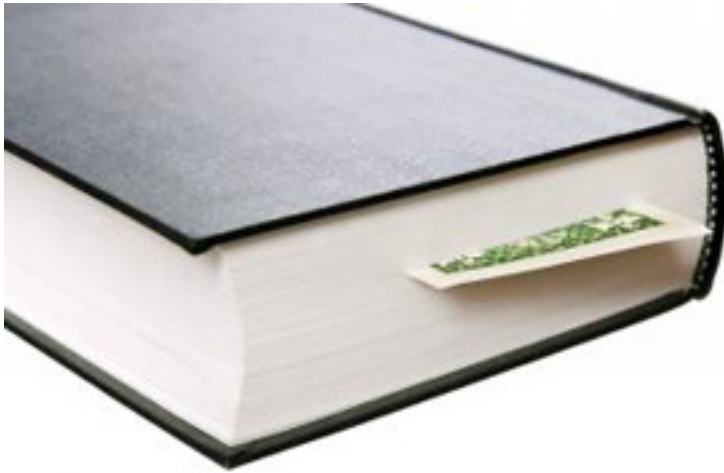


## Get the money out of politics

Written by Fred Easter  
Thursday, 10 April 2014 12:24

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Nobody asked me, but, watching television commercials these days has become an exercise in suspended intelligence and memory.

It seems impossible these days to get through an entire program without having at least two financial companies ask you if you are readying yourself for retirement. "Will you be able to maintain your lifestyle? How long will your retirement nest egg last you?"

Am I the only person in America that remembers the billions of dollars these same, under-regulated companies converted into thin air and upper management bonuses less than a decade ago? Those billions were the retirement hopes and dreams of millions of American employees. Financial companies were also selling questionable mortgages, packaging them for resale and then profiting on bets that the loan packages they had sold would fail.

"Too big to fail" banks and investment companies have wiped out homeowners and working folk. Now they beg you to forget their misdeeds and bring them your retirement dreams again, in the form of your hard earned folding money.

Other commercials I find particularly galling are clustered under the heading "energy."

Companies selling natural gas and oil are jamming the airwaves with claims of "safe extraction," "job creation," and "safe product transportation." Twenty-five years after the Exxon Valdez ran aground, and days after a collision near Galveston, Tex. is fouling beaches there, BP is telling us about their double-hulled tankers.

It is also difficult to avoid hearing how America leads the world in natural gas production and what that means for job creation and "safe, affordable" energy. I wonder if these commercials are being aired in communities where oil from leaky pipelines is bubbling up in the streets. Or in Oklahoma, where over 100 earthquakes were recorded during one weekend last month; or in Pennsylvania, where folks are developing rashes from the water in their showers.

Apparently, the combination of having billions of dollars and having spent a lifetime being white and "entitled" blinds those folk to the principles of physics and geology. They seem to think that, for millions of years, the process of evolution has been pointed toward creating them. Recent

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events in the state of Washington and the continuous activity of volcanoes around the world should suggest to thoughtful individuals that this earth we walk around on is, in point of fact, a dynamic organism. Burrowing deep into the earth's crust and setting off explosions is lunacy. Earthquakes are caused when the earth's tectonic plates shift relative to one another. When this happens at sea tsunamis can result. Building a huge pipeline over the continent's major water aquifer is also lunacy. These guys have developed the technology to blow up gas and oil shale strata but not the wisdom to or interest in researching the possible "unintended consequences" of their latest profit making plan.

Coal ash is flowing in rivers in West Virginia and Ohio. Oil is still present on Alaskan shores from a 25-year-old spill. I would be surprised if one couldn't find oil on Spanish and Portuguese beaches from an accident in the North Sea nearly 50 years ago.

We all know they *will* screw it up sooner or later. Sooner or later, they will screw it up. Many of the jobs they create will be jobs cleaning up their messes. And, if we all survive the next accident; there they'll be, like the current GM CEO, apologizing and promising to pay closer attention next time. We need to pretty please just either don't create stiffer penalties and regulations or put the regulators in the hands of a Congress (but they've already bought and paid for most in the House). Our only solution is to get money out of politics and its puppets out of our legislative houses.