

Thursday, November 20, 2008

The Parkdale Hookers apply to become bank holding company

/Toronto tPHwire/ - In a move presaged by Amex and GMAC, The Parkdale Hookers, or TPH have made the requisite filings with the SEC to become a bank holding company. If approved, the Toronto based indie rock group will then request an estimated 3 billion dollars in recapitalization under the Troubled Asset Relief Program, or TARP.

Although an unorthodox move for an unsigned rock group, "the financial crisis has forced everybody to consider their options", a spokesperson for the group told Forbes. The power-pop group known for its three chord guitar rock oriented anthems reported no revenues in fiscal 2008, have no retained earnings, no assets, and no owner's equity on its balance sheet. But the band is estimated to be counterparty to over 7 trillion dollars of derivatives, credit default swaps and leveraged futures.

"Allowing this band to fail will put the entire financial system at risk", the spokesperson continued, "we may wind up under martial law".

Under the band's proposal the group would be recapitalized, and the treasury would take a direct equity stake in the group's forthcoming record, due for release in Q1 09, tentatively titled "Sleazebags in Suits".

For more information, see <http://www.parkdalehookers.ca>

Posted by Mark Jeftovic in Tongue-in-cheek at 17:59

Why we do not offer Whois Privacy at easyDNS

We get asked this a alot: Why do you guys not offer whois masking or whois contact privacy?

The brief background on this is: whenever you register a domain name, your contact details are published in a publicly visible database called "whois", where your contact details are instantly harvested by spambots and marketers who proceed to email and postal mail you marketing offers, deceptive "domain slamming" attempts, ads for dubious products, and perhaps even telemarketing calls.

Nobody likes that, so over the years people started resorting to various tactics to protect themselves from the deluge of crap that inevitably comes with simply registering a domain name: throwaway email addresses in whois records, fake postal addresses, fake phone numbers, etc. The problem is, Registrants are obligated under their various end user agreements to provide true and accurate data (not doing so is grounds to lose one's domain), and the US even passed legislation making it unlawful to use fake contact details in a domain name registration.

Our response to this, years ago, was MyPrivacy.ca which protects your email address from being harvested from your whois records, but leaves your other data intact. We didn't see it as a revenue opportunity, in fact we made it free and opened it up to competing registrars, many of whom started recommending it to their customers. We just wanted to drive a stake through the heart of the whois spammers.

It wasn't long though, before many registrars took it a step further and created the concept of "whois masking" or "contact privacy", where all of the domain-holder contact details would be masked from the public whois. Of course, this was heralded as a "value-add" and most outfits charge extra for it.

In today's long overdue post, we're finally revealing why so-called "whois privacy" puts your domains at risk, costs you more and doesn't really protect your privacy. Continue reading "Why we do not offer Whois Privacy at easyDNS"

Posted by easyDNS: of Interest in via easyDNS blog at 11:29

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If you haven't seen a "whois record", go to <http://www.easywhois.com> and enter a domain name, any domain existing name, and look at the record. If you enter easydns.com you'll see our corporate contact details, our address, the legal name of our company, our phone and fax numbers.

Then enter a domain name that has "whois privacy", instead of seeing the actual end-user contact details of the domain holder, you'll see something like:

Privacy Protection or

Contact Privacy

and some other address info which is basically all a "mask".

Here's what you need to understand: Whether a domain name is considered "property" (like in .com) or just conveys "rights" (like .ca here in Canada), the domain is considered the property of, or the rights accrue to, whoever or whatever is listed in the whois record.

If you use whois privacy and some kind of dispute arises between you and your Registrar, and you were to go to ICANN or CIRA and assert your rights to that name, they would look at the whois record details and tell you that you have no standing. The domain belongs to the "privacy entity" listed in the record.

From ICANN or CIRA's point of view, having a contract in place between you and the "privacy provider" isn't a factor, the domain belongs to them, not you. If you want to do something about it, you'll have to follow that up in court. If your Registrar (or privacy provider) is in some other legal jurisdiction, then you have that additional hurdle to deal with (that of suing a company in another country).

And that's if the Registrar is still in existence. If the reason you have a problem in the first place is that your registrar has imploded and disappeared (RegisterFly anyone?) then you have 1) nobody to sue and 2) no way to prove you are the "real" owner of all your "privacy protected" names.

It is true that Registrars are now obligated to escrow their Registrant data to protect against Registrar failure (I call this the "RegisterFly Rule"), if your whois records are privacy masked, then the data that will be escrowed will be the masked data, not the underlying registrant data.

There is nothing in the ICANN Registrar Accreditation Agreement that provisions for whois masking or privacy protection that puts an onus on the Registrar to preserve the underlying registrant data anywhere and maintain a verifiable link between the "real" record and "masked" record. There is nothing in the Registrar data escrow requirements that says a registrar has to provide the underlying "real" record to the escrow provider.

I find this risk so unacceptable that I simply refuse to sell this stuff to the public. Liken whois privacy to the "Credit Default Swaps" of the domain world. As long as nothing goes wrong, everything is fine and everybody makes money. As soon as something goes wrong, all hell breaks loose.

It gets worse: Whois Privacy only protects you from the most cursory examination of your details. In the event of an even moderate intensification of scrutiny: a UDRP challenge, a subpoena, or any legal action, you will find that the Registrar will drop your privacy mask as a matter of policy and restore your underlying live data anyway.

There are even some Registrars who will set you up with "privacy protection" on one hand, and will then sell your private data out the other side to anybody who wants it. Now I once wrote about this and was criticized for "not naming names", so if you have that same objection now, email me and I will send you a link to a page from a large Registrar who offers whois privacy protection that offers to sell you the underlying masked data for any "privacy protected" registrant on their system for \$10.

Once again, we have something that strikes me just another Registrar "cash grab" that not only doesn't provide any real benefits to the domain holder but actually adds an unacceptable amount of risk.

Blog Export: Exile From the Herd, <http://www.privateworld.com/>

Wednesday, November 19, 2008

Before you take the word of the "experts", watch this video

This is quite simply an amazing video clip of Peter Schiff being laughed out of every major financial newsroom from Fox to MSNBC by all the "recognized experts" from 2006-2007 as he was predicting "the worst is yet to come" over the howling protests of talking heads who smugly belittled him at every step:

Simply amazing. Ben Stein predicting a significantly higher Dow Jones next year than now in August 2007 (when the Dow closed at 13,000 much to everybody's chagrin), Mike Norman all but called him a complete idiot. The moronic pundits asking for opinions nodded attentively as the cheerleaders breathlessly predicted massive rebounds in financials, a weaker than usual housing market meant a mere 10% gain in 2008 and this was the singularly best possible time in history to go "all-in" with stocks.

When Schiff opened his mouth the other commentators were audibly laughing at him.

In honor of today's Dow closing under 8,000 for the first time since 2003, I humbly submit that these idiots should watch themselves in this video, publicly apologize for leading their viewers astray, and quit the financial advisory business.

Except for Schiff of course. His Little Book of Bull Moves in Bear Markets provides a great overview of what's really happening in the markets today.

Posted by Mark Jeftovic in Venture Capital at 17:07

Thursday, November 13, 2008

The most idiotic thing I've heard all morning....

In case I was doubting my going long on oil last week, this cinched it for me:

Lower heating costs predicted

WASHINGTON — The dramatic drop in world oil prices means a break this winter in heating costs, although households will still be paying more than they did last winter, the government says.

For starters, if a panel of government monkeys say "lower heating costs", prepare for the opposite. Always do this.

Next, if households are still going to pay more this winter than they did last winter, then guess what? Heating costs are HIGHER you damn dolts. If this winter's heating costs aren't going to be as brutal as they would have been with \$100+ oil, but they're still more than last year, then NEWSFLASH: The cost of winter heating has gone up.

Jeezus, they don't even try to make it sound plausible any more.

Posted by Mark Jeftovic in This is not investment advice at 11:22

Thursday, November 6, 2008

MobileMe and easyDNS...

A number of customers have been registering domains to point to their new websites published via iWeb on their MobileMe accounts. Unfortunately, while MobileMe instructs how to point "www.yourdomain.com" to their services, they don't have a way to easily point just "yourdomain.com" to their services. This is especially important as not everyone on the internet will type "www" before a domain name when looking for a website (such as "www.google.com" versus "google.com").

Realising this is an issue for some of our customers who have DNS-Only services, we have implemented a work around. Simply follow the instructions on MobileMe to have your "www.yourdomain.com" CNAME point to "web.me.com". These are correct, and are very important. However, one last step is to leave your "yourdomain.com" record in the "hosts" block pointing to the word "PENDING". It should look something like this: A record (host): yourdomain.com Has IP: PENDING

...with your CNAME looking like this: C name (alias): www.yourdomain.com Points to A record (host): web.me.com Once entered, click "next" to submit your changes, and "next" again after you have confirmed all looks well. These updates may take a few hours to propagate across the internet before you can see them.

If you have any questions at all, please contact our Support Dept., and we would be happy to assist you.

Posted by easyDNS: Tips and Tricks in via easyDNS blog at 13:03

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Posted by easyDNS: Tips and Tricks in via easyDNS blog at 13:03

Wednesday, November 5, 2008

All Hail The Chief and God Bless ...The Left

I know my friend and mentor The Atavist blogged yesterday that it makes no real difference who won the election, I am, to quote a favorite phrase of my attorney, "cautiously optimistic".

We all expect Obama to be a center-left politician and in the ordinary course of things, capitalist pigs such as myself are supposed to revile the left. Anyone who reads my blog knows I run down the lefties on a regular basis. But I have realized over the years that I have never given the opposite extreme: the lunatic right, the treatment they deserved in this space.

We are coming off of the worst 8 years in geopolitical history since the Viet Nam War. In 8 years, a small, neo-conservative cabal has squandered the accumulated goodwill of a once great nation, has financially bankrupted the same, neutered civil liberties and has set purely ideologically motivated precedents of pre-emptive warfare and American exceptionalism. It was nothing short of insanity and frankly, the rest of the world was sitting on the sidelines wondering how long the American citizenry was going to go along with it.

So yes, President Obama will be "left of center", but when a national agenda is set by Neocon loons (which it has been for the last 8 years) anyone tamer than a Nazi is a leftist.

I have a long-held summation about Leftists, Rightists and Centrists which I label as "Socialists, Conservatives and Libertarians".

Conservatives think they know how everybody else should live.
Socialists think we should all live the same way
Libertarians think they may know how to run their own lives and nobody else's.

While leftists miss the point on the fundamental laws of economics, in general their hearts are in the right place (no pun intended). Most leftists want to help their fellow man, alas, sometimes to a fault. But that said, it is generally out of spirit of brotherhood and community and for that, I salute them.

The right are ideologues and ideologues become so blinded by their own tunnel vision they end up being downright Evil. I once heard the Project For A New American Century crowd: Cheney, Rumsfeld, Perle et al, described as "Malthusians" and I think that label fits well.

So while the left tend toward "tax-and-spend" (and at the risk of veering off on a tangent rant coercion, theft and taxation), the right are about enslavement, serfdom, war (best racket ever invented), elitism and crony capitalism.

Neither side veers far from "socialism for the bankers" that routinely ruin our economies but at least one side didn't get a few million innocent people killed in the last 8 years and isn't pursuing a relentless blueprint to create a police state (not yet, anyway).

Tax Shelters, not Bomb Shelters

So yeah, give me the centrist-left guy - all I have to worry about are dealing with more taxes. That I can handle (there are always ways to deal with taxation).

What I don't want is to worry about having to build a goddamn bomb shelter for my 2 year old daughter.