



Winter, 2009-2010

## PLANS THAT WORK. PEOPLE WHO CARE™

### TO DO NOW:

You care. We care. So together we do what it takes to make sure your estate plan will accomplish your objectives. It is again time to renew our mutual commitments to assuring that your estate plan works. We appreciate the confidence you place in us by allowing us to serve you for another year. To assure uninterrupted and efficient services, please do the following:

1. Select the best date and location for you to *attend* an **Annual Family Reunion™** (AFR), mark the enclosed yellow renewal form, and **return it immediately with your annual membership fee** (also note the date on your own calendar and keep it clear of conflicts!)
2. Start working on updating the enclosed **Asset Review Report™** and return it to us by January 29, 2010. Add and delete items; update the dollar values; be sure to send new **Red Check Review™** paperwork for any new assets you put on the report (see the lime-green sheet for recommendations).

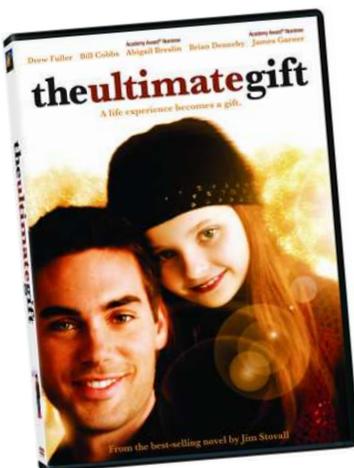
#### RED INK ALERT!

Do you have any idea what we can expect from Congress in 2010 concerning the Death Tax? This year—*under the 2001 Tax Act, the year the Federal Estate Tax was supposed to completely expire*—may be one of the most critical ever for updating your estate tax planning. Hang on for dear life; it could be a wild ride!

The **Annual Family Reunion** remains central to our annual maintenance services. We will update the contents of your **LifeSpan Client Organizer™**, preview the calendar of the ‘optional’ programs (**Family Education Programs™**, **Technical Training Programs™**, **Bridge-Builder™** events and **Community Builder™** events), provide a brief update on estate planning law, and give you practical suggestions for keeping your plan operating as it should to accomplish your goals. *You will want to be there!*

## the ultimate gift

movie will be presented on the *Hallmark Channel*



**Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup>**  
**at 3:00 p.m. CST**  
and again on  
**Monday, December 21<sup>st</sup>**  
**at 1:00 p.m. CST**

This is a wonderful Christmas movie with a **Wealth Reception Planning™** message.

Remember, the book and video make great gifts, too!

*"A government which robs Peter to pay Paul can always depend on the support of Paul."* George Bernard Shaw

### [www.tlcplanning.com](http://www.tlcplanning.com)

We just finished a complete re-design of our firm website, with a new ‘look’ and new content. Check every so often to see what has changed! We have a new administrator and plan to add materials on a more regular basis. Put us in your ‘favorites’ and check every week or so.

You can also check on upcoming dates of our **Educational Programs**, which we post soon after we schedule them.

You can update your **DocuBank®** information from the ‘Links’ page on our website! Call Sarah with any questions you have.

For anyone you know who recognizes their need for estate planning, send them to our website. Every client starts by attending a **TRUTH ABOUT ESTATE PLANNING™** workshop; if they click on the **INTRODUCTORY WORKSHOPS** link, they’ll see a list of upcoming workshop opportunities.

Remember, reservations are required for every program we offer, so anyone who wants to attend should **call 618-548-3729 or 866-900-2878**.

## Story Time

By Ellen Graham, published originally in the Wall Street Journal, 11/14/09

When a friend of mine recently began reminiscing about the past, her grown daughter told her, "That's for old people in nursing homes. You should be thinking forward."

Along with so many other arbitrary rules for "aging gracefully," older adults often feel pressure to stifle an unseemly interest in the past. "When I was a girl..." or "in the old days..." are phrases that tend to make the younger generation's eyes glaze over.

Such reactions are understandable if the recollection is morbid or cruel, as in: "Remember how clumsy you were in the third grade?" And unless you wish to be branded a codger, it's best to avoid numbing repetitions of the same story, or overly rosy comparisons of the past to the present.

Generally, however, I'd argue that tripping down memory lane is a healthy and necessary task of growing older—even if only practiced privately, or in the company of an agreeable friend or spouse. The urge to sum up is "part of normal aging," wrote Gene D. Cohen, a psychiatrist and gerontologist, in his book "The Mature Mind." Inspired by a growing sense of our own mortality, reminiscing can lead to greater self-awareness and self-acceptance, as well as the resolution of old conflicts and unfinished business, he explained.

**Living History** - My husband, Donald, and I swap recollections almost every day. We both come from families where memories were ever-present in daily conversation. For a quarter-century, we joined Donald's extended family each summer at a beach house in Galveston, Texas, where evenings were usually reserved for storytelling on the deck. The old folks held forth with harrowing tales of bootleggers, the Mafia gambling joint that once occupied a town pier, and the 1900 hurricane, in which 8,000 people perished. The children listened, bug-eyed, for these dramas easily topped television. As the old generation passed away, their sons and daughters began spinning yarns of their own. We were touched and delighted recently to receive a note from a young cousin, recalling the fun we shared in Galveston and thanking us for the "good life talks" on the deck.

As a girl, I loved hearing my mother's exotic stories about growing up with eight siblings on a hardscrabble California farm operated by her Danish-immigrant parents: Tales of how Gypsies raided their home one morning and made off with tall stacks of pancakes her mother had made, or when, during a trip to town, she

was stranded in the buggy during a downpour and some Chinese hotel workers with long braids terrified her by scooping her up and taking her inside to shelter. Mom's childhood was marked by much darkness—poverty, the madness and institutionalization of her mother, the death of a sister. Yet in the retelling, at least, it mostly sounded like a hilarious adventure—so different from our tame suburban existence.

And now, when our daughter Julia suddenly recalls one of mother's stories—or reminds me of some skill her grandmother taught her—my heart warms, knowing that their lives are still connected.

**Fresh Memories** - Perhaps the young people in our family have an unusually high tolerance for their elders' reminiscences. But since I now tend to forget who has already heard a given story, my recollections may soon become a tiresome bore. It's particularly important to

guard against repetition with a spouse of long standing. Donald and I were driving Julia to camp years ago, and as we passed New Haven, Conn., he pointed out—as he always does—a huge rock escarpment on the outskirts of town, detailing (yet again) how he had scaled it when he was in college. I made a sarcastic comment, sharp words were exchanged, and the rest of the trip passed in near-silence.

Still, Donald continually redeems himself by dredging up fresh memories—or at least stories I don't remember having heard before: how

he went camping in the same East Texas woods where the outlaws Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow once hid out. Or a deathbed visit he paid to a neighbor who claimed to be the last living veteran of the Civil War. Though the 105-year-old's claim later proved spurious, 100,000 people lined the streets of Houston to commemorate his passing.

So what if we hearken back to the past a bit too often? Blame it on the dogged resilience of long-term memory. I now fumble friends' names while making introductions. But the names of every one of my childhood stuffed animals are etched forever in my brain.

[continued on page 3]

**And a personal story:** Shortly after my Dad's funeral last December, a dear friend who attended with their 5-year-old emailed my sister the following:

*"I just got done praying with Josiah and tucking him into bed. I thought I'd write you a quick note regarding his prayer. I'm not sure how things work in heaven. I kinda doubt that those who are there get to listen in on prayers, but if they do, I'm sure your Dad was smiling tonight. Josiah said, "And please help the Dickinson family in Columbia to spread your love all over this world until this world ends and your world begins. And when your world begins I hope I get to see Mr. Ferguson. Amen." Then he said to me, "Mommy, I hope we get to see Mr. Ferguson in heaven cause that's where he is right now." I said, "Yes, he is Bub. It would be neat to see him, he's a very nice man." Josiah said, "Yes, and he's even nicer now cause he's in heaven."*

May we have faith like little children.

Besides, sharing stories can be comforting. A neighbor spent a couple of weeks this summer at the beach with her two sisters, where they recalled how as girls they had been required to stand at attention when their disciplinarian father came home from work. "We laugh about it now, but it wasn't so funny then," she says.

My friend Marlene recalls visiting her brother as he lay gravely ill. She reminded him of the time he had been delegated to escort her to kindergarten. After he had dropped her at her classroom, she began sobbing because he hadn't kissed her goodbye. The teachers fetched him and made him—an 11-year-old—kiss her.

Years later, shortly before he died, brother and sister could laugh at the memory. He then kissed her twice. "Once for then and once for now," he said.

In "Man's Search for Meaning," Austrian psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl affirmed the value of reflecting on past accomplishments as one grows older. Why should the old envy the young? he asked. "For the possibilities that a young person has? Instead of possibilities, I have realities in my past, not only the reality of work done and of love loved, but of sufferings bravely suffered."

**Questions From the Grandkids** - So, amid today's electronic ephemera of texting and Tweeting, it seems more important than ever to maintain the oral tradition that has been with us since ancient times. Our friends Bill and Gay celebrated their 50th anniversary two years ago with a weekend of family activities. They had asked that their five grandchildren, then ages 8 to 16, each write three questions about their lives that they would answer at the festivities.

The kids took to the assignment with gusto, each producing about 10 questions. Among them: What did you think of each other when you first met? Did you look a lot different then? What did you love to do when you were young, because I know that you didn't have much technology? What was your biggest fight about?

Answering took hours. "We could have gone on indefinitely," Gay says. "It made for a hilarious evening." It goes without saying that the exercise was also a deft way to transmit lessons about life while strengthening generational bonds. And can you imagine a more pleasurable activity for older folks than having an audience of giggling grandkids in the palm of your hand?

*"If you can buy without paying you will buy without thinking. Unless you must give something up in order to acquire health care, you cannot and will not appreciate its value. As a result, you will over-consume and the costs will be shifted to those who do pay."*

## Funding Forum

- Sherry French -

I cannot believe it's already time to update you on funding issues...Wow! Where did this year go? Following are a few concerns concerning **Red Check Review™** that have come to my attention that I want to share with you:

- **CD's:** When you have a CD that matures and you are issued a new account number, I need to know the *old account number* that it replaced so I can delete the old CD from your asset list. Please remember to provide that to me.
- **New assets:** When sending in **new assets** for Red Check Review™, please make sure the paperwork includes any and all account numbers as well as the name and address of the bank/company/institution. This will help us keep our records up-to-date.
- **401(k) & IRA's:** When your **employer** or your **financial advisor** change financial institutions, make sure that your beneficiaries are designated as Curt advised you. For a Letter of Direction for your 401(k)/IRA, look in your black Client Organizer under **Tab 4**. Remember, for Red Check Review™, we will need something from the new financial institution *showing primary and contingent beneficiaries*. Believe it or not, we've seen them be wrong after the new account was set up with the new organization!
- **Titles:** Some of you may already know this, but Corrected Title fees (through the Illinois Secretary of State) are going up as of January 1, 2010 from \$65.00 to \$95.00. If you have any vehicles that still need to be titled into your trust names, please give me a call ASAP and I will help you with the appropriate forms.
- **Speaking of Titles...**when you provide me with a copy of a title of a newly purchased vehicle, please let me know which vehicle this replaced (if applicable) and the value of the new vehicle. This, again, will help us keep our records up-to-date.

Please remember to give me a call if you have ANY funding questions! I'm here to help you! May you all have a Blessed Christmas and a Prosperous New Year!



## Convert to a Roth IRA?

Roth IRAs offer some advantages over traditional, pre-tax IRAs in the estate planning context. A client with income greater than \$100,000 may want to take advantage of the opportunity to convert their traditional IRAs to Roth IRAs under a new law that permits such conversions beginning in 2010.

Of course, the opportunity to do a Roth IRA conversion comes with associated tax, creditor, estate planning, and other risks. In some instances, the ability to protect retirement assets from creditors following the conversion might be diminished.

But for some readers, it will make sense to convert all, or a portion, of existing IRAs to Roth IRAs as soon as you can: January 4, 2010. If the assets in the converted account increase in value, the income tax cost of the conversion may be money well spent.

On the other hand, if the investments do not perform as hoped, the converted account may be re-characterized as a traditional IRA until October 15 of the year following the year in which the conversion occurs. By making the change early in 2010, you will have nearly a two year “free look.”

The income tax due on the converted account may be paid as if the income was incurred in 2010, or it may be paid over two years, half with the 2010 tax return and half with the 2011 tax return. We generally would recommend that you pay the income tax from other (non-IRA) assets if you have such assets available. If you are considering a move to a state with no income tax, you may want to postpone the conversion until the move is completed.

If you move assets to a Roth IRA account, be sure to name the appropriate beneficiaries on the account! The beneficiary recommendations are often the same for Roth IRAs and traditional IRAs; check with us if you have any questions. If you would like to talk further about the opportunities that are available, and why the current economic situation makes this and many other estate planning strategies more effective than before, give us a call.

### The \$2.99 Special

We went to breakfast at a restaurant where the 'seniors' special' was two eggs, bacon, hash browns and toast for \$2.99. 'Sounds good,' my wife said. 'But I don't want the eggs.' 'Then, I'll have to charge you three dollars and forty-nine cents because you're ordering a la carte,' the waitress warned her. 'You mean I'd have to pay for not taking the eggs?' my wife asked incredulously. 'YES!!' stated the waitress. 'I'll take the special then,' my wife said. 'How do you want your eggs?' the waitress asked. 'Raw and in the shell,' my wife replied. She took the two eggs home and baked a cake. Don't mess with Seniors! We've been around the block more than once!

## Life Lessons

From a column by Regina Brett, 90 years old, of The Plain Dealer, Cleveland, OH. It is the most-requested column she's ever written. This is an abridged version:

- Life isn't fair, but it's still good.
- When in doubt, just take the next small step.
- Life is too short to waste time hating anyone...
- Your job won't take care of you when you are sick. Your friends and parents will. Stay in touch.
- Pay off your credit cards every month.
- You don't have to win every argument. Agree to disagree.
- Save for retirement starting with your first paycheck.
- When it comes to chocolate, resistance is futile.
- Make peace with your past so it won't screw up the present.
- It's OK to let your children see you cry.
- Don't compare your life to others. You have no idea what their journey is all about.
- If a relationship has to be a secret, you shouldn't be in it.
- Everything can change in the blink of an eye. But don't worry; God never blinks.
- Get rid of anything that isn't useful, beautiful or joyful.
  - Whatever doesn't kill you really does make you stronger.
  - It's never too late to have a happy childhood. But the second one is up to you and no one else.
  - Burn the candles, use the nice sheets, save it for a special occasion. Today is special.
  - Over prepare, then go with the flow.
  - No one is in charge of your happiness but you.
  - Frame every so-called disaster with these words' In five years, will this matter?'
  - Always choose life.
  - Forgive everyone everything.
  - However good or bad a situation is, it will change.
  - Don't take yourself so seriously. No one else does.
- God loves you because of who God is, not because of anything you did or didn't do.
- Don't audit life. Show up & make the most of it now.
- Growing old beats the alternative—dying young.
- All that truly matters in the end is that you loved.
- If we all threw our problems in a pile and saw everyone else's, we'd grab ours back
- Envy is a waste of time. You already have all you need.
- The best is yet to come.
- No matter how you feel, get up, dress up & show up.
- Yield.
- Life isn't tied with a bow, but it's still a gift.



## Tax Tip: Charitable Contributions

### *When is a Credit Card Gift Deductible?*

Clients who make year-end charitable gifts might do so via credit cards, expecting that gifts will be deductible for the current year. Is that assumption always valid?

A contribution by means of a charge to a bank credit card is deemed to be made in the taxable year of the cardholder “when the charge is made.”

Some uncertainty exists, however, as to the exact meaning of the words “when the charge is made.” The IRS gave the following guidance for donors on substantiating year-end credit card gifts:

*Credit card statements should show the name of the charity and the transaction posting date.*

So, a donor could provide a charity with credit card information on December 31, 2009, via telephone, e-mail or surface mail, but it is highly likely that the “posting date” would be in 2010.

If you wish to make charitable gifts in late December that are deductible for 2009, make sure they will be posted in 2009. Or play it safe and just send an old-fashioned check by first-class mail—making sure the mailing envelope is postmarked no later than December 31!

*Source: The Estate Planner, Fall 2009, Issue #54*

## Notice!

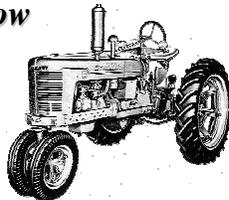
### **Odd-year clients who skipped the 2009 CUP**

If you did not attend the **Client Update Program™** or make other arrangements (like the **Special Delivery System™**) for signing your updated legal documents this past fall, *your property powers of attorney and Living Trust are NOT UP TO DATE!* There were several recommended “legal” changes we made in these documents. To get your updated documents you should contact us and

1. review your **Estate Planning Review Worksheet** and let us know if there are any personal changes you want made to your documents, and
2. schedule a time to sign the updated documents.

***“I believe that people don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”***

Richard H. Ferguson, 1936-2008



***“The course of history shows that as a government grows, liberty decreases.”***

- Thomas Jefferson

## Education Update

- Gayla Ball -

Hello everyone! I hope this time of year finds you all happily anticipating the holidays as much as I am. As Education Coordinator for The Estate Planning Center, I was very pleased with the turnout for our numerous education programs offered throughout 2009. Not only do I really enjoy being able to see and visit with so many of you at these events, but it is very satisfying to know our clients are receiving valuable information, useful tools, and a greater understanding of our **LifeSpan Planning Process™**.

With 2010 just around the corner, it is time to *make your reservation* for an **Annual Family Reunion™** (AFR). Remember, this is for **ALL** our clients to attend and some meetings fill up fast, so the sooner you make a reservation the better.

Again in 2010 we will be offering our **Family Education Program™** at least twice; dates to be announced at the AFR.

In addition, all of our **EVEN** year clients will be invited to a **Client Update Program™** (CUP) later in the year. This is when we make personal and legal changes to your trusts. If you are an **EVEN** year client, be looking for your invitation letter in early July.

As a reminder, **ALL** of our programs require a reservation. Unfortunately, this became an issue at several of our 2009 events, when clients assumed I knew they were coming, and did not make reservations. Due to limited seating and material preparation for our workshops, if you or a helper plans to attend, **PLEASE** make a reservation. Likewise, if you must cancel, please let us know because we often have a waiting list of clients or helpers who wish to attend.

Also, for those of you who lost a loved one this year, I truly hope my role as Settlement Coordinator has made the process less difficult for you. Remember that if you ever have any settlement questions, I’m just a phone call or email away.

From my family to yours, Merry Christmas!

## Expanded Audio Visual Library!

- **Mixed Nuts™** (*new, September 2009*)
- **Nuts ‘N Bolts I™** (2007)
- **Nuts ‘N Bolts II™** (2007)
- **Truth About Estate Planning™** (*new 2009*)
- **Technical Training Program™** (2007)

For a 30-day check-out, we charge \$5 shipping & handling, and with each checkout you get a copy of the handouts. Helper Handbooks (for your family members who attend Nuts ‘N Bolts programs) are only given out in person. If you would like to *purchase* a DVD (i.e. to circulate in your family) just let us know; the cost is \$20 delivered with handouts.

Our newest “**Mixed Nuts**” program got rave reviews last year so we presented it three times in 2009: in Bloomington (in September) and Salem (in June and November). You’ll notice above that this program *is now available on DVD*.

(Also note that each year’s **Annual Family Reunion™** DVD is available but at a *higher price...* details in the Summer 2008 newsletter.)

## The Latest Word on Estate Taxes?

In 2010, under the 2001 Tax Act, the Federal estate tax is (was) supposed to be repealed. But Argus Hamilton, reporting on the vote in the U.S. House of Representatives on December 3, 2009, said:

*“Congress voted Thursday to impose a 45 percent tax on all estates over [\$3.5] million. It just never ends. The only difference between death and taxes is that Congress can’t think of a way to make death any worse than it already is.”*

The bill to ‘permanently’ extend the \$3.5 million exemption (which just went into effect in 2009) passed by a 225-200 vote. The Senate has not acted on it yet and what we are hearing is that instead of a ‘permanent’ extension of the \$3.5M exemption, the Senate is likely to only extend it one year: 2010. After that, existing law says the exemption will drop back to \$1,000,000 per person. Which political forces will prevail? We’ll know more in January!

While we’re on politics, check out this cartoon. *Can you guess where & when it was published?*

## LifeSpan Meeting Reminders

Some tips when attending a LifeSpan™ program:

- If Curt is teaching, the room will probably be cool. Bring a sweater if you’re cold-natured!
- We will serve light snacks only...unless we specifically tell you that there will be a meal.
- Bring **Red Books** only to the CUP; bring your **LifeSpan Client Organizer™** to all events.
- Helpers with a **Helper Handbook™** should bring it to any meeting they attend.
- Reservations are required. Be sure to let us know if you (or any of your Helpers) are coming!
- If at the last minute you don’t recall the meeting location, *come to our office at 919 West Main;* we post a sign on the door.



## The ‘Almost Last’ Word

–Sarah Rupe –

Wow! This year has flown by and, as usual, I can’t believe it’s time for our annual renewals to go out. With a baby on the way (yes, I’m expecting!) this Christmas season is going to be more special than usual. My little one is not scheduled to arrive until mid-June but each day brings a greater appreciation of life to me!

We have enjoyed seeing all of you throughout the year at the **Annual Family Reunions™** (AFR), **Family Education Programs™** (ie. Nuts ‘n Bolts), **Client Update Programs™** (CUP) and the **Community Builder™/Bridge Builder™** events (i.e. bluegrass cookout). I hope that you are recognizing and becoming more familiar with our meetings (and acronyms!) and their importance. We only have the meetings because we believe we have invaluable information to share with you and we trust you benefit greatly from them. As Gayla mentioned, all meetings require a reservation due to number restrictions that we have with each meeting location. We want you all to come, we just have to make sure we have room to fit you (and your Helpers!) when you do plan to come! We’ll be breaking out our new calendar of events at the 2010 AFRs. So...please remember to make reservations!

As we continue to strive for efficiency and more electronic communication, please let us know your email address and update us if/when you change it. When we have a client meeting, I email reminders the week of the meeting; however, if I don’t have your email address or if it has changed, you won’t get the email. So, please, make sure I have your current email address. Best way is to send me an email at [sarah@tlcplanning.com](mailto:sarah@tlcplanning.com). I look forward to hearing from you!

If you’re reading this paragraph, you passed the “newsletter readership test” for this year. ☺ If you will call and wish the office team Merry Christmas and say you saw this paragraph, you’ll be entered into a drawing again this year. Congratulations!

I also want to give you this brief reminder about Docubank. Remember, your enrollment in that program is included at no additional cost to you! If you are hospitalized just show the intake personnel your Docubank membership card and they will have immediate access to your medical directives.

By the way, did you know that all of us have separate emails here at The Estate Planning Center? You probably do, since this information is available in your **Client Organizer** as the first page under **Tab 1**, but just in case you didn’t, I wanted to remind you to contact any of us directly via these addresses:

- [curt@tlcplanning.com](mailto:curt@tlcplanning.com)
- [gayla@tlcplanning.com](mailto:gayla@tlcplanning.com)
- [sarah@tlcplanning.com](mailto:sarah@tlcplanning.com)
- [sherry@tlcplanning.com](mailto:sherry@tlcplanning.com)

## Gipper Wisdom

*selected quotes from Ronald Reagan*

Freedom prospers when religion is vibrant and the rule of law under God is acknowledged.



Government exists to protect us from each other. Where government has gone beyond its limits is in deciding to protect us from ourselves.

Governments tend not to solve problems, only to rearrange them.

How do you tell a communist?

Well, it's someone who reads Marx and Lenin. And how do you tell an anti-Communist? It's someone who understands Marx and Lenin.

We must reject the idea that every time a law's broken, society is guilty rather than the lawbreaker. It is time to restore the American precept that each individual is accountable for his actions.

We should measure welfare's success by how many people leave welfare, not by how many are added.

Without God, democracy will not and cannot long endure.

## Health Care Reform

Let me start by warning you, I’m touching a ‘political’ issue. But I am very concerned about what is going to ultimately become law under the guise of ‘health care reform’ in America. The monstrous bills under consideration will dramatically affect our clients and their families. If you want to you can find lots of information on it, including terrific analyses of the devilish details. But since there is a ‘story’ theme in this newsletter, and I hope not to offend any client, I would like to tell you an ‘unrelated’ story...[cont’d]

**THE PRODUCE STAND:** Bob operates a produce stand. He sells fresh green beans for \$1 per bag. At that price, he makes a profit of about 3 cents. He has an average of 100 customers per week. One day he is notified that the county has enacted an ordinance to help make beans more affordable for all: "All customers over 65 and those of low income are entitled to get beans from Bob, and the county will pay for them. Since we must tax our citizens to raise the funds, we will only pay 60 cents, however. Bob must sell to these people at that price or he cannot sell any beans to anyone at all." Bob complies with the law, and over the next few weeks comes to realize that about 50 of his customers are either low income or over 65. Where he used to bring in \$100 and make \$3, he is now bringing in \$30 on the county sales, and \$50 from the rest of his customers, or \$80. His costs have not changed, so he is losing \$17 a week. In order to stay in business and still make \$3 profit, he raises his "normal" price from \$1/bag to \$1.40 per bag. Assuming the same 100 people buy a bag per week, he now receives \$70 from the 50 regular-paying customers, and \$30 from the county, for a total of \$100 per week and his \$3 profit is restored. Whew! Still in business.

However...half of the customers' personal cost of beans went to zero, making beans an absolute steal! So they start 'buying' (at county expense) an average of 1.5 bags per week; after all, the county would never 'ration' the beans, would it? So the cost to the county skyrockets beyond what had been budgeted: instead of 50 bags for \$30, the county is buying 75 bags for \$45.

Meanwhile, what happened to the 50 private-pay customers? Their price for beans jumped 40%. Some are going to make the reasonable choice of some other, cheaper food! Say they cut back to ½ a bag a week.

What happens to Bob who made all the beans available in the first place? He is now selling each week an average of 75 bags at 60 cents and 25 bags at \$1.40, for total revenue of \$80! His costs have not changed, he still supplies 100 bags of beans, he's back to losing \$17/week, something that he cannot afford. He will have to raise prices again on private-payers, cut quality of his product, implore the county to limit the beans bought by their 50 customers, or find ways to pad the books! Or, he could just quit and find some other profession.

At the same time, the county is concerned! Their budget called for \$30/week to help the elderly and needy get beans. They have limited options as well. (1.) Do they cut the reimbursement rate from 60 cents to something less, say to 40 cents? That would bring them back on budget, but would force Bob to sell 75 bags of beans at and even greater loss. If we do that, Bob might pass the cost on to the other 50 voters...oops, I mean, private paying customers! (2.) Instead, they could simply raise the budget, i.e. increase tax collections to bring in the \$45 instead of the \$30. (3.) They could place a limit on the number of bags of beans the elderly and needy can buy each week.

The county fathers finally compromise: Bob doesn't need to make \$3 profit! After all, food is a basic necessity. They pass another ordinance: they forbid bean-sellers charging more than \$1.40, the county will only reimburse 50 cents on beans to the elderly and needy, and will only reimburse for 1.3 bags per week. There, that solves it!

Is Bob a slave, an idiot or a wealthy philanthropist? None of the above. So, he closes his produce stand, becomes one of the needy and goes to his former competitor to get his free, stale green beans. **THE END**

Dare I ask: are the analogies sufficiently obvious? In a generally-free society, when government intrudes, liberty decreases. Consider care—cosmetic surgery, for instance—where government will not pay; prices have gone down and access up! The free market does that.

Ask yourself, "Is this about access to health care, or a vote-pandering debate over who will pay for mine?" We have access to health care. Do you know anyone who has actually been denied treatment? No-one can keep you from purchasing health care. The only issue is, "Can I get someone else to pay for it?"

Three simple reforms would reduce health care costs: (a) tort reform, (b) tax deductibility on individual policies & (c) freedom to shop across state lines.

As you listen to politicians, remember: "**The broad masses of a population are more amenable to the appeal of rhetoric than to any other force.**" – A. Hitler

