment, personal security, infrastructure), before Nation Building in Afghanistan or Iraq.... Lets make protecting of our elders, children, our poor and

our environment our priorities.... And ask our politicians how come someone who is on the no-fly list can buy as many guns as they want in WalMart, when they can't buy a CD that has gun in the lyrics of the songs.....

Last week in an **Wall Street Journal** editorial, ***Crony Capitalist Blowout*** – In praising Congress's huge new tax increase, President Obama said Tuesday that "*millionaires and billionaires*" will finally "*pay their fair share.*" That is, unless you are a Nascar track owner, a wind-energy company or the owners of StarKist Tuna, among many others who managed to get their taxes reduced in Congress's New Year celebration. There's plenty to lament about the capital and income tax hikes, but the bill's seedier underside is the \$40 billion or so in tax payoffs to every crony capitalist and special pleader with a lobbyist worth his million-dollar salary. Congress and the White House want everyone to ignore this corporate-welfare blowout, so allow us to shine a light on the merriment.

The biggest joke is that Washington pretends to want to pass "*comprehensive tax reform,*" when each year it adds more and more tax giveaways that distorts the tax code and suggest that tax rates are higher than they need to be. Even as he praised the bill full of this stuff, President Obama called Tuesday night for "further reforms to our tax code so that the wealthiest corporations and individuals can't take advantage of loopholes and deductions that aren't available to most Americans." While Lloyd Blankfein, CEO and Chairman of the global investment giant Goldman Sachs, when asked by CBS News' Scott Pelley about how he would reduce the federal deficit, his response: "*You're going to have to undoubtedly do something to lower people's expectations the entitlements and what people think that they're going to get, because it's not going to they're not going to get it.*"

At the same time Goldman makes sure their entitlements aren't touched. Example: After 9/11 Congress created tax-exempt Liberty Zone bonds to help small businesses rebuild near Ground Zero. Turns out Goldman's friends in high places consider it a small business, too, although it made \$5.6 billion dollars in profits last year. As the fiscal cliff fiasco was playing out over New Year's Eve, faster than the ball dropped in Times Square, a deal was struck in Washington that will extend the subsidies for Goldman's fancy new headquarters in lower Manhattan. In their 43 stories of glass and steel, and a footprint two city blocks long, Goldman Sachs reigns supreme, thanks to a system rigged by and for the powerful rich.

And then this. Just hours before the fiscal cliff deal's with higher individual tax rates kicking in, Goldman handed Lloyd Blankfein and his top lieutenants "*a total of \$65 million in restricted stock,*" bonuses awarded a month earlier than usual so they could all beat the coming tax hike and the company was also spared another 10 lucrative years with an extension designed for small businesses. It should not surprise you that "corporations announced more special dividends last month than in any other December since at least 1955." And doing everything they can to avoid helping pay off the debt their CEOs have been urging Congress to cut.

Let's look at Pete Peterson, Nixon's Secretary of the Commerce, billionaire several times over who has set up this "*Fix the Debt*" campaign and is said to be putting half a billion dollars into trying to influence the public. And it's not just *Fix the Debt*, that's just the latest incarnation. There's also the *Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget*, there's the newspaper "*The Fiscal Times*," there's several others. It's a whole portfolio. They all are *Peterson Foundation* money at the roots, but they're all out there. And yeah, serious attempts to influence public debate are not, by and large, a very lavishly funded enterprise. So when you've got a half a billion dollars, \$500 million of spending with one agenda is going to have a huge impact. And policy intellectuals, by and large come cheap, a few hundred thousand in consulting contracts could do a lot there.

How are we going to achieve income equality and for all Americans when special interest money can make public opinion believe that the debt ceiling is more important than feeding the country's poor and that arming teachers can prevent a disturbed individual from shooting a classroom full of kids, after he killed his mother who was a gun enthusiast and bought the weapons that were used to kill her legally. Lost in this discussion was

a shooting in Taft High School in California where an armed teenager who shot several fellow student (and it wasn't an arm guard that stopped this tragedy from spiraling out of control), it was a personally committed heroic teacher (Ryan Heber), armed only with compassion and the skills to engage a deeply disturbed 16 year old student to lay down his weapons.....

We need to stop this craziness....

One of my favorite shows and the gold standard on television is **WGBH/PBS, FRONTLINE**, which spent months following three young girls (and their siblings) who are growing up against the backdrop of their families' struggles against financial ruin. At a time when one in five American kids lives below the poverty line, **"Poor Kids"** is an intimate portrait of the economic crisis as it's rarely seen, through the eyes of children. In **Frontline's** latest documentary, **Poor Kids**, children are all too aware of their family's financial situation. With millions of children living below the poverty line, **Poor Kids** explores daily life of living hand to mouth and not having enough, through the eyes of children. The film's writer, producer and director, is Jezza Neumann.

In American today child poverty has reach record levels, with more than 16 million children now affected. One in thirteen Americans is now unemployed and many children are growing up with little hope for their future. Food banks struggle to keep up with demand and homeless shelter have long waiting list, as even Middle Class families sometimes lose their homes with just a few days notice. In this week's show **FRONTLINE** follows these children living in poverty for a glimpse at what life is like for a child in need. There is the near-constant hunger, the stress that comes from watching a parent struggle, and oftentimes, days and weeks spent living in a shelter or bouncing from motel to motel. And these same challenges face almost all children living in poverty to one degree or another.

The twelve year old girl whose mother is pregnant, ***"I think that it would be difficult for the baby to grow up here because we don't have alot of money.... We don't have the money for us to buy diapers for it and food for it.... But the good part is that my mom is happy, my family is happy.... I don't really care if I am happy or not, I just care if my family is happy."***

"I think that the thing that I miss the most after having this all happen is the Internet. Because people don't realize what they have until it is gone." He sighs, ***"I am having serious WarCraft withdrawals, man.... Cause in World WarCraft, I am awesome, I am a level 85 Paladin, tank and healer..... and in real life a fourteen year old boy with nothing going..."***

Nearly half of all kids in single-parent households, live in poverty. In the richest country in the world shouldn't everybody in America have food and housing... the poorest families.... a place to live and food to eat.... And it is not that way...

"All that I want is to play football, but football is expensive... I can name a few items that I need and want for my sports but I got to wait on until the next time that momma can afford it. I am fourteen... my life is almost over ... until I'm a grown man because if I don't have the opportunity to show somebody that I can play football, football won't exist in four years you know.... and if I don't get to play on a team this year that dream is going to slowly start fade away.... That's what happen to so many dreams of kids..."

Talking about her new baby sister another twelve year old, “the baby’s future is really going to be messed up because there are hardly going to be any jobs in the future or any money and rich people are going to be poor...”

The other twelve year old girl, *“we are back in this motel again because we got kicked out of the duplex, my mother didn't pay rent and then we went to Motel 6, then we went to this Twin Bridges Hotel and then we went to here..... Oh God we went to so many places that even talking about it makes me dizzy.”* Because they have been moving around so much the Mother hasn't been able to sign her children in any schools. As such, this girl again asks her mother, *“why can I go to school.”* To which the Mother tells her daughter that she will put her in school in a couple of weeks when they move into another trailer. The young girl responds..... *“If I keep missing school.... I see my future on a stool in a bar asking for money everywhere, everybody and stealing stuff from stores... and I don't want to steal stuff, I don't want to do any of that stuff..... I want to get an education and a good job..... I believe that I can get a perfect job that I like and I want to do..... People can't stop you from believing in your own dreams....”* It was heartbreaking.....

The figures below underscore many of the challenges facing all of the children living in poverty.

\$23,050

The federal poverty guideline for a family of four is [\\$23,050](#), up from [\\$20,650](#) before the start of the recession. Today's poverty guidelines compare with a median household income in the U.S. of [\\$50,054](#).

Between 13.4 and 16.5 million

Determining the exact number of children living in poverty can depend on what Census calculation you go by. More than 16 million children, or roughly one in five, were living in poverty in 2011, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's [official poverty measure](#). That is higher than any other age group. Among 18- to 64-year-olds, the poverty rate was 13.7 percent, while among seniors the rate was 8.7 percent. The Census Bureau's official figures fail to paint a complete picture, though. The formula the government uses to calculate the poverty rate was designed in the 1960s, and does not account for expenses that are necessary to even hold a job — such as transportation costs and child care. Nor does the formula account for government programs for the needy, such as food stamps and the Earned Income Tax Credit. When the Census Bureau [factors in](#) those types of variables in [a new experimental formula](#) the number of children found to be living in poverty falls to 13.4 million.

- \$5 billion

Despite the safety net's record of lifting children out of poverty, the amount of federal spending on children in 2011 dropped from \$450 billion to \$445 billion, according to an analysis [from The Urban Institute](#).

The study accounted for spending on programs such as Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program, and tax expenditures like the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax

Credit. In all, the decline marked the first time that spending on children fell since the 1980s, and came in a year when total federal spending rose to \$3.6 trillion from \$3.52 trillion.

47.6 percent

The nation's poorest kids primarily live in [households headed by a single female](#). Nearly half of all children with a single mother — 47.6 percent — live in poverty. Indeed, the children of single mothers experience poverty at a rate that is more than four times higher than kids in married-couple families.

38.2 percent

Black children are more likely to live in poverty than children of any other race. The poverty rate among black children is [38.2 percent](#), more than twice as high as the rate among whites. The poverty rate for Hispanic children is 32.3 percent.

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Twenty-four states and the District of Columbia have poverty rates [higher than the national average](#) of 15 percent, with the majority of the nation's poor situated in the south. With a rate of 22.6 percent, Mississippi had the highest proportion of residents below the poverty line. At 8.8 percent, New Hampshire had the lowest. In Iowa and Illinois, where *Poor Kids* was filmed, the poverty rate is 12.8 percent and 15 percent, respectively.

45 percent

The longer a child lives in poverty, the tougher it can be for them to climb out later in life. According to [an analysis](#) by Columbia University's National Center for Children in Poverty, 45 percent of people who spent at least half of their childhood in poverty were poor at age 35. Among those who spent less than half of their childhood in poverty, just 8 percent were poor at age 35.

3

Only three other countries in the developed world have [a higher child poverty rate](#) than the U.S., according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Mexico leads all nations with a rate of 25.79, followed by Chile (23.95), Turkey (23.46), and the U.S. (21.63).

THIS WEEKEND'S READING

This week in **The Washington Post**, Chris Cillizza wrote this op-ed — *Are 'grand bargains' still possible?* — or any sort of large, legislative measures requiring significant bipartisan compromise. Lets be real, because without grand bargains, all that politicians do is kick cans down the road, with little being accomplished, if any.

For much of the last decade in politics, the idea of our government coming together to solve debt and spending issues, the immigration conundrum or that most forgotten of issues, a comprehensive energy solution, has always seemed within sight but slightly out of reach. And in the last 18 months, attempts to address the country's uncertain financial future in some grand way have failed twice: First in the summer of 2011 when discussions between President Obama and House Speaker John Boehner (R) on the debt ceiling collapsed amid anger and finger-pointing and then late last year when discussions between Obama and Boehner collapsed amid anger and finger-pointing.

Those two failures have set up what amounts to the granddaddy of them all in late February/early March when three things will happen: the debt ceiling will (again) need to be raised, the government will run out of money and need to be re-funded, and the package of automatic, across-the-board cuts in military and domestic spending — a.k.a. sequestration — will kick in. There's plenty of reason to believe that the idea that the government can, will — or even wants to — rise to the occasion (as both Boehner and Obama have advocated in recent days) is a total fallacy.

Consider, aside from the failure of the two most recent tries to cut a grand bargain, the following facts:

* Of the 234 House Republicans elected on Nov. 6, 2012, just 39 — or 16.6 percent — were reelected with 55 percent of the vote or less, the traditional benchmark for vulnerability in future general elections. Of that same group, only 15 of the 234 — 6 percent — represent districts that Obama won in the 2012 election. (Ninety-six percent of Democrats represent districts Obama won.) Those numbers make a clear political case that the only danger for most GOP members of the House is in a primary, not a general election. And, the best way to avoid a primary is to hold the ideological line on any and everything. Compromise with Democrats is the quickest and best way to shorten a career. The best example of that new political reality? The fact that Boehner couldn't even get his plan that would have raised taxes on those making \$1 million and more to the floor of the House late last year.

* Polarization in the country is at an all-time high. In Pew polling conducted since 1987 that tests Democrats and Republicans on four dozen values questions, there is an 18-point gap in how the two sides respond — the largest ever measured. That includes a 41 percent difference in how Democrats and Republicans view the "social safety net" (it was a 23-point margin in 1987) and a 39 percent chasm on the environment. The vast majority of the increased polarization has come in the past decade — during the presidencies of George W. Bush and Barack Obama. According to the Pew study: "Both parties have become smaller and more ideologically homogeneous...[the] values gap between Republicans and Democrats is now greater than gender, age, race or class divides."

* Republicans lack a clear — or even fuzzy — leader. Democrats might have celebrated the collapse of Boehner's bargaining power in the fiscal cliff negotiations but, in truth, a powerless (or, at the least, a less powerful) Boehner is a bad thing for a grand bargain down the line. While Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) stepped into the void left by Boehner to cut a deal with the White House, it's important to remember that McConnell represents the Senate minority while Boehner represents the House majority. Any grand bargain will have to make it through the House and it's hard to see Boehner doing that unless a large number (a majority?) of his members are supportive of it. And it's not clear at the moment that Boehner can ensure that they could (or will) be. The rest of the Republican party leadership roster — former Florida governor Jeb Bush, Florida Sen. Marco Rubio, Wisconsin Rep. Paul Ryan, New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal — all seem to be holding off at the moment, keeping an eye on how it all plays out before weighing in politically. All that means that there's no person on Obama's political level who he can negotiate with at the moment. That's a major problem for deal-lovers.

As such, Cillizza says that all signs point to the fact that if the grand bargain isn't dead, it's darn close. Miraculous comebacks happen in politics, which makes it worth watching, but they are the exception not the rule. Given that, it may

be time to accept the idea of Washington doing big things in a bipartisan way is a thing of the past — perhaps never to be recovered. If Washington is unable to do grand bargains, it can't competently govern and the country will suffer. And the only way that this will change is by both the press and public focusing on the solution instead of the conflict, because who wins or loses is unimportant when little or nothing is accomplished — because the country and its citizens loses and the politicians, media and the public have a mutual responsibility to enact laws that benefit the country as a whole.

In reviewing the books — *'The Insurgents'* by Fred Kaplan and *'My Share of the Task'* by Stanley A. McChrystal — in **The Washington Post** by Greg Jaffe — he chronicles the strategies, histories and contributions of Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal and Gen. David H. Petraeus, pertaining to the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere. As I mentioned last week, one of my father's favorite sayings was "*history is always re-written by the winners.*" McChrystal is now being re-framed as an reluctant assassin. And until the sex scandal recently forced him to step down as CIA director, the soldier-scholar able to outrun troops half his age (Petraeus), and the ascetic warrior (McChrystal) became the most influential generals of their generations, mythologized in the media.

Their counterinsurgency doctrine — a product of intensive study and relentless marketing — formed the foundation of Petraeus's strategy in Iraq in 2007. The Army manual was downloaded more than 1.5 million times in its first month and landed a lengthy review in the **New York Times**. By 2009 it was being celebrated as the answer to America's mounting woes in Afghanistan as well.

Both set out to remake their Army and change the American way of war. And both succeeded, though not always in the way they intended. The counterinsurgency revolution that Petraeus and McChrystal championed also has largely run its course, killed off by budget cuts and America's exhaustion with the two wars.

Kaplan's and McChrystal's accounts converge in Afghanistan, where McChrystal, a new four-star commander, faced a war that was deteriorating rapidly. He singled out the corrupt and predatory Afghan government as the driving force behind the Taliban's resurgence. He asked for 40,000 more soldiers and Marines, who were to live with Afghan army forces, protect villagers from Taliban attacks and rebuild the Afghan government. His approach was classic counterinsurgency.

The most prominent attack on the strategy came from the U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan, Karl Eikenberry, a retired three-star general who had been the commander of U.S. forces several years earlier. Eikenberry argued that McChrystal's strategy was sure to fail as long as Hamid Karzai was Afghanistan's president. "It strains credulity to expect Karzai to change fundamentally this late in his life and in our relationship," he wrote in a classified cable to Washington.

At the time, McChrystal saw the Eikenberry cable as a betrayal. In his memoir, though, he devotes only a few paragraphs to it. "There was little of Karl's analysis that I disagreed with," he writes. "But based on my understanding of the mission the President had given us, I concluded that we had few options, and none of them were easy or enticing."

The Eikenberry cable, however, points to a fundamental problem with Petraeus's and McChrystal's counterinsurgency doctrine, which seeks to bolster the local government's legitimacy in order to win over the populace and sap the guerillas' strength. If a country's ruling elite do not share America's interests or are unwilling to change their corrupt ways, even the most sophisticated counter-insurgents are doomed to fail, Kaplan concludes. To that end, he derides McChrystal for foolishly "kowtowing" to Karzai in the hope that he might be able to change the Afghan president.

The brief counterinsurgency renaissance that Petraeus and McChrystal inspired is finished. The Obama administration sealed its demise last year when it ordered the Army to stop using the doctrine in its planning

for future conflicts, and announced this past week jointly with President Karzai of an accelerated troop withdrawal. Meanwhile, the President has ramp-up the lethal targeting machine that McChrystal built in Iraq. Today, McChrystal's commandos are fighting an endless and secret war in far-flung locales such as Yemen, Afghanistan and Somalia. This is the new American way of war. McChrystal will be remembered as the general who reluctantly created it. And now using another favorite saying of my father, their biographers, "***are trying to make the truth sound good.***"

Whether or not you believe that global warming is one of the by-products of climate change as Andrew Freedman wrote in **The Huffington Post** this week – **2012 Hottest Year On Record For Lower 48 States, NOAA Confirms**. And the numbers are in: the year of a surreal March heat wave, a severe drought in the corn belt and a massive storm that caused broad devastation in the mid-Atlantic states, turns out to have been the hottest year ever recorded in the contiguous United States.

The temperature differences between years are usually measured in fractions of a degree, but last year blew away the previous record, set in 1998, by a full degree Fahrenheit. And 34,008 new daily high records were set at weather stations across the country, compared with only 6,664 new record lows, according to a count maintained by the [Weather Channel](#) meteorologist Guy Walton, using federal temperature records. That ratio, which was roughly in balance as recently as the 1970s, has been out of whack for decades as the country has warmed, but never by as much as it was last year.

As I wrote in last week's Weekend Readings, two major scientific reports recently concluded that unless we slow the release of global emissions from fossil fuels, slow it enough to keep the planet's temperature from rising by two degrees Celsius, (*or 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit*), the earth's polar ice sheets will melt away -- with catastrophic consequences, such as Hurricane Sandy and the other extreme weather of the past two years, is just the beginning.

Again four, five degrees, may not sound like very much as we see the temperature change more from night to day, but if you think about it as how the human body responds to temperature changes. Your body is usually at, 98.6 degrees. If your temperature rises by one degree you feel a little off, but you can still go to work. You're fine. When it rises by two degrees and you're now feeling sick, you're probably going to take the day off because you definitely don't feel good. And in fact, you're getting everything from hot flashes to cold chills, okay. At three you're starting to get really sick. And at four degrees and five degrees your brain is actually slipping into a coma, as you are close to death. Obviously there is a no correlation between human body and the planet's temperature, but like the human body the planet is a finely tuned organism and climate change caused by temperature change causes radical consequences.

If the country's climate temperature can raise a full degree Fahrenheit in one year, this is a serious troubling sign, as experts are saying that when we go through the two-degree mark, we may be at the tipping point and on the way towards three degrees, four degrees and perhaps even six degrees Fahrenheit. Although the 2012 record temperature was framed in Fahrenheit it is more than half of a degree Celsius and should be a serious warning.

Scientists and others point out that natural variability almost certainly played a role in last year's extreme heat and drought. But many of them expressed doubt that such a striking new record would have been set without the backdrop of [global warming](#) caused by the human release of greenhouse gases. And they warned that 2012 was likely a foretaste of things to come, as continuing warming makes heat extremes more likely. And the last year's record for the United States is not expected to translate into a global temperature record when figures are released in coming weeks. The year featured a [La Niña](#) weather pattern, which tends to cool the global climate over all, and scientists expect it to be the world's eighth or ninth warmest year on record.

Assuming that prediction holds up, it will mean that the 10 warmest years on record all fell within the past 15 years, a measure of how much the planet has warmed. Nobody who is under 28 has lived through a month of global temperatures that fell below the 20th-century average, because the last such month was February 1985. Last year's weather in the United States began with an unusually warm winter, with

relatively little snow across much of the country, followed by a March that was so hot that trees burst into bloom and swimming pools opened early. The soil dried out in the March heat, helping to set the stage for a drought that peaked during the warmest July on record. The drought engulfed 61 percent of the nation, killed corn and soybean crops and sent prices spiraling. Although it was not comparable to a severe drought in the 1930s that created the legendary Dust Bowl, it is comparable to the big droughts in the 1950s, Mr.

Extensive records covering the lower 48 states go back to 1895; Alaska and Hawaii have shorter records and are generally not included in long-term climate comparisons for that reason. Mr. Crouch pointed out that until last year, the coldest year in the historical record for the lower 48 states, 1917, was separated from the warmest year, 1998, by only 4.2 degrees Fahrenheit. That is why the 2012 record, and its one degree increase over 1998, strikes climatologists as so unusual.

In addition to being the nation's warmest year, 2012 turned out to be the second-worst on a measure called the [Climate Extremes Index](#), surpassed only by 1998. Experts are still counting, but so far 11 disasters in 2012 have exceeded a threshold of \$1 billion in damages, including several tornado outbreaks; Hurricane Isaac, which hit the Gulf Coast in August; and, late in the year, Hurricane Sandy, which caused damage likely to exceed \$60 billion in nearly half the states, primarily in the mid-Atlantic region. Among those big disasters was one bearing a label many people had never heard before: the [derecho](#), a line of severe, fast-moving thunderstorms that struck central and eastern parts of the country starting on June 29, killing more than 20 people, toppling trees and knocking out power for millions of households.

For people who escaped both the derecho and Hurricane Sandy relatively unscathed, the year may be remembered most for the sheer breadth and oppressiveness of the summer heat wave. By the calculations of the climatic data center, a third of the nation's population experienced 10 or more days of summer temperatures exceeding 100 degrees Fahrenheit.

Among the cities that set temperature records in 2012 were Nashville; Athens, Ga.; and Cairo, Ill., all of which hit 109 degrees on June 29; Greenville, S.C., which hit 107 degrees on July 1; and Lamar, Colo., which hit 112 degrees on June 27. And at the beginning of January, 61 percent of the country was still in moderate to severe drought conditions.

Echoing my earlier my earlier offerings on global warming this week in the **New York Times** article – ***Heat, Flood or Icy Cold, Extreme Weather Rages Worldwide*** – by Sarah Lyall, she points out that people may remember 2012 as the year the weather spun off its rails in a chaotic concoction of drought, deluge and flooding, but the unpredictability of it all turns out to have been all too predictable: Around the world, extreme has become the new commonplace.

Especially lately. China is enduring its coldest winter in nearly 30 years. Brazil is in the grip of a dreadful heat spell. Eastern Russia is so freezing – minus 50 degrees Fahrenheit, and counting – that the traffic lights recently stopped working in the city of Yakutsk. Bush fires are raging across Australia, fueled by a record-shattering heat wave. Pakistan was inundated by unexpected flooding in September. A vicious storm bringing rain, snow and floods just struck the Middle East. And in the United States, scientists confirmed this week what people could have figured out simply by going outside: last year was the hottest since records began.

Although every year we experience extreme weather, but it's unusual to have so many extreme events around the world at once. The heat wave in Australia; the flooding in the U.K., and most recently the flooding and extensive snowstorm in the Middle East – it's already a big year in terms of extreme weather calamity. Such events are increasing in intensity as well as frequency and a sign that climate change is not just about rising temperatures, but also about intense, unpleasant, anomalous weather of all kinds.

In Britain, people are used to thinking of rain as the wallpaper on life's computer screen – an omnipresent, almost comforting background presence. But even the hardiest citizen was rattled by the near-biblical fierceness of the rains that bucketed down, and the floods that followed, three different times in 2012. Rescuers plucked people by boat from their swamped homes in St. Asaph, North Wales. Whole areas of the country were cut off when roads and train tracks were inundated at Christmas. In Megavissey, Cornwall, a pub owner closed his business for good after it flooded 11 times in two months.

It was no anomaly: the floods of 2012 followed the floods of 2007 and also the floods of 2009, which all told have resulted in nearly \$6.5 billion in insurance payouts. The Met Office, Britain's weather service, declared 2012 the wettest year in England, and the second-wettest in Britain as a whole, since records began more than 100 years ago. Four of the five wettest years in the last century have come in the past decade (the fifth was in 1954). The biggest change, said Charles Powell, a spokesman for the Met Office, is the frequency in Britain of "extreme weather events" – defined as rainfall reaching the top 1 percent of the average amount for that time of year. Fifty years ago, such episodes used to happen every 100 days; now they happen every 70 days, he said.

The same thing is true in Australia, where bush fires are raging across Tasmania and the current heat wave has come after two of the country's wettest years ever. On Tuesday, Sydney experienced its fifth-hottest day since records began in 1910, with the temperature climbing to 108.1 degrees. The first eight days of 2013 were among the 20 hottest on record. Every decade since the 1950s has been hotter in Australia than the one before, said Mark Stafford Smith, science director of the Climate Adaptation Flagship at the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization.

To the north, the extremes have swung the other way, with a band of cold settling across Russia and Northern Europe, bringing thick snow and howling winds to Stockholm, Helsinki and Moscow. (Incongruously, there were also severe snowstorms in Sicily and southern Italy for the first time since [World War II](#); in December, tornadoes and waterspouts struck the Italian coast.) In Siberia, thousands of people were left without heat when natural gas liquefied in its pipes and water mains burst. Officials canceled bus transportation between cities for fear that roadside breakdowns could lead to deaths from exposure, and motorists were advised not to venture far afield except in columns of two or three cars. In Altai, to the east, traffic officials warned drivers not to use poor-quality diesel, saying that it could become viscous in the cold and clog fuel lines.

Meanwhile, China is enduring its worst winter in recent memory, with frigid temperatures recorded in Harbin, in the northeast. In the western region of Xinjiang, more than 1,000 houses collapsed under a relentless onslaught of snow, while in Inner Mongolia, 180,000 livestock froze to death. The cold has wreaked havoc with crops, sending the price of vegetables soaring. Way down in South America, energy analysts say that Brazil may face electricity rationing for the first time since 2002, as a heat wave and a lack of rain deplete the reservoirs for [hydroelectric](#) plants. The summer has been punishingly hot. The temperature in Rio de Janeiro climbed to 109.8 degrees on Dec. 26, the city's highest temperature since official records began in 1915.

At the same time, in the Middle East, Jordan is battling a storm packing torrential rain, snow, hail and floods that are cascading through tunnels, sweeping away cars and spreading misery in Syrian refugee camps. Amman has been virtually paralyzed, with cars abandoned, roads impassable and government offices closed. Israel and the [Palestinian](#) territories are grappling with similar conditions, after a week of intense rain and cold winds ushered in a snowstorm that dumped eight inches in Jerusalem alone.

In Britain, where changes to the positioning of the jet stream — a ribbon of air high up in the atmosphere that helps steer weather systems — may be contributing to the topsy-turvy weather, people are still recovering from the December floods. In Worcester last week, the river Severn remained flooded after three weeks, with playing fields buried under water. Climate change is real. It is here. And it is everywhere. And if man-made carbon emissions is adding to it, we may be closer to the tipping point of no return than ever imagined.

You really have to have some cojones when your reckless fraudulent practices brought the world's economy to the brink of collapse, causing the US government to provide \$182 billion in taxpayer's money for to bail you out, and then have the gall to consider suing the government who saved you from losing everything, in addition to lawsuits and potential jail sentences. See article in the **New York Times** by Ben Protess and Michael J. de la Merced — ***Rescued by a Bailout, A.I.G. May Sue Its Savior*** and the **New York Times** editorial — ***A Mind-Boggling Claim***.

While the American International Group has been running a nationwide advertising campaign with the tagline "Thank you America," behind the scenes, the restored insurance company is weighing whether to tell the government agencies that rescued it during the financial crisis: thanks, but you cheated our shareholders.

The board of A.I.G. met on Wednesday to consider joining a \$25 billion shareholder lawsuit against the government, court records show. The lawsuit does not argue that government help was not needed. It contends that the onerous nature of the rescue - the taking of what became a 92 percent stake in the company, the deal's high interest rates and the funneling of billions to the insurer's Wall Street clients - deprived shareholders of tens of billions of dollars and violated the Fifth Amendment, which prohibits the taking of private property for "public use, without just compensation."

Maurice R. Greenberg, A.I.G.'s former chief executive, who remains a major investor in the company, filed the lawsuit in 2011 on behalf of fellow shareholders. He has since urged A.I.G. to join the case, a move that could nudge the government into settlement talks. Mr. Greenberg is an 87-year-old former CEO of A.I.G. He was handpicked by its founder Cornelius Vander Starr in 1968 as his successor and held the position until 2005, when he stepped down amid a major leadership scandal and was replaced by Martin J. Sullivan. He was subsequently the subject of New York State accounting fraud and other civil charges which are still unresolved.

Starr argued that the actions violated the Fifth Amendment. "The government is not empowered to trample shareholder and property rights even in the midst of a financial emergency," the Starr

complaint says. The Treasury Department declined to comment. A spokesman for the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, Jack Gutt, said, "There is no merit to these allegations." He noted that "A.I.G.'s board of directors had an alternative choice to borrowing from the Federal Reserve, and that choice was bankruptcy."

A federal judge in Manhattan agreed, dismissing the case in November. In an 89-page opinion, Judge Paul A. Engelmayer wrote that while Starr's complaint "paints a portrait of government treachery worthy of an Oliver Stone movie," the company "voluntarily accepted the hard terms offered by the one and only rescuer that stood between it and imminent bankruptcy." The United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit recently agreed to review the case on an expedited timeline. The judge in the United States Court of Federal Claims in Washington, meanwhile, has declined to dismiss the case and continues to await A.I.G.'s decision.

Some government officials are already upset with the company for even seriously entertaining the lawsuit, people briefed on the matter said. The people, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, noted that without the bailout, A.I.G. shareholders would have fared far worse in bankruptcy. "On the one hand, from a corporate governance perspective, it appears they're being extra cautious and careful," said Frank Partnoy, a former banker who is now a professor of law and finance at the University of San Diego School of Law. "On the other hand, it's a slap in the face to the taxpayer and the government." This is why the AIG executives should have been criminally prosecuted.

The allegations ignore the fact that in September 2008 when the government stepped in to help A.I.G., no private investors were willing to finance the company, which many feared had been made insolvent by its enormous bets on mortgage-related investments. In fact, just four months before the bailout, Mr. Greenberg himself described the situation at the company as a "crisis." Had the Treasury and Federal Reserve not stepped in, A.I.G. would have filed for bankruptcy protection, wiping out its shareholders and institutions that it did business with.

If Mr. Greenberg and A.I.G. are truly interested in holding someone to account for the losses that the company's shareholders have suffered, they should look within. Why not sue the executives who pushed the company into making toxic investments or the board members who did a poor job supervising management? They are far more responsible for the losses the shareholders suffered than the government, which cleaned up the mess at a substantial risk to taxpayers.

The Treasury recently sold its remaining stake in the company for more than it invested, but it could very well have suffered huge losses had the Obama administration and Congress not taken steps to stabilize the economy and the housing market. A.I.G. should be praising, not suing, the government. And, in fact, the company has been running TV ads thanking the country for coming to its rescue. A.I.G.'s directors should keep those ads and the history of the bailout in mind and so should the government and US taxpayers. Thank God that AIG's board of directors decide against joining Greenberg's lawsuit, as this would have given black eyes to AIG, the government and the American taxpayers.

As David Brooks wrote in the **New York Times** this week in his article – ***Why Hagel Was Picked***, although Americans don't particularly like government, they definitely want government to subsidize their health care. And they believe that health care spending improves their lives more than any other public good. Medicare spending is set to nearly double over the next decade. This is the crucial element driving all federal spending over the next few decades and pushing federal debt to about 250 percent of G.D.P. in 30 years. As such there are no conceivable tax increases that can keep up with this spending rise and the Democrats had their best chance in a generation to raise revenue

just now, and all they got was a measly \$600 billion over 10 years. This is barely a wiggle on the revenue line and does nothing to change the overall fiscal picture.

As a result, health care spending, which people really appreciate, is squeezing out all other spending, which they value far less. Spending on domestic programs — for education, science, infrastructure and poverty relief — has already faced the squeeze and will take a huge hit in the years ahead. President Obama excoriated Paul Ryan for offering a budget that would cut spending on domestic programs from its historical norm of 3 or 4 percent of G.D.P. all the way back to 1.8 percent. But the Obama budget is the Ryan budget. According to the Office of Management and Budget, Obama will cut domestic discretionary spending back to 1.8 percent of G.D.P. in six years.

Advocates for children, education and the poor don't even try to defend their programs by lobbying for cutbacks in Medicare. They know that given the choice, voters and politicians care more about middle-class seniors than about poor children. So far, defense budgets have not been squeezed by the Medicare vice. But that is about to change. Oswald Spengler didn't get much right, but he was certainly correct when he told European leaders that they could either be global military powers or pay for their welfare states, but they couldn't do both.

Europeans, who are ahead of us in confronting that decision, have chosen welfare over global power. European nations can no longer perform many elemental tasks of moving troops and fighting. As late as the 1990s, Europeans were still spending 2.5 percent of G.D.P. on defense. Now that spending is closer to 1.5 percent, and, amid European malaise, it is bound to sink further. The United States will undergo a similar process. The current budget calls for a steep but possibly appropriate decline in defense spending, from 4.3 percent of G.D.P. to 3 percent, according to the Congressional Budget Office. As Brooks points out, defense planners are notoriously bad at estimating how fast postwar military cuts actually come. After Vietnam, the cold war and the 1991 gulf war, they vastly underestimated the size of the cuts that eventually materialized. And those cuts weren't forced by the Medicare vice.

As the federal government becomes more of a health care state, there will have to be a generation of defense cuts that overwhelm anything in recent history, with Medicare being the last to be cut. Brooks opt-ed suggest that cutting military funding is the country's biggest security threat. And that Republican and highly decorated Chuck Hagel, provides a Democrat President political cover to cut defense funding to European levels. Brooks blames voters for any American military decline. I see it differently. Our military budget is larger than the next 17 countries combined and we are no safer than any of our allies. Hence this is a waste of money and at least an inefficient use of taxpayers' money. And the fact that Hagel is not a neocon looking for the next enemy/war, allows the country to recalibrate its defense strategy and hopefully will keep us out of unnecessary military conflict.

As Robert Samuelson wrote this week in **The Washington Post** – *If we can't kill farm subsidies, what can we kill?* Government subsidies began in the 1930s to protect small farms, which are down by 70% with \$10 to \$15 billion going to large corporate farming. On top of this, farmers don't need subsidies to stay profitable as farm income in 2011 and 2012 (\$135 billion and \$133 billion, respectively) were the highest and second-highest ever and would have been without subsidies. Subsidies were initially instituted as an antidote for above-average instability, such as floods, droughts, insects and wide price swings. But this is no longer true because of technology and sophisticated hedging practices. Obviously government support for agricultural research and food safety is justified but direct subsidies to farmers can't, because if they ended tomorrow, wheat would still be grown in Kansas.

While many agricultural direct payments to farmers have been eliminated, the savings have been diverted into a new subsidy ("agriculture risk coverage") and expanded crop insurance, with crop insurance going from \$1.5

billion in 2002 to \$7.4 billion in 2011. Hence the shell game continues. Farm subsidies are a metaphor for our larger predicament. We no longer have the luxury — as we did for decades — of carrying marginal, ineffectual or wasteful programs. We can no longer afford subsidies for those who don't need them or, at least, don't need so many of them (including affluent Social Security and Medicare recipients). If we can't eliminate the least valuable spending, then we will be condemned to perpetually large deficits, huge tax increases or indiscriminate cuts in many federal programs, the good as well as the bad.

Despite a deficit obsession, Americans still seem ill-informed about the magnitude of the gaps. A recent CBO report is illuminating. Even with a full economic recovery, current policies imply annual deficits over the next decade averaging 5 percent of the economy (gross domestic product); by 2022, federal debt to GDP would hit 90 percent (the 2007 figure: 36 percent). Balancing the budget in 2020 would require \$1 trillion of spending cuts or tax increases. The recent "fiscal cliff" agreement hardly alters these forecasts because it closes only about 8 percent of the next decade's projected deficits, estimates the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget.

Government needs reappraisal. Programs shouldn't be immortal in the face of changing economic and social conditions. What's no longer justified should be discarded. Unfortunately, President Obama has evaded and discouraged this discipline. Republicans emphasize spending control but are often hypocritical on specifics. Significant deficit reduction is likely to require a combination of policies, many of which may stand in stark contrast to policies now in place." Still, agriculture would be a good starting point. Samuelson: In 2013, Congress will continue debating a farm bill. It would be refreshing, if surprising, to see subsidies phased out because — whatever their historical justification — they're no longer needed.

I love Thomas Friedman because he often thinks out of the box, and this week in the **New York Times**, he wrote — ***The Market and Mother Nature*** — suggesting that the government use carbon tax to reduce the deficit as America's debt-to-G.D.P. ratio which has grown from 36.2 percent in 2007 to 72.8 percent today. Most economists believe that countries that allow their debt-to-G.D.P. ratios to exceed 90 percent experience slower growth and greater instability — much like hitting a climate tipping point. And for those who would point to low interest rates today as some kind of "all-clear" for more debt "should remember that market interest rates can change like the weather."

For thousands of years up to the dawn of the industrial age 200 years ago, the Earth's atmosphere contained 280 parts per million of the heat-trapping greenhouse gas carbon dioxide. Today, that number is nearly 400 p.p.m., with 450 p.p.m. routinely cited as the tipping point where we create the conditions for out-of-control acceleration. Melting the permafrost in Alaska, Canada and Siberia, for example, would release massive amounts of carbon that would further increase global warming. Permafrost is packed with CO2 and frozen methane, which is 25 times more potent a greenhouse gas than CO2. And if the tundra continues melting, we could basically release the equivalent of all the carbon that all humanity has emitted from the start of history to now. — That would really send temperatures soaring, ice melting and sea levels rising.

At some point, when we allow so much carbon to build up in the atmosphere, our mightiest efforts to cut emissions through energy efficiency, conservation and new technologies will only enable us to stay in place. They won't be able bend the curve downward anymore. And 450 p.p.m. is not a place we want to get stuck. And, at some point, the debt will get so large that big tax increases and spending cuts will simply go to pay interest. We also won't be able to bend that curve anymore, and spending on infrastructure, education and the poor will vanish.

Friedman: "I am struck by how many conservatives insist we must reduce the deficit immediately, but, on climate, say there is no urgency because, so far, temperature rise has been slight. (Although 2012 was the

hottest year on record in the continental U.S.) One reason interest rates are so low is that they are being suppressed by the Federal Reserve's quantitative easing. That won't last. As for the climate, well, "Mother Nature doesn't do quantitative easing," Beware of nonlinear moves in both."

Friedman: *"We can't go off coal overnight, and we can't go into recession by cutting spending overnight, but we need to start tapping on the brakes in both realms by agreeing on spending cuts, tax increases and new investments that would be phased in as the economy improves, as well as higher efficiency standards for power plants, buildings, vehicles and appliances that would be phased in, too. A carbon tax would reinforce and make both strategies easier. According to a September 2012 study by the Congressional Research Service, a small carbon tax of \$20 per ton — escalating by 5.6 percent annually — could cut the projected 10-year deficit by roughly 50 percent (from \$2.3 trillion down to \$1.1 trillion).*

What would you rather do to help solve our fiscal problem: Give up your home mortgage deduction and wait two more years for Social Security and Medicare, or pay a little extra for gasoline and electricity? These will be our choices. I'd rather pay the little carbon tax, especially since it would clean up the air for our kids, drive innovation and make us less dependent on the most unstable region in the world: the Middle East. How could a carbon tax not be on the table today?"

This week in the **New York Times**, Stephen Castle — *Signs of a Rift in British Coalition Over European Union*. Nick Clegg, the deputy prime minister and leader of the Liberal Democrats, said risking Britain's membership in the union was perilous, and he mocked a long-awaited speech on E.U. policy that Mr. Cameron is expected to make in the Netherlands before the end of the month. Nick Clegg's party supports the 27-nation bloc, European Union feels that both the Prime Minister and Conservatives are weakening their relationship with the world's largest single market, accounting for one in ten jobs in the UK.

The political temperature rose following an unusual, on-the-record intervention on Wednesday, in which a senior United States official argued that Britain was a more useful ally if it remained fully engaged in the European Union. Speaking in London, Philip Gordon, the assistant secretary of state for Europe, added that referendums held by other nations on E.U. agreements *"have sometimes turned countries inward."* Britons pride themselves on their *"special relationship"* with Washington, and the possibility that it would be weakened by a movement away from the European Union is problematic for Mr. Cameron.

Mr. Cameron, whose Conservative lawmakers are increasingly critical of the European Union, said he wants to renegotiate Britain's relationship with the bloc and will seek consent from voters for the outcome of those talks. Many observers expect him to make an explicit promise of a referendum in his upcoming speech — in part because Mr. Cameron's party risks losing support to the Independence Party, which wants Britain to leave the union. Mr. Cameron's official spokesman played down the controversy. *"The prime minister's view is that it is in the British national interest to be in the E.U., but he wants to change that relationship with the E.U. and to seek fresh consent for it,"* he said.... Sounds like just more political speak....

In an article this week in the **New York Times** — *Europe's Debt Crisis: No Relief on the Horizon* — Suzanne Daley outlines the current economic status of the hardest hit countries in the European Union

— Greece, Spain, Portugal, Ireland and Latvia, concluding that the economic and employment outlook still is bleak. Over the past year Greece, Spain, Portugal and Ireland have struggled to bring down their debts. They have raised taxes, laid off workers, reduced services and have begun charging for medical care that had been free for decades. Each country had its own formula. But they were joined in the misery of trying to make do on less — and then even less. Still no amount of cutting seemed to be enough. Businesses continued to fail at a rapid pace. Even many of those Europeans who thought they were safe lost their jobs. Those who had work saw their salaries reduced. Parents watched their children fly off to other countries looking for employment — or welcomed them back into their childhood rooms because they were losing their homes to foreclosure.

Spain — with thousands of abandoned housing projects, where rotted, waist-high weeds sprouted from cracks in the sidewalks and soup kitchens strained to feed all who arrived. A growing number of people have turned to scavenging outside supermarkets and wholesale food distribution centers looking for edible throwaways. One Spanish town, Girona, found the practice such a health risk that it issued an ordinance to lock the city's garbage bins. The country continues to wrestle with the collapse of its housing boom. Its banks tried yet again to get a handle on their true losses, and the government worked to negotiate a bailout for them. But even that brought bad news. The European Commission approved a payment of \$49 billion to four Spanish banks, but only on the condition that they lay off thousands of employees and close offices as part of their restructuring, a move that only contributed to a growing unemployment rate. Still regional and municipal governments continued to struggle with their own debts, making relationships with the central government tense. One of Spain's richest provinces, Catalonia, is threatening a referendum on independence, which many see as a way of pressuring Madrid to give the region back more of the money it earns.

Portugal — For a time, Portugal was seen as a role model in the grinding crisis. In return for an international bailout, its government cut services and raised taxes while its citizens patiently endured the hardships. But that ended in 2012, when the government appeared to make one demand too many. After Prime Minister Passos Coelho offered a plan to shift the burden of social security payments from employers to workers, tens of thousands took to the streets. Although the measure was meant to lower labor costs, the protest from workers was so ferocious that Mr. Coelho was soon forced to withdraw it. With headlines of people committing suicide when police arrive to move them out and hundreds of thousands of mortgage holders watching things are still bleak.

Greece — 2012 was another year of often violent demonstrations as a new government was elected and a fragile coalition worked to satisfy the requirements of the nation's creditors, who pressed relentlessly for more cuts. Greece once had an extensive public health care system that ensured near-universal coverage. But reducing costs yet again, public hospitals instituted new fees and co-payments that many poor and unemployed residents could not afford. At the same time, several drug companies, tired of not getting paid, stopped supplying some of their drugs to the country's hospitals. Many cancer patients could not afford the expensive drugs they needed.

Meanwhile, with Greece's unemployment rate hitting 25 percent, and exceeding 50 percent for young people, social tensions were on the rise — between generations, public and private-sector workers, and the haves and have-nots. Illegal immigrants, blamed for taking jobs, became the target of attacks, particularly by members of an extreme right-wing group, Golden Dawn. Those attacks only fed the popularity of the party, which was seated in Parliament for the first time.

Ireland — continued to struggle, too. The proportion of households without a working adult was the among highest in the European Union, and yet the government, under pressure from its creditors, undertook a series of cuts that reduced aid to the poorest, including child support payments. At the same time it increased property taxes. Hunger became an issue in several countries. In Greece, the government passed a law allowing supermarkets to sell expired food at discounted prices, while in Portugal and Spain soup kitchens strained to feed all who arrived. Cutbacks were felt in the schools, too. Some classrooms bulged with 50 or 60 students. Others suffered from a lack of heat and supplies. In one school district advertised for anyone willing to make donations for textbooks or a copying machine. Protests grew almost everywhere, with many people saying they could take no more.

Latvia — One country that offered a somewhat rosier picture was Latvia, which four years ago was as desolate as the others. Now, however, some experts are hailing its progress as proof of the healing properties of austerity measures. At one point, Latvia which suffered many of the problems seen in other troubled nations — a growing hole in government finances, a banking crisis and falling competitiveness — laid off a third of its civil servants and slashed salaries and services. Its economy shriveled by more than 20 percent. But in 2012 its economy rebounded to grow by about 5 percent, making it the best performer in the 27-nation European Union. That figure, however, was hardly enough to improve the lot of the average Latvian. Some 30 percent of the population is “severely materially deprived,” according to 2011 European Union statistics.

Tracking Europe's Debt Crisis – New York Times – January 10, 2013 – The euro zone economy shows signs of stabilizing and may even be in a period of “positive contagion,” Mario Draghi, the president of the European Central Bank, said as the bank left its main interest rate at a record low. Mr. Draghi said that market interest rates on government bonds have fallen, while stocks have risen. The flow of bank deposits from troubled countries has reversed and euro zone economies have become more competitive, he said.

FRANCE: A banking overhaul bill rolled out by Finance Minister Pierre Moscovici was a far cry from the tough talk when François Hollande began his campaign for the French presidency in January. Debt/G.D.P.: 91.0% - Unemployment, September 2012: 10.8% - [S. & P. Rating: AA+](#)

GERMANY: German imports slid 3.7 percent in November, while exports dropped 3.4 percent, resulting in a narrowing of Germany’s trade surplus, new data showed, further evidence that troubles in the euro zone are straining its strongest member, Germany. Debt/G.D.P.: 82.8.2% - Unemployment, September 2012: 5.4% - S. & P. Rating: AAA

GREECE: Standard & Poor's ratings agency upgraded Greece's credit rating by 6 notches to B-, lifting the debt-heavy country out of default but still keeping its devalued bonds in junk. • Debt/G.D.P.: 144.3% Unemployment, September 2012: 25.1% - S. & P. Rating: B- status. The agency also gave Greece a stable outlook, meaning it is less likely to change its rating again soon.

ITALY: Italy's caretaker prime minister, Mario Monti, said that he would not run as a candidate in national elections that are expected in February, but was open to leading the government if parties that endorsed his pro-Europe, pro-reform agenda asked. Debt/G.D.P.: 126.1% - Unemployment, September 2012: 10.8% - S. & P. Rating: BBB+

PORTUGAL: Portugal's economy shrank for an eighth quarter in the three months through September as the government and consumers reduced spending. Gross domestic product declined 0.9 percent from the second quarter, when it fell 1 percent, the National Statistics Institute said. Debt/G.D.P.: 117.5% - Unemployment, September 2012: 15.7% - S. & P. Rating: BB

SPAIN: The European Commission approved a payment of €37 billion, or \$48 billion, from the euro zone bailout fund to four Spanish banks on the condition that they lay off thousands of employees and close offices as part of their restructuring. Debt/G.D.P.: 76.0% - Unemployment, September 2012: 25.8% - S. & P. Rating: BBB- It was announced this week that Spanish banks will start repaying €260 billion, with Sabadell (Spain's fifth largest bank) saying that it plans to repay between 10 to 20% of the €24 billion this month.

One of the living lions in international statesmanship is 89 year-old Shirmon Peres, currently President of Israel and part of his country's political landscape since its birth. Included in this weekend's offerings is an interview by RONEN BERGMAN in the **New York Times – *Shimon Peres on Obama, Iran and the Path to Peace***. He has long been perceived as a moderating force on Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin "Bibi" Netanyahu and a mediator between the Prime Minister and the international community that is losing patience with him. In a survey conducted by the Israel Democracy Institute, 84 percent of Jewish respondents said Peres was trustworthy, while 62 percent thought Netanyahu was.

Earlier this year, President Obama awarded Peres the Presidential Medal of Freedom – America's highest civilian honor. But the ceremony served only to deepen the rift between Peres and Netanyahu, and three weeks later, as reports became more frequent that Netanyahu was planning to send bombers to Iran, Peres took advantage of his 89th-birthday celebrations to speak out publicly against an attack. The prime minister's office responded with ferocity, proclaiming, "Peres has forgotten what the president's job is," and recalling that in 1981, Peres opposed Prime Minister Menachem Begin's decision to bomb Iraq's nuclear reactor, an act that many Israelis consider a great achievement. There are those who believe Peres's confrontation with Netanyahu as one of the principal reasons that an attack on Iran has not yet materialized.

As a protégée of David Ben-Gurion (the father of Israel), Peres became a top official in the Israeli's defense establishment at age 24. Peres is a man of the world, full of insights and curiosity that have not worn down over the years. Though he is about to enter his 90s, he recalls in vivid detail his encounters with central figures in the post-World War II era: a Soviet joke competition started by President Ronald Reagan, marathon drinking sessions with the German defense minister Franz Josef

Strauss and what he learned from the founder of modern Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew. But when looking for a moral compass, it is Ben-Gurion, that Peres returns to time and again.

Peres has been Israel's president since July 2007. He is a firm believer in the power of social networks. There is no move that he makes, no remark or observation that is not immediately reported by his staff (which is, with the exception of a military aide and a foreign-ministry representative, entirely female) on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. There was a time when Peres made frequent mention of his conception of "a new Middle East." Today, a new Middle East is indeed taking shape, but it is not the one he envisioned.

"People usually tend to believe grim words, rather than positive ones," he told Bergman in December. *"When you say, as I do, that you are a confirmed optimist, you are seen as unbalanced. But if you look at history, you will see that it is an ongoing failure for pessimism, not for optimism. It has befallen me to live for many years, and throughout them I have seen that faith triumphs more often than cynicism or skepticism. I think"* – and here he expressed harsh criticism of Netanyahu without explicitly mentioning his name – *"that if the people of Israel heard from the leadership that there is a chance for peace, they would take up the gauntlet and believe it."* In closing, when ask by Bergman if he will you live to see peace in the Middle East, the eternal optimist Peres, *"I think and believe so. If I have another 10 years to live, I am sure that I will have the privilege of seeing peace come even to this dismal and wonderful and amazing part of the world."*..... I pray that he lives another decade, because the world needs more men and women (especially leaders)..... like Shirmon Peres.....

As Amitai Etzioni wrote in **The Huffington Post** this week in an article titled – ***The Conservative 'Party' Dominates***, suggesting that although there is a very widely shared myth about "*Washington*," that there are two camps, the right-wing GOP and the left-leaning Democrats, who are more or less matched. And that each control one house of Congress, and command about half of the electorate. Hence, the gridlock. While much of American politics over the last four years or longer should be understood as a contest between the conservative "*party*" (most of the GOP and good part of the Democrats) and a liberal minority party. Recent case in point: On December 28, the conservative "*party*" in the Senate -- 42 Republicans, 30 Democrats and one Independent -- voted to extend foreign intelligence law, known as FISA. The bill was opposed by civil liberty advocates for threatening Americans' right to privacy.

Gridlock exists when one party pulls east and the other party pulls west and, hence, nothing budes. This is not the case in Washington. Most times, one party wants to move east and the other wants to stay put. Thus, what appears as gridlock is actually one conservative blocking victory, after another. The fact that the 2012 Congress passed only half as many bills as most previous ones does not trouble the conservatives one bit. Moreover, what legislation that was enacted was a long cry from what the liberals preferred. Thus, a conservative amendment to the 2010 budget that expanded the amount of wealth exempt from the estate tax to over \$5 million received support from all 41 Republican senators and 10 conservative Democrats, giving it the needed majority. Similarly, 24 Democrats helped push through a Republican proposal to establish a 60-vote threshold for the imposition of any new energy taxes during the next year's budget deliberations and 19 signed on to pass

a Republican proposal to ban the use of federal funds by the EPA in enforcing lead paint regulations against specific contractors.

On taxes, conservatives have managed to extend the Bush tax cuts throughout Obama's presidency, with 19 House Democrats and 3 Senate Democrats joining Republicans in rejecting Obama's proposal to raise taxes on only the 2 percent of Americans who earn over \$250,000 annually. All in all, 25 percent of all Republican victories in the 111th Congress were made possible by conservative Democratic votes. Others were carried by the GOP alone. This is no gridlock, but a conservative headlock. The stimulus package was much smaller than liberals believed necessary, and roughly a third of the package -- \$286.9 billion -- was diverted to conservative preferences such as tax cuts, which, according to Keynesian economics, are much less stimulative than government spending. With tax cuts as the new *Pork* in government....

The Affordable Care Act is considered by some a liberal victory, but it was advanced without even granting a hearing to the preferred liberal option of a single-payer system. Even moderate liberal proposals such as a public option were quickly jettisoned as the Obama administration sought to secure the support of powerful interest groups. Restoring the Glass-Steagall Act -- which, prior to being repealed prevented commercial banks from acting as Wall Street casinos -- was never seriously considered. And when it came to national security, Obama followed or expanded the conservative policies of his predecessor. He signed an extension of the Patriot Act and expanded Bush-era policies of domestic surveillance. He was prevented from closing Guantanamo bay and from trying terror suspects in civil courts, as preferred by liberals. Moreover, Obama has carried out five times as many drone strikes than the Bush administration and was the first to authorize the targeted killing of U.S. citizens abroad. For much more documentation of my thesis, go here.

A 2010 analysis of the Roberts Court described it as the "*most conservative in decades*," noting that four of the current justices are among the top six most conservative justices since 1937 and that Justice Kennedy -- who acts as the swing vote (though sides with conservatives about two-thirds of the time) -- is among the top 10. Thus, it should have come as no surprise that the Court, on a 5-4 decision, struck down the liberal McCain-Feingold campaign finance law in its Citizens United ruling, effectively allowing corporations to secretly inject unlimited amounts of money into elections. The same is true of the Court's decision in *District of Columbia v. Heller*, wherein the Second Amendment was interpreted as an individualized right to bear arms as opposed to that of a "well-regulated militia." In short, pay no mind to the argument that Washington is not working or gridlocked. It works quite well, most times, for conservatives. Those who are out to change Washington -- better start by recognizing the way it actually works rather than being distracted by the myth that it is gridlocked.

One of my favorite Americans is the Nobel Prize-winning economist and **New York Times** columnist Paul Krugman who this week was the guest on **Moyers & Company**. In the show he argues that saving money is not the path to economic recovery. Instead, he tells Bill, that we should put aside our excessive focus on the deficit, try to overcome political recalcitrance, and spend money to put America back to work. Krugman offers specific solutions to not only end what he calls a "*vast, unnecessary catastrophe*," but to do it more quickly than some imagine possible. His latest book, ***End This Depression Now!***, is both a warning of the fiscal perils ahead and a prescription to safely avoid them

ON JACK LEW, NOT KRUGMAN HIMSELF, AS POSSIBLY THE NEXT TREASURY SECRETARY

"I probably have more influence doing what I do now than I would if I were inside trying to do the court power games that come with any White House, which I don't think I'd be any good at... What the president needs right now is he needs a hard-nosed negotiator. And rumor has it that's what he's got." Watch this clip.

ON SAVING VERSUS SPENDING

"We're awash in excess savings. And if you decide to save more, it's not actually going to help society... If there's one crucial thing to understand about all this it is that the global economy, money moves around in a circle. And my spending is your income, and your spending is my income. And if all of us try to spend less because we want to save more, we don't succeed. All we end up doing is creating a global depression... the thing that all the evidence of history says works in a situation like this is the private sector won't spend, government can step in and provide the spending that we need in order to keep this economy afloat."

ON THE POWER OF JOB CREATION

"The only obstacles to putting people to work, to having those lives restored, to producing hundreds of billions, probably 900 billion a year or so of extra valuable stuff in our economy, is in our minds. If I could somehow convince the members of Congress and the usual suspects that deficit spending, for the time being, is okay, and that what we really need is a big job creation program, and let's worry about the deficit after we've had a solid recovery, it would all be over. It would be no problem at all... All the productive capacity is there. All that's lacking is the intellectual clarity and the political will."

ON WHAT SHOULD BE OBAMA'S ECONOMIC PRIORITY

"[Obama's] policy priority right now should be doing whatever he can to at least move in the direction of the kinds of policies that we want for full employment, that we need for full employment. And that the obsessions of Washington about a grand bargain on the deficit are really pretty much beside the point right now. That, if given a choice between doing something that will help the economy in the next two years, and something that will allegedly settle our budget problems for all, you know, for all time, which it wouldn't, that he should go for the stuff that will help the economy now..."

We happen to have a very intelligent man as president. He's for real. And he does understand. You can have real discussions with him. And I think he understands that, although things have improved some... it's a glacial pace, compared with the way we should be... We cannot allow ourselves to be blackmailed into spending cuts, partly because blackmail should not be part of how the U.S. operates, and partly because spending cuts would be disastrous right now. So Obama's right to say he doesn't negotiate. I'd like to know exactly what he will do if it turns out that there is not a quorum of sane people in the Republican party."

ON REPUBLICANS THREAT TO SHUT DOWN THE GOVERNMENT

"This is a guy walking into a crowded room and saying, "I have a bomb strapped to my chest, and if you don't give me what I want, I'm going to blow up everybody, including myself." And is that a credible threat? Well, there're some pretty crazy people there. And it might be that they're willing to do it.

But by the same token, Obama cannot get into this because then you have government in the hands of -- never mind the Constitution, the government is run by whoever is most willing to wreak havoc with our whole system of -- with the nation. We cannot allow ourselves to be blackmailed into spending cuts, partly because blackmail should not be part of how the U.S. operates, and partly because spending cuts would be disastrous right now. So Obama's right to say he doesn't negotiate. I'd like to know exactly what he will do if it turns out that there is not a quorum of sane people in the Republican party."

ON THE LONG-TERM DAMAGE OF A BAD JOB MARKET

"We have pretty good evidence on how long does it take to make up for the fact that you happen to graduate from college into a bad labor market. And the answer is forever... You'll miss years getting onto the career ladder. By the time you get a chance to get a job that makes any sense, you know, that makes any use of your skills, you will already be tarred as somebody, 'Well, you're 28 years old and you haven't held a responsible position?' 'Well, yeah, I couldn't because there were no jobs.' It just shadows your whole life. And it's very clear in the evidence from past recessions, which have been nowhere near as bad as this one." Watch this clip.

ON COVERING BOTH THE ECONOMY AND POLITICS

"If you write about economics right now and implicitly adopt the perspective, 'Well, let's get reasonable people together in Washington and reach a solution here,' you're paying no attention to reality. And, of course, if you talk about the politics without talking about the economics, you're also missing everything. So how could I not be writing about both?"

"The outstanding faults of the economic society in which we live--" and this was the '20s and '30s, "are its failure to provide for full employment. And its arbitrary and inequitable distribution of wealth and incomes."

John Maynard Keynes

In his masterpiece: The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

Saying that politicians, media and the public, have a mutual responsibly to stay on point:

"The Fiscal Cliff became a way to hypnotize all of us to avoid thought... And we all sat around saying what are they going to do, what are they going to do.... Now we have the crisis of the debt ceiling and that will allow us to avoid thought."

Newt Gingrich

THIS WEEK'S MUSICAL OFFERINGS

This week's musical offerings comes from my dear friend and big brother Quincy Jones, whom I have known for 35 years and traveled around the world. Beyond his music he is a role model for

anyone who sees the world globally recognizing that everyone's culture has something to contribute.... With this in mind, please enjoy this week's music from my dear friend "Q"....

There are very few people on the planet who has touched as many as Quincy Delight Jones, Jr. (born March 14, 1933). He is a record producer, conductor, arranger, film composer, television producer, and trumpeter. His career spans five decades in the entertainment industry and a record 79 Grammy Award nominations, 27 Grammys, including a Grammy Legend Award in 1991. In 1968, Jones and his songwriting partner Bob Russell became the first African Americans to be nominated for an Academy Award for Best Original Song; "*The Eyes of Love*" from the Universal Pictures film *Banning*. That same year, he became the first African American to be nominated twice within the same year for an Academy Award for Best Original Score for his work on the music of the 1967 film *In Cold Blood*. In 1971, Jones would receive the honor of becoming the first African American to be named musical director/conductor of the Academy Awards ceremony.

He was the first African American to win the **Academy's Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award**, in 1995. He is tied with sound designer Willie D. Burton as the most Oscar-nominated African American, each of them having seven nominations. At the **2008 BET Awards**, Quincy Jones was presented with the *Humanitarian Award*. He was played by Larenz Tate in *Ray*, the 2004 biopic about Ray Charles. In addition, Jones was the producer of the album *Thriller*, by pop icon Michael Jackson, which has sold more than 110 million copies worldwide, and was the producer and conductor of the charity song "*We Are the World*". He will be inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 2013 as the winner, alongside Lou Adler, of the **Ahmet Ertegun Award**.

Born in Chicago, the oldest son of Sarah Frances (née Wells), an apartment complex manager and bank executive who suffered from schizophrenia, and Quincy Delight Jones, Sr., a semi-professional baseball player and carpenter. When he was 10, his family moved to Bremerton, Washington and he attended Seattle's Garfield High School. It was in Seattle that Jones, 14, first met a 17-year-old Ray Charles and developed musically under the tutelage of Robert Blackwell. His brother, Richard Jones, is a federal district court judge in Seattle, and has presided over several very high-profile cases, including the notorious Green River Killer Gary Ridgway.

In 1951, Jones won a scholarship to the Schillinger House (now Berklee College of Music) in Boston, Massachusetts. However, he abandoned his studies when he received an offer to tour as a trumpeter with the bandleader Lionel Hampton. While Jones was on the road with Hampton, he displayed a gift for arranging songs. Jones relocated to New York City, where he received a number of freelance commissions arranging songs for artists like Sarah Vaughan, Dinah Washington, Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Gene Krupa, and his close friend Ray Charles. In 1956, Jones toured again as a trumpeter and musical director of the Dizzy Gillespie Band on a tour of the Middle East and South America sponsored by the United States Information Agency. Upon his return to the United States, Jones got a contract from ABC-Paramount Records and commenced his recording career as the leader of his own band.

In 1957, Quincy settled in Paris where he studied composition and theory with Nadia Boulanger and Olivier Messiaen. He also performed at the Paris Olympia. Jones became music director at Barclay Disques, the French distributor for Mercury Records. During the 1950s, Jones successfully toured throughout Europe with a number of jazz orchestras. As musical director of Harold Arlen's jazz musical *Free and Easy*, Quincy Jones took to the road again. A European tour closed in Paris in February 1960. With musicians from the Arlen show, Jones formed his own big band, called The Jones Boys, with 18 artists—plus their families—in tow. The band included jazz greats Eddie Jones and fellow trumpeter Reunald Jones, and organized a tour of North America and Europe.

Though the European and American concerts met enthusiastic audiences and sparkling reviews, concert earnings could not support a band of this size, and poor budget planning made it an economic disaster; the band dissolved and the fallout left Jones in a financial crisis. Quoted in **Musician** magazine, Jones said about his ordeal, "We had the best jazz band in the planet, and yet we were literally starving. That's when I discovered that there was music, and there was the music business. If I were to survive, I would have to learn the difference between the two." Irving Green, head of Mercury Records, got Jones back on his feet with a personal loan and a new job as the musical director of the company's New York division, where he worked with Doug Moody, who would later go on to form Mystic Records.

In 1964, Jones was promoted to vice-president of the company, thus becoming the first African American to hold such an executive position in a white-owned record company. In that same year, Quincy Jones turned his attention to another musical arena that had long been closed to blacks—the world of film scores. At the invitation of director Sidney Lumet, he composed the music for *The Pawnbroker*. It was the first of his 33 major motion picture scores. Following the success of *The Pawnbroker*, Jones left Mercury Records and moved to Los Angeles. After his film score for *The Slender Thread*, starring Sidney Poitier, he was in constant demand as a composer. His film credits in the next five years included *Walk, Don't Run*, *In Cold Blood*, *In the Heat of the Night*, *A Dandy in Aspic*, *Mackenna's Gold*, *The Italian Job*, *Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice*, *The Lost Man*, *Cactus Flower*, and *The Getaway*. In addition, he also composed the theme for "*The Streetbeater*," which became familiar as the theme music for the television sitcom *Sanford and Son*, starring close friend Redd Foxx.

In the 1960s, Jones worked as an arranger for some of the most important artists of the era, including Billy Eckstine, Sarah Vaughn, Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, Peggy Lee, and Dinah Washington. Jones's solo recordings also garnered acclaim, including *Walking in Space*, *Gula Matari*, *Smackwater Jack*, *You've Got It Bad, Girl*, *Body Heat*, *Mellow Madness*, and *I Heard That!!*. He is well known for his 1962 tune "Soul Bossa Nova", which originated on the *Big Band Bossa Nova* album. "Soul Bossa Nova" was a theme for the 1998 World Cup, the Canadian game show *Definition*, the Woody Allen film *Take the Money and Run* and the *Austin Powers* film series, and was sampled by Canadian hip hop group Dream Warriors for their song, "My Definition of a Boombastic Jazz Style". Jones was also responsible for producing all four million-selling singles for Lesley Gore during the early and mid-sixties, including "*It's My Party*" (UK No. 8; US No. 1), "*Judy's Turn To Cry*" (US No. 5), "*She's A Fool*" (also a US No. 5) in 1963, and "*You Don't Own Me*" (US No. 2 for four weeks in 1964). He continued to produce for Lesley until 1966, including the Greenwich/ Barry hit "*Look of Love*" (US No. 27) in 1965. Jones's 1981 album *The Dude* yielded multiple hit singles, including "*Ai No Corrida*" (a remake of a song by Chaz Jankel), "*Just Once*" and "*One Hundred Ways*", the latter two featuring James Ingram on lead vocals and marking Ingram's first hits. In 1985, Jones scored the Steven Spielberg film adaptation of *The Color Purple*. He and Jerry Goldsmith (from *Twilight Zone: The Movie*) are the only composers besides John Williams to have scored a Spielberg theatrical film. After the 1985 American Music Awards ceremony, Jones used his influence to draw most of the major American recording artists of the day into a studio to record the song "*We Are the World*" to raise money for the victims of Ethiopia's famine. When people marveled at his ability to make the collaboration work, Jones explained that he'd taped a simple sign on the entrance: "*Check Your Ego At The Door*".

Starting in the late 1970s, Jones tried to convince Miles Davis to re-perform the music he had played on several classic albums that had been arranged by Gil Evans in the 1960s. Davis had always refused, citing a desire not to revisit the past. In 1991, Davis, then suffering from pneumonia, relented and agreed to perform the music at a concert at the **Montreux Jazz Festival**. The resulting album from the recording, *Miles & Quincy Live at Montreux*, was Davis' last released album (he died several months afterward) and is considered an artistic triumph.

In 1993, Jones collaborated with David Salzman to produce the concert extravaganza *An American Reunion*, a celebration of Bill Clinton's inauguration as president of the United States. In 1994, Salzman and Jones formed the company **Quincy Jones/David Salzman Entertainment (QDE)** with **Time/Warner Inc.** QDE is a diverse company which produces media technology, motion pictures, television programs (*In the House*, *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*, and *MADtv*), and magazines (*Vibe* and *Spin*). In 2001, he published his autobiography, *Q: The Autobiography of Quincy Jones*. On July 31, 2007, Jones partnered with Wizzard Media to launch the Quincy Jones Video Podcast. In each episode, Jones shares his knowledge and experience in the music industry. The first episode features Jones in the studio, producing "*I Knew I Loved you*" for Celine Dion, which is featured on the Ennio Morricone tribute album, *We All Love Ennio Morricone*. Jones is also noted for helping produce Anita Hall's CD, *Send Love*, which was released in 2009.

While working on the film *The Wiz*, Michael Jackson asked Jones to recommend some producers for Jackson's upcoming solo record. Jones offered some names, but eventually asked Jackson if he would like for him to produce the record. Jackson replied that he would, whereas the result, *Off The Wall*, ultimately sold about 20 million copies and made Jones the most powerful record producer in the industry at that time. Jones' and Jackson's next collaboration *Thriller* has sold a reputed 110 million copies and has become the highest-selling album of all time. Jones also worked on Michael Jackson's album *Bad*, which has sold 45 million copies. *Bad* was the last time the pair would work together in the studio, although audio interviews with Jones feature on the 2001 special editions of *Off The Wall*, *Thriller* and *Bad*. In a 2002 interview, when Jackson was asked if he would ever work with Jones again he replied, "The door is always open".[citation needed] However, in 2007, when NME asked Jones a similar question, he said "Man, please! We already did that. I have talked to him about working with him again but I've got too much to do. I've got 900 products, I'm 74 years old."

Following Jackson's death on June 25, 2009, Jones said: "I am absolutely devastated at this tragic and unexpected news. For Michael to be taken away from us so suddenly at such a young age, I just don't have the words. Divinity brought our souls together on *The Wiz* and allowed us to do what we were able to throughout the '80s. To this day, the music we created together on *Off The Wall*, *Thriller* and *Bad* is played in every corner of the world and the reason for that is because he had it all...talent, grace, professionalism and dedication. He was the consummate entertainer and his contributions and legacy will be felt upon the world forever. I've lost my little brother today, and part of my soul has gone with him."

Jones first worked with Frank Sinatra when he was invited by Princess Grace to arrange a benefit concert at the **Monaco Sporting Club** in 1958. Six years later, Sinatra hired him to arrange and conduct Sinatra's second album with Count Basie, *It Might as Well Be Swing* (1964). Jones conducted and arranged 1966's live album with the Basie Band, *Sinatra at the Sands*. Jones was also the arranger/conductor when Sinatra, Sammy Davis, Jr., Dean Martin, and Johnny Carson performed with the Basie orchestra in St. Louis, Missouri, in a benefit for Dismas House in June 1965. The fund-raiser was broadcast to a number of other theaters around the country and eventually released on DVD. Later that year, Jones was also the arranger/conductor when Sinatra and Basie appeared on *The Hollywood Palace* TV show on October 16, 1965. Nineteen years later, Sinatra and Jones teamed up for 1984's *L.A. Is My Lady*, after a joint Sinatra-Lena Horne project was abandoned.

Jones is a great admirer of Brazilian culture and a film on Brazil's Carnival is among his recent plans: "one of the most spectacular spiritual events on the planet"; Simone, whom he cites as "one of the world's greatest singers", Ivan Lins, Milton Nascimento and Gilson Peranzetta, "one of the five biggest arrangement producers of the world"[24] stand as close friends and partners in his recent works. Jones had a brief appearance in the 1990 video for The Time song "*Jerk Out*". Jones was a guest actor on an episode of *The Boondocks* in which he and the main character, Huey Freeman, co-produced a Christmas play for Huey's elementary school. He appeared

with Ray Charles in the music video of their song 'One Mint Julep' and also with Ray Charles and Chaka Khan in the music video of their song *"I'll Be Good to You"*.

Personal life

Jones has been married three times and has seven children:

to Jeri Caldwell from 1957 to 1966; they had one daughter, Jolie Jones Levine.

to Ulla Andersson from 1967 to 1974; they had two children, Martina Jones and son Quincy Jones III;

to actress Peggy Lipton from 1974 to 1990; they had two daughters, actresses Kidada Jones and Rashida Jones.

Jones also had a brief affair with Carol Reynolds and they had a daughter, Rachel Jones.

Jones dated and lived with actress Nastassja Kinski from 1991 until 1995. In February 1993, their daughter Kenya Julia Miambi Sarah Jones was born.

Social activism

Jones's social activism began in the 1960s with his support of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Jones is one of the founders of the Institute for **Black American Music** (IBAM), whose events aim to raise enough funds for the creation of a national library of African American art and music. Jones is also one of the founders of the **Black Arts Festival** in his hometown of Chicago. In the 1970s Jones formed The Quincy Jones Workshops. Meeting at the **Los Angeles Landmark Variety Arts Center**, the workshops educated and honed the skills of inner city youth in musicianship, acting and songwriting. Among its Alumni were Alton Mc Clain who had a hit song with Alton Mc Clain and Destiny, and Mark Wilkins who co-wrote the hit song *"Havin' A Love Attack"* with Mandrill and went on to become the National Promotion Director for **Punk / Thrash** record label Mystic Records. For many years, he has worked closely with Bono of U2 on a number of philanthropic endeavors. He is the founder of the Quincy Jones Listen Up Foundation, a nonprofit that connects youths with technology, education, culture and music. One of the organization's programs is an intercultural exchange between underprivileged youths from Los Angeles and South Africa. In 2004, Jones helped launch the We Are the Future (WAF) project, which gives children in poor and conflict-ridden areas a chance to live their childhoods and develop a sense of hope. The program is the result of a strategic partnership between the **Global Forum**, the Quincy Jones Listen Up Foundation and Hani Masri, with the support of the World Bank, UN agencies and major companies. The project was launched with a concert in Rome, Italy, in front of an audience of half a million people. Jones supports a number of other charities including the **NAACP**, **GLAAD**, **Peace Games**, **AmfAR** and **The Maybach Foundation**. Jones serves on the Advisory Board of HealthCorps. On July 26, 2007, he announced his endorsement of Hillary Clinton for president. But with the election of Barack Obama, Quincy Jones said that his next conversation "with President Obama [will be] to beg for a secretary of arts,"[34] prompting the circulation of a petition on the Internet asking Obama to create such a Cabinet-level position in his administration. In 2001, he became an honorary member of the Board of Directors of **The Jazz Foundation of America**. Jones worked with **The Jazz Foundation of America** to save the homes and the lives of America's elderly jazz and blues musicians including those who survived Hurricane Katrina. Jones and his friend John Sie, founder of **Liberty Starz**, worked together to create the Global Down Syndrome Foundation, the founding of which was inspired by Sie's granddaughter, Sophia, who has Down syndrome.

Quincy Jones – *We Are The World* -- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OoDY8ce_3zk

Quincy Jones – *The Secret Garden* (HQ) Ft. Barry White, Al B Sure, El DeBarge, James Ingram -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bChCRga3djw>

Quincy Jones – *If I Ever Lose This Heaven* -- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dzA_gdoHhtA&playnext=1&list=AL94UKMTqg-9BXBIwML8VS-n0viKmbm4Ry

Quincy Jones – *Birdland* -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k-uQMASv13A&list=AL94UKMTqg-9BXBIwML8VS-n0viKmbm4Ry>

Quincy Jones – *Body Heat* -- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dYuA_c_6if8&list=AL94UKMTqg-9BXBIwML8VS-n0viKmbm4Ry

Quincy Jones – *Back On The Block* -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WorFltoWII0&list=AL94UKMTqg-9BXBIwML8VS-n0viKmbm4Ry>

Quincy Jones, Ray Charles & Chaka Khan – *I'll Be Good To You* -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k14BWx0fyjw>

Quincy Jones with the Brothers Johnson on Soul Train – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-udiPNOUEE>

Quincy Jones, Chaka Khan & Simply Red live – *Everything Must Change* -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kYY2kuUnpfU>

Quincy Jones on Michael Jackson – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A9zGxvV3nAk>

Quincy Jones – *Walking In Space* -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1avu4Psw1qM>

Quincy Jones – Tevin Campbell - *Tomorrow (A Better You, Better Me)* -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WPrHx2sSdDs>

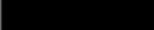
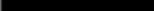
Quincy Jones – *We Are The World 25 For Haiti* - Official Video -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Glny4jSciVI>

Quincy Jones – *Listen Up The Lives Of Quincy* 1990 (Full Movie HD) -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8sCMawIwaIU>

I hope that you have enjoyed this week's offerings and again, I wish you and the ones that you love a great 2013.....

Sincerely,
Greg Brown

--
Gregory Brown
Chairman & CEO
GlobalCast Partners, LLC

US: 
Tel: 
Fax: 

Skype: [REDACTED]