

## BLASKA BLOG

### Blaska's Blog: How low can it go? Part II

[David Blaska](#) on Wednesday 02/18/2009 9:18 am , (2) Recommendations



It happened again. Another major federal stimulus/rescue/bailout/pump-priming/giveaway. The response? More flushing sounds from Wall Street. More evidence that government can try to ride the bucking bronco called "the economy" and another lesson that the beast will not be saddle broken.

On Tuesday, The New President signed into law the \$787 Billion "stimulus" package. I want the stimulus to succeed. I want the stock market to fuel a million Princess retirement cruises. I want a hundred thousand start-ups to reward their risk-takers with clinking champagne glasses. I want employers to take out ever-larger billboards reading "Now Hiring." Maybe it will happen. Fondly do I hope, fervently do I pray, *pace* Honest Abe.

But on the very same day of Tuesday's historic bill signing, the S&P 500 tanked by 4 1/2 percent. CNN reports that [Stocks fall despite rescue](#). Or, maybe, "because."

How many times has the market tanked after every major financial intervention from Washington? This is beyond coincidence. As [Charlie Sykes points out](#), the Dow stood at 9,625 on Election Day. Tuesday, with The New President's signing of the porculus package, it had declined 40 percent to 7,606.

Pass a law, fix the economy. This is a precept of the liberal faith. Please, don't just do something, stand there! Can we afford any more "help"?

After decades of diligent research, scholars still argue about what caused the Great Depression -- excessive consumption, investment, stock-market speculation and borrowing in the Roaring '20s, Smoot-Hawley protectionism, or excessively tight monetary policy? Nor do we know how we got out of it: Some credit the New Deal while others say that that FDR's policies prolonged the Depression.

Similarly, there is no consensus about why huge public-spending projects and a zero-interest-rate policy failed to pull the Japanese out of a prolonged slump. [The Wall Street Journal: [Don't Believe the Stimulus Scaremongers](#)]

[Stuart Rothenberg of Roll Call](#) writes:

When Obama promised an audience in Peoria, Ill., last week that "once Congress passes this [stimulus] plan, and I sign it into law, a new wave of innovation, activity and construction will be unleashed all across America," he was merely cheerleading.

In fact, nobody knows if that is true. The stimulus package is something of a crapshoot, and whether it will work or ultimately add to the nation's woes is a mystery.

Please, God that I am wrong about all of this. But I am putting my faith in this sentiment, by Richard Florida in the current *Atlantic* magazine:

The Stanford economist Paul Romer famously said, "A crisis is a terrible thing to waste." The United States, whatever its flaws, has seldom wasted its crises in the past. On the contrary, it has used them, time and again, to reinvent itself, clearing away the old and making way for the new. Throughout U.S. history, adaptability has been perhaps the best and most quintessential of American attributes. Over the course of the 19th century's Long Depression, the country remade itself from an agricultural power into an industrial one. After the Great Depression, it discovered a new way of living, working, and producing, which contributed to an unprecedented period of mass prosperity.

At critical moments, Americans have always looked forward, not back, and surprised the world with our resilience. Can we do it again? [*The Atlantic*: [How the Crash Will Reshape America](#)]

### **On the ticker**

Prediction: It will not be pretty what WEAC tries to do to grass roots insurgent Rose Fernandez, our next Superintendent of Public Instruction. The goal is instructing the public, not a full crew law for the educrats.

Brenda Konkel gets 40 percent of [the vote](#) to survive a five-way primary. She could still win it. But that's pretty poor for an 8-year incumbent. (Up on the northeast side, first-term incumbent Joe Clausius, a moderate, gets 67 percent of the vote.) What does Brenda have to show for a legislative record? The "inclusionary zoning" plan was a colossal waste of time and money. And the I-net forums are full of loathing for her public pissing proposal. Not a neighborhood-friendly message.

Nancy Mistele has [two new radio ads](#). The ads highlight the consequences of Kathleen Falk's absentee leadership and misplaced priorities on public safety.

President Bush ... I mean, Obama ... sends the troop surge into Afghanistan. Hey, it worked in Iraq. Ed Garvey's head will explode (perhaps at a marketplace crowded with other Wobblies).

I found [C-Span's rankings](#) of U.S. Presidents fascinating. Yes, to Abe Lincoln as #1. The pleasant surprise was seeing Ronald Reagan slip into the Top 10. Happy to see U.S. Grant vault 10 spots to #23. He was the only President who actually tried to reconstruct the South after the Civil War; he came the closest to Lincoln's dictum of malice toward none, charity for all. He sent troops to quell racist aggression against newly freed slaves.

Grant writes in his autobiography, ""While strongly favoring the course that would be the least humiliating to the people who had been in rebellion, I had gradually worked up to the point where, with the majority of the people, I favored immediate enfranchisement (of the former slaves)."

As for George W. ranking seventh worst, we'll see him move up the list as history takes a longer view.

### **It's tough getting old**

Cousin Johan sends this along: An 85-year-old man was requested by his doctor for a sperm count as part of his physical exam.

The doctor gave the man a jar and said, "Take this jar home and bring back a semen sample tomorrow."

The next day the 85-year-old man reappeared at the doctor's office and gave him the jar, which was as clean and empty as on the previous day

The doctor asked what happened and the man explained, "Well, doc, it's like this — first I tried with my right hand, but nothing. Then I tried with my left hand, but still nothing.

"Then I asked my wife for help. She tried with her right hand, then with her left, still nothing. She tried with her mouth, first with the teeth in, then with her teeth out, still nothing.

"We even called up Arlene, the lady next door and she tried too, first with both hands, then an armpit, and she even tried squeezin' it between her knees, but still nothing."

The doctor was shocked! "You asked your neighbor?"

The old man replied, "Yep, none of us could get the jar open."