



Comment on the Commentary of the Day

by

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Disclaimer: The following "Letters to the Editor" were sent to the respective publications on the dates indicated. Some were printed but many were not. The original articles that are being commented on may or may not be available on the internet and may require registration or subscription to access if they are. Some of the original articles are syndicated and therefore may have appeared in other publications also.

7 July 2007

Editor, The Wall Street
Journal
200 Liberty Street
New York, NY 10281

To the Editor:

Arnie Celnicker argues that the FTC's challenge of Whole Food's merger with Wild Oats is justified by various "market nuances" (Letters, July 7). Among these is the fact that "financial markets have deprived Wild Oats of the capital to compete head on with Whole Foods" and the fact that consumer demand for organic foods is skyrocketing.

How in the name of free-range chicken do these

facts justify government blocking this merger? Precisely because consumers now want more and more organic products, financial markets have every incentive to invest in firms catering to this growing market IF these firms are well-managed. Wild Oats' inability to get adequate private financing in this growing market is strong evidence that its assets now are poorly managed. It's only natural that Whole Foods spots and seizes this opportunity to use these assets more effectively at meeting consumer demands. The FTC's interference - an unwholesome additive to the market - jeopardizes consumer well-being.

6 July 2007

Editor, Washington Post
1150 15th St., NW
Washington, DC 20071

Dear Editor:

Michael Gerson mischaracterizes the theory of spontaneous order by writing that, according to this theory, "society should be the product of uncoordinated human choices instead of human design" ("Where the Avatars Roam," July 6).

This theory does not recommend, as an alternative to society being designed, choices that are "uncoordinated." Rather, it explains that in societies with rules of private

property, choices made in markets and in other decentralized institutions will be coordinated far better than when government "designs" society. The theory reveals that the greatest source of discoordination is the attempt to achieve coordination centrally. The fact that the computer game "Second Life" is chaotic and ugly proves nothing, for in that game no one really dies or otherwise encounters the many consequences of personal actions that we all experience in reality. It is these real and personal consequences, and our reactions to them, that fuel the spontaneous coordination characteristic of free societies.

3 July 2007

Editor, The Wall Street Journal
200 Liberty Street
New York, NY 10281

To the Editor:

Like many others, Professor Hendrik Van den Berg insists that "we need to raise the price of gasoline by introducing a tax that reflects the congestion, environmental and national security costs of oil" (Letters, July 3). I disagree.

First, government already taxes oil production and gasoline. How does Prof. Van den Berg know that the current level of taxation is inadequate? Second, government itself is a swamp of negative externalities. Not only do politicians and bureaucrats spend other people's money, they do so overwhelmingly while under the influence of special-interest groups. The only tax that we should raise is one that increases the cost of using government.

2 July 2007

The Editor, New York Times
229 West 43rd St.
New York, NY 10036

To the Editor:

For his Presidential bid, Barack Obama has raised a record sum of money - as you describe it, "a whopping \$31 million" in the last quarter alone ("Record Number of Donors Heartens Obama," July 2).

I don't begrudge the Senator's skill at attracting money to support his ambition. But this is the same politician who just over a month ago called for

Senate hearings to investigate allegedly excessive pay for corporate CEOs. Sen. Obama somehow discerns that private-sector CEOs are paid too much despite the fact that those who pay these salaries do so voluntarily. Were he ethically consistent, Sen. Obama would call also for an investigation into his own bulging campaign chest. It, too, is full of lots of dollars contributed voluntarily.

30 June 2007

Editor, Washington Post
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1150 15th St., NW
Washington, DC 20071

Dear Editor:

It is unfortunate that Congress refuses to renew the President's fast-track trade authority ("End Nears for Era of Presidential Trade Authority," June 30). And it is insulting for protectionists, such as Kevin Kearns, to justify this refusal with the argument that freer trade has encouraged "footloose multinational companies" to flee the U.S. for "penny-wage, regulation-free foreign production sites like Mexico."

The facts are difficult to square with this claim. In 2006, per capita foreign

direct investment in Mexico was \$174; in the U.S. it was \$612 - two and a half

times as much as in Mexico.