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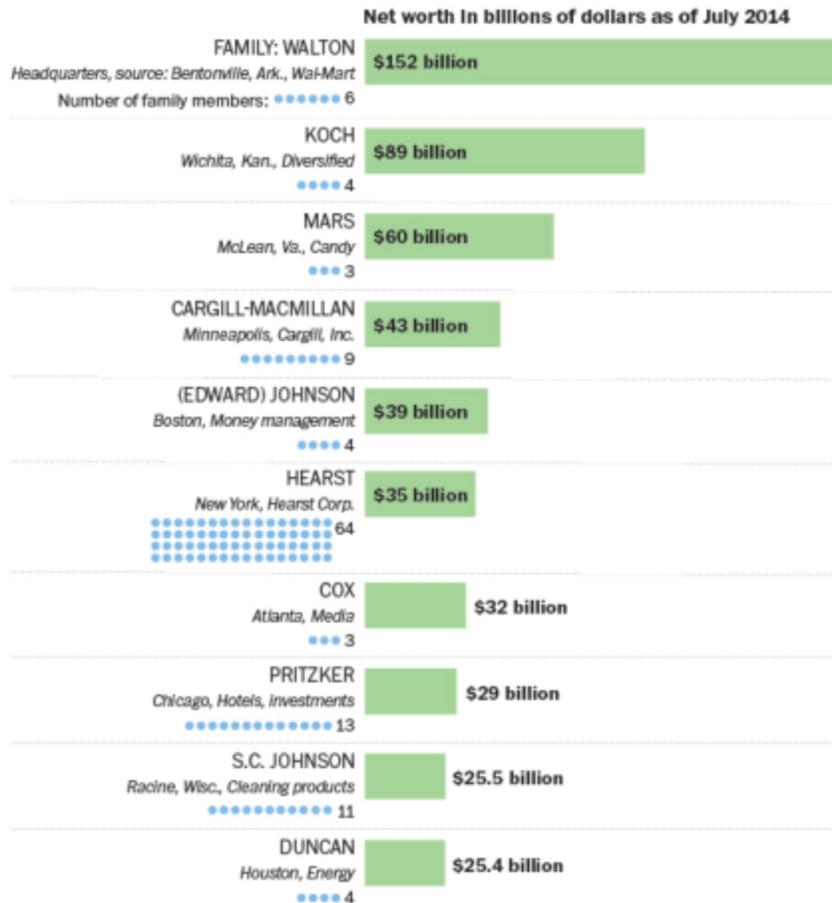
DEAR FRIEND.....

Meet America's richest families, courtesy of
Forbes



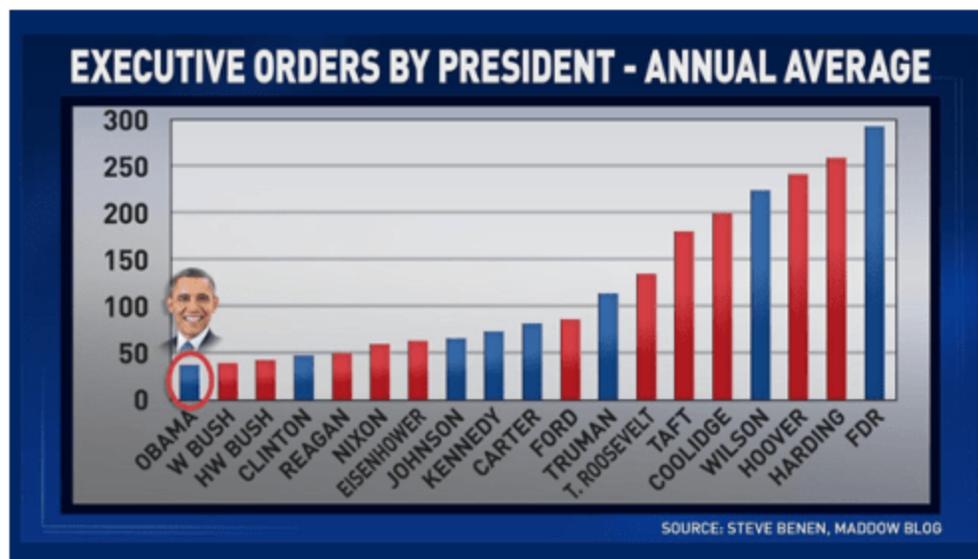
Forbes's list of richest families was released this week. Here are the top 10:

America's 10 richest families



Source: Forbes, "Americas Richest Families." Graphic: Tobey - The Washington Post

If you noticed like I did, it pays to be born in the right family. And I am still trying to figure out how these families are "job creators." The truth is that wealth doesn't make you happy but it is better to be born with a silver spoon than in a single person household on welfare. By the way, where is the "old money?" Therefore the question is, will these same families on this list in a hundred years. What do you think?



As the earlier efforts to discredit President Obama, his administration and accomplishments have worn thin and grown stale, Republican leaders are now doubling down on their effort to attack President Obama for what they are framing as executive overreach, a move that comes four months ahead of the fall midterm election that is increasingly consuming the energy of both political parties. While polling shows the public as a whole isn't all that fired up one way or another by the debate over executive overreach, the use of executive power is viewed most negatively by conservative Republicans -- exactly the kind of GOP base voters the party is looking to turn out this November.

The latest move to put the issue at the forefront of the political debate came Sunday when House Speaker John A. Boehner (R-Ohio) penned a CNN op-ed explaining why he plans to move legislation that declares President Obama's executive moves an unconstitutional power play, something Obama has dismissed as a "stunt." *"Over the last five years, starting -- not coincidentally -- when his political party lost the majority in the House of Representatives, the President has consistently overstepped his authority under the Constitution, and in so doing eroded the power of the legislative branch,"* writes Boehner.

Democrats say Republicans are just playing politics. *"People are tired of this. They are tired of a Congress that would rather fight the president in order to turn out their base than work with the president to get things done,"* said Democratic National Committee spokesman Mo Elleithee Sunday on CNN's "State of the Union."

Obama has made a number of executive moves during the past couple of years that have irked conservatives, like moving to curtail emissions and halting the deportations of some undocumented immigrants brought into the country as children. But it's important to note that not all of the actions Republicans oppose are executive orders. As Philip Bump recently noted on The Fix, the deportations rule was enacted via executive action, which is technically different.

The distinction matters because of the Democratic resistance. They note that the number of executive orders issued by Obama during his first five and a half years is hardly high. In fact, the man who

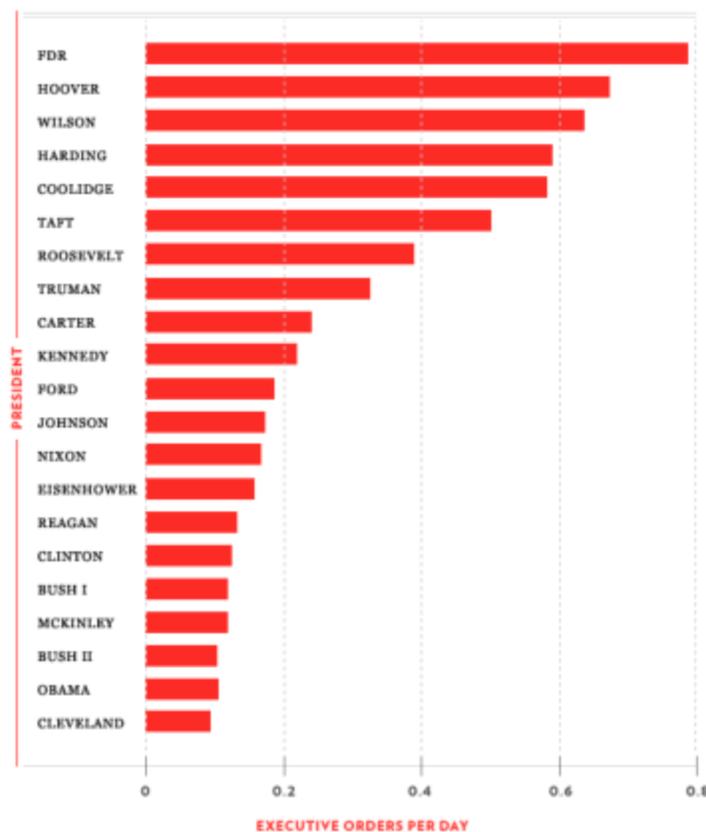
preceded him used them more, as the following chart shows. But Republicans can counter that it's not all about executive orders. It's about the totality of Obama's use of executive power.

Now to the question of what impact this will all have on 2014, regardless of whether Republicans are playing politics like Democrats claim or appropriately policing the president as GOP leaders say. Either way, the GOP's moves are bound to resonate with conservative voters who tend to be passionate about showing up in midterm elections. A January Washington Post-ABC News poll that asked about executive orders showed a couple of interesting things:

-- One, the public as a whole was pretty divided over whether they like such moves. Fifty-two percent said they support presidents using executive orders to accomplish their goals and 46 percent said they opposed the maneuver.

-- Two, Republicans -- specifically conservative Republicans -- were far more opposed than Democrats. Given that the current president is a Democrat, that's no surprise. The following chart breaks it down:

**Presidential Executive Orders
Issued Per Day in Office**



Executive orders are not synonymous with executive action. But the poll still provides a telling glimpse into the partisan divide that defines the debate. It's hard to imagine a poll about all executive actions looking extremely different, especially since the distinction is so esoteric.

Midterm elections, are about which side best can turn out its base for elections that many people choose to sit out since the presidency is not at stake. For Republicans, talking about executive overreach is one way to try to get those voters to come out on Nov. 4. That's why you're probably going to hear a lot more about it all from GOP leaders in the next four months. And like the the auto bailout, stimulus package, debt limit, Benghazi, recess appointments and Obamacare, its opposition is just another smoke screen without merit to shore up the base against our Black President.

EATING FRUIT



We all think eating fruits means just buying fruits, cutting it and just popping it into our mouths. It's not as easy as you think. It's important to know how and when to eat.

What is the correct way of eating fruits?

IT MEANS NOT EATING FRUITS AFTER YOUR MEALS! * FRUITS SHOULD BE EATEN ON AN EMPTY STOMACH.

If you eat fruit like that, it will play a major role to detoxify your system, supplying you with a great deal of energy for weight loss and other life activities.

FRUIT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT FOOD.

Let's say you eat two slices of bread and then a slice of fruit. The slice of fruit is ready to go straight through the stomach into the intestines, but it is prevented from doing so.

In the meantime the whole meal rots and ferments and turns to acid. The minute the fruit comes into contact with the food in the stomach and digestive juices, the entire mass of food begins to spoil.

So please eat your fruits on an empty stomach or before your meals! You have heard people complaining - every time I eat water-melon I burp, when I eat durian my stomach bloats up, when I eat a banana I feel like running to the toilet etc - actually all this will not arise if you eat the fruit on an

empty stomach. The fruit mixes with the putrefying other food and produces gas and hence you will bloat!

Graying hair, balding, nervous outburst, and dark circles under the eyes all these will not happen if you take fruits on an empty stomach.

There is no such thing as some fruits, like orange and lemon are acidic, because all fruits become alkaline in our body, according to Dr. Herbert Shelton who did research on this matter. If you have mastered the correct way of eating fruits, you have the Secret of beauty, longevity, health, energy, happiness and normal weight.

When you need to drink fruit juice – drink only fresh fruit juice, NOT from the cans. Don't even drink juice that has been heated up. Don't eat cooked fruits because you don't get the nutrients at all. You only get to taste. Cooking destroys all the vitamins.

But eating a whole fruit is better than drinking the juice. If you should drink the juice, drink it mouthful by mouthful slowly, because you must let it mix with your saliva before swallowing it.

You can go on a 3-day fruit fast to cleanse your body. Just eat fruits and drink fruit juice throughout the 3 days and you will be surprised when your friends tell you how radiant you look!

KIWI: Tiny but mighty. This is a good source of potassium, magnesium, vitamin E & fiber. Its vitamin C content is twice that of an orange.

APPLE: An apple a day keeps the doctor away? Although an apple has a low vitamin C content, it has antioxidants & flavonoids which enhances the activity of vitamin C thereby helping to lower the risks of colon cancer, heart attack & stroke.

STRAWBERRY: Protective Fruit. Strawberries have the highest total antioxidant power among major fruits & protect the body from cancer-causing, blood vessel-clogging free radicals.

ORANGE: Sweetest medicine. Taking 2-4 oranges a day may help keep colds away, lower cholesterol, prevent & dissolve kidney stones as well as lessens the risk of colon cancer.

WATERMELON: Coolest thirst quencher. Composed of 92% water, it is also packed with a giant dose of glutathione, which helps boost our immune system. They are also a key source of lycopene - the cancer fighting oxidant. Other nutrients found in watermelon are vitamin C & Potassium.

GUAVA & PAPAYA: Top awards for vitamin C. They are the clear winners for their high vitamin C content. Guava is also rich in fiber, which helps prevent constipation. Papaya is rich in carotene; this is good for your eyes.



I couldn't believe the headlines in the **Associated Press** article by Matthew Lee – ***Netanyahu Tells U.S. 'Not To Ever Second Guess Me Again' On Hamas***. The article said that following the latest collapse of the cease-fire in Gaza, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu meeting with senior U.S. officials, including Secretary of State John Kerry, say the Israeli leader advised the Obama administration "*not to ever second guess me again*" on the matter. The officials also said Netanyahu said he should be "*trusted*" on the issue and about the unwillingness of Hamas to enter into and follow through on cease-fire talks.

The Obama administration on Friday condemned "*outrageous*" violations of an internationally brokered Gaza cease-fire by Palestinian militants and called the apparent abduction of an Israeli soldier a "*barbaric*" action. The strong reaction came as top Israeli officials questioned the effort to forge the truce, accusing the U.S. and the United Nations of being naive in assuming the radical Hamas movement would adhere with its terms. The officials also blamed the Gulf state of Qatar for not forcing the militants to comply.

With the cease-fire in tatters fewer than two hours after it took effect with an attack that killed two Israeli troops and left a third missing, President Barack Obama demanded that those responsible release the soldier. Obama and other U.S. officials did not directly blame Hamas for the abduction. But they made clear they hold Hamas responsible for, or having influence over, the actions of all factions in the Gaza Strip. The language was a distinct change from Thursday when Washington was focused on the deaths of Palestinian civilians. "*If they are serious about trying to resolve this situation, that soldier needs to be unconditionally released as soon as possible,*" Obama told reporters. He added that it would be difficult to revive the cease-fire without the captive's release.

Complicating matters is that other militant groups in Gaza are taking advantage of the current situation so it is now not clear if Hamas is actually responsible for the incident or if some other militant group was to blame. One thing is clear, Palestinians living in Gaza are paying an enormous price as more than 1458 have been killed and more than 8300 seriously injured including hundreds of innocent women and children. As a result, President Obama has called the situation in Gaza "*heartbreaking*" and repeatedly asked Israel to do more to prevent Palestinian civilian casualties.

I live in a country where I often second guess my own President and I promise you that if we were involved in a military action whereby more than 1400 people had been killed including more than 1000 innocent women and children there would be an outrage here in American from both major political parties. As a result, I take affront when any leader tells my President and Secretary of State who is trying to broker a peace to not second guess them..... And so should you....



U.S. GDP surged by 4% in the second quarter of 2014, beating analysts' forecasts and more than compensating for the previous quarter's severe contraction, according to new figures released by the **Bureau of Economic Analysis** on Wednesday. Analysts had forecast growth rates ranging between 2 to 3%, but the economy bounced back with stronger-than-expected rebounds in consumer spending, exports, and business inventories. The growth wiped out the declines of the first quarter, when the economy contracted by 2.1%, one of the sharpest declines in 5 years. Now, with the second quarter's rebound, the economy has grown by 0.9% in the first half of the year. The growth was led by a rebound in consumer spending, which took a hit in the previous quarter due to severe winter weather. This quarter consumer spending grew by 2.5%, compared with 1.2% in the previous quarter. Durable goods, in particular, surged by 14%. Exports increased to 9.5% in the second quarter from 9.2% in the first quarter. Where I come from this is good news and as I travel around the country I see construction booming and WalMart/COSCO parking lots full.... So I asked, why the Obama Administration isn't getting any credit for this good news..... *and this is my rant of the week....*

WEEK'S READINGS



Whether you call them terrorist or freedom fighters militant forces are fighting smarter and deadlier than ever according to an article this week in **The Washington Post** by Robert H. Scales, a retired Army major general, (*former commandant of the U.S. Army War College*) and Douglas A. Ollivant (*fellow at the New America Foundation's Future of War project*). The article points out that military transformations can be hard to detect. They generally occur over decades, sometimes over generations. Soldiers are usually the first to recognize them, but for the perceptive, the signs of a sea change developing on today's battlefields are there. Look carefully at media images of ground fighting across the Middle East, and you will notice that the bad guys are fighting differently than they have in the past.

In the immediate aftermath of the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, the West confronted terrorists who acted like, well, terrorists. In Iraq and Afghanistan, al-Qaeda and other militant groups relied on ambushes, roadside bombings, sniper fire and the occasional "*fire and run*" mortar or rocket attack to inflict casualties on U.S. forces. When terrorists were stupid enough to come out of the shadows, they fought as a mob of individuals. One rip of a Kalashnikov or a single launch of a rocket-propelled grenade was enough. If they stood to reload, they risked annihilation at the hands of their disciplined, well-trained and heavily armed American opponents.

Today, it's different. We see Islamist fighters becoming skilled soldiers. The thrust of the Islamic State down the Euphrates River illustrates a style of warfare that melds old and new. U.S. soldiers fighting in Iraq used to say: "*Thank God they can't shoot.*" Well, now they can. They maneuver in reasonably disciplined formations, often aboard pickup trucks and captured Iraqi Humvees. They employ mortars and rockets in deadly barrages. To be sure, parts of the old terrorist playbook remain: They butcher and execute prisoners to make unambiguously clear the terrible consequences of resistance. They continue to display an eager willingness for death and the media savvy of the "*propaganda of the deed.*" We see these newly formed pseudo-armies emerging across the Levant as well. The Darwinian process of wartime immersion has forced them to either get better or die.

Some observers of the transformation admit that Hezbollah now is among the most skilled light infantry on the planet. And now there is Hamas. Gone are the loose and fleeting groups of fighters seen during Operation Cast Lead in 2008. In Gaza they have been fighting in well-organized, tightly bound teams under the authority of connected, well-informed commanders. Units stand and fight from building hideouts and tunnel entrances. They wait for the Israelis to pass by before ambushing them from the rear. Like Hezbollah and the Islamic State, they are getting good with second-generation weapons such as the Russian RPG-29 and, according to as-yet-unconfirmed reports from the fighting in Gaza, wire-guided anti-tank missiles.

These fighters are now well-armed, well-trained and well-led and are often flush with cash to buy or bribe their way out of difficulties. While the story of the disintegration of the Iraqi army is multi-causal, the fact that it was never trained to face such an opponent as competent as the Islamic State was certainly a factor. This frightening new age is emerging due to several factors that neither the United States nor Israeli forces anticipated.

First is the influence of foreign fighters. Iranian advisers throughout the Middle East are getting better at their craft. Radicalized fighters from the Chechen and Bosnian conflicts serve Islamic State forces as mentors. The terrorists of the last decade generated one-shot suicide bombers of little strategic consequence. Now they have learned to build fighting units and teach weapons and tactics very well.

Second, the bloody Syrian war has served as a first-rate training ground for the Islamic State and Hezbollah. The crucible of that terrible war permitted them to forge leaders, practice tactics, train to maneuver on the urban battlefield and build political and military institutions with mass and resiliency. Perversely, having these two Islamist organizations in conflict with each other has made each one stronger, not weaker.

Third, these new armies talk to each other, even occasionally across ethno-sectarian divisions. Social media and strategic intercessions in Syria, Lebanon, Gaza and Iraq have created a body of well-informed and battle-hardened leaders and soldiers who share lessons learned.

Fourth, while these new armies are becoming more professional, they retain the terrorist's specialty of disciplined killing. Terrorist killing used to be mostly random. But now killings are often orchestrated, media-driven executions of surrendering soldiers and opposition leaders. Such strategic killing can give the armies a psychological advantage before the clash of arms begins.

What we see in Gaza, Syria and Iraq should serve as a cautionary tale for any Beltway guru calling for a return of U.S. forces to Iraq. U.S. soldiers and Marines are still the global gold standard, but their comparative advantage has diminished. As terrorist groups turn into armies, pairing their fanatical dedication with newly acquired tactical skills, renewed intervention might generate casualties on a new scale — as the Israelis have been painfully learning. As a result our leaders have to understand that there are no easy wars. And any Mission Accomplish maybe just a lull in the fighting allowing militant forces to replenish their ranks and supplies to attack later at an opportune moment. Hence our leaders have to find other ways to find peace because the days of sending in the Marines to mop up the mob in the square are over.....

Interesting infographic on Colleges and Pay

 Does

We may now have a new “*most unread best seller of all time.*” Data from Amazon Kindles suggests that that honor may go to Thomas Piketty’s “***Capital in the Twenty-First Century,***” which reached No. 1 on the best-seller list this year. Jordan Ellenberg, a professor of mathematics at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, wrote in **The Wall Street Journal** that Piketty’s book seems to eclipse its rivals in losing readers: All five of the passages that readers on Kindle have highlighted most are in the first 26 pages of a tome that runs 685 pages.

The rush to purchase Piketty’s book suggested that Americans must have wanted to understand inequality. The apparent rush to put it down suggests that, well, we’re human.

So let me satisfy this demand with my own “***Idiot’s Guide to Inequality.***” Here are five points according to Ellenberg:

First, economic inequality has worsened significantly in the United States and some other countries. The richest 1 percent in the United States now own more wealth than the bottom 90 percent. Oxfam estimates that the richest 85 people in the world own half of all wealth. The situation might be tolerable if a rising tide were lifting all boats.

But it’s lifting mostly the yachts. In 2010, 93 percent of the additional income created in America went to the top 1 percent.

Second, inequality in America is destabilizing. Some inequality is essential to create incentives, but we seem to have reached the point where inequality actually becomes an impediment to economic growth. Certainly, the nation grew more quickly in periods when we were more equal, including in the golden decades after World War II when growth was strong and inequality actually diminished. Likewise, a major research paper from the International Monetary Fund in April found that more equitable societies tend to enjoy more rapid economic growth.

Indeed, even Lloyd Blankfein, the chief executive of Goldman Sachs, warns that “*too much ... has gone to too few*” and that inequality in America is now “*very destabilizing.*”

Inequality causes problems by creating fissures in societies, leaving those at the bottom feeling marginalized or disenfranchised. That has been a classic problem in “*banana republic*” countries in

Latin America, and the United States now has a Gini coefficient (a standard measure of inequality) approaching some traditionally poor and dysfunctional Latin countries.

Third, disparities reflect not just the invisible hand of the market but also manipulation of markets. Joseph Stiglitz, the Nobel Prize-winning economist, wrote a terrific book two years ago, ***"The Price of Inequality,"*** which is a shorter and easier read than Piketty's book. In it, he notes:

"Much of America's inequality is the result of market distortions, with incentives directed not at creating new wealth but at taking it from others."

For example, financiers are wealthy partly because they're highly educated and hardworking — and also because they've successfully lobbied for the carried interest tax loophole that lets their pay be taxed at much lower rates than other people's.

Likewise, if you're a pharmaceutical executive, one way to create profits is to generate new products. Another is to lobby Congress to bar the government's Medicare program from bargaining for drug prices. That amounts to a \$50 billion annual gift to pharmaceutical companies.

Fourth, inequality doesn't necessarily even benefit the rich as much as we think. At some point, extra incomes don't go to sate desires but to attempt to buy status through *"positional goods"* — like the hottest car on the block. The problem is that there can only be one hottest car on the block. So the lawyer who buys a Porsche is foiled by the C.E.O. who buys a Ferrari, who in turn is foiled by the hedge fund manager who buys a Lamborghini.

This arms race leaves these desires unsated; there's still only one at the top of the heap.

Fifth, progressives probably talk too much about "inequality" and not enough about *"opportunity."* Some voters are turned off by tirades about inequality because they say it connotes envy of the rich; there is more consensus on bringing everyone to the same starting line.

Unfortunately, equal opportunity is now a mirage. Indeed, researchers find that there is less economic mobility in America than in class-conscious Europe. We know some of the tools, including job incentives and better schools that can reduce this opportunity gap. But the United States is one of the few advanced countries that spends less educating the average poor child than the average rich one. As an escalator of mobility, the American education system is broken.

There's still a great deal we don't understand about inequality. But whether or not you read Piketty, there's one overwhelming lesson you should be aware of: **Inequality and lack of opportunity today constitute a national infirmity and vulnerability — and there are policy tools that can make a difference.**

EIFFEL TOWER AT NIGHT

I wanted to send this out last month on Bastille Day, July 14th to honor France's national holiday but for some reason or another it got lost in the mix. Still as someone who has been visiting France over the last four decades I would like to give France kudos for the many stylish ways in which it trounces the rest of the world. From delectable delicacies to iconic structures, take a look at the reasons why we should tip our hats -- or excuse us, berets -- to France for simply doing some things better than anyone else as below are *14 Things France Does Better than almost anyone else....*

1) Enticing Visitors From Around The World

It's not just the French who love their country; the world loves France too. France was the world's top tourist destination in 2012, with 83 million foreign visitors -- that's almost 20 million people more than the country's total population.

2) Mastering The Art Of Affection

With its cute bars, the banks of the Seine and magical Montmartre, Paris consistently tops the lists of most romantic cities in the world and is a top honeymoon destination. Words like "*chérie*," "*amour*," and "*French kiss*" have become part of a global lexicon of love. And the French aren't all talk either, as the country has consistently ranked among the countries whose inhabitants have the most sex.

3) Serving Lip-Smacking Pastries

Croissants. Macarons. Éclairs. Madeleines. If your mouth isn't watering just thinking of these sumptuous French pastries, you should probably have your taste buds checked. Chefs like Christophe Adam, famous for his bright-colored éclairs, and Mussipontain cake master Sébastien Gaudard have developed a fan base around the world.

4) Sharing Their Exquisite Wine With The Rest Of The World

While the French have surprised the world with a significant drop in wine consumption in recent years, the average resident of the wine heartland still drinks 1.2 bottles a week. And fear not -- since France remains a top wine exporter, you can still imbibe as much Bordeaux and Burgundy as you'd like. France reaped in 5.6 billion euros (\$7.7 billion) from wine exports in 2012. Demand from the Asian market for French wine has bolstered exports, with China guzzling down a whopping 1.36 billion bottles of wine last year.

5) Taking Their Demands To The Streets

The French seem to have perfected the art of protest. Whether it's a demonstration around a higher retirement age, train workers going on strike, or fed-up passengers pushing back against the train workers' strike, the French are never too shy to take their demands to the streets. Alternatives Economiques writes that while the country today sees fewer strikes than it did in the '70s, the nation still has more strikes than most other developed nations.

6) Having A Way With Words

Albert Camus, Marcel Proust, Jean-Paul Sartre: The bon mot of France is world-renowned. But did you know France has taken home 15 Nobel Prizes in Literature -- more than any other nation -- since the inception of the awards?

7) Serving Award-Winning, Exquisite Cuisine

France's gourmet tastes and history of fine dining make it no surprise that the nation received more Michelin stars than any other country in 2013. Recently, in Paris alone you could choose from 70 starred restaurants, 10 of which had received the exclusive three-star rating. In the Michelin rankings, only Japan comes close to challenging France's fame for food. The beauty of French food is that you don't have to go to the famed Michelin three-star restaurant L'Auberge in Paris to enjoy a great meal, because in almost every city, town or village there are lots of great neighborhood family own restaurants where you can enjoy a great meal at a reasonable price.

8) Taking Work-Life Balance Seriously

France's "*joie de vivre*" may stem in part from the government's strong record in defending workers' rights to disconnect. In 1998, the administration agreed on a 35-hour work week, after which overtime kicks in. And just recently France amended national regulations stipulating that certain classes of workers should be guaranteed the ability to disconnect from remote working devices during 11-hour "*rest periods*."

9) Maintaining A Laissez-Faire Attitude Toward Their Leaders' Romantic Relationships

The rumors surrounding President François Hollande's romantic relationships have given the French much to chat about. But reports of infidelity are nothing new for French leaders: Several past presidents have confirmed their extramarital affairs. Perhaps most notorious was François Mitterrand's orchestrated announcement of his second family, which was kept secret for 14 years of his presidency. And many French people might be understanding of their leaders' romantic decisions: A poll from the Pew Research Center showed that the French are more accepting of infidelity than people in other countries and no one in France is going to get upset if the President gets a blow job.

10) Producing Elegant Mature Femmes Fatales

With elder actresses like Catherine Deneuve and politicians like Ségolène Royal, the French have a handful of classic ladies of a certain age to look up to. And while many these celebs may hold their anti-aging tactics close to their chests, some have revealed quirky strategies: "*The day I stopped using soap, my life changed*," declared actress and TV presenter Léa Drucker.

11) Designing Haute Couture

What can rival the iconic looks of Gaultier's striped sailor shirt, Louboutin's red-soled high heels or the suit jackets and pearls from Chanel? So strap on those stilettos and throw your scarf into the air if you want to even consider competing with those French fashionistas. Think about it, just the name Givenchy symbolizes unparalleled elegance.

12) Building Beautiful Structures, Old and New

France has gifted the world with some of the most iconic and breathtaking buildings, modern and classic alike. The Centre Pompidou museum and the Flower Tower residential building are just some of the ultra-modern pieces in Paris. Meanwhile, the Palace of Versailles is a masterpiece of secular baroque architecture; the Notre Dame Cathedral is a standard bearer of Gothic style; and the Eiffel Tower once was considered one of the most *avant garde* structures of its time. And lest we forget the grandiose chateaux, which you'll find both in the sprawling countryside of the Loire Valley as well as in urban centers. France is among the top five countries with the most UNESCO World Heritage Sites:

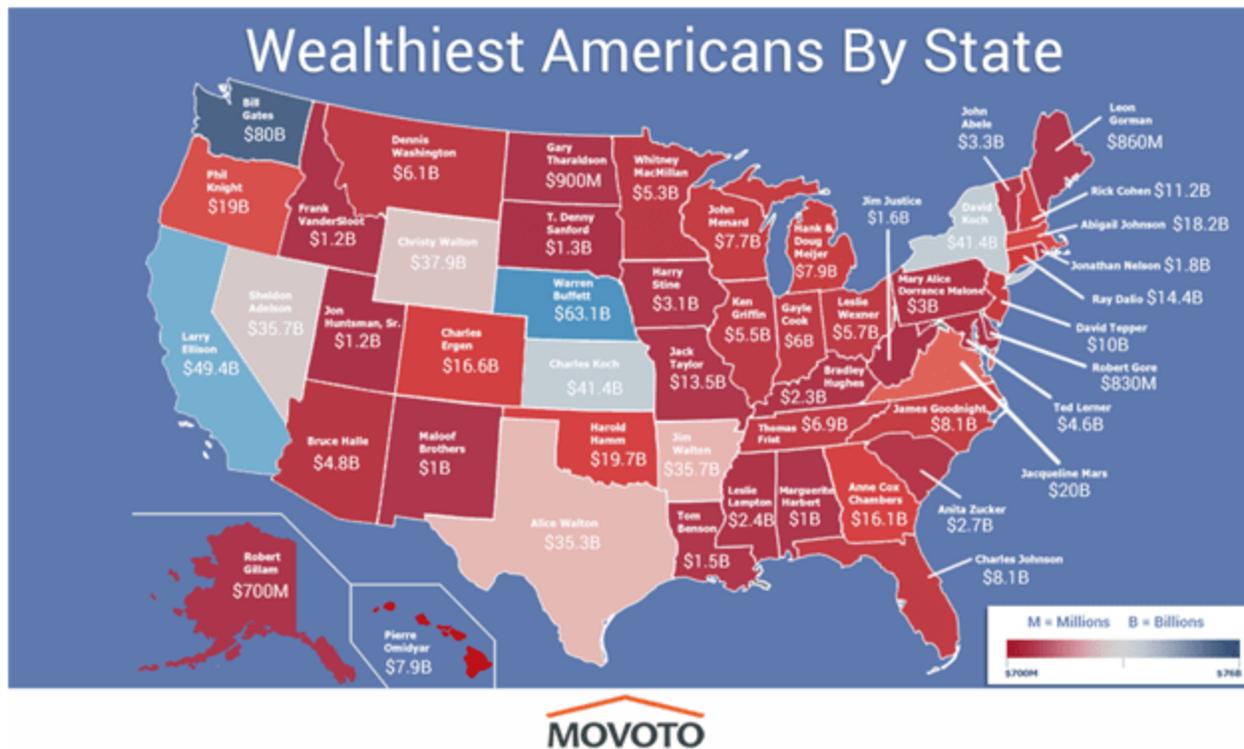
39 of France's beautiful structures are currently protected with the label, with an additional 37 submitted for approval.

13) Keeping The Wheels Going Round

It's no wonder that it was a Frenchman who established the world record for being the fastest recorded centenarian cyclist, at 102 years old. Indeed, the bicycle and French culture go hand in hand. Not only does the French countryside provide for some of the world's best cycling routes, but the country is also home to the world's foremost cycling event: Le Tour de France. While last year's edition marked the tour's 100th anniversary, the tradition is actually 110 years old (it was suspended during the world wars).

14) Sneaking Their Words Into The English Language

It's a fait accompli: The French language has sabotaged English conversation with countless words and expressions. So whether you're an amateur or a savant of French idioms, you'll likely experience *déjà-vu* when listening in on a rapport between two Francophones. And with French as an official language in 29 countries, and one of the official languages of the United Nations, it would be quite the faux pas to not expand your cache of the so-called "Language of Love."



Washington resident and Microsoft founder Bill Gates' \$80 billion net worth makes him the richest person in the country (and the world). The least rich individual on the map is Robert Gillam, founder of McKinley Capital, an Alaska-based institutional investment firm. But don't feel too bad for him -- he's worth a cool \$700 million. Heirs to the Walmart empire dominate three states: Arkansas (Jim Walton, worth \$35.7 billion), Texas (Alice Walton, worth \$35.3 billion) and Wyoming (Christy Walton, worth \$37.9 billion). Here's to so-called upward mobility.

Web link: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/07/31/richest-person-in-each-state_n_5617993.html

Looking to borrow some money go on the above web like to see the best person to go to in each state. The interactive map from the real estate blog Movoto shows the net worth of the richest resident in each U.S. state. Darker shades of blue reflect those at the richest end of the wealth spectrum, while darker shades of red reflect those at the lower end. As you can see in the map, there's a wide gulf between the fortunes of America's richest.

Last week Rupert Cornwell wrote an interesting article in **The Independent** – **Bill de Blasio: The man who dared to go on holiday** – asking if an American politician can have a holiday in peace – or, for that matter, can he have a holiday at all? Such are the thoughts prompted by the hullabaloo, in the New York media at least, over last week's family vacation of the city's mayor, Bill de Blasio, in Italy, the land of his maternal grandparents.

The trip lasted a mere eight days, but has provided some wonderful copy. "*Hizzonor*" appears to have been made an honorary citizen of various small towns and villages in the south of the country whence his forebears came, in what were billed to the trailing reporters from New York as "*ancestral homeland events*". And no detail had been left uncovered, from the "*political*" side of the De Blasio holiday, including a meeting with his opposite number in Rome, to the menu he enjoyed in Sant'Agata de' Goti, birthplace of his grandfather (black pork, ricotta cheese and pear cake according to The New York Times), at a lunch that lasted three hours, a concept unimaginable in the US. The mayor was clearly having a splendid time. But that merely fuelled the carping.

While back home, he was criticized for being observed eating pizza with a fork, apparently the ultimate sin in the Big Apple. He was chastised for visiting Capri: what is a self-proclaimed champion of the poor and underprivileged doing in the opulent, decadent haunt of celebrities, from the emperor Tiberius to Jackie Onassis? And, come to think of it, what's De Blasio doing taking a holiday in the first place? New York mayors and holidays have always had an uneasy relationship. His predecessor, the zillionaire Michael Bloomberg, would get into trouble when he slipped off on his private jet to one of his various mansions scattered about the planet. Rudy Giuliani, the mayor before that, never seemed to be away – though he spent an unconscionable amount of time attending New York Yankees games.

True to form, the Republican Giuliani lost no time in getting the knife into Democrat De Blasio about his foreign jaunt, which might have coincided with a strike by workers on the Long Island Rail Road. "*He shouldn't be going with the threat of a commuter rail strike looming,*" Giuliani complained. In the event, the dispute was settled, thanks to the good offices of the state governor, Andrew Cuomo. You have to wonder: has no one heard of delegation or of De Gaulle's dictum, that graveyards are full of indispensable people? However, if the De Blasio "*holiday*" is a big deal, consider the presidential vacation. In Europe, no problem. Harold Wilson used to potter off to the Scillies, Margaret Thatcher went to the Austrian Alps and Tony Blair sojourned in Tuscany and the Caribbean – and apart from some tut-tutting over the last named's free-loading off wealthy friends, they were pretty much left to get on with it. Not so the occupants of the White House.

Take Obama, "*doing a Blair*" and planning a summer break at a villa outside Florence. The very notion is unthinkable. "*Isn't there anywhere in the US good enough for you?*" his critics would

instantly ask, practically accusing him of treason. At a more humdrum level, such a presidential stay would tie up swathes of Tuscany for weeks, what with advance trips by the Secret Service, motorcades, no-fly zones and, of course, the obligatory White House press corps, scouring the land for the tiniest scraps of news to justify their presence. Needless to say, presidential holidays cannot be divorced from political image-making. They are delicately calibrated affairs: you must be seen as a "*regular guy*", but not strain credulity in the process. It's fine for George W Bush to clear brush at his Texas ranch, or for Obama to take down time in Hawaii. Both could be portrayed as going home, reverting to their roots, doing what comes naturally.

Others are less successful. Lets remember Bill Clinton family holiday in the Rockies during his first term. Few were fooled by the gregarious, compulsively involved Clinton seeking inner peace by hiking in the mountains. Soon he reverted to a more natural habitat – the chic Massachusetts island of Martha's Vineyard, favored summer refuge of the liberal chattering classes and close to his African American roots and his friend Vernon Jordan.

In a way, though, America's politicians are fortunate. They get paid vacations. Astonishingly, a quarter of their/our fellow citizens still do not, even though they are working harder than ever. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average employee in the US now works 160 hours, or the equivalent of four weeks, more than he or she did in 1976. Here, there is no statutory obligation for companies to offer paid holiday time. Last year, the Florida Congressman Alan Grayson introduced a Paid Vacation Act, requiring employers to provide one week of paid holiday. When last heard of, the measure had been referred to the Subcommittee on Workforce Protections and there, presumably, it gently rots.

The partisan gridlock on Capitol Hill doubtless partly explains failure to act. But other factors, one suspects, are at work: the country's deep-rooted and persisting Puritan ethic, dating back to the Founding Fathers, as well as the historical mismatch between capital and labor in America, reflected today by ever-growing disparities of wealth and ever-weakening unions. For most of the 20th century (*aka the "American Century"*), this did not much matter. My country the US could disdainfully look down on effete, nanny-state Europe, land of obstreperous unions and the three-hour lunch, and bask in its own superiority. These days, that is not so easy. How is it that Germany, where six weeks' paid holiday is the norm and workers and bosses actually co-operate, far outperforms not just most of Europe, but the US as well?

This question resonates with me as I am actually on holiday in New York City from Los Angeles, with a business breakfast this morning (*Sunday morning*), followed by another business luncheon because every serious business person traveling with a laptop and smart phone is always working wherever they are. And I am sure that this is the same for the Mayor and the President. Our politicians and their families need time to relax and I wish more would travel abroad which hopefully would broaden their understanding and give them time to recharge their own batteries.... And no place for an Italian mayor than in his ancestral home in Italy.

THIS WEEK'S QUOTE

"We journalists make it a point to know very little about an extremely wide variety of topics; this is how we stay objective."

Dave Barry

BEST VIDEO OF THE WEEK

Five North Korean Children Playing Guitars – YouTube



Web Link: <http://youtu.be/i9giZ-upZ4k>

Those kids are awesome. Impressive level and synchronization. Guitars are bigger than the kids.....

SECOND FUNNY VIDEO OF THE WEEK

Hot Crazy Matrix - A Man's Guide to Women

Web Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hKWmFWRVLIU&feature=youtu.be>

I hope that this doesn't offend your sensibilities because the video is a bit chauvinistic but it is funny even though I am not sure that it is accurate..... But again.... It is funny....

GREAT MAGIC TRICKS

One of the most exciting magicians in the world today is **David Copperfield** and if you haven't seen his live show in Las Vegas or one of his many television specials over the years and you have a free hour to kill I invite you to enjoy the amazing magic of master illusionist, **Mr. David Coperfield.....** and I promise that you will not be disappointed....

Web Link: <http://youtu.be/uxatcjA6uko>

THIS WEEK'S MUSIC

Steve Marriott – Small Faces



One of the first rock stars that I met when I first arrived in the UK was the legendary musician's musician, Stephen Peter "**Steve**" **Marriott** (30 January 1947 – 20 April 1991) was an English musician, songwriter and frontman of two notable rock and roll bands, spanning over two decades. Marriott help is remembered for his powerful singing voice which belied his small stature, and for his aggressive approach as a guitarist in mod Rock bands **Small Faces** (1965–1969) and **Humble Pie** (1969–1975 and 1980–1981). Marriott was inducted posthumously into the **Rock and Roll Hall of Fame** in 2012 as a member of Small Faces. In Britain, Marriott became a popular, often-photographed mod style icon through his role as lead singer and guitarist with the Small Faces in the mid to late 1960s. Marriott was influenced from an early age by his heroes including Buddy Holly, Booker T & the MG's, Ray Charles, Otis Redding, Muddy Waters and Bobby Bland. In later life Marriott became disillusioned with the music industry and turned his back on the big record companies, remaining in relative obscurity. He returned to his music roots playing the pubs and clubs around London and Essex. Marriott died on 20 April 1991 when a fire, thought to have been caused by a cigarette, swept through his 16th century home in Arkesden, Essex. He posthumously received an **Ivor Novello Award in 1996** for his **Outstanding Contribution to British Music**, and was listed in Mojo as one of the top 100 greatest singers of all time.

The English rock band **Small Faces** was founded in 1965 by members Steve Marriott, Ronnie Lane, Kenney Jones, and Jimmy Winston, although by 1966 Winston was replaced by Ian McLagan as the band's keyboardist. It is remembered as one of the most acclaimed and influential mod groups of the 1960s. With memorable hit songs such as "*Itchycoo Park*", "*Lazy Sunday*", "*All or Nothing*", "*Tin Soldier*", and their concept album *Ogdens' Nut Gone Flake*, they later evolved into one of the UK's most successful psychedelic acts before disbanding in 1969. After the Small Faces disbanded, with Marriott leaving to form Humble Pie, the remaining three members were joined by Ronnie Wood as guitarist, and Rod Stewart as their lead vocalist, both from The Jeff Beck Group, and the new line-up was renamed Faces. A revived version of the original Small Faces existed from 1975 to 1978. Small Faces are also acknowledged as being one of the biggest original influences on the Britpop movement of the 1990s. Despite the fact the band were together just four years in their original incarnation, the Small Faces' music output from the mid to late sixties remains among the most acclaimed British mod and psychedelic music of that era. With this said I invite you to enjoy the music of **The Small Faces**, **Steve Marriott** and **Humble Pie** as Steve Marriott was truly a gifted musician and the quintessential English Rock Star who was completely nuts but a special - special person.... Please

enjoy the music, interview and the Bonus Track from the Yardbirds as well as the Small Faces' rock opera *Ogdens' Nut Gone Flake*..... which I have to admit requires a real love for 60s English rock....

- Small Faces – ***All or Nothing*** -- <http://youtu.be/HUuuHLaSLRo>
- Small Faces – ***Tin Soldier*** -- http://youtu.be/6vWTtx_PxPo
- Small Faces – ***Itchycoo Park*** -- <http://youtu.be/14VivvgtvbA>
- Small Faces – ***Lazy Sunday*** -- <http://youtu.be/Rv41AgQTrA>
- Humble Pie – ***Black Coffee*** -- <http://youtu.be/2tNoSmlnxwQ>
- Humble Pie – ***30 Days in the Hole*** -- <http://youtu.be/MboEgSKfWVA>
- Humble Pie – ***Rolling Stone*** -- <http://youtu.be/Ryfo8xePJBs>
- Humble Pie – ***Honky Tonk Women*** -- <http://youtu.be/f8hou2lhsVI>
- Humble Pie – ***For Your Love*** -- http://youtu.be/O_2ysoByMT8
- Humble Pie – ***I Walk on Gilded Splinters*** -- http://youtu.be/lnI6W3l_1Oo
- Humble Pie – ***Natural Born Boogie*** -- http://youtu.be/WAZlf_9ObLg
- Steve Marriot – ***I Don't Need No Doctor*** -- <http://youtu.be/WmXIkfH9olw>
- Steve Marriott – ***Five Long Years*** -- <http://youtu.be/XMCgqjYA424>
- Steve Marriott – ***30 Days in the Hole*** -- <http://youtu.be/qogwRaqT5xw>
- Steve Marriott Interview: LIVE FROM LONDON, 1985 -- <http://youtu.be/HeT5nb3RqXI>
- Peter Frampton ***"Remembering Steve Marriot"*** -- http://youtu.be/Xh6LA_oEHMk
- Small Faces – ***Ogdens' Nut Gone Flake*** - Full record -- <http://youtu.be/qBOFm96rTsg>
- THE YARDBIRDS ROCK WITH INVENTION -- <http://youtu.be/HoHnlHfEA64>

*I hope that you enjoyed this week's offerings and wish you
and yours a great week....*

Sincerely,

Greg Brown

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Gregory Brown
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