



# Les Commentaries de Lavoisier

“It’s hard to hold a candle in the cold November rain.” ~ Guns ‘n’ Roses (Juan Guerrero) □ December 2007

## Letter from the Editor

Today marks our first (and special) issue of *Les Commentaries de Lavoisier*, WAL’s alternative version of the “*Commentaries*” for our non-lawyer members. It will feature articles and columns for those members with more of a scientific or educator bent that we hope will still be of interest to our legal fraternity.

While the Blackstone Club Commentaries will continue to be published five times a year (in February, April, June, August, and October,) to correspond with our bi-monthly Blackstone Club meetings, *Les*

*Commentaries de Lavoisier* will be published in the alternate months of March, May, July, September, and November; starting in 2008, WALs will publish ten issues of the *Commentaries* each year, with no publication in December (except for this initial,

introductory issue), so as not to interfere with the planning of our annual Christmas Awards Banquet, and none in January (to give those straggler-members of WALs and/or the Blackstone Club a chance to re-new their membership

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## Tullamore Dew Profiles

### Kathy Fuller Shapell

Born in Shadyside, Ohio (Go Tigers!), I grew up in a large extended family of characters that have left an indelible mark on

my own moral fiber. Hardworking coal miners and factory workers who laughed a lot (some of them were downright goofy, like Uncle Joe, who carried his dog backwards under his arm, so he “could see where he’s been”), yelled a lot (a bull-headed bunch), sang a lot (loudly and way off key), and taught me the impor-

tance of family, service to others, and hard work. I followed my brother Jim (he likes to say that he’s the good-looking one) to Bethany College and



graduated with a degree in Psychology. Through a series of volunteer and intern opportunities, I found that I was drawn to teaching children with disabilities and enrolled in grad school at George Mason University. It was there, after an internship working with emotionally disturbed teen-age

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### **Commentaries**

is the official newsletter of the Blackstone Club, and is published by the Wheeling Academy of Law and Science. For more information, contact Barb Knutsen, Executive Director, at 304.232.2576. [barbaraknutsen@firststatecapitol.com](mailto:barbaraknutsen@firststatecapitol.com)

## Letter from the Editor

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for the new year - so they won't miss a single issue!

While our *Blackstone Club Commentaries* will continue to feature such favorites as "The State of Justice" and "Ask Bartleby," we are planning corresponding features for *Les Commentaries de Lavoisier* such as pieces on the state of the environment, science or education, and "Ask Antoine," along with our usual Tullamore Dew Profiles. And for all of you who have complained that too much time elapses from

one Chapter of La Cerca to the next, we will continue with our serialization of La Cerca across both versions of the *Commentaries*, with a new installment every month.

We hope you will renew your membership for 2008, and we look forward to working and socializing with you in the upcoming year.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR! ☘

**O' C of D**

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Reduce the forest of paperwork on your desk (and save some natural forests) by signing up to get the Blackstone Club newsletters electronically. Please call Barbara Knutsen at 232.2576 or email her at [BarbaraKnutsen@hotmail.com](mailto:BarbaraKnutsen@hotmail.com) and instead of mailing you a copy we'll email your newsletters in handy PDF format. You can also read current and past newsletters on our website: [www.firststatecapitol.com](http://www.firststatecapitol.com).

# The State of the Economy - Dollar Down

*Is there no hope for the humble George Washington?*

Conventional financial wisdom is that there are both good and bad consequences of a weakening dollar, and that currency values, being cyclical, will see the rise of the dollar again.

Thus, we are told that a “weak dollar is good for exports,” and that our manufacturers are reaping the windfall of being able to sell more goods abroad. We are also

**The weak dollar doesn't hurt the multi-national corporations because the dollar is just one of the currencies in which they operate.**

told that the increase in exports will consequently help decrease our trade deficits. The only downside, we are told, is if you wish to spend your money on a

European vacation! “Visit Disneyland, instead!”

Never one for conventional wisdom, this observer thinks we are being taken for a ride, without ever going to Disneyland.

For one, multi-national corporations make up a huge percentage of “goods of consequence” that are still manufactured in the United States. The multi-nationals do not manufacture

exclusively in our dollar-denominated economy. GM and Ford sell automobiles for Pounds Sterling in the UK and for Euros in Europe, as well as other currencies throughout the world. The Pepsi machines at Heathrow take pounds, not dollars. You get the picture. If conventional wisdom is correct, then a European should be

able to pay less for an American-made car that was made and sells for \$25,000 in the United States. But that's not the case. An equivalent car in the UK can cost upwards of 20,000 pounds, the equivalent of \$40,000 in American dollars.

“But,” you will say, “That's because they are not buying in the United States (and having them shipped over). They are making them and buying them in their own country!” But that's my point exactly. The weak dollar doesn't hurt the multi-national corporations because the dollar is just one of the currencies in which they operate. When the dollar is weak, they can still spend (or invest) their Yens or Yuans.

It is the American consumer who feels the sting of the weak dollar, because although we can still



buy superstore trinkets and “lead-based” toys from China, the average American is increasingly unable to buy such things as quality manufactured items or better constructed clothing from Europe. We can still buy the cheap products, because as a society, we have squeezed all the “value” out of them – the value they retained in former times because they included the investment in American workers who produced them, as well as the value to the community where they were made.

What we are seeing is more than the devaluation of the

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dollar. It is the devaluation of our standard of living, which is what a lower valued dollar ultimately means. One symptom of the draining of value from the American economy is that we can buy less and less of the global output but have to pay more and more for what we need – as in the price of oil at the gas pump. Something is fundamentally wrong when it takes Dubai to bail out Citicorp, and when much of our steel industry is controlled by Indian and Russian billionaires. And although for the time being no one has taken away our SUVs and Hummers, the writing is on the wall. It's not, as I have heard said recently, that we will eventually have to live as Europeans. (Have you been to Europe lately? There is nothing shabby about their standard of living) Rather, we will as a people learn to accept less and less, do without high paying jobs and make do with what paltry products our

consumer-conscious society can still purchase, which will be more and more of less and less.

Is there no hope for the humble George Washington? There is, but it will require that we as a country again create things of value, things of value for the world, jobs of value, and industries of value. And this must necessarily include our most precious natural resource—our citizens—who are often shortchanged by our educational system at a time when we need more than ever to educate our citizens to become people of worth, people that other cultures, other countries, will find valuable to the sustenance and nurturing of civilization and life on this planet.

Then, and only then, will the dollar—the means of exchange of all that new value—find again its lost dominance. But that, my fellow Americans, as we all know, is another story, for another time. 

## Ask Antoine



Dear Antoine,  
Can you tell me a little about yourself?

But of course. I was born August 26<sup>th</sup>, 1743 and had the misfortune of leaving the world of the living at the age of 50 on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 1794 by way of Marat's guillotine—my judge having proclaimed that “The Republic has no need of scientists!”

False modesty aside, I have been called “*the father of modern chemistry*,” celebrated for explaining the law of conservation of matter, for naming oxygen and hydrogen, and for helping to usher in the metric system. I was a lawyer (law degree from the University of Paris in 1763) before regaining my senses and going into science, and although some have maintained that I freely borrowed (often without attribution) other scientists' work, I was by far a superior theorist, often explaining to them better than they could just what in fact that had discovered!

Finally, I say (with only a modicum of self-pity) that it only took a little more than a year after my death for the French government to recognize the error of its way and exonerate me (to my poor widow) as “falsely convicted.” Oh, Mon dieu! “*Tout les monde est sage après le coup!*”

You may feel free to ask me questions about education or science, and I'll try to “borrow” from other scientists' work to respond.

Au revoir, mes amis,

*Antoine-Laurent Lavoisier*

# La Cerca, Chapter 6

At the appointed hour, 8:00 o'clock the next evening, I stood waiting near the statue of William Shakespeare. Five minutes. Ten minutes. It seemed like hours. No sign of Herr Gallagher. No sign of Herr Schmidt. No sign of anyone.

My eyes studied the statue from top to bottom. From where I was standing, I could barely see what looked like the edge of a notebook or portfolio which lay atop the lap of Shakespeare. I looked around slowly. Still no one.

I stood on the base of the statue to retrieve the packet which consisted of a low quality photocopy of what appeared to be a manuscript written in German cursive.

Thoughts raced through my head. I wondered if I were committing some crime just by picking up the document.

Two children, laughing at play, ran by

the statue on the path in front of me, seemingly totally oblivious to me. It was 8:15 p.m. Still no Schmidt.

I tucked the manuscript under my arm and walked slowly back to the hotel, turning back frequently to see if anyone was following. It was not until I got to my room at the Elephant that I carefully looked at the manuscript.

The words, "The Transfiguration of All Values" and "1891" were written as a title on the cover page. Although I could translate German, it was for me a slow and difficult process accomplished only with dictionary in hand, and more so now with my having to first decipher the handwriting of the author. I located my dictionary in my travel bag.

My heart pounding, I started to read the manuscript, trying a hurried translation. I turned to the last page. I couldn't believe it. The

signature was familiar. I had seen it many times in my studies of the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche.

But it could not be. I thought of "My Sister and I," a well known forgery of a purported Nietzsche work published in 1924. Perhaps Schmidt was playing a trick on his bourgeois acquaintance and hoped for a good laugh. But no. That would not be in Schmidt's character at all. So it was possible! Possible that I held in my hand a previously undiscovered manuscript of the great philosopher.

All of a sudden the thought seemed ominous. I read and attempted a translation at a pace previously unknown to me, as the words fell away to discovery.

Here was Nietzsche without rancor, without the biting sarcasm and egoism of his later writings. More lyrical, peaceful even. The first few pages talked of the

"Transfiguration of All Values," "through love," or, more literally, the "power of furthest love" — which he identified in another phrase as "friendship."

The words were introductory in nature, without more explanation, which I assumed would be elaborated in the text.

What captured my interest more in the first introductory pages, however, was his prediction that this work would not be "understood," perhaps not even "read," until the "cloud" over Europe was lifted. This "cloud" he presaged as a "darker time to come," a time that would engulf Germany and the world in flames as a result of race hatred — "anti-Semitism."

It prophesied that after the "darkness," Germany would become a vassal state of the East and West, and that while the darkness prevailed, the world would envelope

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itself in greed, militarism, and arrogance, from which it would not soon recover.

It also predicted that out of this darkness, a new people would emerge — “Good Europeans,” with “new values” — values capable of saving “not just the fatherland,” but “Alles menchen werden” from destruction. Values that would help steer “Odysseus’s ship home again.”

I again wondered if the document might be a forgery. Nietzsche died in 1900. If this were truly his work, it was prophesy unlike any other of which I heard—prophesy that didn’t need “interpreted” through symbols or mathematical formulations. It foresaw the precise history of World War II and it’s aftermath a full half-century before it happened! But somehow it had the feel of authenticity.

The ring of truth.

My excitement building, I had a hard time concentrating on translating the next sentence. It became for a moment impenetrable. I put the words together.

“These,” he wrote, “are only humble truths of which I write! But those which constitute abiding value, the value of a people, the value of an individual, the value, the very goal — of humanity. These are the values — my last gift to mankind.”

Then it struck me.

“The Values!” “The Revaluation of All Values”! He did write it! I felt like shouting, and thought again of Schmidt. He had found Nietzsche’s Magnum Opus, promised by the philosopher himself, which every reputable Nietzsche scholar since his death was sure had never been completed!

And now I held it, at least a copy of it, in my hands. But where was the original? And where was Schmidt? Why had he not yet made his appearance? The thought occurred

to me that if he could, he would surely be here, celebrating the discovery with me. I looked at the clock. It was nearly midnight. I had spent nearly four hours trying to decipher the cursive writing and had only translated the first three introductory pages. I reached for the bottle of German wine that I assumed had been left as a welcome gift by the hotel. Uncorking it, I took a long sip. It seemed bitter, unlike the more mellow Weisswein for which Germany was famous.

Suddenly, a cold chill went down my spine. I got up to shut the window and glanced down to the public square in front of the Elephant. Below my window, a *grentruppen* der DDR in his impeccable green wool uniform stood smoking. He seemed to be looking in the direction of my window. Perhaps I was just being paranoid. But I quickly stepped away from the glass.

The light in my room was conspicuous. Other windows in the

buildings across the square were all dark. Believing in the security of conformity, I left the window, turned out the light in the room, locked the door, and got undressed in the dark. Then I carefully placed the manuscript on the desk next to the bed—making sure it was within arm’s reach—and slid into bed.

But at first I could not sleep. It felt impossible to sleep. I tossed and turned, thinking of the words of the philosopher, the manuscript, what it meant if it were genuine — reaching out to touch it, repeatedly.

After what seemed like an eternity, but was probably less than an hour, I decided to get out of bed, turn on the light and continue the translation, so great was my excitement. But before I switched on the light, I first peeked out of my window in the dark to the square below. The uniformed one had not

moved from his silent vigil. He still seemed to be looking in my direction.

Again, I returned to bed and tried to sleep, promising myself to resume translating at daylight, and make enquiries at the desk about Schmidt, or at least Gallagher. Surely one of them was known to the proprietors. Friends at least. Otherwise why would they have suggested I stay here? Surely I would get a full explanation. It would just have to wait until tomorrow.

As I lay there in the dark, I thought I would stay awake all night, so excited and troubled were my thoughts. But somehow, at some point, I did fall asleep. I have no memory of doing so. I still wonder how under the circumstances I did. But most assuredly I slept. I fell asleep abruptly, and slept soundly. I know. Because when I woke up, it was well past dawn, and the manuscript was gone. ☪

## Kathy Shapell Profile

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boys, that I discovered my preference for teaching *young* children!

I started teaching at The Ivymount School, a private school for children with special needs in the D.C. area, while finishing my master's degree in special education.

Ivymount gave me the finest possible training, and I embraced the school's philosophy of employing best practices for working with children with disabilities. Disappointedly, unlike the medical model of "best practices," the public school educational model offers only "appropriate (i.e., minimal) services," often leaving much to be desired, especially for children with disabilities. Fighting this discrepancy, which I see as a most basic value, has become my passion.

I taught special education in the D. C. area for 11 years before starting a family and then moving back to the Ohio Valley in 1998.

I was eight months pregnant with my second child when we moved into our house during the week of Christmas. Needless to say, our transition to Wheeling was a little hectic. Things calmed down for a couple of years while I stayed home to care for my children, Hannah (now 10) and Sam (almost 9).

Then, in January 2000, I started my own business, publishing a regional parenting magazine called *Ohio Valley Parent*, and life has been hectic again ever since. The business grew to a circulation of 20,000 and was taking way too much time away from my kids, so I sold it a year later and continued to edit and publish it from home for 5 ½ years.

During this time, I also advocated for families of children with disabilities and helped Laughlin Chapel with their educational programming.

In 2005, I founded the Augusta Levy Learning Center, a school for children with autism and continue to direct that program. Like The Ivymount School, the Levy Center utilizes best

practices, including a research-based program, parent involvement, individualized programming for each child, and ongoing staff development from the gurus of autism education, the Lovaas Institute for Early Intervention. The Levy Center's ultimate goal is to enable our students to transition to typical classrooms in their neighborhood schools.

This journey has allowed me to work with some really phenomenal people, like fellow Blackstone Club members Pat Cassidy (despite what they say about him), Debra and John Hull, Elisabeth Slater, and my husband Irv Shapell. Aside from marrying Irv and raising my two sweet kids, the highlights of my tenure in Wheeling have been my admittance into the Blackstone Club and winning the prestigious "Irishman of the Year" Award in 2006. ☪

# Upcoming Blackstone Club Meetings & CLEs

BLACKSTONE CLUB Tonight - Dec. 13, 2007 Christmas Party and Awards Presentation

NEXT MEETINGS: February 21, , April 17, June 19, Aug. 21, Oct. 16  
& Dec. 11, 2008

REMINDER: If you haven't already done so, it's time to renew your Blackstone Club membership for 2008. Remember - the 60-minute CLE's are free for members!



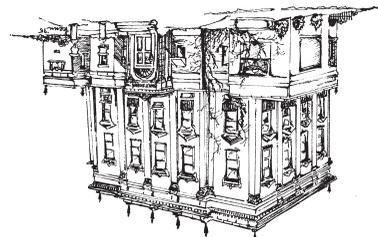
## Continuing Legal Education Seminars

*(Mark your calendars today)*

**Friday, Dec. 14, 2007 - Morning with the Judges IX** with Judge Joyce Dumbaugh Chernenko and Judge Joy Flowers Conti - (Approved for Up to 3.6 CLE Credits)

**January 2008 - Noon Series - Topic TBA** - 60 min. ( Up to 1.2 CLE credits)

**February 2008 - Ethics, Risk Management and Office Management** - (Up to 3.0 CLE credits) ATTEND THIS ONE AND SAVE MONEY ON YOUR INSURANCE!



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