

News bites

Sr. Rose Pacatte | Aug. 15, 2011 NCR Today

I became a media literacy education specialist because I started paying attention to the news. Now I am a recovering news junkie because after Tim Russert died, no one seems civil and especially I don't enjoy the Sunday morning talk shows any more. The news isn't what it used to be; it's infotainment at best.

However some news bits and bytes get my attention because they "bite" -- though for different reasons.

Politicians that blame the "lame stream" media get a lot of broadcasting sound bytes that can take a politicians' meaning out of context -- or not. It depends on one's perspective I think.

Here's what I heard on the news yesterday and again this morning:

Michele Bachmann said during the Republican debate in Iowa last Thursday that she introduced "[the lightbulb freedom of choice act](#) [1]."

If this is the best we can hope for in a democracy to empower the people, this is a sad sound byte that frankly bit my funny bone. We have a jobless rate of 12 percent; how does this compete with light bulbs?

Mitt Romney [said to a heckler](#) [2] at the Iowa State Fair Thursday that "Corporations are people, my friend... of course they are. Everything corporations earn ultimately goes to the people. Where do you think it goes? Whose pockets? Whose pockets? People's pockets. Human beings my friend."

Now this sound byte bit sharply because it is simply not true. Corporations are not people, even though the Supreme Court has given corporations the same First Amendment rights that the U.S. Constitution gives human beings. Corporations are run by people, yes, but relatively few flourish from the experience. And as for money earned, let's face it, the profits go to the top 1 percent of earners in the USA.

Bachmann and others are also calling for the return of the president and Congress [to deal with economic and labor](#) [3] issues. Why?

Something seems so "off" to me. But with Congress on break there isn't a lot of news except for the starving people of the Sudan and the endless war in Afghanistan and the tragic loss of life.

For all the Americans who are out of work or are hoping for a functioning democratic government, I think these sound bytes bite because they demonstrate that the gap between the rich and the poor continues to grow and that Congress is dysfunctional. Neither the freedom to choose our own light bulbs or accepting corporations as fellow human beings is the remedy.

How did we get to this point where the sound of the constant shrill and drill of the media and politics machine sets my teeth on edge?

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Links:

[1] http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/08/11/iowa-debate-pawlenty-bachmann-gop-primary_n_925040.html

[2] http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/08/11/mitt-romney-heckled-iowa_n_924426.html

[3] http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/08/11/obama-is-beseched-to-cal_n_924782.html