



# KICKIN' NEWS

Volume II

Issue 5

LOW Democratic Club

APRIL 2011

## EDITOR'S LETTER

It's been a year of "Kickin' News" On our first Anniversary, Issue 5 will not only be e-mailed, but will be on our new website - [www.lowdemocrats.org](http://www.lowdemocrats.org). If you have not gone there yet - you should do so - It's beautifully presented and loaded with information.

Much has happened since the last issue in January. More members are contributing articles of information and interest. The programs at our monthly meetings are motivating the members to get more involved in local, state and national issues. New members have joined the club and guests often attend.

So read on- enjoy !! And remember -

**BLUE POWER!!!!**

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## STAFF:

EDITOR - Chris Carr  
ISSUES - Diane Sibley  
MEANDERINGS - Lyn Nowakoski  
CIRCULATION - Pat Drake

## PARADE JULY 2

Let's parade and show our patriotism! Sen. Edd Huck will be riding with us Dems. Walkers and riders are needed, Come wave the flag; everyone gets one . Mark the date. More info - Shirley Pfile- 972-3812

## GOP PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION - C. Carr

Who will run against President Obama in 2012? It seems someone who is very far right; just check the polls. This means - no stem cell research, more limiting of women's rights, voting rights, do as the NRA says, global warming and evolution do not exist, more cuts in education dollars, and of course, stay on the path to bust unions.

The most important piece of the platform - the president is not a U.S. citizen and is a Moslem.

Now, there's a grocery list to set your hair on fire! There is no room for moderates and the Tea Party is running amuck. Just ask (the country is broke) Speaker Boehner.

But positive always overrules negative, This constant demonizing of the President is wearing thin and he keeps that charming smile, no matter how he is derided. And he has done much for the country, even if the right screams it's head off! So, we await the GOP nominee. It should be a real LULU in the party of Lincoln.

# KICKIN' NEWS



## SCHOOL FUNDING - C. CARR

The Commonwealth of Virginia provides each school locality with about 50% of their funds. The Virginia general assembly determines how much Orange County will receive. This is based on a complicated formula called (LCI) or Local Community Index. This is also used to determine Orange County's ability to pay for its public schools.

4 parameters are used for the LCI:

1. Number of students in attendance.
2. County real estate values.
3. Adjusted gross income of residents.
4. County income from sales tax.

Using LCI gets interesting results. Orange County ranked 34<sup>th</sup> in wealth out of 136 local governments. To compare- Culpeper ranks 39<sup>th</sup>. Spotsylvania ranks 66<sup>th</sup>. Best kept secret = the wealth of Orange County.

Strange that Orange County pays its most experienced teachers much less than Culpeper or Spotsylvania. The difference ranges from \$5,00.00 to \$16,000.00.

## SCHOOL FUNDING

(continued)

Orange County needs to close this gap.

Now compare per pupil expenditures in Orange County to other Virginia districts. The following figures are from 2008- before the economy went down.

Out of the 136 districts - Orange County ranks 34<sup>th</sup> in ability to pay, but ranks 127<sup>th</sup> in per pupil expenditure and 101<sup>st</sup> out of all districts in average teacher salary!

This inconsistency has been going on for a long time and needs a huge local effort to change it.

This is amazing data and all residents need to think on this and what it means to the education of their children, grandchildren and the overall good of our society.

Perhaps our local representatives should be questioned about this. Right now they're arguing over a 1 cent raise in property taxes! Cost to homeowner -very little!

## MEANDERINGS

Lyn Nowakoski

In my column in January, I mentioned Khrushchev's name twice and a computer misspelled it. Before I submitted the column, I checked the spelling with one of my daughters, Betsy, who translates Slavic language into English for our federal government. There really are three "h's" in his name .

\* \* \* \* \*

The first sign of danger, I believe, was when she said she liked to take her rifle, ride in a low-flying helicopter and shoot wolves.

After Sarah appeared on T.V. and had shot and killed a caribou, she said that she had no patience with animal rights activists. She added that she could shoot a caribou when her family needed protein. (What, the entire state of Alaska has no super markets?)

Again on T.V., Sarah was standing near a fishing dory that had, in the bottom, several halibut still alive and flopping around. Sarah picked one up by the tail and whacked its head against the boat several times to kill it. She has very serious problems!

# NEWSLETTER

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## ISSUES BY DIANE SIBLEY

With the news from Japan some of the things we thought were so important seem insignificant now - or are they? Federal budget issues? How much do we help? ? Does the Federal Government need to regulate more or less? Leave regulation to the states? I don't think so. There are a few states that come to mind that I wouldn't want regulating nuclear energy policies, construction safety issues, pollution issues, etc. (And while we're on the subject of regulation, please read Rand Paul's rant on his toilet problems. Seems he has to flush several times. This brings to mind an obvious conclusion, but I'll let you come to that conclusion on your own.)

"We're Broke!! OR Are We?"

E.J. Dionne, Jr. did a great column in the Washington Post regarding speaker Boehner's assertion that the Federal Government is broke and Governor Walker's assertion "We're broke," and with the help of PoliFact.com and Bloomberg news looked at

## ISSUES ( CONT> )

those statements and, of course, proved them a lot of hoey. Not just hoey, but irresponsible, uncaring and classist hoey. I think most of us know what will happen when the unions, whether public or private, are decimated. Our middle class will become a fond memory, As a daughter of a union member and a former civil servant, I don't consider those two groups as a privileged class. I save that label for those whose family fortunes came at the expense of the sweat of the laboring class and that laboring class includes teachers, firefighters, and other public servants, Don't get me wrong, I believe in getting rich through entrepreneurship, hard work, innovation, education, building, etc. Gee, think I've recently heard a speech incorporating those ideas. Oh Yeah, they were spoken by a President- a Democratic President.

## ISSUES (CONT.)

THE N.R.A.

Wayne La Pierre, Executive V.P. of the N.R.A. refused to meet with President Obama. Apparently considers himself a martyr for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment. Wow, he sure makes me feel safer !

Waste, Fraud and Humor

Paul Whitemore of Spotsylvania had a letter published in the Post. I'm hoping he won't mind if I quote it. "I don't care if it was Republicans or Democrats, but whoever came up with the brilliant idea of reducing duplicate and overlapping missions by sometimes redundant federal offices ought to be applauded." ("Government overlap costs tax payers billions, GAO says"(The Fed Page March 2.) In fact, it's such a big problem, I hope we can get at least 20 or 30 federal offices working on it right away. Paul Whitemore



“LOOK A BOOK !” By Diane Sibley

This is the first in a series of brief reviews of books that hopefully will shed a little light on political issues, provide a little humor, give you a few things to think about and make you proud to be a Democrat.

Our first selection for review is Confederates in the Attic-Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War. Published 1998. The author, Tony Horwitz, also authored the best seller, Baghdad Without a Map. He is a Pulitzer Prize winner for national reporting and is now a staff writer for “The New Yorker”.

When this book was recommended to us by a 1990 graduate of the Citadel married to Charleston Belle, I immediately worried that I might get another apologia that would assert “It wasn’t about slavery, it was about states’ rights.” I am pleased to report that my assumption was wrong !

The author begins his tale upon meeting a Civil War re-enactor. Horwitz was fascinated by the ensuing conversation and accepted the invitation to witness and participate in an upcoming reenactment. He quickly realizes that most of these guys are hard-core, some dedicated to the truth and others to what they want the truth to be. The disparities in age, education, background and dedication to accuracy provide more than enough to prompt a little research

“LOOK A BOOK” (continued)

and a lot of humor. One thing leads to another and Horwitz soon finds himself eating ancient hardtack, sleeping in sunken roads, “spooning”, and participating in a “wargasm” weekend. (The spooning and “wargasm” weekend are not related, thank God.)

Along the way the author observes the South and the southerners who inhabit it. He sees the good, the bad, and the ugly. He investigates prejudices on both sides, examines the depths we go to in order to preserve preconceived notions of how things really were, and also points out the heights men and women reach as they struggled to make sense of it all. He doesn’t whitewash anything and tries to understand everything. And he does a remarkable job of reporting his findings.

Confederates in the Attic is available at our local library. Give it a try. You’re sure to learn a few things and laugh a lot along the way.

“There is no frigate like a book”

Emily Dickinson



## RONALD REAGAN -THE REAL TRUTH

By: LOIS GRIFFIN POWELL

Hale To The Chief Ronald Reagan? Are You Kidding Me? Our Economic Nightmare - Thanks To President Ronald Reagan.

The truth should set us free, but unfortunately knowing the truth about our downward slippery slope economics does not set us free. I sincerely hope that the reading of this article will help to put our economic nightmare in a more understandable perspective. All the information was gleaned from the people mentioned in this article.

David Johnson - Take a look at the chart of almost anything, and you'll notice that right around 1981, things take a sharp turn in the wrong direction -that is, for everyone but the wealthiest 1%.

Terrence Heath - In a sense, it's highly appropriate that the centennial of Reagan's birth falls upon us in the midst of an economic nightmare from which it is uncertain when - or

if - the nation will awaken. Though we will be inevitably awash in conservative praise and hagiography ( idealizing or idolizing biography of a person) of Reagan, his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday is also an occasion to remember how America's long economic nightmare began. Conservative policies transformed the United States from the largest creditor nation to the largest debtor nation in just a few years. And it all started with Reagan. Anyone who's wringing their hands about America's debt and China's ownership of it, has Reagan to thank, as Reagan's former budget director David Stockman recently explained to David Corn.

David Stockman - In the 80's, Reagan and the Republican leaders on the Hill were eager to cut income taxes across the board. They insisted that the White House pass spending cuts before Congress tackled the tax side. The honest-to-goodness fact is that in February 1981, there wasn't close to a Republican majority for tax cuts without

the accompanying or coupled spending cuts. The idea that tax cuts furl economic growth that yields increased tax revenues was only embraced by a handful of junior Republicans, plus Jack Kemp. The Reagan administration didn't mind the tax cuts and spending, but then things went haywire and the tax cut ballooned from \$500 billion over five years to \$1 trillion after the lobbyists added special - interest tax breaks for various industries. The inevitable happened: The deficit ballooned. The Federal Reserve was able to sell the nation's growing debt to China and others. It totally anesthetized the political system to the costs of deficit spending. Therefore, the simplistic and reckless idea that the way to stimulate the economy is to cut taxes anytime, for any reason, became embedded in the GOP. It has become a religion, it has become a catechism. It's become a mindless incantation.

## REAGAN (CONTINUED)

In 1982 Ronald Reagan signed the Garn-St. German Depository Institutions Act. It provides a long-term solution for the troubled thrift institutions.

Paul Krugman wrote in 2009 - The President was wrong about solving the problems of the thrifts. On the contrary, the bill turned the modest-sized troubles of savings and loan institutions into an utter catastrophe. But he was right about the legislation's significance. And as for the jackpot - well, it finally came more than 25 years later, in the form of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. The S. & L. crisis, has been written out of the Reagan hagiography, but the fact is that deregulation in effect gave the industry - whose deposits were federally insured - license to gamble with taxpayer's money, at best, or simply to loot it, at worst. By the time the government closed the books on the affair, taxpayers lost \$130 billion, back when that was a lot of money.

Krugman continued - But there was also a longer term effect. Reagan-era legislative changes essentially ended New Deal restrictions on mortgage lending - restrictions that, in particular, limited the ability of families to buy homes without putting a significant amount of money down. These restrictions were put in place in the 1930's by political leaders who had just experienced a terrible financial crisis, and were trying to prevent another. But by 1980, the memory of the Depression had faded. Government, declared Reagan, is the problem, not the solution; the magic of the marketplace must be set free. And so the precautionary rules were scrapped. The increase of public debt was dwarfed by the increase in private debt, made possible by Reagan's deregulation. "It's the gift that keeps taking. That is taking from the working people."

Robert Borosage - explained that Reagan's deregulatory fervor essentially gutted consumer protection, environmental protection, workplace safety and the right to organize. It led to scandals that made his administration one of the most corrupt in history, with a record 138 officials investigated, indicted or convicted. But the biggest change was deregulation of banking, which led to successive wildings and crashes that have cost taxpayers literally trillions. The first was the Savings and Loan debacle that followed on Reagan's reforms that empowered banksters to gamble with other people's money, with their losses guaranteed by the Federal Government.

Terrence Heath - If workers didn't fare well under Reagan, perhaps it's because Reagan wasn't exactly a friend to working people. His war on labor as U.S. President began in the summer of 1981, when he fired 13,000 striking air traffic controllers and destroyed their union.

## REAGAN (CONTINUED)

As Washington Post columnist Harold Myerson noted in 2004, the firing was “an unambiguous signal that employers need feel little or no obligation to their workers, and employers got that message loud and clear—illegally firing workers who sought to unionize, replacing permanent employees who could collect benefits with temps who could not, shipping factories and jobs abroad.”

Terrence Heath - Reagan gave dedicated union foes direct control of the federal agencies that were originally designed to protect and further the rights of workers and their unions. Most important was Reagan’s appointment of three management representatives to the five member National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). The appointees included NLRB Chairman Donald Dotson, who declared that “unionized labor relations have been the major contributors to the decline and failure of once healthy industries” and have caused “destruction of individual freedom.”

A House committee found that under Dotson, the NLRB abandoned its legal obligation to promote collective bargaining, in what amounted to “a betrayal of American workers.” As Borosage noted, that betrayal of American workers extended to “free trade” and the shipping of jobs abroad rather than goods. Americans in the overall top one percent, the 2007 CBO data showed, did quite well in the Reagan era’s first quarter-century. Their average incomes, after taking inflation into account, essentially tripled, rising 21%.

Terrence Heath - A lot happened after Reagan saddled up and rode into the sunset, but nothing has yet been sufficient to rouse America or its economy from the nightmare that ensued. Even now we live not only with the economic consequences of his “cut and spend” conservatism, but we are haunted by the narrative he established in his 1981 inaugural address: “government is not the solution to our problem;

Government is the problem.” That is the narrative that haunts us to this day. Haunts us and hampers us from taking bold action to solve the problems facing America. It hampers us because it frames us as separate from government.

Government in Reagan’s narrative became - “the government”, not “our government.” The success of Reagan’s narrative, all the way up to the reforms of the Obama administration and the previous Congress, have effectively scaled down our ability to address problems too large in scope to be effectively addressed by state or local governments, let alone by non-government organizations or on an individual basis. Reagan’s genius was to step into a period of uncertainty and focus the fear and anxiety of America on the government as the enemy. What he was saying was, “Whatever happens, you’re on your own.”

These days, no Republican with national ambitions will miss an opportunity to remind us of his or her Reganesque

# KICKIN' NEWS

Date

## REAGAN (CONTINUED)

Bona fides. Reagan's precepts of a smaller government, bigger military, lower taxes and conservative social policies demand absolute fealty (absolute, intense and compelling fidelity). His self-declared legatees (one whom a legacy is bequeathed) invoke his name as a pledge to do the opposite, a reassurance that they will venture beyond what has become conventional thinking in the GOP. What starts as a touchstone, however, can over time become a millstone, if history is any indication. As a child of the '80's, I grew up during the Reagan era. As an adult, now, living amid the ruins of the Reagan era, I can only hope we will soon wake from our shared nightmare and - if not banish his memory - at least finally strip it of its destructive power, reclaim our own, and allow the nightmare to fade into memory.

## REAGAN (CONTINUED)

It is my hope that this article will help us to see what we are up against and realize that this millstone battle is one that must be won. That we as Democrats and Independents must step up to the plate and work hard to bat this nightmare into a faded memory.

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### FUNNY, BUT TRUE, NEWS

1. FOX is not liking Sarah P. as much as it once did.
2. Donald Trump couldn't find his own birth certificate.
3. Michelle Bachman thinks the Battles of Concord and Lexington were not fought in Massachusetts. So much for "the shot heard round the world."
4. Newt Gingrich cheated on his wives, because he so loved America. (Newt that's a beaut!)
5. Glen Beck is channeling God. God is not pleased.

6. Republican governors in Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin and Florida would now lose their elections by 20 to 30 percent.

7. A Republican U. S. Senator is afraid if we're in Libya - we may go to Africa next! (So, Libya's in Europe?)

8. Karl Rove is trying to stop the birther nonsense, but having little success. (Be careful what you wish for.)

9. The Tea Party's approval rating is way down in the polls, but they deftly and deafly soldier on.

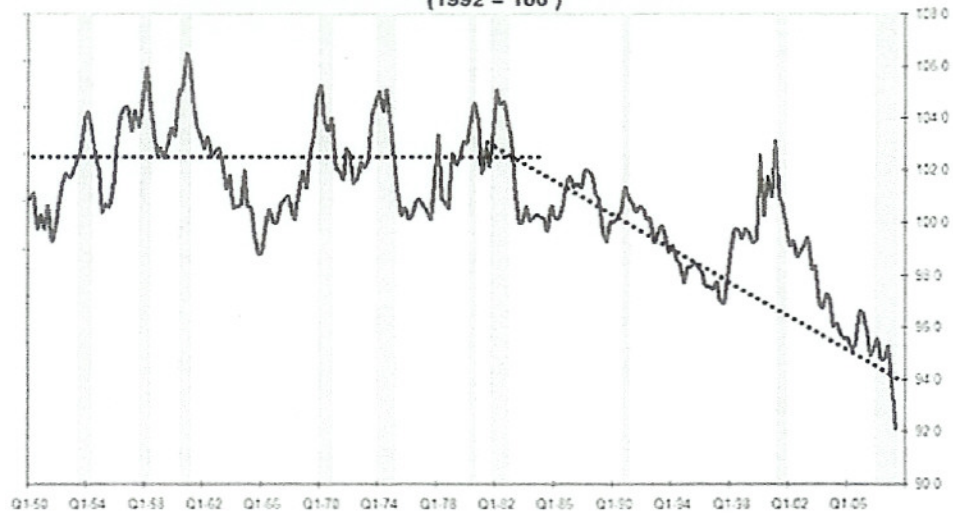
10. A Republican state senator in Wyoming wants to get rid of drunk driving laws. Reason - bad for business - the bar business. Oh, he owns a bar.

KICK IT DEMS !!!!!!!

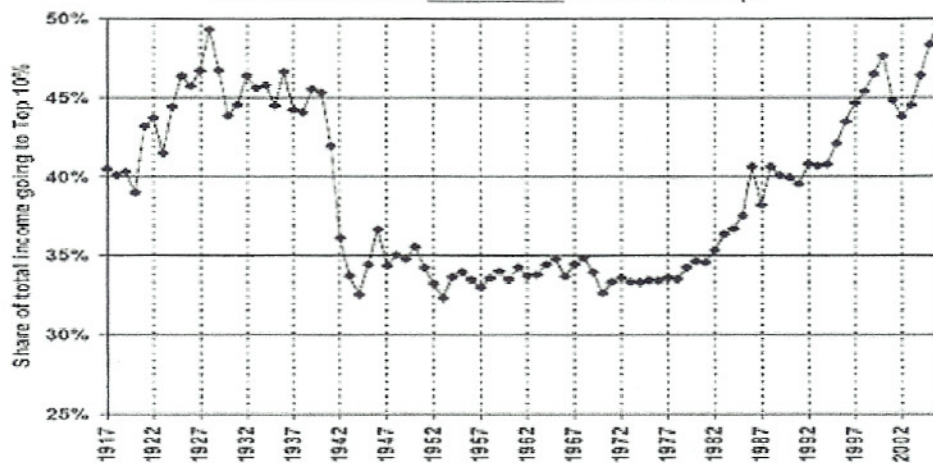
BLUE POWER !!!!

# NONFARM BUSINESS: LABOR SHARE

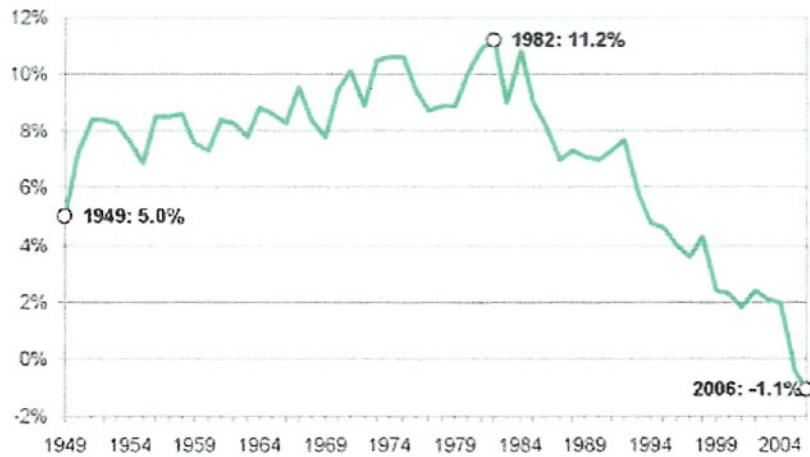
(1992 = 100)



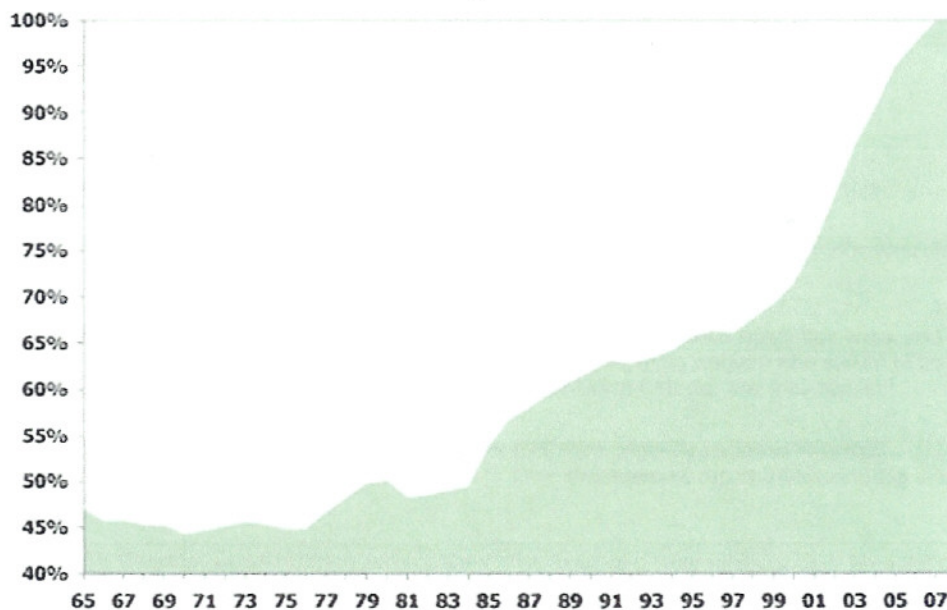
This resulted in intense concentration of wealth at the top:



# U.S. Personal Saving Rate, 1949 - 2006



Through 2008



Source: Federal Reserve Z-1, Bureau of Economic Analysis

But don't take my word for it, or even Dave's. When Michael Moore contended in [Capitalism: A Love Story](#) that productivity went up during the Reagan years, while wages were frozen, [Politifact \(mostly\) backed him up](#). So did the August 24, 1988 edition of [the New York Times](#).

Not every pocketbook statistic, however, reflects so rosily on the Administration's performance. Real wages have slipped since 1980, and now are about 10 percent below the peak of 1972. Thus Mr. Bush's claim that average incomes are at a record high today only reflects the fact that more families have a second earner in the work force.

Nor is there reason to be optimistic that wage stagnation will soon end. Productivity gains, which largely determine wage increases in the long run, have slowed to a crawl in the last two decades and show little sign of revival. Moreover, America's rapidly accumulating debt to foreigners is sure to become a drag on domestic purchasing power.

Also, per Dave's earlier instruction, notice what happens right around 1981 in this chart from a 2007 Center for Economic Policy Research report, ["The Productivity to Paycheck Gap: What the Data Show."](#) (PDF) by Dean Baker.