

THE PICAYUNE
("It's the truth even if it didn't happen.")
February 2011

"President Obama was in San Francisco today, meeting with a group of technology executives, including Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg. Their goal is to figure out how to create new jobs, and to replace jobs that have been lost as a result of everyone spending all their time at work on Facebook." —Jimmy Kimmel

"Facebook is looking into buying Twitter for around \$10 billion. If all goes as planned, the company hopes to combine the two companies, creating the biggest waste of time the world has ever seen." —Jay Leno

"Rush Limbaugh called Michelle Obama a hypocrite, criticizing her for eating ribs on vacation and said she isn't following her own dietary guidelines. Well, isn't that the morbidly obese pot calling the kettle African-American?" —Jimmy Kimmel

"A year ago Michelle Obama started her campaign to end childhood obesity called 'Let's Move.' I think Americans have been very clear in their answer, 'No.'" —Jimmy Fallon

"President Obama filled in as the coach of his daughter Sasha's basketball team. Sasha evidently listened to her Dad, because all she did was drive straight down the center and piss everyone off." —Conan O'Brien

WASHINGTON—In a strong rebuke of President Obama and his domestic agenda, all 242 House Republicans voted Wednesday to repeal the Asteroid Destruction and American Preservation Act, which was signed into law last year to destroy the immense asteroid currently hurtling toward Earth. --The Onion

"[Former Vice President, Dick Cheney, may need a heart transplant.] They had a party at Dick Cheney's house and he invited 12 people to his birthday party. At midnight he told them, 'Only 11 of you will be leaving with a heart.'" —David Letterman

On Valentine's Day, Former First Lady Barbara Bush, watching her husband get choked up talking about his affection for her, quipped that he was acting like noted weeper John Boehner . "You know what?" Barbara told George. "You could be Speaker of the House."

Newly elected Tennessee state Rep. Julia Hurley (R) credits her success to her time waitressing at Hooters . The 29-year-old legislator writes in the current issue of Hooters Magazine that while she has "taken quite a bit of flack" for being a Hooters Girl, "I know that without that time in my life I would not be as strong-willed and eager to become successful." --The Progress Report

"George Clooney says he's had sex with too many women to ever run for office. He was immediately made Prime Minister of Italy." —Conan O'Brien

"Rahm Emanuel is expected to win the election for mayor of Chicago. In keeping with Chicago tradition, his victory was announced two weeks ago." —Conan O'Brien

"Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas has passed a unique anniversary" yesterday -- five years without asking a single question during the court's oral arguments. "The other eight justices ask on average 133 questions per hourlong session," but Thomas has remained silent -- the only Justice to have done so for so long in recent history. --The Progress

Egypt has responded to hundreds of thousands of protesters by shutting down the internet. Listen, if you want people to stay home and do nothing, turn the internet back on." —Conan O'Brien

"The good news is that Hosni Mubarak may step down. The bad news is that he may be replaced by his idiot son Hosni W. Mubarak." —David Letterman

"The bookies have put the odds out for this weekend. The Packers are slightly favored over the Steelers and the rioters are slightly favored over President Mubarak." —Jay Leno

Fox News is a home wrecker. The estranged wife of comedian and right-wing personality Kelsey Grammer said her marriage fell apart in part because her husband preferred watching Fox News to being intimate with her . "He was too busy watching Fox News, he didn't want to cuddle," Camille Grammer told CNN host Joy Behar on Monday. --The Progress Report

So much for military intelligence [which is always an oxymoron]. For eight years the U.S. government paid Dennis Montgomery, a California computer programmer, more than \$20 million for software he claimed could stop al Qaeda's next attack by detecting secret messages in

Al-Jazeera broadcasts, identify terrorists from predator drones, and detect noise from enemy submarines. But the software didn't work, and the government is invoking national security to keep the details secret. The CIA was so excited about the technology at first, one former agency official says, people called it "the most important, most sensitive" program they had. But when it was used in 2003, it set off a false alarm that led President George W. Bush to order airlines over the Atlantic Ocean to turn around. French officials, annoyed that the U.S. had grounded their planes, launched their own investigation into the program and determined it was a hoax. However, the U.S. kept turning to Montgomery, and in 2008, reacted to another false alarm—this time, Somali pirates plotting to disrupt President Obama's inauguration. Not only did the government not look into Montgomery, it was determined that no one else should either. In the last few months, the Justice Department has issued protective orders to keep details of his software in court, some, like Montgomery's former lawyer, say it is to save itself the embarrassment. Montgomery is currently in bankruptcy in Palm Springs, Calif, and facing charges of passing \$1.8 million in bad checks at Vegas casinos. --The Daily Beast

When Rimma Golovko reported to staff at an aquarium in Ukraine that a crocodile had swallowed her cell phone, at first they thought it was a crock. But when they heard the phone ringing from inside the animal, they realized she was telling the truth. Apparently Golovko had been using her mobile to try to snap a picture of the reptile opening his mouth when the phone slipped from her hand and went down the hatch. The crocodile, "Gena", may need surgery to remove the phone. (JW/AP) --This Is True

"Chickens Banned from Crossing Road" -- Maroochydore (Queensland, Australia) Sunshine Coast Daily headline

'New York Times' Moves All Content You Won't Give A Shit About Unless You Make At Least \$200K A Year Into One Convenient Section. --The Onion headline

New law gives every mistreated group in America the right to open a casino. --The Onion, headline.

Libyan Pilots Seek Asylum:

'This is a golden opportunity for the Maltese military to leapfrog to the cutting edge of 1950s French jet-fighter technology.' --The Onion, headline.

It's the truth even if it did happen.

Celebrating Reagan's 100th birthday: As President, Reagan "raised taxes 11 times in his administration." This is a stark departure from today's conservative ideology; hundreds of elected Republicans in Congress have even signed oaths pledging to never raise taxes under any circumstances. And while modern conservatives boast of their commitment to rein in the budget deficit, reduce the size of government, and pursue free trade, Reagan seriously deviated from those policies. He nearly tripled the size of the federal budget deficit and federal spending "ballooned" during his tenure. And he notably used tariffs and trade controls to protect domestic industry, at one point imposing a 100 percent tariff on some Japanese electronic products, enacting major quotas on sugar imports, and establishing the largest steel tariff in American history. And while the right may boast of Reagan's economic policies, the truth is that they helped hollow out the middle class and decimate America's social safety net. Reagan cut federal funds to cities and slashed the federal housing program which more than doubled the country's homeless population. He deregulated the savings & loan industry, which led to enormous taxpayer-funded bailouts and widespread financial industry failures, as even the Cato Institute admits was a failure. Per capita income for the bottom 90 percent of the population fell .3 percent during Reagan's presidency while the incomes of the top 1 percent increased by 55 percent. Even his famed tax cuts did little to alleviate strains on the middle class, with the bottom 40 percent of households paying "out more of their income in federal taxes in 1988 than they had in 1980." Rather than transforming America into a "shining city on a hill," Reagan turned America into a "tale of two cities," as former New York Governor Mario Cuomo (D) said, with the rich wildly prospering and everyone else fighting over table scraps.--The Progress Report

While Gov. Scott Walker's (R) assault on Wisconsin's state's public employees' labor rights is the most visible assault on the middle class, conservative governments across the country are waging similar campaigns. In Ohio, Gov. John Kasich (R) is backing legislation similar to Wisconsin's in that would gut the organizing rights of public employees. Kasich has already killed his state's federally-funded high-speed rail project, which will cost Ohio \$400 million in infrastructure investment and thousands of jobs. While he justifies these moves by claiming he's tackling his state's deficit, he also is championing a slew of tax cuts that could actually double the state's deficit. New Jersey's Gov. Chris Christie (R), who previously vetoed progressive efforts to raise taxes on his state's millionaires, is trying to ram through steep cuts to education funding and municipal assistance. In Georgia, Gov. Nathan Deal (R) has unveiled cuts to the state's treasured subsidized college tuition program, HOPE, which would lead to hundreds of thousands of college students paying thousands of more dollars out-of-pocket in order to be able to get a higher education. Deal is also cutting overall education spending by seven percent, and he simultaneously plans to dramatically reduce the corporate income tax rate, further reducing the state's revenue coffers. Gov. John Hickenlooper (D-CO) has dismissed tax increases while simultaneously slashing funding for K-12 education, because, he argued, "That's where the money is." Michigan's Gov. Rick Snyder (R) has unveiled a spending plan that includes "\$1.2 billion in cuts to schools, universities, local governments and other areas while asking public employees for \$180 million in concessions" while at the same time giving \$1.8 billion in tax cuts to businesses. --The Progress Report

David Cay Johnston (formerly of the NYT) writes on Tax.Com: "Economic nonsense is being reported as fact in most of the news reports on the Wisconsin dispute. ... Gov. Scott Walker says

he wants state workers covered by collective bargaining agreements to 'contribute more' to their pension and health insurance plans. Accepting Gov. Walker's assertions as fact, and failing to check, created the impression that somehow the workers are getting something extra, a gift from taxpayers. They are not. Out of every dollar that funds Wisconsin's pension and health insurance plans for state workers, 100 cents comes from the state workers. How can that be? Because the 'contributions' consist of money that employees chose to take as deferred wages - as pensions when they retire - rather than take immediately in cash." --Politico

Report: Bringing Home 150 Troops from Afghanistan Would Fix Wisconsin's Budget "Crisis"
Robert Greenwald --AlterNet

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