



ARTICLE FINDER

OPINION

[Search Salon](#)

[Directory](#)

Hot Topics

- [Joe Conason](#)
- [Right Hook](#)
- [World Press](#)
- [Mark Fiore](#)
- [Sidney Blumenthal](#)
- [Arianna Huffington](#)

Articles by date

- [All of Salon.com](#)
- [By department](#)

SALON

- [News & Politics](#)
- ▶ [Opinion](#)
- [Tech & Business](#)
- [Arts & Entertainment](#)
- [Books](#)
- [Life](#)
- [Comics](#)
- [Dialogue](#)
- [Letters](#)
- [Columnists](#)
- [Corrections](#)

PARTICIPATE

Satire



JOYCE MCGREEVY

Uncle Sam's extreme makeover

There's a bold new spirit in America: Downtrodden workers slaving harder than ever to build a better life for members of the investor class!

By **Joyce McGreevy**



March 12, 2005 | Listen. Do you hear it? There's something in the air, and it's not just [mercury emissions](#). It's a sound, a feeling, a movement, and like the flock of reporters returning to a courthouse in Santa Maria, Calif., it's growing bigger every day.

All across America, people are witnessing a remarkable transformation. You can see it in the crowding of a school, feel it in the crumbling of a bridge, and smell it in the water from a drinking fountain. It's a new era for a new land, and it's headed your way.

As the poet Walt Whitman might have blogged, "I hear America cringing." Welcome to America Lite. Now with 3,700 percent more deficit!

In America Lite, cutbacks run free and contractors ride off into the sunset. And seldom is heard a discouraging word in the wide open spaces of your [retiring TV news anchor](#). Good morning, America Lite! Join us as we gloss over the results of your Extreme Makeover. Lady Liberty has had the principles liposuctioned right out of her, Uncle Sam is on steroids, and the [biggest enemy](#) of the United Nations just got nominated as ambassador to the United Nations. What's next? Lizzie Borden for secretary of health and human services? MC Hammer for secretary of the treasury? Donald Rumsfeld for secretary of defense? But enough about that. We now return you to our regularly scheduled [Martha Marathon](#), already in progress.

Take a gander around America Lite. Check out the infrastructure. Quaint, isn't it? You've got your roadways, your railroads, your

Premium Benefits



[Download 20 tracks from our new music mix](#)

Table Talk[Spirited
Salon forums][What's the next wave of feminism?](#)[Is torture ever justified?](#)● [Posts of the week](#)**The Well**[Pioneering members-
only discussions][Should the Golden Gate Bridge have suicide barriers?](#)**Sound Off**● [Letter to the Editor](#)
● [Salon Blogs](#)**SALON PREMIUM**[Join today](#)
[Gift memberships](#)
[Upgrade your membership](#)
[Premium help](#)
[Mobile edition](#)
[Refer a Friend](#)
[Institutional Subs](#)**SALON SERVICES**[Personals](#)
[Newsletter](#)
[Unsubscribe](#)
[Salon's RSS Feeds](#)
[Salon Credit Card](#)
[Salon Publications](#)
[Salon Store](#)**CONTACT SALON**[Customer Service](#)
[About Salon](#)

[Investor Relations](#)

power grids and whatnot. The American Society of Civil Engineers just gave it all a D, down from a D-plus in 2001 and 2003. Sure, we could fix it, but that would cost \$1.3 trillion and we need that plus several billion more just to knock the stuffing out of [Social Security](#). Oh, frayed new world!

In America Lite, folks who lose their Social Security benefits can still give their regards to Wall Street -- because politicians of all stripes and every shade of yellow-belly are standing up for the rights of struggling Americans to give a big fat gift to banks and credit card companies. Yaaa! Fee at last, fee at last, thank God almighty we're saddled with a 23.99 percent fee at last.

Hey buddy, lost your income while serving National Guard duty in Iraq? No problem. While you were dodging bullets without a Humvee shield, the Enron boys were hiding behind their asset shields. So now you too can feel like a big spender as you keep making house payments long after the bank forecloses.

The shiny new [bankruptcy bill](#), also known as "Serenade of the Quid Pro Schmoes," should make it much harder for families with debt to start over after suffering serious illness, unemployment and other calamities. Annual premium on your health insurance? \$7,000. Cost of a dilapidated tract house in California? \$700,000. Campaign donation for Beltway robber barons? Priceless.

Because in America Lite, we believe that fewer people working harder than ever can build a better life for every single man, woman and child who is a member of the investor class. And that's why the America Lite team is on the job -- everyone's job. For example, Wal-Mart and other retailers are lobbying Congress to let truckers work 16-hour days. What good is a crumbling infrastructure without truckloads of sleep-deprived, pay-cut-pummeled, benefit-burgled, debt-ridden American drivers to make it more of a challenge? And what good are nurses if they can't handle a drastic increase in patient levels? In these exciting times, any unsafe nurse-to-patient staffing ratios will soon be alleviated by spiraling morbidity rates.

In a world where excessive advances in knowledge could present a serious obstacle to the steady progress of humanity's handbasket along its hellish trajectory, America Lite is greasing the wheels and paving the way. Indeed, the Bush budget cuts will help reduce bothersome research into food security, animal viruses, forestry sustainability and a lot of other stuff that has never preempted a Katie Couric exclusive on "Botox for Babies." Simper Fi, Katie! Meanwhile, NASA is about to jettison 3,000 of its best and brightest researchers. Because in America Lite, the study of global climate change and breakthroughs in aviation safety need never take the place of good old creationism and confiscation of deadly toenail clippers by the Transportation Security Association.

So sleep well, little citizen. Because in America Lite, you can rest easy knowing that while your personal passwords are misappropriated, your sensitive information is being bought and sold, and your identity has been shipped by next-day air to key demographics in several states, you will never again be threatened by the terror of a split-second [nipple flash](#) on your countertop TV. And besides, the FBI is sort of wending its labyrinthine way toward getting on the case. It has spared no taxpayer expense, pouring \$581 million into failed efforts to overhaul a computer system so antiquated that it was operational back when people in Ohio and Florida still had the vote.

But don't neglect to say your prayers, because in America Lite, the economy may be faith-based, but the White House doubts the existence of people who need jobs.

[Get Premium on your PDA or Wireless device](#)[Free one month audio subscription](#) to the New York Times or Wall Street JournalGet Salon's headlines delivered to your [e-mail address](#)Download Salon as [plain text](#) or [PDF](#)

So try to win that lottery, hire a team of lawyers and accountants, and if you still need something to do, run for office to deep-six medical malpractice lawsuits and high-five the pharmaceutical lobby. As the American poet once said, "Do I contradict myself? Very well then, I guess that makes me president."

salon.com



About the writer

[Joyce McGreevy](#) is a writer in Portland, Ore.

Sound Off

Send us a [Letter to the Editor](#)



[Salon](#) [Search](#) [About Salon](#) [Table Talk](#) [Investor Relations](#)

[News & Politics](#) | [Opinion](#) | [Tech & Business](#) | [Arts & Entertainment](#)
[Indie film](#) | [Books](#) | [Life](#) | [Comics](#) | [Audio](#) | [Dialogue](#)
[Letters](#) | [Columnists](#) | [Salon Gear](#)

Reproduction of material from any Salon pages without written permission is strictly prohibited

Copyright 2005 Salon.com
Salon Media Group, Inc.
101 Spear Street, Suite 203
San Francisco, CA 94105
Telephone 415 645-9200 | Fax 415 645-9204
[E-mail](#) | [Salon.com Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Service](#)