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IN YOUR WORDS

The downside of an oil boom
I wish we had location labeling requirements on food so that I could never have to worry about eating anything produced in North Dakota, or downstream of any of its rivers and streams. Just because the people of North Dakota want to live in an industrial wasteland doesn't mean I should have to share the risk.

RICK HUNOSE, CHATHAM

Another litany of "admirable" behavior by the private sector. Energy does its part — along with Wall Street — to move integrity and trust right off the scale of possibilities.

TOMO, N.J.

The good people of North Dakota elected Kevin Cramer, who has been steadfast in his opposition to any sort of regulation of industry. As so many conservatives do, the residents of North Dakota have voted against their own interests. Again.

UWTEACHER, COLORADO

Humans just might be an evolutionary device such that plant life might receive maximal atmospheric doses of CO₂. We are doing everything in our power to maximize emissions.

BRUCE MOLHOLT, WEST CHESTER, PA.

California as immigration model
California depends on immigrants. They pick our crops. They work in manufacturing. They care for our children. Given the opportunity, they become model citizens, sending their kids to school to achieve their American dream. Like my grandparents and parents did. If people have jobs, let's make it possible to pay taxes and at least become residents.

VALERIE NAVARRO, COPENHAGEN

California has high-tech and entertainment money to keep it going. Most other states do not (at least not to the same degree).

JUANITA K., N.Y.

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IN OUR PAGES

International Herald Tribune

1914 Churches of Ypres Are Targets
IN BELGIUM When the history of the terrific fighting in and around Ypres is written — Ypres, where the Huns have repeated the sacrilege and outrages of Louvain and Rheims, where once more they have selected the cathedral, churches, town hall and all the beautiful examples of Flemish architecture as the special targets of their heavy artillery — it will add another chapter of infamy to the record of German "kultur" in this great war. Filled with fierce joy over the destruction of the imposing Hall of the Draper; and of the classic little Town Hall, the Huns have added the beautiful cathedral of Ypres to the sacrifices which Belgium has made for freedom.

1939 French Join in Thanksgiving
Despite the alarms of war, Thanksgiving Day was observed by Americans in Paris yesterday with traditional rites at the American Church and Pershing Hall, where American war veterans congregated with their French comrades to enjoy a real Thanksgiving dinner in a spirit of good fellowship recalling the dramatic days of 1914-18. Services at the American Church were held with the participation of the Cathedral Church of the Holy Trinity, and Dean Frederick W. Beekman delivered the Thanksgiving sermon.

Find a retrospective of news from 1887 to 2013 at iht-retrospective.blogs.nytimes.com

What Syrian youths see



MOH SOLEMAN

Moh Soleman, 14
"This animal needs care."



ESKANDER

Eskander, 14
"I would go this fast upon my return to my home country Syria."



RANDA



ISRA

Isra, 13
"Every day I wake to the tenderness of my mother's touch. She wakes me softly and tenderly, calling to me, 'Wake up, my love ...'"

Randa, 13
Self-portrait in a box.

REFUGEE REALITIES After devising a participatory project for refugee children in Yemen and Namibia at the request of the United Nations, Brendan Bannon expanded it recently to young Syrians in the Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan. His goal was to give the students a fun experience and a chance to make friends. "It's not easy to talk about anything without touching on war or its aftermath," Mr. Bannon said. "The classroom is a safe place for children to talk through whatever comes up." lens.blogs.nytimes.com

In elections, the economy comes first



Albert R. Hunt

LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

To recover from their debacle in the midterm elections, Democrats have seized on two questionable propositions: They lost mainly because of President Obama's unpopularity, and the 2016 presidential election will be more favorable.

Across the United States, Democrats ran away from the president, and the electorate this year wasn't the same as during the 2012 presidential campaign: It included three percentage points more of white voters, with an equal drop in people of color; the number of younger voters fell by a third, while the number of older voters increased by that much. This helped Republicans.

Turnout, exit polls and other data suggest another Achilles' heel for Democrats: the lack of any real focus on the economy. Many candidates talked about raising the minimum wage and achieving pay equity for women. But Republicans often co-opted those issues. Minimum-wage initiatives carried in five states, sometimes with the support of conservative Republicans such as Representative Tom Cotton, who unseated a Democrat, Senator Mark Pryor, in Arkansas.

Most Republicans had a coherent economic message: Downsize government, reduce domestic spending, cut taxes and curb regulations on business. The Democrats got trounced with the middle class, according to exit polls. Among voters earning \$50,000 to \$100,000 — more

than a third of the electorate — Republicans had an 11-point advantage.

In several Senate races — North Carolina, Colorado, probably Alaska — the outcomes would have been reversed had Democrats lost fewer of these voters.

Democrats are sure to keep stressing pay equity — appealing to female voters — and raising the minimum wage. They will also press to expand the valuable earned income tax credit for the working poor. However, these measures only marginally affect wage stagnation and the lagging middle class.

There are smart Democratic policy researchers who think about this a lot, including Alan S. Blinder and Alan B. Krueger, both Princeton University economists and former top Democratic officials.

In general, their message for Democrats is to shift from a defensive posture as deficit reducers to become proactive advocates of stimulus measures, especially a major infrastructure initiative. A robust economy won't end wage stagnation or income inequality, but it's a step.

Inequality is getting worse in America: The gap between rich and poor is growing, while the middle class is stalled. And upward mobility, a centerpiece of the American dream, is more limited.

According to Raj Chetty, a Harvard economist who has done seminal work on social mobility, data shows that there is only a 7.5 percent chance an American born in the lowest economic quintile will move to the top quintile; the chances are almost twice as good in Canada.

An element in addressing this, Democratic economists say, is changes in tax policy, with the focus on the working and middle classes. Mr. Krueger also calls for creating more incentives for profit-sharing and employee stock options for workers.

Worker representation, they say, is critical to change.

"We need to tilt the playing field in favor of rather than against unions," said Mr. Blinder, who was an economic adviser to President Bill Clinton and vice chairman of the Federal Reserve Board.

Mr. Krueger, who was chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers for Mr. Obama, said Democrats "need to think creatively about worker representation in the workplace," citing models in Germany. He suggests expanding initiatives such as Sara Horowitz's Freelancers Union, with its support system and health insurance coverage opportunities for independent workers.

Democratic candidates, especially at the presidential level, have to fashion this and more into an economic message that addresses anxieties and frustrations and projects a more promising future. That is a tough task. But if they forfeit, as they did this election season, the outcome may be similar. (BLOOMBERG VIEW)

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Marion Barry, former mayor of Washington, dies at 78

BY DAVID STOUT

Marion S. Barry Jr., a sharecropper's son and civil rights pioneer who became a flamboyant and polarizing mayor of Washington, went to prison on cocaine charges and then recaptured City Hall in one of the most improbable comebacks

OBITUARY

in the history of American urban politics, died early Sunday. He was 78.

His death was confirmed in statements from his family and the City Council. Mr. Barry died at United Medical Center in Southeast Washington just hours after he was released from Howard University Hospital on Saturday. He admitted himself on Thursday, saying that he did not feel well, although no specific medical problems were mentioned.

Elected mayor four times — in 1978, 1982, 1986 and 1994 — Mr. Barry left the mayor's office for good early in 1999 and then worked as an investment banker. But politics was never far from his mind. In 2004 he was elected to the District of Columbia Council from a hard-pressed section in Southeast Washington, a dis-

trict he represented until his death.

Mr. Barry was a charismatic yet confounding politician. Admirers saw him as a Robin Hood who gave hope to poor black residents. His detractors saw a shameless rogue who almost ruined the city by stuffing its payroll with cronies and hacks and letting services decay. Indisputably, he was a political Lazarus with a gift for convincing his followers that their hopes and disappointments were his, too.

On Jan. 18, 1990, Mayor Barry was arrested in a Washington hotel room while smoking crack cocaine and fondling a woman who was not his wife. The arrest, videotaped in an undercover operation, caused a sensation. Convicted of misdemeanor cocaine possession, Mr. Barry was sentenced to six months in prison. His fall from grace was especially poignant for those old enough to remember the bright promise and idealism of his youth.

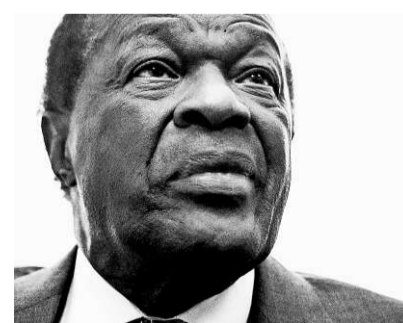
He was born on March 6, 1936, in Ita Bena, Miss. His father, also named Marion, died when he was 4, and his mother, Mattie, moved to Memphis, where she remarried. Young Marion picked cotton, waited on tables and de-

livered newspapers. He earned a degree in chemistry from LeMoyne College in Memphis in 1958.

While studying for his master's degree at Fisk University in Nashville, he organized a campus N.A.A.C.P. chapter. Early in 1960, he helped organize the first lunch counter sit-ins in Nashville. That April, he and other student leaders met with the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to establish the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

In June 1965 he moved to Washington, where he began pressing for home rule for the District of Columbia. He won his first election in February 1970, to a citizens' board created to smooth relations between the police and black residents. He was later president of the school board and a City Council member.

On March 9, 1977, he was shot during a takeover of a Washington office building by members of the Hanafi Muslim sect, but Mr. Barry was back at work by the end of the month. The next year he ran for mayor and defeated the incumbent, Walter E. Washington, in the Democratic primary, making his election in November a certainty in that overwhelmingly Democratic city.



GABRIELLA DEMCZUK/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Former Mayor Marion Barry, a charismatic and controversial politician.

At first, Washington seemed to undergo a renaissance with Mr. Barry as mayor. Downtown boomed as vacant lots and abandoned buildings gave way to smart new offices, hotels and restaurants. But Mr. Barry's critics complained that conditions in the poorest black neighborhoods were deteriorating even as the mayor used the city government as an employment agency for his followers.

Part of Mr. Barry's tenure coincided with a nationwide crack cocaine epidemic,

and Washington's poor neighborhoods suffered as much as any in the country.

In 1989 Mr. Barry was called before a federal grand jury investigating whether a woman had sold drugs to city officials, including the mayor. In 1990, he was convicted of one misdemeanor count of drug possession.

Various theories have been advanced to explain how Mr. Barry survived scandals that would have destroyed lesser politicians. Writing in *The New Yorker* in 1994, David Remnick observed that Mr. Barry's flaws actually helped him, especially among poor black people who feared that white businessmen and other elitists were conspiring to take back the power that black Washingtonians had gained.

"What Barry grasps intuitively — and what comes as a shock to most whites — is the political potential of conspiracy thinking," Mr. Remnick wrote. Indeed, years afterward Mr. Barry blamed a white racist conspiracy for his trial and imprisonment on cocaine charges.

Steve Kenny contributed reporting from Washington.