

## N&O as accurate as a pepperbox pistol

Many people don't remember that most American newspapers began as political party publications that made sure the public understood the other party was run by a bunch of lying fools who wanted to raid, rape and run over your loved ones.

The party never planned to make a profit and was willing to spend all they had to get their W. E. Slickum slate into city hall. Mark Twain wrote wonderful reports of rival editors who duked it out with cow hide bullwhips or pepperbox pistols. The pepperbox

was majestically inaccurate. One editor reportedly fired at his opponent but shot off his own thumb instead.

The only thing that has changed is proximity of the opposing editors. The Raleigh News and Observer, as it

has done since its birth, fights anything that begins with "r-e-p-u-b-l." "Right wing" terrifies them and "right or left" confuses them because they think only in terms "left or left".

This month is a joyous time for the N&O because Republicans are trying to nominate an opponent to run against their Savior, St. Obama. Every day the paper can run big headlines about failure of this or that Republican in this or that precinct meeting. This takes up all their space and Obama's foibles are hidden deep inside the paper near the comic strips.

Actually this entire month of Republican campaigning is about as important as which side of the street does your barber give haircuts. It is my own personal opinion that any one of the Republicans can beat Obama by a good margin. Obama's concept of leadership or the purpose of government is as baffling as the accuracy of a pepperbox pistol.

There is also the ugly emergence of race this year. In 2008 the N&O proudly claimed race was not an issue when America, flooded with endless liberal attacks on George Bush, voted for change. That is what Obama had and that is what they got.

It is clear the public did not think much of his changes and want to change again. It happens every day. We change coffee, beer, peanut butter, bread, collard greens, gas, cars, TV stations and even girlfriends. As sure as shooting a pepperbox pistol, the N&O will scream and holler "racism" if a single white voter opens his—her—mouth.

Just as black voters joined their hearts in support of Obama in 2008, a multitude of taxpaying white voters will vote for somebody else, regardless of who that somebody might be. The Republicans have 10 months to select a candidate for the November election. The Democrats already have Obama whether they like it or not. Since 47 percent of Americans pay no taxes at all, the working folks will still have to work very hard to win this one.

The headlines will cry the blues, ignore facts and sensibility and give the sainted American tradition of a free press a big black eye of irresponsibility.

For the record, I am a registered Democrat.

R.L. Taylor is a regular contributor to Chatham County Line. He has been a newspaperman for more than 60 years.

## Bock sides with Wall Street's greedy cheaters

By Beth Kricker

This is a response To Mr. Brian Bock's Opinion ("Occupy Wall Street, a good idea gone horribly wrong") Chatham County Line, December 2011/January 2012)

Mr. Bock glibly and smoothly blames our economic ills on Freddy Mac and Fannie Mae, conveniently forgetting the role of the super banks, insurance companies and investment brokerage firms such as A.I.G., Bank of America, Citigroup, Wachovia, SunTrust, Wells Fargo and Goldman Sachs in manipulating these subprime variable interest rate mortgages that rose so high that homeowners could no longer pay them. When the banks were bailed out with hard-earned taxpayer money, in the belief the funds would be used to re-negotiate mortgage terms so young families in particular would not end up in the streets homeless, bank CEOs chose instead to regard these Federal bailout funds as personal gifts descending from Heaven. They awarded themselves huge salary increases and bonuses amounting to untold millions of dollars. This same scenario was repeated again and again with oil subsidies, tax rebates for those earning over \$1 million a year or doing business overseas, wars we never needed nor wanted and on and on.

One fated morning we woke up and asked, oh my gosh where did all the money go? No one explained until later, it went into the hands of those who neither worked for it nor earned it and in fact went to those primarily responsible for causing the crisis.

The response of these one percenters was easy. We'll just expropriate some more from the elderly, who every week of their working lives had Social Security taken from their pay check to be placed in a Trust Account in the belief it would be there for them when they could no longer work. These funds were simply hi-jacked by various administrations. In turn, elderly retirees are being told, "you have to share the burdens of our

mis-adventures." Any wonder many of them have joined OWS and more are expected to follow.

Mr. Bock compares the response by the authorities to the "Tea Party" protests and compares them to the Occupy protests. The fact is that police in urban areas have frequently identified with the 1% and the Tea Party. This is especially evident when Tea Party members protesting a speech by President Obama in Arizona were permitted to carry loaded automatic weapons in the vicinity of the building where he was speaking. It's also interesting to note that in New York alone, J.P. Morgan Bank donated 4.6 million dollars to the "New York Police Foundation" shortly before the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) protests formed in Zuchotti Park. There have been news reports of similar "donations" to police in other areas of the country where OCCUPY protests were forming.

Mr. Bock claims that "assaults, robberies, property destruction and rapes, were commonplace." Quite to the contrary, while there were some incidents reported in the vicinity of the OWS location, there were, however, news reports of officers of the New York Police Department directing and encouraging criminals, such as drug dealers to Zuchotti Park and encouraging them to stay there. (N.Y. Daily News, October 11, 2011)

As Mayors turn their backs and police use mace, guns tear gas and pepper spray as well as provocateurs to rape, terrorize and injure the peaceful, nonviolent protesters, to drive them out of the parks, it only served to escalate the situation. Tens of thousands have taken to the streets, and many more will follow, to cross color lines. Veterans, doctors, lawyers, youth and elderly, will soon follow into the streets until the greedy, the indifferent and the intolerant get the message.

Beth Kricker is a Pittsboro resident.

## Bock preaches peaceful debate, practices silencing dissenters

By William Sommers

Brian Bock's recent Chatham County Line article on Occupy Wall Street (OWS) recalls the classic November, 1948 newspaper headline reporting, "Dewey Defeats Truman." This was dead wrong since Truman won handily, just as Brian Bock's article is dead wrong by misinterpreting the focus of the OWS as he praised the OWS operation believing it a replication of the Tea Party Rioters.

But the OWS is focused on the devastating reality that 1.4 million US families—1 percent of the total—made an average \$1 million each in 2009. The Congressional Budget Office noted, "that the share of national income going to the top percentage of households skyrocketed over the last three decades—even as it fell for the vast majority of American families." And the New York Times proclaimed, "Wall Street Protesters Hit The Bull's Eye".

While Mr. Bock details current operations, he is often misleading. Complaining that Fanny May and Freddy Mac have executives still in place who still receive huge bonuses. In fact the two executives of Fannie and Freddy, Daniel H. Mudd and Richard F. Syron, were fired in 2008 when the government took over. Moreover, the SEC recently sued Mudd and Syron for "misleading investors about their firm's exposure to risky mortgages..." and included four other former top executives in the indictment.

And should Mr. Bock have the time or inclination, he might do some bedside reading of "Reckless Endangerment" by Gretchen Morgenson and Joshua Rosner. These two authors point to the sharp, morally indifferent and money-hungry prior director of Fannie Mae—one James A. Johnson—who when he

became executive director turned FM into a quasi-private corporation, raised havoc with the mortgage business and whose success was copied by Countrywide Financial, Goldman Sachs, Citigroup and many others. Although he retired in 1999, the two authors unveil a rolling ball of facts to show that Johnson's manipulations "...are crucial to understanding the origins of the worst financial debacle since The Great Depression."

Mr. Bock's article ends with a proposal that the OWS issues should be solved in "a peaceful debate." An interesting proposition, particularly if Mr. Bock were to be a leader of the debate! An assessment of his views on public debate and public hearings could be important. But the prospect is not encouraging.

Recently Chairman Bock conducted a "peaceful debate" regarding the request of a group of senior citizens (whom Mr. Brock refers elsewhere in his comments as the "average guy") to continue the County's library book bus so that many older citizens could still be served. This facility has been operated by the Library for many years. The seniors proposed viable suggestions to reduce costs and yet preserve the service. But as the public debate continued, Mr. Bock signaled the end and then, with the backing of his two voting compatriots, ruled that the bookmobile was too expensive and ordered the service be abandoned and the Bus itself to be sold soonest.

In another instance, the Chatham County Council with Mr. Bock presiding, advertised a discussion. e.g. public debate, on the issue of "fracking" for its October 17, 2011 meeting. Fromkin Energy, whose main offices are located in

Coral Springs, Florida, made a very positive rehash, involving the presentation of 24 pages included in the Council's meeting records. Many interested citizens attended this "public debate," assuming they would be able to discuss the proposal. But discussion was restricted to Board members. The only member who participated was Sally Kost. When she was finished, Chairman Bock closed the meeting.

The "public debate" which Mr. Bock was keen to promote re OWS, seems not to be his approach unless citizen input is curtailed.

At the latest County Board meeting to assign members of the Board, for the New Year, Mr. Bock was re-elected Chairman and also took away the Library Assignment usually held by minority member, Sally Kost, for her many years in pushing for and supporting the new Chatham County Library. Perhaps the Chairman will begin to read the many books, which examine our current financial tie-up.

It becomes clear that most of our spendable wealth is controlled by a few, very rich families. But Mr Bock's article indicates that some of the 99% might be called "intellectually 1%" who support the latter and hope they someday might be included in that rarefied condition where big money begets even more money!

So we conclude with an apt poem by the famous Scotch poet, Robert Burns:

O wad some Power the giftie gie us  
To see oursels as ithers see us!  
It wad frae mony a blunder free us.  
An' foolish notion

William Sommers, a Chatham resident, maintains an interest in Chatham County government, and in its development.

## HAVE AN OPINION?

Send your letters or columns in to Julian Sereno  
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