



The Kochs — Show me the money!

By RICHARD CALKINS

Wednesday, April 23, 2014

Robert Amdur's April 15 love letter to the Koch Brothers, "Democrats do it again," eschews any criticism of the conservative oligarchs. A *Forbes* examination of Koch Industries (October 2012) makes no mention of the fictional "140,000 additional American jobs" Amdur claims the Kochs provide. Amdur mentions that Koch refineries provide gasoline "that power our cars and heat our homes," with nary a mention of cleaner forms of energy that do the same thing. Always the benevolent employers, the Kochs threatened their 60,000 employees with layoffs, if Obama won re-election in 2012, a not-so subtle suggestion to vote for Romney or else.

Banned from doing business in the U.S., Fred Koch made his initial fortune building refineries in the Stalinist Soviet Union, later returning to America to form the John Birch Society. He left nearly all his fortune to his sons. They, in turn, have used much of the money to establish the libertarian CATO Institute and the Tea Party infused Americans for Prosperity, the group that Andy Harris reveres more than his constituents, as Mike Brown, with considerable evidence, has demonstrated.

Deniers of global warming should take heart that Koch industries, which has been assessed with nearly \$1 billion in environmental fines, outdid even Exxon Mobil in contributions to organizations opposed to climate change. Koch Industries will add to its fortune if Keystone XL is approved through the Koch Pipeline subsidiary. Amdur mentions Koch funding of PBS and NOVA from WGBH in Boston, on which Charles Koch sits as a trustee. Little wonder. Two PBS documentaries from the Independent Lens series were edited or never shown because of criticism of the Kochs. Wonder how that happened?

Amdur's disjointed letter mercifully ends by telling us that Harris can read and accuses Democrats of not reading the health care law. The Congressional Budget Office has said (April 14) that the ACA will enroll 12 million newly insured, with 7 million more in Medicaid in 2014. Yes, we read the law, which Harris tried to repeal 50 times, just as the Kochs told him to do. Read this: boycott Georgia Pacific products.

Richard Calkins writes from Tilghman.