

# *The K.F. Stone Weekly*

(Formerly "Beating the Bushes")



June 07, 2014

## THIS JUST IN . . . FROM A PARALLEL UNIVERSE

Nearly 35 years ago a cosmologist named [Alan Guth](#) first posited a parallel universes theory. Although "I am not a scientist" -- to use a phrase which is currently all the rage -- I can tell you that Guth's theory holds that atomic particles have the ability to exist



simultaneously in more than one place at the same time. If Guth's theory is correct -- and tons of theoretical physicists and cosmologists believe it is -- it would mean that there are many universes, all of which would appear to have the same properties and abide by the same law of physics. Because this theory can't fully be proven, there is speculation as to what these other universes hold. That's where the fun comes in. It is entirely possible that in a parallel universe Charlie Chaplin is the world's greatest tragedian and

Lawrence Olivier the best slapstick comedian; that redwoods swim and rhinoceros fly; that Ted Cruz is a mad leftist and Barack Obama a militant conservative.

Keeping this prolegomenon in mind, and inserting tongue in cheek, we present the following news item from a parallel universe . . .

WASHINGTON -- Within minutes of the White House announcing that U.S. Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl had died in captivity, Capitol Hill was abuzz with condemnation -- from both sides of the political aisle.

Speaking of what he called "*. . . the nation's sacred historic obligation to leave no serviceman or woman behind*," Arizona Senator John McCain (R-AZ) -- who himself was a POW during the Vietnam War -- stated "*President Obama's hands are stained with Bowe Bergdahl's blood*." Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) castigated the president, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel and Secretary of State John Kerry for what he called "*. . . their shocking lack of diplomatic skill or ability*," and referred to Sgt. Bergdahl as "*a great American hero . . . a man steeped in the tradition of Nathan Hale*." House Oversight and Government Reform Committee Chair Darrell Issa (R-CA) called for immediate hearings "*. . . at which we will seek to determine how in the world the White House failed to negotiate a prisoner swap with the Taliban*." Fox News Commentator Bill O'Reilly noted that "*America is supposed go the extra mile when it comes to our brave men and women in uniform. To leave behind -- thereby causing the death -- of even a single soldier, sailor or marine is an impeachable offense. Obama should have learned from our Israeli allies who traded 1,027 Palestinians and Arab-Israelis -- more than 280 of whom had been sentenced to life in prison for perpetrating terrorist attacks -- for Gilad Shalit. That's the way to show loyalty to one's own . . . and stick a finger in the eye of the enemy*."

Speaking at a hastily convened press conference in the White House Rose Garden, President Obama said he stood firm in his decision not to negotiate for Sgt. Bergdahl's release. "*Simply stated*," Obama told the assembled reporters, "*America does not . . . I repeat, does not negotiate with terrorists. If we did, what would this be saying to our enemies? I'll tell you what: That if you capture a U.S. soldier, you can trade that soldier for your fellow terrorists that we've taken off the field of battle*."

Former Representative Alan West (R-FL) took the president to task, telling Fox News "*. . . one would hope that as a father, as a parent, he would understand that you move heaven and earth to save the life of your child*." Speaking of Sgt. Bergdahl's father, Robert, West added, "*Look at this man: in his single-minded desire to see his son freed, Robert Bergdahl stopped shaving and even learned to speak Pashto -- the language of his son's captors -- so he could appeal to them directly in words they would understand. This is what a father does! This is how far a parent goes! But not president Barry Obama . . .*"

Not all the president's critics were Republicans.

Senate Intelligence Committee chair Dianne Feinstein's (D-CA), response to the president's statement that "*The United States does not negotiate with terrorists*," was both scolding and didactic: "*While the president may be correct in his assertion that we do not negotiate with terrorists, the Haqqani network -- the people who held Sgt.*

*Bergdahl captive -- are not terrorists, according to the letter of the law. [The Foreign Relations Authorization Act](#), section 140(d)(2) defines 'terrorism' as 'premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents.' Sgt. Bergdahl was not a 'noncombatant.' He was a soldier fighting in a war, which means that his capture was not an act of terrorism, his captors not, by definition terrorists. As such, the president could have -- should have -- negotiated with them. To do otherwise, which led to Sgt. Bergdahl's death -- is total dereliction of duty -- the antithesis of leadership."*

A growing number of Democratic House and Senate candidates are seeking to distance themselves from the White House, most stating that they did not agree with the President's decision . . .

Remarkable, isn't it? In a parallel universe, the right shoe is worn on the left foot, Haydn tops the hip-hop charts and LeBron James is a CPA. The one thing that seems unchanged is that no matter what President Obama does -- or does not do -- he is slammed. In a parallel universe, Sgt. Bergdahl is a hero; swapping Islamic terrorists for a U.S. prisoner of war is kosher; learning Pashto and growing a long beard a sign of parental fealty. Regardless of which universe we visit, President Obama is wrong, wrong, wrong.

Here in *this* universe, things are pretty screwed up as well. In the words of [Esquire's](#) Charles Pierce, "*The kidz and their recess monitors are busily fashioning a yellow ribbon into a noose for Bowe Bergdahl, whom they congratulate for being home so that they can calumnize him, his family, his service, and the president who got him here.*"

I guess professor Guth was right: atomic particles (like political craziness) have the ability to exist simultaneously in more than one place at the same time.

Or, to put it into terms that all us non-scientists can easily grok, "*The more things change, the more they remain the same.*"

Pity, isn't it?

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June 14, 2014

## DUBITO ERGO COGITO

Few statements are indubitable -- meaning impossible to doubt. In a world in which so much jabber, blather, and prattle seeks to pass itself off for absolute truth, indubitability is as rare as a royal flush. For many, that which is "true" is that which has been stated with the greatest frequency and sonance -- the most often and the loudest. This of course means that that which *frick* holds to be self-evidently, unquestionably true -- through hearing said proposition a million times over -- is at best debatable, at worst a total fiction to *frack*, who gathers his or her truths from different sources. Then too, many unconsciously confuse that which they *believe* with that which they *know*.



Nearly 400 years ago (1637 to be precise), the French philosopher/mathematician René Descartes took a mere three words to express one of the few indubitable truths we possess: *cogito ergo sum* -- "I think, therefore I am." Without getting into [Descartes' abandonment of Aristotelianism](#) or formulation of [mind-body dualism](#), suffice it to say that with these three words (actually five in the original French: *Je pense, donc je suis*), he demonstrated that we really can attain absolute, certain knowledge. *Cogito ergo sum* is indubitable, Descartes argued, because "*even if an all-powerful demon were to try to deceive me into thinking that I exist when I do not, I would have to exist for the demon to deceive me. Therefore, whenever I think, I exist.*"

So what is this all about? Since when did *The K.F. Stone Weekly* turn into a Platonic academy for well-meaning amateurs? Actually, it has not, but Descartes' dictum did come to mind the other day as I was watching a televised hearing of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution and Civil Justice. The stated subject of [the hearing](#) was "The State of Religious Liberty in the United States." Subcommittee Chair Trent Franks (R-AZ) and his 8 majority colleagues invited three witnesses to testify:

- [Matthew D. Staver](#), Dean and Professor of Law Liberty University School of Law.
- [Ms. Kim Colby](#), Director, Center for Law and Religious Freedom Christian Legal Society, and
- [Gregory S. Baylor](#), Senior Counsel, Alliance Defending Freedom.

Ranking minority member Jerry Nadler (D-NY) and his 4 minority colleagues were permitted to invite a single witness. They chose

- [The Rev. Barry Lynn](#), Executive Director, Americans United for the Separation of Church and State

The first three witnesses pretty much spoke with a single voice. Their message, in the words of Dean Staver, was that "*The threat to religious freedom has reached unprecedented levels. These threats are more significant and severe than at any time in recent history.*" Baylor, the Alliance Defending Freedom senior counsel stated at the outset of his testimony that, "*Americans of all faiths have reason to be concerned about the current Administration's religious liberty record . . . the current Administration has all too often taken what can only be characterized as extreme positions designed to dramatically decrease religious freedom.*" Similarly, Ms. Colby, the Religious Freedom Christian Legal Society legal director sounded a warning about the Administration's attempt, specifically through the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to constrain religious freedom.

These three witnesses were pretty much of a single mind when it came to indubitable statements of truth. All believe that the Affordable Care Act is anti-Christian, that the acceptance and legalizing of same-sex marriage tears at the moral fabric of society, thereby endangering the American family, and that there is a veritable war against Christianity going on in this country.

In his remarks, Staver complained that states shouldn't be allowed to prevent so-called conversion, or [reparative therapy](#) to treat people for being gay. And he later dodged on whether he supported Russia's anti-gay laws, telling Rep. Steve Cohen (D-Tenn.), "I don't know what you've read; I haven't spoken on the Russian law anywhere." Actually, Staver *has* spoken out about his support for



the law which makes homosexuality a crime in Russia, and punishable by death in Nigeria and Uganda . . . both loudly and forcefully ([listen here](#)).

The Rev. Lynn's take on the state of religious liberty in America was predictably quite different. He told members of the subcommittee that *"The good news is that the United States is one of the most religiously diverse countries in the world and our constitution grants us some of the strongest religious liberty protections in the world. Nonetheless, we still face threats to religious liberty in our country every day. The largest threats as I see them today can be placed into two broad categories: threats to religious minorities and non-believers, and efforts to radically redefine religious liberty. Threats to the Christian majority are few, far between, and sometimes, frankly, untrue."*

Perhaps the high- (or low) point of the session came during the following colloquy between committee member Louie Gohmert (R-TX) and Rev. Lynn:

Gohmert asked Rev. Lynn "Do you believe in sharing the good news that will keep people from going to Hell, consistent with Christian beliefs?"

Lynn disagreed with the congressman's "construction of what Hell is like or why one gets there."

"So, you do not believe somebody would go to Hell if they do not believe Jesus is the way, the truth, the life?" Gohmert pressed.

The pastor argued that people would not go to Hell for believing a "set of ideas."

"No, not a set of ideas. Either you believe as a Christian that Jesus is the way, the truth, or life or you don't," Gohmert shot back. "And there's nothing wrong in our country with that — there's no crime, there's no shame."

"Congressman, what I believe is not necessarily what I think ought to justify the creation of public policy for everybody," Lynn explained. "For the 2,000 different religions that exist in this country, the 25 million non-believers. I've never been offended, I've never been ashamed to share my belief. When I spoke recently at an American Atheists conference, it was clear from the very beginning, the first sentence that I was a Christian minister."

"So, the Christian belief as you see it is whatever you choose to think about Christ, whether or not you believe those words he said that nobody basically 'goes to heaven except through me' . . .?"

In asserting that the only way to achieve eternal life is to believe in Jesus -- and in the precise same theologic construction as he -- Gohmert was effectively

condemning to Hell not only the Rev. Lynn, and the three Jewish members of the subcommittee -- Jerry Nadler (D-NY), Steve Cohen (D-TN) and Ted Deutch (D-FL) but easily more than half the American public and the many billions of non-Christians who inhabit planet earth. Never mind that a Congressional subcommittee is no place for a theological debate -- and to his credit, Rev. Lynn was not tempted by Louis Gohmert's bait. More importantly, this sort of personal belief passing itself off as indubitable self-evident truth smacks of the worst kind of intolerance. It easily violates the separation of church and state -- which sadly, Gohmert and those like him "know for a fact" is a myth perpetrated by non-believers.

This is not the only area in which a wide swath of America exercises absolute certainty. There are those who "know" that the only thing that stands between personal freedom and a federal government run rampant is a citizenry that is armed to the teeth and proudly parading through the streets, weapons at the ready as if it were 1870 and we all were back in the days of Dodge City. There are also those who "know" that illegal aliens are poised to take over the country, that the vast majority of impoverished people choose to be so, and that every problem can be solved by lower taxes, less regulation and a return to God.

So much certainty among people who don't think.

Of this there can be no doubt.

That is why my motto is *dubito ergo cogito* -- "I doubt, therefore I think."

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June 22, 2014

## **IF MONEY IS SPEECH AND CORPORATIONS ARE PEOPLE, THEN I'M LEBRON JAMES AND HEDY LAMARR WAS A GUY**

Back in late October of 2010, I published an essay entitled [\*Worse Than Dred Scott\*](#). It dealt with the Supreme Court's ruling in [\*Citizens United v Federal Election Commission\*](#), which at that point was less than a year old. This decision -- which I have long held is



the absolute worst in the history of SCOTUS (Supreme Court of the United States) -- reaffirmed that money is speech and ruled that corporations are people. In that essay I wrote:

*One wonders if there is any power on earth that might one day lead to the nullification of Citizens United, the single-worst and most dangerous decision the Court has ever made. For in giving corporations and anonymous "civic-minded" mega-billionaires the legal*

*right to deluge the political system with dollars, they have hastened the transition of America from a capitalist to a corporatist state. And unless I have totally misunderstood my reading of history, corporate control of the state is a pillar of fascism . . ."*

More recently, the court added insult to injury in the *McCutcheon v Federal Election Commission* decision whereby the majority ruled that aggregate campaign contribution limits violate the First Amendment. As a result of these two toxic decisions, our political system -- and indeed the very destiny of our republic -- has been put into the hands of an infinitesimally tiny cadre of billionaires and multi-centimillionaires who seem to care not a whit for the needs, wishes, or desires of the American people. Where



once upon a time it was derisively that that "What's good for General Motors is good for the U.S.A.," these people declare "What's good for me is good for me."

In essence, *Citizens United* and *McCutcheon* have given those in possession of unfathomable wealth legal license to override public will; to, in essence, reshape an America that will reflect *their* needs, wants and worldview regardless of what the majority thinks.



How do they do it? They pump hundreds upon hundreds of millions of dollars -- frequently under the cloak of anonymity -- into Super PACs which support the campaigns of people who will protect and further their self-interest. Their goal is to elect these people to offices ranging from county commissions and city councils to state legislatures, Congress and even the White House. As we have seen in recent election cycles, a huge majority of those receiving funds and support identify with the Tea Party brand of Republicanism. And it works. Man, how it works.

Need proof?

According to the most recent [NBC/Wall Street Journal Poll](#):

- 47% of the American public believes that immigration helps the U.S., while 68% of those who identify with the Tea Party think it hurts.
- Nationwide, 57% of the public approve of measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; 74% of the Tea Party supporters disapprove.
- In the country at large, 61% believe that global warming needs either "serious action" or "some action"; among Tea Party Republicans, 77% say that concerns about global warming are either "unwarranted" or "don't know enough."
- On gun control, a recent [UMass Poll](#) showed that when it comes to gun control, 78% of those polled nationally favor more thorough background checks and psychological analysis for people buying guns, and 80% favor closing the "gun show loophole," which allows gun buyers to forgo background checks all together. (Of those identifying themselves as Republican, 70% said they favored background checks.)

And yet:

- Congress will not take up immigration reform for fear of being labeled "liberal";
- Global warming is regularly referred to as a hoax;
- State legislatures are passing more and more legislation permitting the open carrying of guns in places like bars and churches;

- Access to abortion is increasingly plagued with more and more roadblocks and restrictions.
- Despite the fact that ". . . [prosecutions for migratory bird law](#) violations [are] still far more common than election fraud," state legislatures continue passing measures which make both registering to vote and casting a ballot more difficult for seniors, minorities, students and the poor.

One of the main reasons why Congress and many state legislatures are so obviously out of step with a majority of the American public on these and other issues is that they have little to fear. They know that as long as they continue doing the bidding of their financial backers, they have little to fear from the voting public. They know they can count on virtually unlimited funds from Super PACs which will smear their opponents and obfuscate issues to the point where voters either stay home or vote against their own self-interest . . . at least those who are still able to vote.

Overturing *Citizens United* and *McCutcheon* is absolutely essential. [The support is there](#): in poll after poll, upwards of 76% of the American public believe that "The super rich have far too much power, that the government should not provide financial aid to corporations and should not provide tax breaks to the rich." Unbelievably, most *Republicans* believe *Citizens United* was "bad for democracy." [A survey](#) conducted in April 2012 by the Opinion Research Corporation (ORC) found that overall 69% of Americans agreed that "*new rules that let corporations, unions and people give unlimited money to Super PACs will lead to corruption.*" Only 15% disagreed. Notably, three out of four *Republicans* (74%) agreed with this statement. A similar poll conducted in January 2012 by the Pew Research Center (PRC) showed that Independent voters were by far the group that felt the *Citizens United* ruling was negative – more than two out of three (67%) of those polled said the ruling has a negative impact on political campaigns.

Over the past several years, most of us have received dozens of junk emails purporting to be in favor of a proposed 28th Amendment to the Constitution. (I wrote about this in an essay entitled [A Goat Also Has a Beard](#) in October of 2011). It is a fraud; no one has ever submitted such a proposal . . . until now. Now, there *is* a real proposal for a 28th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. It is New Mexico Senator Tom Udall's [SJ Res 19](#), "A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relating to contributions and expenditures intended to affect elections."

The resolution has two sections:

### ***Section 1. [Artificial Entities Such as Corporations Do Not Have Constitutional Rights]***

The rights protected by the Constitution of the United States are the rights of natural persons only.

Artificial entities established by the laws of any State, the United States, or any foreign state shall have no rights under this Constitution and are subject to regulation by the People, through Federal, State, or local law.

The privileges of artificial entities shall be determined by the People, through Federal, State, or local law, and shall not be construed to be inherent or inalienable.

## **Section 2. [*Money is Not Free Speech*]**

Federal, State, and local government shall regulate, limit, or prohibit contributions and expenditures, including a candidate's own contributions and expenditures, to ensure that all citizens, regardless of their economic status, have access to the political process, and that no person gains, as a result of their money, substantially more access or ability to influence in any way the election of any candidate for public office or any ballot measure.

Federal, State, and local government shall require that any permissible contributions and expenditures be publicly disclosed.

The judiciary shall not construe the spending of money to influence elections to be speech under the First Amendment.

Senator Udall's resolution has 43 cosponsors: 41 Democrats and 2 Independents. (Sorry Florida, but Democratic Senator Bill Nelson ain't one of 'em.) This past Wednesday was historic: SJ Res 19 passed the Senate's Constitution, Civil Rights and Human Rights Subcommittee. The amendment now moves to the Senate Judiciary Committee. That's scheduled for July 10. And then it goes to the full Senate, either later in July, or after the August congressional recess.

From there, who knows?

While it is not likely to pass the House, and would need to go to each of the 50 state legislatures for ratification, stranger things have been known to happen. Who would have thought just a couple of years ago that any state would enact same-sex marriage legislation? Already, [16 state legislatures](#) have passed resolutions calling for the overturning of *Citizens United*.

Anyone who wishes to stand up and be counted should go to [MovetoAmend.com](http://MovetoAmend.com) and see how you can help.

If money is speech and corporations are people, then I'm LeBron James and Hedy Lamarr was a guy.

Or, to put it a bit more poetically,

*Tho' the court's ruled that money's free speech, it still cannot whistle a tune;*

*And that Microsoft's really a person, it still cannot sigh at the moon.*

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**June 29, 2014**

## **HOWARD BAKER: LAST OF THE "ELOQUENT LISTENERS"**

Former Senate Majority Leader Howard Baker (R-TN) passed away this past Thursday, June 26, 2014. Ironically, the very next day -- June 27th -- marked forty years to the day that the Senate Watergate Committee released its seven-volume, 1,250-page [report on the scandal](#) that brought down a president. Beginning on Thursday, May 17, 1973 ABC, CBS and NBC turned on their cameras for what would become 319 hours of national gavel-to-gavel coverage.



The hearings, watched by an estimated 85% of the American public made household names out of Committee Chair Sam Ervin (D-NC), Daniel Inouye (D-HI) and Lowell Weicker, Jr. (R-CT), committee counsels Sam Dash and Fred Thompson, and witnesses John Dean, Alexander Butterworth, Donald Segretti and Jeb Stuart

Magruder (who passed away just two weeks before Baker). Similarly, it was those televised hearings that put Howard H. Baker, Jr. into both the public spotlight and history books. For in addition to having his face on camera for most of those 319 hours, it was Baker, the committee's ranking member, who asked what turned out to be the hearings' most famous -- and, to this day, most oft-posed -- question:

*What did the president know and when did he know it?*

What made his searching question all the more unique -- from today's perspective -- is that Baker was asking it not about some political adversary, but about a sitting president from his own party. Of course, Baker is -- and should be -- known for far more than merely posing an iconic question. For in addition to serving 3 terms (1967-85) in the Senate, nearly 18 months (1987-88) as President Ronald Reagan's Chief of Staff, and 4 years (2001-05) as America's Ambassador to Japan, Howard Baker may well have been one of the last of a dying breed -- an elected leader who knew the value of listening -- honestly listening -- to those with whom one likely disagree. In an article published this past Thursday in the *National Journal*, writer George E. Condon, Jr., writes that "To Baker . . . the secret of success was being what he called an 'eloquent listener.'"

In today's Maginot-lined world of hyper-partisan, take-no-enemies politics, Baker's "eloquent listening" sounds both cloyingly quaint and numbingly innocent; a relic of a bygone era when the floor of Congress had one spittoon for every five members and Democrats and Republicans went out drinking together at the end of the day. And for those who think the Tennessee senator must have been some sort of squishy-soft middle-of-the-roader . . . guess again. Howard Baker was a dyed-in-the-wool partisan Republican. Nonetheless, in listening both respectfully and eloquently to those on the other side of an issue or the aisle, Baker came to understand that there are times when placing the good of the nation above one's own partisan political agenda is both essential and patriotic. Baker can and did cosponsor legislation with Democrats. Despite being a fiscal conservative, Baker successfully teamed with Massachusetts Senator Edward Kennedy to pass a \$98 billion tax *increase* in 1982. Then too, Baker was largely responsible for passage of the 1977 Panama Canal Treaty. At the time, most Republicans had a visceral disdain for the Jimmy Carter-initiated treaty which would give Panama control of the Panama Canal. Baker, then serving as Senate Minority Leader, listened to what supporters of the treaty had to say. He was a smart enough politician to understand that backing the treaty would likely scotch his dream of becoming the GOP's presidential nominee in 1980. Despite this, he not only





personally supported the treaty; he gathered up enough Republican votes to see the treaty enacted. Why did he do it, knowing that it would likely give the presidential nomination to Ronald Reagan? Because, he later said, "It was the right thing to do."

It really was not that long ago when mature adults populated the political landscape; Senators like Clifford Case (R-NJ), Jacob Javits (R-NY), Mark Hatfield (R-OR), John Chafee and George Aiken (R-VT); Representatives like Pete McClosky (R-CA), Tom Evans (R-DE), Bob Michel (R-IL), Bill Gradison (R-OH) and Bob Kasten (R-WI). Like Howard Baker, these Republican senators and representatives knew how to work across the aisle; they understood that putting the good of the nation ahead of the needs of their party was not the abnegation of principle; it was the acceptance of responsibility.

Then too, there was a time -- and not so very long ago -- when politicians could hold fast to a political agenda without having the need to treat those who disagreed with that agenda as lepers, heretics and ignoramuses. Debate could be spirited without being spiteful; colloquies collegial, without being contumelious. In days gone by, one of the hallmarks of serving in elected office was a genuine affinity for people. After all, what is politics if not human relations writ large? Sadly, these days anger, impatience -- even abhorrence -- have become major weapons in the political playbook. Politicians used to like people -- whether you agreed with them or not. Then too, people used to treat those with whom they disagreed with a far greater degree of respect than is currently the fashion. Today we have far too many elected officials -- on both sides of the aisle -- who love humanity . . . but hate people. Back in the day, there was a genuine love for the institution on the part of its members; today, people get elected to Congress having run on a platform which calls for tearing the place apart.

When I first went to work on Capitol Hill in the summer of 1969 (the 91st Congress), J. William Fulbright, (D-AK) Everett Dirksen (R-IL) (Howard Baker's father-in-law), Stuart Symington (D-MO) and Albert Gore, Sr. (D-TN), were still serving in the Senate; Emanuel Celler (D-NY), Claude Pepper (D-FL) and Gerald Ford (R-MI) were still members of the House. Celler was first elected in 1923, Pepper in 1936 and Gore in 1939. Senate Majority Leader Richard Russell (D-GA) had first been elected in 1933; Speaker John McCormack (D-MA) in 1928. At that time, Congress possessed an unbelievable amount of what we now call "institutional memory." There was a reverence not only for the institution but for the legislative process. And despite the fact that differences between Republicans and Democrats -- as well as between members of the same party -- could be just as sharply defined as today, these differences rarely got in the way of doing the nation's business. Not every thorny issue wound up being filibustered; few members were universally disliked. Listening was far more commonplace than it

is today. Then too, in 1969, one could still rent an elegant, sizeable apartment in a turn-of-the-century building on Dupont Circle for under \$200 a month. . .

If Congress is ever going to get anything done -- outside of pointing fingers and waiting for the next election -- they are going to have to take a page from Senator Howard Baker's playbook: to listen with both ears and never be afraid to reach a hand across the aisle.

Being a spellbinding orator certainly has a place on Capitol Hill.

Being an eloquent listener is far more important.

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