

## Just in case it matters to you:

- AFTER FIVE YEARS OF INCREASING I.R.S. TAX AUDITS in response to “Congressional pressure to crack down harder on tax dodgers,” federal audits declined last year to just over 1% of all individual tax filings. Around 1.4M personal returns were reviewed, of which nearly 80% only involved letter requests for documentation (a ‘Correspondence audit’) rather than face-to-face meetings with agents. The decline was primarily due to workforce reduction – i.e. few agents employed – and the fact that many were assigned to handling “the gargantuan task of distributing economic-stimulus payments to taxpayers.” However, for those who did get selected, agents “greatly intensified their scrutiny of upper-income Americans” – especially those making above \$200K and/or reporting self-employed (schedule C) income, statistically higher deductions, hobby losses, tax shelters, or suspected of hiding income abroad. Auditors also pulled returns when I.R.S. “got a tip from an ex-business partner, ex-spouse or neighbor claiming they’re cheating.”  
[WALL STREET JOURNAL – Jan 14, 09]
- AS EXPECTED BY CONSERVATIVES, THE FIRST ACTS OF THE FIRST WEEK OF THE PELOSI-CONTROLLED CONGRESS WENT AFTER EMPLOYERS: funding Dep’t of Labor to “investigate and make new requirements,” and giving trial lawyers new pay-discrimination-claim bonanzas. The ‘Fair Pay’ and ‘Payroll Fairness’ Acts (HR 11 and 12) relate to discrimination suits for purported lower female pay-scales: shifting the burden-of-proof for non-discrimination to the employer, allowing for *unlimited* damages, allowing for inclusion of all females in Class Action litigation even without their knowledge or opt-in consent, and removing the statute of limitations completely. If these bills make it through the Senate, a lawsuit for unlimited damages and interest could then be filed for any alleged claim “long after all managers are gone, dead or can’t remember.” These are the first of “changes” American supposedly want.  
[CONGRESSMAN JOHN CAMPBELL NWSLTR – Jan 15, 09]
- FAR FROM HEADING TOWARDS GLOBAL WARMING, “the Earth is now on the brink of entering another Ice Age, according to a large and compelling body of scientific evidence... Ice cores, ocean sediment cores, the geographic record and studies of ancient plant and animal populations all demonstrate a regular cyclic pattern of Ice Age glacial maximums which each last about 100,000 years, separated by intervening warm interglacials, each lasting about 12,000 years... The cycles stem from three underlying astronomical cycles involving the tilt of the earth, the shape of its orbit, and its wobble.” The popular theory that carbon dioxide (CO2) produced by human industries is *causing* global warming is based on “evidence from only the past thousand years at most, while ignoring evidence from the past million years...which shows that changes in global CO2 levels *lag behind* temperature changes by about 800 years – i.e. *CO2 is not the cause, it is the effect.*” (The reason relates to cold water capacity to retain more CO2; an example is why carbonated beverages lose fizz when they warm up.) “While concern over the dubious threat of Anthropogenic Global Warming continues to distract the attention of people throughout the world, the very real threat of the approaching and inevitable Ice Age, which will render large parts of the Northern hemisphere uninhabitable, is being foolishly ignored.”  
[PRAVDA.RU ONLINE – Jan 11, 09]
- ON THE HEALTH FRONT: ‘BPA’ is the chemical used in plastic, cell-phones, computers, eyeglasses, drinking bottles, CDs & DVDs, food & drink cans and most other daily use products. Fourteen industry-funded studies claim that BPA is not dangerous to humans and the U.S. Food & Drug Administration says that, at current levels of exposure, BPA is safe (even though the FDA’s Science Board “questioned the rigor of its analysis”). However, some 90 independently-funded experiments “have found evidence of adverse health effects... and the Nat’l Institutes of Health reports ‘some concern’ that BPA harms the human brain and reproductive system, especially in babies and fetuses.” Multibillion-dollar industry versus issues of Public Health is not surprising in America and, as usual, industry-funded studies have so far held sway among regulators. In the meantime, NIH advises “concerned parents to reduce their use of canned foods, use BPA-free baby bottles, and opt for glass, porcelain or stainless steel containers, particularly for hot foods and liquids.”  
[FAST COMPANY – Feb 09]
- THOUGHTS FOR THE WEEK: ***As of 1/1/09, it is now a crime in California “to telephone or electronically contact the home of another person repeatedly with the intent to annoy.”***  
***It is also now a felony to willfully sell any counterfeit registered trademark. Since “intent can be found in the eye of a jury, be sure you know your wholesale sources.”***