

Firstly, let me say a big Happy Birthday to you, Ron, and congratulations on turning 75 years young. I sure hope that I'll have as much energy and enthusiasm as you do when I reach that age—I think you put many of us youngsters to shame!

Unfortunately I can't be there to celebrate with you, though, because, as you know, I'm on the other side of the world, living in that little backwater of a place they call New York City. I probably shouldn't call it that, I mean, true—we don't have a fancy bell tower and we don't have a Hay St or Murray St mall here either—but somehow I still manage to find things to do and to keep myself busy.

Now some of you may think that living so far away would mean that I've grown ignorant of what's been going on back home. But this is not true. I *have* been keeping up to date with what's been happening in Perth and around Australia. This is largely because for the past couple of months I've been posting news articles on Ron's Facebook. No, not by using *my* account but by using Ron's.

I hope this won't come as too shocking a revelation but I figure, hey, if it's true that women were throwing themselves at Julian Assange because he publicized confidential information, maybe it will work for me too? I'm also Australian and a bit of a nerd—why should he be the only one that gets to reveal secrets?

What I've been doing is, for a good hour or so every day, I trawl the Internet, looking for interesting articles and stories in the news. I then post them on Ron's Wall with a comment, and leave it to him to respond to anyone who replies.

It's actually going rather successfully. Ron has been getting quite a lot of comments and an even greater number of 'Likes' which, as we all know, is one of the most significant and meaningful forms of human interaction an individual can have in this day and age.

But to be serious for one moment, it's true the particular details of all the various news stories I've been posting differ whether they occurred in Australia or the US (or anywhere else), but I think the themes and issues are pretty much the same. Out of control government spending. Cronyism. Bureaucratic incompetence. An all-around disregard for individual rights and for private property rights, and an ever-diminishing notion of individual self-responsibility.

Now overwhelmingly, the comments people leave for Ron are positive. Sometimes, though, there will be a more negative or sceptical kind of comment that gets left but it really doesn't seem to make much of a difference, however, whether that person is Australian or American. Economic ignorance is economic ignorance and the disregard for liberty is truly a universal phenomenon.

There is definitely more of an emphasis and acknowledgement here in the US that freedom is a desirable thing in and of itself, but all too often this just seems like lip service. The Left will cheerfully hand over more power to the State if it's done in the name of social justice, while the Right will cheerfully hand over more power to the State if it's done in the name of national defence. The end result of all this is that the government continues to grow no matter who is in charge.

Still, I wouldn't want to be anywhere else right now because living in New York is just so much fun. While politicians and other criminals may make life increasingly more difficult for the masses, the masses continue to make life increasingly more *enjoyable* for each other through peaceful, voluntary cooperation.

I suspect you're all probably wanting to get back on with the party, so I'll conclude my remarks now and leave you with a final comment regarding Ron's Facebook. I admit that I enjoy doing this daily project; however, I must also say that I find it rather demoralizing and disheartening too. It's not because every day I read countless articles exposing all the lies and waste and corruption of government, and so have fears for the future of the world and for liberty. No, it's rather because every day I'm reminded of the fact that my 75 year old boss has 2,000 more friends than I do.

Happy Birthday, Ron! I hope you have a fantastic day.

Luke