

Urth Digest, Vol 57, Issue 36

The Urth list — 10 messages, 7 voices, 20 May 2009

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5442>

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Robin Dunn — 20 May 2009, 00:39

At the risk of sounding like a nutty conspiracy theorist, take the tightening of borders, the expansion of military expenditures, the militarization of the boy scouts, and what do you have? A nice revolution in the making.

If the Democrats don't stop resembling the Republicans, eventually those old Gutenberg presses are going to need to kick some serious ass to combat the non-network neutral Cox empire.

For every man who "pull himself up by his own bootstraps" there are hundreds who could NEVER do that, because they don't have the right advantages.

For someone with ALL the advantages, who elects officials who protect those advantages, and then constructs ideologies and talk radio stations to create an endless echo chamber of lies, is it really wrong for the guy with NO advantages to pull you out of your SUV, stomp on your cel phone, relieve you of your wallet, and bruise a few of your ribs?

Certainly Congress is not going to be hitting you in the ribs any time soon. And it needs to be done. :)

On Tue, May 19, 2009 at 3:37 PM, <urth-request at lists.urth.net> wrote:

Send Urth mailing list submissions to

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To subscribe or unsubscribe via the World Wide Web, visit

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or, via email, send a message with subject or body 'help' to

? ? ? ?urth-request at lists.urth.net

You can reach the person managing the list at

? ? ? ?urth-owner at lists.urth.net

When replying, please edit your Subject line so it is more specific than "Re: Contents of Urth digest..."

Today's Topics:

? 1. Re: ?Urth Digest, Vol 57, Issue 31 (John Watkins)

Message: 1

Date: Tue, 19 May 2009 18:37:12 -0400

From: John Watkins <john.watkins04 at gmail.com>

Subject: Re: (urth) Urth Digest, Vol 57, Issue 31
To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>
Message-ID:
? ? ? ?<93d4039f0905191537n66f10eeftcae2f5763cb1eb2f at mail.gmail.com>
Content-Type: text/plain; charset="iso-8859-1"

I take it, then, that although you believe that war can be justified, you don't believe that the American Civil War (from the Yankee side, anyway) was such an instance. "Is that fair"

I am probably not far from some of your views, but you don't do yourself much of a favor by taking such out-of-the-mainstream positions and defending them so aggressively.

On Tue, May 19, 2009 at 6:26 PM, <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:

I'm a Copperhead.

.

brunians, are you a bona fide Southerner, or is your term for the American Civil War an affectation?

On Tue, May 19, 2009 at 6:20 PM, <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:

Actually, the way you tell that it's getting close to shoot-the-bastards time is that *everyone*, including the cops, is talking about it getting close to shoot-the-bastards time, on one side of the argument or another, depending on the loyalties of the region that you are in. Anyone disagrees they keep quiet. That's how it was before the American Revolution and that is how it was before the War Between The States.

.

Into the streets with your Robin Hood hats!

Tear down the SUVs! ?tear down the McDonalds! ?Unite as Brothers! ;)
Burn the neocons at the stake like Giordano Bruno! ? Instatiate the Group of Seventeen for all time!

On Tue, May 19, 2009 at 3:11 PM, ?<urth-request at lists.urth.net> wrote:

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When replying, please edit your Subject line so it is more specific
than "Re: Contents of Urth digest..."

Today's Topics:

- 1. Re: Gene Wolfe Fans Talk Politics (Again) (Adam Thornton)
- 2. Re: Gene Wolfe Fans Talk Politics (Again)

(brunians at brunians.org)

- 3. Re: Gene Wolfe Fans Talk Politics (Again)

(brunians at brunians.org)

- 4. Re: Gene Wolfe Fans Talk Politics (Again) (James Wynn)
- 5. Re: Gene Wolfe Fans Talk Politics (Again) (David Stockhoff)
- 6. Re: Gene Wolfe Fans Talk Politics (Again) (David Stockhoff)
- 7. Re: Urth Digest, Vol 57, Issue 30 (David Stockhoff)
- 8. Re: Gene Wolfe Fans Talk Politics (Again) (David Stockhoff)

Message: 1

Date: Tue, 19 May 2009 17:00:17 -0500

From: Adam Thornton <adam at io.com>

Subject: Re: (urth) Gene Wolfe Fans Talk Politics (Again)

To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>

Message-ID: <7128DCCE-0E7C-4291-A0FA-D5855BC96A02 at io.com>

Content-Type: text/plain; charset=US-ASCII; format=flowed; delp=

On May 19, 2009, at 4:56 PM, brunians at brunians.org wrote:

I calls them like I sees them. I prefer to look straight at things
and

name them plainly, rather than search for more comforting,
euphemistic

ways to express plain reality.

Ah, but here is our fundamental disagreement: I don't think
"extortion" is any closer to "plain reality" than "dues."

I am, in fact, arguing that the reverse is true. "But then I believe
we probably, at heart, disagree on "plain reality."

Adam

Message: 2

Date: Tue, 19 May 2009 18:03:48 -0400 (EDT)

From: brunians at brunians.org

Subject: Re: (urth) Gene Wolfe Fans Talk Politics (Again)

To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net>
Message-ID: <14123.67.142.130.18.1242770628.squirrel at brunians.org>
Content-Type: text/plain; charset=iso-8859-1

You're familiar with Thomas Jefferson, right Lane? They taught you about him in law school or college or something, I am sure, and you are just pretending to be ignorant for rhetorical effect.

Go on with you: I am feeling favorably disposed towards you now and have no real desire to explain Jeffersonianism to you, almost certainly falling into one or more of your lawyerly traps along the way. I argue for fun, not blood and would prefer not to engage with a professional unless you tie one lobe of your brain behind your back or something.

...[W]hat country can preserve its liberties, if it's rulers are not warned from time to time, that this people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms. The remedy is to set them right as to the facts, pardon and pacify them. What signify a few lives lost in a century or two? The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time, with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure.

-- Thomas Jefferson

.

So your democratically-elected government gets to serve at the pleasure of a small but violent minority? I understand frustration with graft and waste, but calling for rebellion against a lawfully-seated state for carrying out the will of society?

At some point, you realize the value in cooperation, community and shared society. All civilization is based on this premise, that together a people can accomplish what one alone cannot.

The substitution of civil government/society with a profit driven market removes this universally-agreed as beneficial goal of cooperation and replaced it with a unilateral goal of profit. As wealth cannot be created ex nihilo, profit must arise from a producer taking more than a product is worth. This is only possible on a market where supply and demand are manipulated against the interest of the consumer.

Thus, the market is merely the latest iteration of the master-slave relation. It is the battlefield of class conflict. How does calling taxes imposed by a lawful sovereign equal theft, but the creation of

profit not equal extortion by a self-selected, undemocratic oligarchy?

Individuals and individual liberty are only meaningful insofar as a civil legal system ensures they are protected. Authoritarian abuses by right and left ignore this. Free markets actively suppress it by economic manipulation.

Tell me again why I should kill lawfully-seated ministers of the civil government to preserve the rights of the people exploiting me?

Sent from my iPhone

On May 19, 2009, at 4:36 PM, brunians at brunians.org wrote:

I said this in a recent post. I will expand upon it.

Taxation, the extortion of money from the citizens, is permissible for things that are necessary. My list of necessary things includes the military and things related to the military, infrastructure and certain kinds of research. I insist that the involuntary nature of taxation be explicit and resist the inevitable attempts at expansion of the things-to-be-paid-for-by-taxation.

Of course, as a good Jeffersonian, I believe that from time to time it is necessary to shoot the bastards and start over. We're not quite there yet.

.

On May 19, 2009, at 4:19 PM, brunians at brunians.org wrote:

But we (the people on the other side of the argument) are none of us arguing for a complete lack of functional civil society and a Hobbesian all-against-all. Were you under the impression that we were?

I don't see how you can get from the position that all taxation is theft to the position that some governments are legitimate without giving up on the first one.

Adam

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Message: 3

Date: Tue, 19 May 2009 18:05:56 -0400 (EDT)

From: brunians at brunians.org

Subject: Re: (urth) Gene Wolfe Fans Talk Politics (Again)

To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net>

Message-ID: <2352.67.142.130.18.1242770756.squirrel at brunians.org>

Content-Type: text/plain; charset=iso-8859-1

Reality is what doesn't go away when you stop believing in it.

-- PKD (I think).

.

On May 19, 2009, at 4:56 PM, brunians at brunians.org wrote:

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I am, in fact, arguing that the reverse is true. ?But then I believe
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Adam

Urth Mailing List

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Message: 4

Date: Tue, 19 May 2009 17:06:05 -0500

From: "James Wynn" <crushtv at gmail.com>

Subject: Re: (urth) Gene Wolfe Fans Talk Politics (Again)

To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net>

Message-ID: <BD4FACD5AAA943568DAC238C1E3F3911 at eMachinePC>

Content-Type: text/plain; format=flowed; charset="iso-8859-1";

? ? ? ?reply-type=response

Adam, in "The Devil in a Forest", Wolfe presents the issue moral
terms.

If

I'm benefiting from a service more than my neighbor, and also paying
less

for that service than my neighbor, why is that less shameful than

just
going
to his door and demanding the money?
Okay. Here are your three options:

Adam sez:

Of course, "fund it to the same degree," and "robbing from the rich to give to the poor," each themselves admit multiple interpretations. One way of "funding it to the same degree" would be to demand a flat amount from each citizen.

This is actually is the most fair way. But, that's asking way too much fairness from a society of Fallen human beings. On the other hand, if the poor don't like it, I suppose they could move to Mogadishu.

One way would be to impose the same percentage fee on each citizen, regardless of income. "This is usually what Libertarians claim to like.

However, such a plan ignores the (I think fairly important)

observation

that the marginal value of money decreases the more of it you have.

Marginal value decreases for whom" Not to the people who work to earn it.

You're argument divorces the amount of money made from the people who created it. It assumes that a guy making \$25K a year is exactly like

the

guy

making \$250K a year except that one happens to make less. It ignores the

risks the second guy took in capital, time, and effort in order to create

that wealth. It also ignores the fact that the first guy gets far more

BENEFIT from non-essential government services than the second guy.

Some

would say the differences therefore balance out so that both should pay

the

same rate.

The real reason has nothing to do with marginal values of money. It has

to

do with practicality. These services are proposed to get a majority of

the

voting public to like them. So you give out benefits to a larger number

and

have a smaller number pay the freight. No majority will not vote for 95%

of

government services if they are seen as fee-for-service. "You probably

wouldn't. David Stackhoff implied that he found the idea increased

taxes

appealing because he didn't think he'd pay the bulk of them (or any of them").

Hence a third way would be to impose a tax that causes the same amount

"of

inconvenience at all levels of income. ?This is approximately what progressive income taxes attempt to do.

How does a progressive tax provide "the same amount ?of inconvenience at

all

levels of income"? Or do you mean "we'll tax you more if you have more

and

we'll do the same to other guy who has more too"? What if we taxed every

one

making \$35K-\$50K at 95% and everyone else at 15%. Is that equally logical"

But we don't just tax based on income either, do we? Because this is democracy in action. The law-makers cut breaks for certain voting blocks

(home-owners, parents, college students, and retirees) while busting others

(cigarette smokers and people who drive for a living).

"Robbing from the rich to give to the poor," is simply the same "argument

stood on its head, of course. ?Does taxation go from ?"legitimate"

to

"robbery" at a value derived from the absolute dollar ?value of the tax,

from a percentage of income across all income ?ranges, or to a degree

of

inconvenience across all income ranges"

How can I describe a progressive tax? Say five citizens get together to

fund

a new well. Hmmm...they could all pay the same amount to dig it, or they

could all pay the same percentage of their wealth, OR....they could vote

that Moe here--who also has a lake on his property so he doesn't need the

well---will pay for half of it because, after all, he can "afford it".

How

is that different from a two foxes and a hen voting on what to have for

supper?

J.

Message: 5
Date: Tue, 19 May 2009 18:06:46 -0400
From: David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net>
Subject: Re: (urth) Gene Wolfe Fans Talk Politics (Again)
To: urth at lists.urth.net
Message-ID: <4A132D76.3090700 at verizon.net>
Content-Type: text/plain; charset=ISO-8859-1; format=flowed

Yeah, Mao and Washington would have found much in common.

--- On Tue, 5/19/09, brunians at brunians.org <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:

From: brunians at brunians.org <brunians at brunians.org>
Mao was a perceptive guy about some things. Power and how to use it, for instance. Decent poet also, I'm told.

Not a very nice man, but pretty smart.

If three people as different as Mao, Washington and Geller agree about something, I'd say it's time to sit up and take notice.

.
If Mao said it, it must be true.

avast! Antivirus: Outbound message clean.
Virus Database (VPS): 090519-0, 05/19/2009
Tested on: 5/19/2009 6:06:48 PM
avast! - copyright (c) 1988-2009 ALWIL Software.
<http://www.avast.com>

Message: 6
Date: Tue, 19 May 2009 18:08:42 -0400
From: David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net>
Subject: Re: (urth) Gene Wolfe Fans Talk Politics (Again)
To: urth at lists.urth.net
Message-ID: <4A132DEA.20907 at verizon.net>
Content-Type: text/plain; charset=ISO-8859-1; format=flowed

Of course you have.

Message: 5
Date: Tue, 19 May 2009 17:44:27 -0400 (EDT)
From: brunians at brunians.org
Subject: Re: (urth) Gene Wolfe Fans Talk Politics (Again)

Gwern Branwen — 20 May 2009, 01:45 · in reply to Robin Dunn

On Tue, May 19, 2009 at 8:39 PM, Robin Dunn <bigbadgerjohnny at gmail.com> wrote:
At the risk of sounding like a nutty conspiracy theorist, take the tightening of borders, the expansion of military expenditures, the militarization of the boy scouts, and what do you have? ?A nice revolution in the making.

I had resolved to ignore these various discussions, because they make the worst of the old Usenet flame wars look like collegial & productive symposiums...

But I have to ask: 'militarization of the boy scouts'?

gwern

Adam Thornton — 20 May 2009, 01:47 · in reply to Gwern Branwen

On May 19, 2009, at 8:45 PM, Gwern Branwen wrote:
I had resolved to ignore these various discussions, because they make the worst of the old Usenet flame wars look like collegial & productive symposiums...

?!?

What Usenet were *you* on?

This current tiff is a model of tact, charm, decorum, and, importantly, proper grammar and spelling.

Adam

Gwern Branwen — 20 May 2009, 01:55 · in reply to Adam Thornton

On Tue, May 19, 2009 at 9:47 PM, Adam Thornton <adam at io.com> wrote:
What Usenet were *you* on?

This current tiff is a model of tact, charm, decorum, and, importantly, proper grammar and spelling.

Ah, but on Usenet we could look forward to surreal humor, bizarre interjections, profound non sequiturs, tech holy wars etc. Here we can look forward only to tedious arguments over definitions, and basically the standard panoply of WASPy rhetoric that (hopefully) one grew tired of in one's infancy.

Meow meow meow meow meow meow meow meow meow meow meow meow...

Adam Thornton — 20 May 2009, 01:58 · in reply to Gwern Branwen

On May 19, 2009, at 8:55 PM, Gwern Branwen wrote:

On Tue, May 19, 2009 at 9:47 PM, Adam Thornton <adam at io.com> wrote:

What Usenet were *you* on?

This current tiff is a model of tact, charm, decorum, and, importantly, proper grammar and spelling.

Ah, but on Usenet we could look forward to surreal humor, bizarre interjections, profound non sequiturs, tech holy wars etc. Here we can look forward only to tedious arguments over definitions, and basically the standard panoply of WASPy rhetoric that (hopefully) one grew tired of in one's infancy.

Meow meow meow meow meow meow meow meow meow meow meow meow...

ARMM!

Adam

Craig Brewer — 20 May 2009, 02:17 · in reply to Gwern Branwen

But I have to ask: 'militarization of the boy scouts'?

I can take that one, since at least it's a factual question.

There's lately been some hubbub about Explorer Scouts running "anti-terrorist" operations:
http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/14/us/14explorers.html?_r=2

2 things:

1) "Explorer Scouts" are not "Boy Scouts." They are co-ed groups that are most commonly pre-professional. They're associated with the Scouts and often have like police or fire or coast guard training rather than traditional camping and knots, etc. The kinds of police or "military" training that these groups did have been going on for decades as part of whatever professional group the Explorer's are ostensibly training to become. So what's seen as "militarization" of the Boy Scouts is neither accurate nor something new.

2) The "anti-terrorist" training that these Explorer groups have been doing is part of whatever the professional sponsors are having them do. It's not a program designed by anyone at Boy Scouts of America. Explorer Posts are each individually organized groups that are sponsored but not overseen in any real sense by the Boy Scouts. So even if this group is stepping over the line, it's not something that you'll soon see every 12 year old with a Scout uniform doing.

I was an Eagle Scout, and I also consider myself a sane and reasonable individual. So I get a bit defensive when the crazy homophobic, gung-ho types who, admittedly, make up a noticeable portion of an otherwise great program get all the publicity.

Most of us in Scouts, though, spent more time playing Dungeons and Dragons out in the woods rather than taking rifle practice against ferriners.

James Wynn — 20 May 2009, 02:23 · in reply to Craig Brewer

But I have to ask: 'militarization of the boy scouts'?

I can take that one, since at least it's a factual question.

There's lately been some hubbub about Explorer Scouts running "anti-terrorist" operations:

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/14/us/14explorers.html?_r=2

This new generation gets **everything**. First cable TV. Now this!

Steven — 20 May 2009, 22:04 · in reply to Robin Dunn

On May 19, 2009, at 8:39 PM, Robin Dunn wrote:

is it really wrong

for the guy with NO advantages to pull you out of your SUV, stomp on your cel phone, relieve you of your wallet, and bruise a few of your ribs?

Yes.

Steven

brunians at brunians.org — 20 May 2009, 22:14 · in reply to Steven

It's OK if you shoot him when he comes at you to do that, too.

.

On May 19, 2009, at 8:39 PM, Robin Dunn wrote:

is it really wrong

for the guy with NO advantages to pull you out of your SUV, stomp on your cel phone, relieve you of your wallet, and bruise a few of your ribs?

Yes.

Steven

Steven — 21 May 2009, 22:02 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

On May 20, 2009, at 6:14 PM, brunians at brunians.org wrote:

It's OK if you shoot him when he comes at you to do that, too.

<g> You get extra points, I think, for being in a national park.

Steve