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January 10, 2011

Get Your Constitution Here

Posted by *Macy Halford*

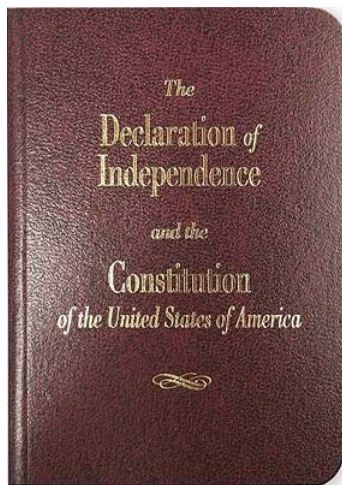
This week in the magazine, Jill Lepore writes about the Constitution, and about that “minor American artform,” “crying constitution,” wherein patriotic types invoke the forty-four-hundred-word document in arguing for whatever truths they hold to be self-evident. Sometimes, politicians (specifically John Boehner) don’t know that the phrase “we hold these truths to be self-evident” comes from the Declaration of Independence, not the Constitution, but it hardly matters to their constituents: Lepore reports that in a poll of one thousand Americans, seventy-two per cent had never read the entire Constitution (a fact which, she notes, doesn’t keep them from loving it). If you haven’t read the Constitution lately, Lepore advises that you do so: it’s a surprising read that “doesn’t exactly explain itself.” Below, a few editions mentioned in the piece, plus some books to aid (or perhaps hinder) your understanding.

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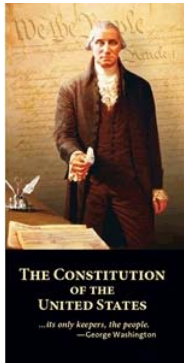
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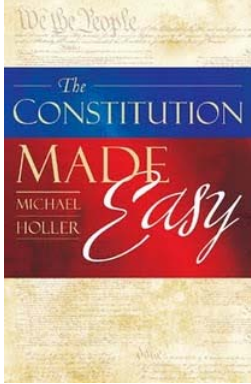
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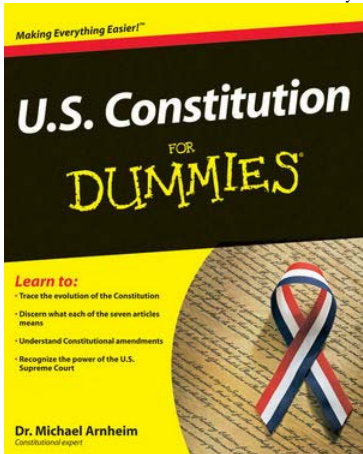
“The Cato Institute prints a handsome Constitution, the size and appearance of a passport, available for four dollars and ninety-five cents.” Inc



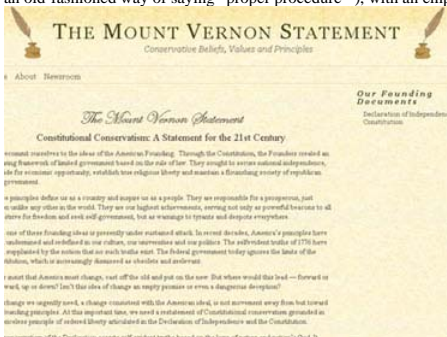
The National Center for Constitutional Studies, founded by W. Cleon Skousen, a rogue Mormon, John Bircher, and all-purpose conspiracy theorist, prints a stapled f



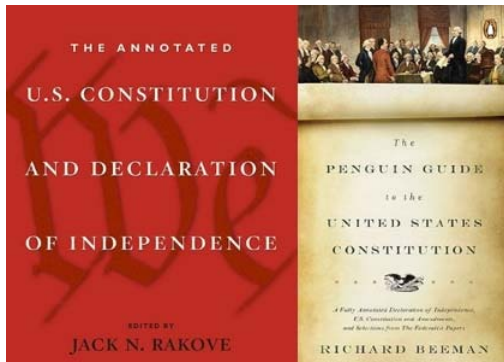
The Tea Party Express endorses "The Constitution Made Easy," a translation into colloquial English made by Michael Holler, and available on Holler's W



"U.S. Constitution for Dummies," published last year, was written by Michael Arnheim, an English barrister. The book includes a foreword an old-fashioned way of saying "proper procedure"), with an emphasis on contemporary controversies, which he frames as battles between 'judge-made law' and the proper workings of democ



"This February ... a coalition of prominent conservatives, including leaders of the Heritage Foundation, The National Review, such truths exist. The federal government today ignores the limits of the Constitution, which is increasingly dismissed as obsolete and irrelevant."



Two more new guides include both scholarly annotations and historical essays. Jack Rakove, a Pulitzer Prize-winning paperback, 'The Penguin Guide to the United States Constitution.' In his commentary on Heller, the laudably equable Beeman summarizes the arguments; shrugs ('The meaning of the Second /

Keywords

- Jill Lepore;
- the Constitution

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