



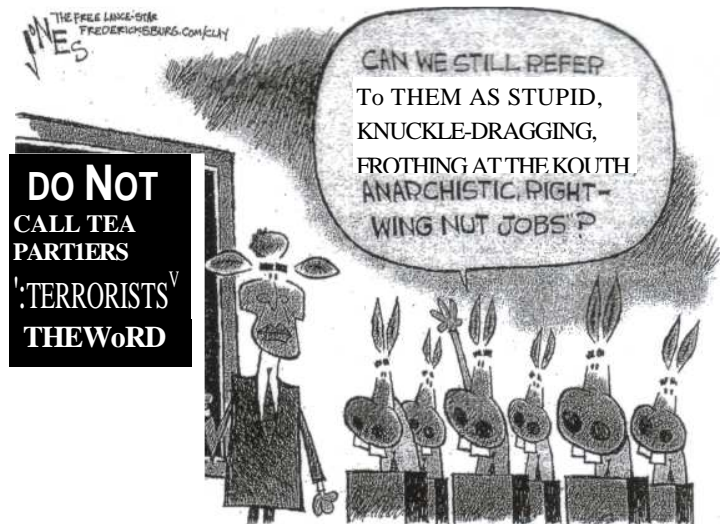
"Look on the bright side—our investments with Bernie Madoff must really be paying off by now!"

• Florida governor Rick Scott has launched an effort to identify and remove ineligible voters from the state's voter rolls. But Janet Napolitano's Homeland Security Department has refused to provide Florida access to federal databases that would aid its efforts—ignoring nine months of petitions—and Eric Holder's Justice Department has ordered the initiative halted, contending that it violates federal law, which prohibits voter-roll maintenance within 90 days of an election (Florida's primary is August 14), and discriminates against Hispanic voters. The Florida department of state's initial search, conducted in 2011, indicated that more than 180,000 registered voters may not be U.S. citizens. Since April, Florida officials have flagged 2,700 voters for removal. In addition to accusations of racism (58 percent of the flagged voters are Hispanic), state Democrats have toted out bathetic examples of "flaws" in the program, including the flagging of a 91-year-old World War II veteran. But those who receive letters need only supply valid proof of citizenship within 30 days—which several hundred people, including the veteran, have done. Some Floridians have even admitted to being ineligible or have requested removal from the rolls. So the program is working, though perhaps not to the advantage of the administration.



"This planet is great!—He says we qualify for affirmative action!"

• In the summertime when the weather is high / You can stretch right up and touch the sky.. The weather wasn't the only thing that was high at Punahou School in the Seventies, according to *Barack Obama: The Story*, by David Maraniss. Young Obama hung with a set called the Choom Gang, "choom" meaning to smoke marijuana—and that they did, in cars with the windows rolled up (so as not to waste any smoke), and in the Choom Wagon, a VW bus. Writes Maraniss: "When a joint was making the rounds, [Obama] often elbowed his way in, out of turn, shouted 'Intercepted!' and took an extra hit." If you were there it was funny, if you were high. We have no doubt that as Obama matured he put away childish things. But, in memory of those days, and to console poor David Axelrod, who has had a rough spring, cue that tinkly music one more time. *Sing along with us. dee dee dee dee dee . . .*



• Pity poor Portugal. It hit its peak five centuries ago and ever since has grown increasingly marginal in Europe, geographically and politically. Once a great sea power, it clung to a few of its colonies well into the 20th century, but now even those are gone. And while EU membership provided an initial boost, membership in the euro and the single market is becoming more of a straitjacket than a lifeline. Meanwhile those old African colonies are dripping with oil wealth. The result, writes the British journalist Allister Heath: "Five hundred years after Vasco de Gama first landed in Mozambique, impoverished Portuguese are turning up in droves, begging for work permits.... 100,000 Portuguese have moved to Angola, four times more than the traffic in the opposite direction." (Angola has about twice Portugal's population.) From prosperous Western economy to supplier of cheap labor to the Third World: They did always say the EU would transform the country.