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THE BRUSHFIRES OF FREEDOM

"It does not take a majority to prevail ... but rather an irate, tireless minority, keen on setting brushfires of freedom in the minds of men." --Samuel Adams

A few decades ago, my great aunt, a lady whom I admired, passed away. I was listed as a relative, though not a material beneficiary, of her small estate. An official notice went out to all of our living relatives announcing the date of her estate settlement, but it listed my name as the deceased instead of her name.

In the days that followed, I received many faux messages of condolence from my siblings and cousins, whom I assured, in a manner befitting Samuel Clemens, "The report of my death was an exaggeration."

Likewise, a few decades ago, the economy was given last rites and the Republican Party with it, and Democrats elected Jimmy Carter to solve the nation's problems at home and abroad. However, reports of the Republican demise were also greatly exaggerated.

Though Republicans appeared down for the count, constitutional conservatives, The Patriot heart and soul of our nation, never wavered in their devotion to Essential Liberty and Rule of Law established by our Constitution.

From our ranks arose a formidable spokesman for conservative principles, Ronald Reagan.

Fortunately, after four years of Carter and his congressional Democrats, Reagan's clear articulation of the principles of economic and individual liberty brought the Republican Party back from the brink of extinction. His 1980 election and his leadership as president provided a timeless template for the restoration of our nation's economic and moral prosperity.

In his 1981 inaugural address, President Reagan reassured the nation: "The economic ills we suffer ... will not go away in days, weeks, or months, but they will go away. They will go away because we, as Americans, have the capacity now, as we have had in the past, to do whatever needs to be done to preserve this last and greatest bastion of freedom. In this

present crisis, government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem. ... Our government has no power except that granted it by the people. It is time to check and reverse the growth of government, which shows signs of having grown beyond the consent of the governed. It is my intention to curb the size and influence of the federal establishment and to demand recognition of the distinction between the powers granted to the federal government and those reserved to the states or to the people. All of us need to be reminded that the federal government did not create the states; the states created the federal government."

Ronald Reagan implemented massive tax reductions, deregulation and anti-inflation monetary policies, which reduced inflation to 3.2 percent by 1983 and unleashed a historic period of economic growth. Of course, behind all the right-minded policy was the most important element of the recovery: Ronald Reagan himself. He was a man of character and substance, and he restored American prestige and confidence. His re-election in 1984 was a landslide of historic proportions: He carried 49 states and collected 525 electoral votes, while his overmatched Democrat opponent, Walter Mondale, could carry only his home state of Minnesota and, of course, the District of Columbia.

Reagan's genius was in his ability to communicate the timeless message of American Liberty with simplicity and purpose. Unfortunately, by the end of his eight years, establishment Republicans of the old-money dynastic variety had retaken control of the party and squandered the Reagan legacy in just a single term under George H.W. Bush.

With the election of the young, charismatic Democrat Bill Clinton in 1992, conservatives once again had to rebuild the foundation of Liberty. It didn't take long. By Clinton's first midterm election, they had successfully, for the first time in four decades, seated a Republican majority in the House of Representatives. That majority managed, under the leadership of Newt Gingrich, to fulfill almost all the conservative commitments outlined in its Contract with America. In doing so, they also pushed Clinton to the center, forcing him to balance budgets and reform welfare. Unfortunately, though, the Republican establishment ran elder statesman Bob Dole against Clinton in 1996, and like Bush(41) before him, Dole could not match wits with Clinton.

In the run-up to the 2000 election, conservatives had made progress toward restoring the Reagan legacy. Despite this, establishment Republicans still held sway within the Party, and by the end of Clinton's reign, they had allocated more attention to his extra-marital debauchery than the agenda advanced by conservatives. In doing so, they lost their focus and almost lost the 2000 presidential election to Clinton's lapdog, Albert Arnold Gore. Fortunately for our nation, Gore could never muster Clinton's alpha-dog hubris and gravitas.

George W. Bush campaigned on some Reaganesque themes, but he entered office wounded by "dangling chads" in Florida. Bush's resolve, however, was solidly forged on the morning of 11 September 2001. The devastating attack on our country that day killed some 3,000 Americans and sent our economy into a tailspin. Still, in the months that followed, President Bush exhibited a purpose and resolve unlike anything he had exhibited prior to that day. His great popularity lasted for the first two years of his presidency, during which he enjoyed the unwavering support of conservative Patriots across the nation.

Fruit doesn't fall far from the tree, though, and by the end of his first term, Bush(43) and like-minded establishment Republicans in the House and Senate had abandoned the conservative base to the extent that many of their domestic policies were indistinguishable from Democrat policies. Consequently, they were hamstrung by the midterm elections of Bush's second term, and as the economy collapsed around them in 2008, Republicans ran a senior member of their establishment club, John McCain, against a young, charismatic unknown, Barack Hussein Obama.

The McCain v. Obama contest had all the excitement of the Dole v. Clinton match, even though Obama is a featherweight when compared to Clinton, with one exception -- Obama's resolve to implement socialist ideology. Given the added campaign benefit of a collapsing economy under an opposing party president, and the good sense to, in the words of his chief of staff, "Never allow a crisis to go to waste," Obama managed to dupe a majority of American voters.

Thus ends this painfully short history of the ups and downs of the Republican Party over the last three decades. Yet despite the significant reversals due to the malfeasance of establishment Republicans, conservatives have always held fast to the legacy of Liberty bequeathed to us by our Founders, understanding as did Samuel Adams, "It does not take a majority to prevail ... but rather an irate, tireless minority, keen on setting brushfires of freedom in the minds of men."

Now, as it was by midterm of Jimmy Carter's presidency, an angry electorate is awakening from its malaise, shaking off its feel-good stupor, and sensing that "hope and change" is a metaphor for rope and chains.

And now, as then, conservatives have been hard at work again, laying the foundation to repair all of the damage done by the establishment wing of the Republican Party. This time around, however, conservative Patriots are establishing an identity apart from being the "Republican base." There are still Reagan Republicans in Congress -- about 120 of them between the House and Senate. But the new conservative movement is now positioned to challenge establishment Republicans, who fake right in campaigns and then run left after election day, forsaking both their commitments to voters and their "sacred oath" to support and defend our Constitution.

The "Tea Party" movement has grown from its humble roots a couple of years ago to now include millions of Patriot conservatives across the nation, who, first and foremost, reject the notion of a "living constitution" and instead are firmly committed to the First Principles upon which our nation was founded.

In 1980, the conservative movement had Ronald Reagan to rally around, but in the absence of such a stalwart leader, the movement is rallying around the enduring principles of Liberty that Reagan advocated.

The Tea Party's influence was abundantly clear across the nation this past week, from Glenn Beck's "Restoring Honor" rally in Washington, to Tea Party candidate Joe Miller's defeat of establishment Republican incumbent Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski.

Our objectives are aptly summed up in The Patriot Declaration and the less specific but more ambitious Contract from America endorsed by a strong consortium of conservative groups organized by former House Majority Leader and now FreedomWorks Chairman Dick Armey.

Predictably but regrettably, many establishment Republicans still don't get it.

In a recent opinion piece for The Washington Post, Michael Gerson, erstwhile speechwriter for George W. Bush, condescends, "Tea party populism is ... clearly incompatible with some conservative and Republican beliefs."

I am not suggesting that Gerson is wrong, but that some

Republican beliefs are not consistent with those that are the foundation of our Republic.

Gerson seems most upset about the fact that the majority of conservative Patriots now identified with the Tea Party movement are unafraid to list rebellion among their political options.

Gerson notes, "Far from reflecting the spirit of the Founders, the implied resort to political violence is an affectation -- more foolish than frightening. But it is toxic for the GOP to be associated with the armed and juvenile."

I'm not sure what "spirit of the Founders" Gerson consulted in séance, but the one who wrote our Declaration of Independence also wrote with steadfast determination, "The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants."

What's more, the scribe who later penned our Constitution also noted, "[T]he advantage of being armed, which the Americans possess over the people of almost every other nation ... forms a barrier against the enterprises of ambition, more insurmountable than any which a simple government of any form can admit of."

Like Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, respectively, their Patriot descendants understand that the Second Amendment was and remains, in the words of Justice Joseph Story, "the palladium of liberties of a republic."

I suppose the preceding is an unsettling notion for Beltway

bow-tie establishment Republicans, just as it should be for every Leftist disciple of Obama and the Socialist Bourgeoisie nationwide. Get over it.

The Tea Party movement, if it can maintain its identity as a set of principles rather than become an institution, may well succeed in reversing much of the insult done against our Constitution during the last century. However, this will take more than one election cycle, and it will take leadership as bold as that of Ronald Reagan.

In the meantime, for those establishment Republicans who have yet to repent of their ways and join our ranks, those who are as yet unwilling to stand in the gap between Liberty and Obama's objective to "fundamentally transform the United States of America," I offer these words from Sam Adams: "If ye love wealth better than liberty, the tranquility of servitude than the animating contest of freedom, go from us in peace. May your chains sit lightly upon you, and may posterity forget that ye were our countrymen!"

Veritas vos Liberabit -- Semper Vigilo, Fortis, Paratus, et Fidelis! Mark Alexander, Publisher, for *The Patriot Post's* editors and staff. Read online at <http://patriotpost.us>

(Please pray for our Armed Forces standing in harm's way around the world, and for their families -- especially families of those fallen Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen, who granted their lives in defense of American liberty.)