

655 word version

Where's the Outrage?

by Judy Ferro

"Where's the outrage?" a columnist asked last week.

Okay, I agree lobbyists drawing state pensions is wrong--but I can't muster an extra spark of outrage.

Right now I'm outraged that the United States is considering military action in Syria even though 80% or so of the American people are against it, even though neither side in that war qualifies as "good guys," even though the Syrian conflict poses no threat to the United States, even though the United Nations will not back such action.

I'm outraged that genetically-modified foods don't have to be labeled lest informed consumers make decisions the corporations don't approve of. And that corporations can produce unlimited amounts of propaganda to make sure that voters decide how corporations want them to. And that the courts have upheld corporations' right to lie about everything except the products they are selling.

I'm outraged that Americans believe global warming is a maybe thing even as once-a-century storms appear every three years or so, polar bears are suffering without ice floes, and our sandy beaches are disappearing.

I'm outraged that man-made environmental disasters are multiplying, that radioactive fish are being found off our Pacific shores, that huge dead spots exist in the Gulf off Florida, that fracking-caused earthquakes are occurring in Ohio—and possibly Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas.

I'm outraged that eight states have made it illegal to video animal abuse in big ag facilities.

And I'm outraged that my Congressmen are more interested in raising money for their next elections than in listening to Idaho voters. I'm outraged that the richest 600+ people in the country put nearly \$1 billion into buying 2012 elections.

I'm outraged that the purpose of government today seems to be to funnel taxpayer money to private corporations. I'm outraged that mercenaries get paid much more than enlisted troops. That we build jails with taxpayer money and then turn them over to fat cats who provide guards with poor pay and training. Or worse, that we build jails with private funds but guarantee that we'll jail enough people to keep them full. I'm outraged that private companies are working to take advantage of our failure to adequately fund roads, bridges, water supplies, etc., and that we may soon be paying tolls and fees far larger than the taxes we are avoiding.

I'm outraged that weaker, smaller corporations of the 1950s provided 75% of tax dollars while the behemoths of today have shifted the burden to the middle class.

I'm outraged that pseudoephedrine is still on the market even though its primary use seems to be making meth. Sales in Mississippi fell 99.5% when it was made a prescription drug—followed by drops in thefts, meth lab raids, and serious burn victims.

I'm outraged that the United States jails more of its citizens than any other country in the world and seems more interested in where to house them than in preventing this.

I'm outraged that state after state is making it more difficult for people to vote rather than investing in unbiased voter pamphlets.

And education--

I'm outraged that Gov. Otter can claim that education is his top priority one day and then promise Idaho Association of Commerce members repeal of the personal property tax.

I'm outraged that Tom Luna signed a \$50 million dollar contract to put Wi-Fi in public schools—not the Internet, we're already paying for that—without legislative authorization. I'm outraged that two Idaho suppliers are effectively put out of business, that kids can rob classrooms of bandwidth by listening to music in the parking lot, and that classrooms receive only 80% of their 2008 funding.

I'm outraged that our legislators reenacted proposition one and portions of propositions two and three after the voters rejected them. I'm outraged that Idaho School Board Association used money voters paid for schools to lobby against the majority's decision.

That's simply all the outrage I can manage for today. Maybe tomorrow.