

# THE PROCRASTINATOR

(YOU'LL THANK US LATER)

PRE-THANKSGIVING EDITION

## POLITICS:

“TAKE MOST PEOPLE, THEY'RE CRAZY ABOUT CARS. I'D RATHER HAVE A GODDAMN HORSE. A HORSE IS AT LEAST HUMAN, FOR GOD'S SAKE.” – J.D. SALINGER

MICHAEL ORR

Over recent weeks, the Big Three automakers in the US (Chrysler, Ford and General Motors) have been petitioning the government to lend them some \$25 billion to stay afloat during these tough economic times. The carmakers have long been in trouble but with the government doling out billions to bail out various entities in the financial sector, the Big Three are trying to get some for themselves. Something about it just doesn't sit right, though. Why should the taxpayers bail out companies that have forced us to waste so much money already due to really low mileage standards and cheaply made products?

There are several ways to approach this topic but I'd like to compare the proposed bail out of Detroit to two other hurriedly thrown together projects that passed through the Congress in the past five years. The first is the recent financial bail out that was passed earlier this fall. Congressmen and pundits alike screamed that our country would collapse if we did not immediately bail out Wall Street. But what happened? We pledged to use \$700 billion to rescue financial institutions but have seen the stock market continue to sink almost every day. Isn't that what the bail out was supposed to be protecting us from? Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson is now also claiming that he doesn't exactly know what to do with the rest of the money appropriated to him in the bail out. How is that possible? He drew up the plan himself.



The second comparison I think is apt is the Congress' passing of the Iraq invasion in 2003. With faulty intelligence and questionable motives, the President warned that Iraq was a danger to the US. Congress quickly passed resolutions to allow the war to begin, a decision many regret five years later. Regardless of what your political or emotional feelings on the subject may be, it is safe to say that the preparation for the war did not have good longer-term planning. The executive branch used scare tactics to get it through and then did not produce the results it purported to be used for.

That brings us back to Detroit and their quest to be saved. What makes us think that an infusion of cash from the government will actually save these foundering giants? With the scale upon which they lose money each year, how far would \$25 billion really go? Would it save them for an extra year or even six months? There does not seem to be a plan in place to see that the money is used wisely and effectively to actually save these companies. If granted as it stands right now, the car companies could easily take the money and do with it as they please, not necessarily addressing the problems that are causing the disasters in question. In other words, no plan, no results.

Scare tactics are being used in this case as well. Talking heads lead us to believe that if the automakers are not bailed out, the companies will fail and millions of Americans will lose their jobs. That simply is not true. Looking just in the past ten years, nearly all of the major American air carriers have gone into, and out of, Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. During these times, instead of the airlines collapsing and our ability to travel by air being eliminated, the companies were restructured and saved while keeping creditors from shutting down the industry. Why wouldn't the same thing work with car companies? Millions of American airline jobs were not lost while in Chapter 11. Yes, there were casualties on the job front but with the shape these



companies are in, that is a given regardless of the actions taken by the government. If GM, Ford and Chrysler were to enter Chapter 11, the companies likely would not be lost and at some point in the future, they would likely return as profitable or at least viable corporations.

Bailouts are tricky business because they allow certain companies or sectors to survive while allowing others to fail. By opening the door, the Congress has given struggling industries across this country a reason to say, why not me? But they cannot give this bail out to the automakers in Detroit. Let them go into bankruptcy, shake up management and bring out some new ideas. If

anything, the government should require all vehicles produced in this country to have at least 35 miles-per-gallon capacities, not give them money to keep making the gas-guzzling cars and trucks they currently build.

The auto industry is a vitally important part of this economy if for no other reason than millions of people are employed in some way or another. But that does not mean that they should be exempt from the tough times in this economy. We all have to make sacrifices to get on while things are down. Why not be leaders in the changing world instead of clinging to any last straws available in the old world? We cannot afford to have the auto industry reliant upon the government any longer and we cannot allow special interests to trump the due diligence that should be inherent in the handing over of taxpayer money.

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# THE WAYS OF THE WORLD:

## SHUFFLING LOOSE THE OCCUPATIONAL COIL

BRAD WRIGHT

*Up every mornin just to keep a job / I gotta fight my way through the hustlin mob  
Sounds of the city poundin in my brain / while another day goes down the drain*

- The Vogues

To those who know me, even casually, it is no secret that I am not fond of my job. I readily identify with the countless movies, sitcoms, and comedians who deplore the tedium and drudgery of the workaday world. As the Vogues so brilliantly state, everyday seems to be a waste of time, with nothing gained and nothing changed. My 9 to 5 existence is probably the same as millions of others, with very little being accomplished, and what is accomplished isn't all that important. Because of frustration with this situation, I have decided to take a rather unconventional step. Rather than trying to find another means of employment, I have chosen to leave my job and hike all 2,175 miles of the Appalachian Trail.

The most obvious question is, of course, why would I do such a thing? While I have always enjoyed the outdoors, I am certainly no Davy Crockett. My experience as a woodsman is limited to the time I spent as a Boy Scout and the hours upon hours I would spend in the woods surrounding my house as a child. That being the case, why would I forgo the stability and security provided by my job?

Why would I drop everything and spend five to seven months walking from Georgia to the tip of Maine? When contemplating this question, I usually turn it around, and ask instead "why would I continue to do something that brings me no fulfillment whatsoever?" To get the heart of why I have made this decision, one must look no further than one very simple word: meaning.



For as long as I can remember, I have been drawn to the mysterious and profound. What began with my personal and academic study of religion and philosophy has continued in my love of music, literature, and cinema. How we relate to the world and each other is a source of endless fascination to me. If I am able to sit back, smoke a pipe and contemplate one of life's many mysteries, I am able to say that it was a good day.

Whether this is an intrinsic aspect of my nature (I am a Pisces, after all) or the product of a lifetime of watching movies, I cannot be sure. Regardless of how my personality developed, my worldview is dominated by an almost dreamlike fascination with the pursuit of meaning. Regrettably, this can often lead to instances of maudlin sentimentality, which is what I fear this writing is becoming. But though I might romanticize things, I take comfort in knowing that doing so is a reflection of my intense desire to see the meaning and purpose in life.

Despite my yearning to understand the underlying mystery of our existence, I suffer from a lack of religious perspective. Most people in this world turn to their god to help them through troubled times. Their faith in God is what allows them to grasp the meaning of their lives. I have all but abandoned the conventions of organized religion. Simply put, God does not speak to me and I do not speak to God. Though, while the lines of communication are down, I do not deny, and am strongly attracted to, the mysteries of existence upon which religious belief is based. It is my most sincere desire that, simply by immersing myself in the beauty of this world, I will arrive at some kind of truth.

Needless to say, there is little to no truth to be found manning a desk in an office building. I think the number of people who actually enjoy the office setting are few and far between. Personally, I find it impossible to contemplate the mysteries of life and the universe while surrounded by the artifices and contrivances of humankind. There is so much disconnect between people in our modern world, and I am hoping to rediscover some of the beauty and inherent goodness of humanity in my travels.

So, why am I giving up everything and taking such a risk? Basically, it comes down to desperation. Part of it, to be sure, is my desperation to escape the mind-numbing drudgery that is the 9 to 5 world. That is a relatively insignificant factor, however, when compared to my desperation to experience something beyond the mundane. When we, as humans, accept the mundane as our reality and abandon the search for meaning, we are sacrificing the very essence of what makes us human. I believe that it is the pursuit of meaning, of trying to understand our purpose, if there is one, that makes life worthwhile. And so, it is with this ambition in mind that I undertake this journey.

I would like to end with something incredibly eloquent and profound, but I suppose that that ability will elude me until I complete my trek. Instead, I will end as I began; relying on the poignant lyrics of the Vogues to capture the spirit of the meaning I seek.

*But there's a five o'clock world when the whistle blows / no one owns a piece of my time  
And there's a five o'clock me inside of my clothes / thinking that the world looks fine.*

**Brad** will be growing a Forest Gump-style beard soon enough, and can be reached at [bwright08@gmail.com](mailto:bwright08@gmail.com)

## BONFIRE OF INANITIES:

### TEXAS TECH AS *REDISTRIBUTIONISTS*

MICHAEL ORR



Lubbock, TX - Texas Tech basketball players were shocked to learn on Saturday night that their overflow of points in a Thursday night basketball game would not be added to the football team's total against Oklahoma. After running up a 167-115 victory over tiny East Central Oklahoma on Thursday, November 20, the Red Raiders believed that their margin of victory could be spread to the football team.

“Why else do you think we scored 90 points in the second half?” asked Red Raider senior forward Trevor Cook, who led Texas Tech with 20 points. “We never would have beaten them so badly if we’d known the points wouldn’t carry over!” he added.

Cook was one of ten players in double figuring scoring in the record breaking game. His football counterparts were not so lucky, however, losing 65-21 to Oklahoma.

“I tried to tell my guys all week that we had to win this one on our own but they just didn’t listen,” noted Tech football coach Mike Leach after the humiliating debacle in Norman.

“Usually it’s us scoring all the points and running up the score late in the game,” lamented Red Raider quarterback Graham Harrell, “but somehow them guys on the basketball team scored so many points there just wasn’t any left for us.”

There are no other reported cases of one sports’ points carrying over into another.

*Michael cannot even count to 167, but can be reached at [mikeaorr@gmail.com](mailto:mikeaorr@gmail.com)*