

Quid Est Veritas: Big Government?



By Patrick Weadon

Early last year on a bright Saturday morning, I was on my way to the Severna Park Giant and passed the intersection of McKinsey Road and Ritchie Highway. Gathered in and around the area was a throng of angry politicians who were bent on exercising their first amendment rights. I noticed one particular woman who was waving a large sign that read, "Had enough of Big Government?" The woman appeared angry and was shaking the sign at the many cars that passed by.

Some seemed genuinely pleased by her politically fueled obstreperousness and honked their horns in approval. I had a different reaction. I found myself pondering what our world would be like if the woman and her compatriots got their wish and "big government" suddenly disap-

peared from the face of the earth.

After all, I was driving on a road that had been paved and maintained by a BIG government agency. "Big government" also paid for the traffic light I was stopped at. On the other side of Ritchie highway, also waiting for the light to change was an Anne Arundel County police officer in his squad car. He also was the product of a rather sizeable government agency. Had I gone another three miles or so down Ritchie Highway I would have seen on the right side of the road another sign of "big government" in Anne Arundel County, namely, the Earleigh Heights Fire Department.

Now, I know what you are thinking, no Pat, you don't understand. The tea party crowd that was pontificating that day was not so concerned about local government. They want you liberals to understand that in their view, President Obama and his ilk are pushing the country towards "socialism" and need to be reined in. OK, fair enough, but at the same time it is critical that those on the right who hate "Big Government" take the time to tell us just what the term includes. When they rail against the despot Obama, are they also saying that they do not approve of programs and institutions such as, Social Security, Medicare, Student

loans and the United States Army, Navy and Air Force?

I find it intriguing that for all of their caterwauling regarding the dangers of big government, conservatives rarely talk about cutting any of the exceedingly popular things that the Leviathan on the banks of the Potomac provides to us on a daily basis. The sad truth is that they love the services that a modern civilized country provides to them. What they do not like is having to ante up the taxes to pay for them.

The fact is that civilization is expensive. Competent police officers, firefighters, teachers and soldiers do not fall from the sky. The sad reality is that we as a people demand services but are delusional enough to think that someone else will pay for them. We want the people and resources that hold our society together to be top notch but moan and whine about the monies needed to sustain them.

Many of you reading this today can't wait to get to the ballot box in November to "send President Obama a message." That is not a bad thing; participation in our democracy is crucial if we are to survive as a nation. However, at the same time, keep in mind that you cannot have it both ways. If you hate "big government", you logically should also despise the many impor-

tant previously mentioned programs and initiatives that make up our nation's social safety net.

Maybe you sincerely believe in your heart that "big government" should go away and that we should go back to the way things were in 1931 when Herbert Hoover informed millions of starving people that there was nothing that the government could do to help them. Maybe you look forward to a time where everyone will once again be living at his or her own peril. I believe however that in the end most Americans understand that "big government" is not only a good thing but is truly the glue that holds society together. Countries like France, Canada, and the United Kingdom have realized this for a long time. I pray that we, as a nation, will soon come to the same realization.

With this in mind, I hope that 2010 will be a year of reckoning for all of us. Hopefully, it will be the beginning of a time when people begin to understand that taxes are the lifeblood of our community and our nation. And that unless we are willing to head out to some mountain range in Montana to live off the land, we should have a more mature attitude toward sustaining those things that help ALL of us to survive in a very tough world.