

## Lieberman, Markham win

In the first contested ACDC elections in nobody-knows-how-long, **Mike Lieberman** and **Maureen Markham** have been elected chair and deputy chair for the 2010-11 biennium.

A total of 84 people were eligible to vote at the January 6 balloting. Of those, 74, or 88 percent, showed up to vote. (Another two got caught in traffic and arrived after registration closed, or the turnout would have surpassed 90 percent.)

The elections also drew a large number of curious spectators as well. A total of 148 people attended the January meeting—not a record, by any means, but 50 percent more than the average attendance.

For many years—actually decades—there have been no contested county party elections. In fact, no one has been able to remember any contested election; maybe there was never one until now.

But this year, there were two contests. Mike Lieberman and **Bob Platt** ran for chairman, while Maureen Markham and Gabe

**Snow** ran for deputy chair.

As Lieberman took the gavel from outgoing Chair **Peter Rousselot**, Lieberman spoke of how  
*continued on page two*



Photo courtesy Arlington Sun Gazette

**WINNERS — Mike Lieberman and Maureen Markham were all smiles after winning the ACDC chairmanship and deputy chairmanship.**

## Virginia shifts back to blue

November's dramatic shift to the right appears to have lasted all of two months in Virginia, if not in Massachusetts, as Fairfax County elected a Democrat January 12 to replace a Republican in the State Senate.

Actually, the successful election of Dave Marsden to the State Senate may be more an example of excellent campaigning—with an astoundingly successful emphasis on absentee ballots—that brought out the Democratic vote when it was needed in a low turnout election.

Marsden won election in the 37<sup>th</sup> Senate District at the far western end of Fairfax County, a district centered on Centreville. Fewer than 20 percent of the registered voters turned out, and Marsden

won over Republican Steve Hunt by all of 327 votes, a 50.7 percent majority.

Senator Marsden's election raises the Democratic majority in the State Senate from 21-19 to 22-18, a much more comfortable margin—and an important margin, given that Republicans now control both the House of Delegates and the Executive Branch.

Marsden got a big boost in his election as Arlingtonians **Kip Malinosky** and **Charley Conrad** and the Arlington YDs recruited volunteers from Arlington to work Marsden's district. Volunteer work was crucial in getting out Democrats in a low turnout election. Robert Laskey, a 69-year-old

*continued on page six*

Another election needs you. Eileen Filler-Corn won the nomination for the vacant delegate seat in



Fairfax County. Special election is March 2. Help Eileen out. Volunteer at: <http://www.eileenfordelegate.com/>

Jay Fisette outlines the county's effort on energy. See Page Seven.



The Tea Party Movement is in Richmond pushing two bills you'll just love. See Page Nine.



**Report from Chairman Mike Lieberman**

# *Lessons learned from 2010*

It may seem odd to some that I would write a column on “lessons learned” less than a month into 2010, but it has been a busy month in politics.

First there was the Senate race in Massachusetts, where Democrat Martha Coakley lost to Republican Scott Brown. Though the pundits lament Coakley’s “poorly run campaign,” this was still Massachusetts – a Democratic stronghold where national Republicans should not be succeeding. Though in Arlington we enjoy an even stronger Democratic track record, Massachusetts reminds us that even in Democratic strongholds, Democrats can lose if we get complacent, or take victory for granted. **Lesson # 1 – Even in Democratic strongholds, complacent Democrats can lose.**

Next, there was the recent inauguration of Bob McDonnell here in Virginia. Governor McDonnell’s inauguration carried with it much of the same celebratory verve among Republicans that carried Scott Brown to victory in Massachusetts. And while we wish

Governor McDonnell well, his inauguration must serve as an additional warning for Arlington Democrats that we are not alone in Virginia. Indeed, if Virginia Republicans muster the same excitement that carried Scott Brown in Massachusetts, Democrats in Arlington and across Virginia must step up their game or risk the same outcome. **Lesson #2 – Virginia Republicans feel that they are on offense.**

And finally, there was a silver lining – the election of Democrat Dave Marsden as a State Senator in Fairfax County. Many may not realize that the margin of victory for Mr. Marsden – 327 votes – came from Mr. Marsden’s 405-vote advantage in absentee ballots. As we all know, absentee ballots do not happen by accident. It takes a concerted effort by any campaign team to turn out a handful of absentee ballots, let alone a 405-vote cushion. This serves as a tangible reminder that ground game still matters in politics, and that in a close race, a well-organized campaign can be the difference between win-

ning and losing. **Lesson #3 – Well-organized campaigns can make the difference.**

As we organize for 2010 in Arlington, we must take these lessons to heart. That means staffing our campaigns early and hitting the ground running. That means knocking on doors and making phone calls all year long. And that means running every race with the hunger and drive that comes from knowing that no outcome is guaranteed. We are off to a running start this year in the Arlington Democratic Party, and with your help, we will keep running hard all the way through Election Day.

## *Lieberman is elected to follow Rousselot*

*continued from page one*

the Arlington Democratic organization is held in awe by city and county parties all across the state.

Lieberman said, “The Arlington County Democratic Committee represents the gold standard in Democratic organizing, but we must always strive to be better. Success with Arlington voters starts with a personal connection to our voters. I am committed to seeing our party and our people deepen that connection through personal engagement with the Arlington community and the Arlington electorate.”

Another 13 Steering Committee posts were also up for election. But there were no contests there. Only one candidate filed for each of the slots. The full election list is shown in the box on Page Eight.

The eligible voters in ACDC elections are the precinct captains—a maximum of 116 when all the positions are filled—plus any Democrats from Arlington holding elective office and five others ex officio, such as representatives of the Young Democrats and The Roosevelt Society.

All those elected serve a two-year term.

In addition to those elected posts, there are a number of appointive members of the Steering Committee who the chair will be naming.

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*Views expressed do not necessarily represent those of the ACDC unless expressly approved by an appropriate Committee Resolution*

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**Next Monthly Meeting  
All Dems Invited**

*Wednesday, February 3, 2010, 7:00 p.m.*

NRECA Building, 4301 Wilson Blvd  
*Corner of North Taylor and Wilson, just east of Glebe & Wilson  
Free parking under building, enter from Taylor Street*

***Put in your 2¢ worth***

This year 2010 starts with an all-Republican administration in Richmond and a new leadership team for ACDC. Join a brainstorming session and share your thoughts about how we can move forward in Arlington and make a difference in the Commonwealth. Small discussion groups will focus on these questions:

- What programs, activities, & events do you want ACDC to offer?
- How can we recruit and retain volunteers?
- How can we bring more of Arlington's diversity into our party?
- How can we most effectively fundraise?
- How can we continue to build our outstanding precinct operations?
- How can we help and work with other Democratic committees?

***Bumper Sticker  
of the Month***

**The best things  
in life are  
not things**

***Virginia no  
longer scorns  
outlanders***

Democrats lost the governor's mansion with the inauguration of Bob McDonnell, but McDonnell continues a modern trend to governors born outside the confines of the commonwealth.

Five of Virginia's last eight governors—a majority—were born elsewhere—and the last three are certifiable Yankees! Before that, only four of the 63 governors were born out of state—and one of them was from an old Virginia family but born on a ship in mid-Atlantic, another was born just over the border in New Bern, North Carolina, and another was a Reconstruction governor who moved into the state at the end of the Civil War and left 15 years later.

*The Washington Post* recently carried a story speculating that Creigh Deeds, a native-born Virginian, may have lost the race for governor last fall in part because he has a noticeable rural Virginia accent that may have offended many black and "immigrant" voters.

Be that as it may, in the past quarter-century, Virginia has changed dramatically and now shows a preference for "outlanders" as governors. Here are the last eight governors with their terms and birthplaces:

82-86	Chuck Robb	Phoenix AZ
86-90	Gerald Baliles	Patrick Cnty
90-94	Doug Wilder	Richmond
94-98	George Allen	Whittier CA
98-02	James Gilmore	Richmond
02-06	Mark Warner	Indianapolis
06-10	Tim Kaine	St. Paul
10-	Bob McDonnell	Philadelphia

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Arlington Chamber of Commerce

## *AYDs get thanks from Marsden camp*

Fifty Arlington Young Democrats kicked off 2010 at Ragtime near the Court House Metro on Wednesday, January 20. Members were introduced to the new executive committee and invited to get involved on one or more of the committees.

Newly elected AYD President **Gordon Simonett** reviewed some of the top priorities for the year, including membership growth, promotion of unity between the organization's various caucuses and increased levels of involvement and activism.

Virginia Young Democrat Executive Director Toby Quaranta stopped by to thank the Arlington Young Democrats for all their work in 2009 and to explain how they could help in 2010. Stressing AYD's successes, Quaranta said he has people across the state ask him if they can have the Arlington Young Democrats in their county too.

Mark Henson, campaign manager for Dave Marsden's successful State Senate campaign, came by to thank the YDs for their help and stressed that they made a big difference in Senator Marsden's victory over Republican Steve Hunt January 12.

### Democratic Values in Action

## *DVA is collecting towels, diapers for Haiti relief*

In January, your Democratic Values in Action (DVA) Committee collected 12 boxes of cereal that were donated to the Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC). In February, DVA will collect cereal and canned or dry goods for AFAC.

In addition, to support Haitian relief, DVA is collecting good clean used towels of any size and also packs of disposal diapers. Democratic Values in Action volunteers will take the donations to the Haitian Embassy.

Contract **Charley Conrad** at (703) 835-6614 or email [charleyconrad@gmail.com](mailto:charleyconrad@gmail.com) if you would like to join the 2010-2011 Democratic Values in Action Committee.

# *Donkey Ears*

*Listening to the doings of Arlington's Dems*

**as overheard by Dan Steen and Warren Nelson**



**Into the 21st Century:** School Board Chair **Libby Garvey** has joined the blogosphere. She has added a blog to her website, <http://www.libbygarvey.org>. Libby tells us this blog will be more personal and less political than her previous communications. And she firmly promises not to brag too much about her four beautiful, brilliant, personable and entertaining grandchildren. Did we mention that they were brilliant?

**Passages:** **Nancy Lee Head** passed away January 15. She was for many years active in The Roosevelt Society and was a stalwart volunteer whenever and wherever needed. For 31 years, she worked for the Presbyterian Church (USA). She put an emphasis on peace fellowship, interfaith worship and help for the homeless. Her major emphasis was on raising awareness of mental health issues. Diagnosed with schizophrenia as a youth, she became a founding member of the D.C. Mental Health Consumers League and served for several years as the league's president.

**Passages:** **Mike Codel** died January 13 after a two-year struggle with cancer. He was 70. He served many years as precinct captain in East Falls Church. He was an early Peace Corps Volunteer who was stationed in Africa. He later joined the Associated Press, working in Europe, Mobuto's Congo and New York. He and his wife, Birte, were both of Danish extraction and married in Africa.

**Arlington is intelligent:** Arlington has been named one of the top seven intelligent communities in the world for 2010 by the Intelligent Community Forum (ICF). No, that's not based on the percentage of residents with high IQs! It's geared to how well a jurisdiction is run. ICF said of Arlington, "Smart land-use planning created a network of parks and playgrounds, bicycle paths, sidewalk restaurants and entertainment districts. In the digital age, Arlington has two competitive broadband carriers delivering data, voice and video services, who also provide free fiber-based services to County facilities and all schools. E-government services running on this platform include e-book access, award-winning public-access television programming, Web streaming, RSS feeds and online tax collection. A highly ranked school system sends more than 90% of graduates to college or university." The single most intelligent community will be chosen in May. The others competing with Arlington are: Dublin, Ohio; Tallinn, Estonia; Suwon, South Korea; Ottawa, Ontario; Eindhoven, Netherlands; and Dundee, Scotland.

## Meet our leaders

# Lieberman outvoted in grammar school

Mike Lieberman's first memory of politics dates from when he was nine years old and was in the decided minority at his grammar school, where he cast his 1988 straw poll ballot for Mike Dukakis—and George H. W. Bush won with 94 percent.

But that didn't discourage him from staying a Democrat—and may even have encouraged him.

Mike was born in Ithaca, New York, but moved to Raleigh, North Carolina, when he was seven and spent the rest of his primary and secondary school years there, where he remembers a heavy emphasis on playing soccer and tennis “or anything with a ball to knock around.”

But he also retained a very un-North Carolina love for ice hockey from his early days in New York State.

Mike's election in January as ACDC chair comes shortly after he turned 30 and seven years after he attended his first ACDC meeting in December 2002. In his free time, Mike continues to play soccer, indoor soccer and ice hockey, and struggles as a self-styled “mediocre guitarist,” but he says his main hobby these days is Arlington Dems.

His first encounters with politics was student government in high school and in college at Duke University, where he was named student legislator of the year his senior term.

Mike was a member of College YDs at Duke, but recalls that he didn't become active until moving to the D.C. area to take up a job on Capitol Hill, briefly with Rep. Henry Waxman, D-Calif., and then for six years as a legislative aide with Rep. John Spratt, D-S.C., who chairs the House Budget Committee.

Somewhere in between the Hill work and the ACDC volunteering, Mike continued to date his college girlfriend. “We took our time,” he said. After eight years of courting, Mike and Dara married in August 2008. They met at Duke, where their courting consisted mostly of sleeping in a tent to get Duke basketball tickets. With other Duke alumni in the metro area, they continue to follow the team's games on television.

Mike got his B.A. from Duke in 2001 with a double major in public policy and economics. After coming to Washington to work, he started going to Georgetown Law at night, then switched to being a full time day student to get his JD degree in 2008 *magna cum laude*.

Since graduating, he has handled criminal and commercial litigation for the D.C. firm of Crowell & Moring.

Dara is from Chicago originally. She came to Arlington after graduation with Mike, but later spent two years in Michigan getting her master's in public policy at the University of Michigan. She now works as a government relations manager for the Trust for America's Health.

Within a few months of attending his first ACDC meeting, Mike found himself an officer of AYDs as publicity director. He moved up as senior party rep and then president of the AYDs, then a precinct captain in Ballston and, when it was split off, in Buckingham. In the senior party, he was vice chairman of finance and then finance chairman. Along the way, he was campaign manager of the 2003 Larry Fishtahler campaign for School Board and the 2007 Walter Tejada campaign for County Board. Mike has been on the ACDC Steering Committee about six years.

His parents are still in Raleigh, where his mother teaches at the school Mike attended and his father is an environmental consultant working on toxic cleanups. Mike has one brother who works in Seattle with Microsoft.

There has been some time for travel. Mike and Dara honeymooned in Croatia. Last year, they visited Iceland, which Mike highly recommends. During high school, Mike did community service in Nicaragua. And in college, he had a tough semester mastering the local tongue in Glasgow.

Mike's bloodlines are decidedly American—Protestant, Catholic and Jewish. His father is of German and Russian Jewish stock. His mother's family goes way back—the family likes to say to “the second ship after the Mayflower”—and has Scottish, English and French Huguenot roots.

Mike recently read a new biography of Andrew Jackson and is now reading—for professional guidance in the courtroom as well as pleasure—a biography of Edward Bennett Williams.



WED—Mike Lieberman married Dara Alpert in 2008.

# Dems pick up another State Senate seat

*continued from page one*

Powells Landing resident, told *The Washington Post* he almost forgot about the election until reminded by a last minute canvass by Marsden volunteers the morning of Election Day.

Marsden may also have been helped in his campaign by the Republican candidate's reputation as a shrill conservative. Hunt, a former naval flight officer, was a Fairfax County School Board Member in 2005 when he wrote a letter to school principals calling homosexuality "a very destructive lifestyle."

The key to Marsden's victory, however, was his astounding margin of more than 2-to-1 among absentee voters. Without the effort to reach absentee voters, Marsden would have lost. Here are the numbers:

	Marsden	Hunt	Dem margin
In-person	11,154	11,232	- 78
Absentee	800	395	+405
Total	11,954	11,627	+327

Senate Majority Leader Dick Saslaw of Fairfax County discussed the victory. First and foremost, he said, "A good campaign and a good candidate are a big plus."

He singled out the strong grassroots effort—and especially the importance of winning the absentee ballot count. "We've been getting killed on that" in past elections, Saslaw said. This time, whenever canvassers found a potential Democratic voter who wasn't going to be home on Election Day, they worked hard to get that voter to cast an absentee ballot. "We knocked on a zillion doors," Saslaw said.

Marsden replaced Ken Cuccinelli, the Republican elected state attorney general last fall. Cuccinelli won the seat in 2003 with 53.3 percent of the vote and was re-elected in 2007 with a minuscule majority of 50.02 percent and a mere 92-vote lead over Democrat Janet Oleszek. Those results made the seat look winnable. But many analysts said last November's shift to the GOP in Virginia meant Marsden couldn't win—especially in a special election where Republican stalwarts are famed for a higher turnout than Democratic voters, and where GOP ultraconservatives would be sure to flood the polls to support a fellow ultraconservative like Hunt.

Furthermore, Marsden has said that his early polling last November showed him trailing by double digits.

But Marsden did win—and stopped the much-touted Republican revival in its tracks. With Marsden's victory, all 10 state senators

## One election down, so another now pops up

No sooner is one election done than another is scheduled. The election to the State Senate of Dave Marsden on January 12 means there must be a special election to fill his old seat in the House of Delegates. That will be held March 2 in western Fairfax County.

Perennial campaigners did have a rest period, albeit very brief. Democrats in Marsden's old 41<sup>st</sup> Delegate District did not meet until January 24 to pick a candidate in a firehouse primary. She is Eileen Filler-Corn. Volunteer at <http://www.eileenfordelegate.com/>

Help the nominee retain the seat in the Democratic column. Marsden won re-election in November by only 209 votes, so the March special election could be a cliffhanger.

who represent a part of Fairfax County are now Democrats.

Marsden served as head of the Department of Juvenile Justice under both Republican and Democratic governors. Originally a



SENATOR MARSDEN

Republican, he switched parties early in the decade and was elected as a Democrat to the House of Delegates in 2005, 2007 and 2009.

Marsden had the endorsement of the teachers' union and the Sierra Club plus the firefighters. His GOP opponent had the support of the National Rifle Association plus the sheriff's and police organizations.

There was another special election that same day in Virginia Beach to fill another State Senate seat. That vacancy opened up when Sen. Ken Stolle, a Republican, was elected last November as sheriff of Virginia Beach. The district is solidly Republican. Stolle won election in 2003 and 2007 without any opposition. In the January special election, Republican Jeff McWaters defeated Democrat Bill Fleming, a late arriving candidate, by a margin of 79 percent to 21 percent, with fewer than 10 percent of the registered voters bothering to turn out.

The Republican spent at least \$741,000, according to campaign finance reports, while the Democratic outlay was just \$14,000. The GOP thus outspent the Democrats by a margin of 53-to-1. The GOP spent \$92 for each vote it got, while the Democrats spent \$6 per vote.

The two new senators were sworn in the next day to join the legislative session that opened that day with the dismal task of slashing \$4.2 billion from a state budget that has already been pruned by \$7 billion since the fiscal crisis began a year and a half ago.

# Arlington tackles energy, sustainability

by Jay Fisette

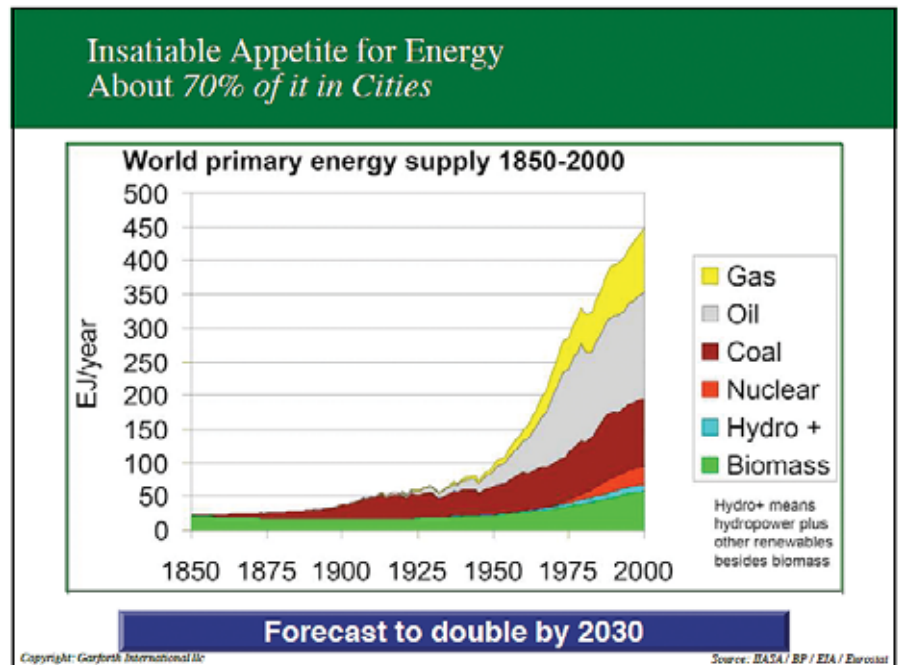
Chairman, County Board

Most of us know where to find energy – flip the switch, plug in the cord, or fill the tank. But few of us know how to define energy. Energy is the capacity of a physical system to perform work, and it exists in different forms such as heat, light, electrical, or other forms.

Think about all the energy generated and wasted by the row upon row of people using treadmills, stair masters and stationary bikes at the gym. Maybe we should hook up the TV or the fan to the exercise equipment such that the TV or fan only work if you generate the energy to keep it on!

Our economy and our way of life have become dependent on cheap, reliable energy – derived mostly from carbon-based fuels such as coal and oil. Transportation and buildings use the vast majority of these carbon-based fuels, which in turn account for the bulk of the Green House Gas (GHG) emissions that are threatening our environment. In Arlington, over 90 percent of our community's total GHG emissions come from buildings and transportation.

So why has Arlington decided to tackle this issue? First, investments in energy efficiency are good business. Wise investments will reduce future operating costs. Second, energy prices worldwide are completely unpredictable due to political instability overseas and the skyrocketing demand from China and India. Did you know that we import about 70 percent of our oil, most from the volatile Middle East? And while demand is growing,



**UPWARD BOUND — The use of all kinds of energy has been rising exponentially since the end of World War II.**

known supply is leveling off. Remember supply-demand economics? Any pre-emptive investments now will reduce the risk to Arlington budgets later. Third, investments in our energy infrastructure will make Arlington more competitive in attracting and retaining business in the future. Fourth, we should do “our part” to protect the environment.

And, finally, if we can't tackle this challenge, who can? Arlington has a history of

trying to find long-term solutions to big problems. We engage everyone in the discussion, often take longer, and love our long-term planning. We have plans for land use, transportation, open space, technology, storm water management and many more. Our smart growth planning was well ahead of its time, and decades later the fruits of that labor have earned us national acclaim and a high quality of life.

The County Board adopted a charter for a new Community Energy and Sustainability (CES) Task Force. Our purpose is to identify countywide goals for the reduction of GHG emissions and the actions and strategies necessary to reduce those goals. We need to find energy efficiencies, recapture wasted energy, and increase renewable energy use. The end product will be a community energy plan that will become a roadmap for our energy future through 2050.

The Arlington County Government has been working on a plan to reduce the GHG emissions generated by government operations since **Paul Ferguson** established the Fresh AIRE initiative in 2007. This new effort will tackle the remaining 96 percent of the GHG emissions generated countywide. This will be hard and will require voluntary

*continued on next page*

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# Arlington tackles energy, sustainability

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collaboration by a broad array of stakeholders – property owners, businesses, the energy industry, citizens and home owners, educational institutions, non-profits and government.

The good news is that those stakeholders are at the table. There are 29 members of this green ribbon, blue ribbon Task Force. The kick-off meeting was held on January 15. Along with the Task Force, at least 60 people attended and heard a wonderful presentation by Peter Garforth. He painted a bleak picture of the future under the “business-as-usual” model. Garforth explained how the U.S. is at a serious competitive disadvantage to Europe.

Listen to this—when Copenhagen, Denmark was hit by an oil supply disruption in the 1970s, it realized its vulnerability and vowed to become energy independent. It changed building codes, expanded renewable energy, transit and biking, passed laws and took action. Today, while Washington, D.C., generates 19.7 metric tons of CO2 per capita per year, Copenhagen generates 2.6 metric tons of CO2 per capita per year. Each person in DC generates over 7 times the CO2 as a resident of Copenhagen – and their goal is to get to zero. It can be done.

We’re off to a great start. All task force

materials, charter, roster, the Garforth power point, etc. are available on the project website at [www.arlingtonva.us/energyplan](http://www.arlingtonva.us/energyplan). Please visit the site regularly to stay updated. All meetings are open to the public, and we will have several Energy Town Hall meetings to fully engage everyone in this process. There will be many opportunities to hear your ideas and many opportunities for you to make changes in your home and daily routine.

In fact, there has been such a groundswell of interest that we have begun to identify official “Liaisons” to the CES Task Force from other organizations. If you repre-

sent an organization that would like to be involved with the process and contribute to the final Community Energy Plan, please contact me at [jfiset@arlingtonva.us](mailto:jfiset@arlingtonva.us).

As former County Manager Ron Carlee has stated, “We don’t do easy.” Ain’t that the truth! It is my hope that our effort in Arlington will be a model and a catalyst for others in the region, the state and the nation to get our heads out of the sand. Whether motivated by environmental concerns, community livability, or budgets and cost savings, we must work together to ensure a healthy, viable, sustainable Arlington for future generations.



JAY FISSETTE

## Your 2010-2011 Steering Committee

*Here are the members of the new ACDC Steering Committee elected for two-year terms on January 6.*

Chairman	Mike Lieberman
Deputy Chair	Maureen Markham
Precinct Ops Chair	Kip Malinosky
Finance Chair	Bree Raum
Press/PubRel Chair	Jason Rylander
Outreach/Visibility	Atima Omara-Alwala
“ “	Terron Sims
“ “	Carole Lieber
Communications	Arielle Holland
Newsletter Editor	Warren Nelson
Volunteer Coordinator	Marge Epstein
Secretary	Charley Conrad
Treasurer	Amy Lewis
Sergeant-at-Arms	Peter Owen
Parliamentarian	Melissa Bondi

## Don’t forget the date auction

Mark your calendar—The Arlington Young Dems will hold their ninth annual charity date auction Wednesday, March 7, at 7 p.m. at the Clarendon grill in Clarendon. This is one of the most amusing and fun-filled events on the annual calendar. Contact Brian Straw at [finance@arlingtonyoungdems.org](mailto:finance@arlingtonyoungdems.org) for more information.

## Virginia right pushes 2 bills in Richmond

Three decades ago, it was the fundamentalist political movement that rose up in Virginia and soon challenged the political system both in the commonwealth and nationally. Now, it is the Tea Party Movement that is on the rise, trying to mobilize the dissatisfied and the suspicious with conspiracy theories.

In Virginia, the Tea Party advocates rallied in Richmond on Martin Luther King's birthday as their first big show in the commonwealth. They drew more than 1,000 people to Capitol Square.

Del. Bob Marshall, Republican of Prince William County, told the crowd, "This Obama-care is not only a fight over health insurance.... This is a fight over whether you are a citizen or are a serf? It's not your wallet that they want. It's your soul and your family." Marshall is the principal author of the state constitutional amendment that bans same-sex marriage.

The speeches, the posters and the stickers worn by many in the crowd called on the General Assembly to pass two bills that top this year's right wing agenda in Virginia, as



**The Tea Party Watch  
by the Mad Hatter**

in many other states.

One would declare a federal requirement that everyone hold health insurance to be illegal in the commonwealth. This is the 21<sup>st</sup> Century variant of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century doctrine of nullification—the argument that a state may overturn federal law. It is House Bill 10.

The other says firearms and ammunition manufactured and sold in Virginia are purely

*intrastate* commerce and thus not subject to federal regulation under the U.S. Constitution's clause giving Congress authority to regulate *interstate* commerce. It is House Bill 69.

Because Democrats have a majority in the State Senate, these bills are unlikely to pass in Virginia, but they will provide a measure of the movement's breadth and depth in the commonwealth.

The Richmond protesters carried signs with slogans such as: "Both parties are the problem," "Man is not free unless government is limited," "States Rights" and "The Few. The Pissed. The Taxpayer."

Nationally, one part of the fragmented movement will hold a convention in Nashville February 4-6 with Sarah Palin as keynote. Except for her speech, the convention will be closed to the media.

Locally, there is a Northern Virginia Tea Party Movement, whose website says it covers Fairfax city and county, Loudoun, Alexandria and Prince William, which suggests they are making no effort in Arlington and Falls Church.

# THE ROANOKE TIMES

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## McDonnell drops his transportation plan

On the campaign trail last fall, Gov. Bob McDonnell promised Virginians he had a plan to fix the state's broken transportation system.

In 19 pages, he detailed how he would fund highways, rail and other improvements without raising taxes. Now, when it is time to put his plan into action, he punts.

Last week, he announced he would not pursue transportation reform during the General Assembly session. He said lawmakers would not have enough time to evaluate his plan, and he would not have enough time to sell it.

No offense intended, but the plan is not very hard to evaluate. It is loaded with the same gimmicks Republicans have talked about for years. Everyone is familiar with

them.

And everyone who turned a thoughtful eye on the plan during the campaign knew it would never work as McDonnell said. Royalties from offshore drilling remain a distant fantasy, for example. If the Obama administration approved drilling tomorrow, it would be years before any money appeared.

Nevertheless, his plan contained many ideas voters trusted him to pursue. Nothing prevents him from floating a few before lawmakers. Introduce bills to privatize Alcoholic Beverage Control stores, start the process to put tollbooths on Interstates 95 and 85, and set up new bonding.

None would solve the transportation mess, of course, but this is what he sold to voters.

He could at least try to deliver and make transportation funding the priority he claimed it was.

Instead, McDonnell says he might call a special session of the assembly later in the year. First he wants to spend time working with lawmakers and using the persuasive powers of his office to find a deal that all sides can agree to.

If that sounds eerily familiar, it is. McDonnell's opponent, Creigh Deeds, said that was what he wanted to do. McDonnell dismissed it as no plan at all then.

Now that he is safely in office, he has either come to his senses or started being honest with the public.

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January 20, 2010*

# Obama locked in dirty war with right

By Andrew Sullivan  
The London Sunday Times  
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One quote really hit home for me last week. It is quite typical of a certain kind of paranoid conservative subculture; it reflects conspiracy theories, and it's motivated by extreme antipathy to Barack Obama. Here's the quote: "President Obama is leading an extreme, left-wing crusade to bankrupt America."

If you spend much time reading far-right and so-called Tea Party blogs, you will be familiar with this theme. The idea is that Obama is a secret Muslim communist whose goal is to destroy US capitalism through fiscal collapse in order for the government to take over the remnants of a dying market economy. Or something like that. All future debt is Obama's fault (even though the majority was inherited and the rest skewed by the recession). And this, the argument goes, is deliberate. The cited quote is given extra piquancy by using the term "crusade", subtly invoking the theme of religious warfare in a Christian battle against a supposedly Muslim president.

Who uttered this quote? John McCain. Yes: John McCain. Why? He's facing a tough primary challenge for his Senate seat this year from the far right, and this is the only way he thinks he can survive. And, as we know, McCain will say anything and do anything to maintain power. If you're looking for his soul, try eBay.

Now take another extraordinary quote. This one came immediately after the Detroit underwear bomber near miss, and argued that Obama was deliberately allowing the US to be attacked by terrorists, and refusing to take the threat seriously as warfare, because accepting the existence of the terror threat "doesn't fit with the view of the world he brought with him to the Oval Office. It doesn't fit with what seems to be the goal of his presidency: social transformation — the restructuring of American society".

Here the idea is that Obama is so intent on socialism that he is really uninterested in combating terror. At some level, it's an accusation of treason — of deliberately risking American lives for the pursuit of socialism. Again, this does seem a little extreme, given that Obama has kept George W Bush's defence secretary, kept Bush's timetable for Iraq withdrawal, drastically increased troops and overhauled strategy in Afghanistan and declared emphatically, last week, that "we are at war", while ordering a thorough review of intelligence-gathering. So who was this radical, throwing rhetorical bombs at the president at a moment of an actual terror attack that might — I can dream, right? — have actually brought Americans of both parties together?

The quote came from the former vice-president, Dick Cheney.

Look. There is a real and vital role for

political opposition, and a robust, healthy, even vicious critique of Obama's policies and a clear alternative to them is not just legitimate but essential for a democracy to work. But these statements from key players at the very top of the Republican party do not reflect this. They reflect a partisanship that seeks to impugn the core motives of the president, implying that he is, in fact, something alien and destructive to America, and must be opposed in everything he does, whatever it is, because his success would mean the end of America itself. It is not a declaration of opposition; it's a declaration of war.

That is why in the week before Obama's inauguration the most influential voice on the right, Rush Limbaugh, openly said he hoped the president would fail. That is why, in the first real test of the opposition, Obama's stimulus package — with vast tax cuts in the middle of the steepest downturn in memory — garnered zero Republican votes. Zero. That's why a health insurance reform plan that is in many ways more conservative than the Republican leader Mitt Romney's Massachusetts pilot, a reform that cut the deficit, ruled out a public option, and gave the health insurance and drug companies millions of new private sector clients, won zero Republican support in the Senate and one, yes, one, Republican vote in the House.

Now recall Bush's first signature proposal, his massive 2001 tax cut. Unlike Obama, he came to office with fewer votes than his opponent. In the wake of that election, 12 Democratic senators voted for Bush's campaign promise, and 28 Democrats followed suit in the House. McCain actually voted against his own party on this critical first test. Now look at him. That is a sign of how partisanship and polarisation have only deepened since 2000, and Obama's attempt to overcome it has simply fallen on barren ground. The response of the Republicans to Obama's open hand has been pretty close to that of the Iranian junta: a clenched fist.

In Britain, an opposition party in total revolt can do only so much. In the US system, where the constitution makes big change very, very hard, an opposition can gum up the works much more successfully. Because the Republicans lost so many seats last time around, their current ranks are dominated by those in the safest seats, and their main worry is being picked off by primary challenges from the Sarah Palin-Dick Cheney wing. Because of the still-waxing power of religious fundamentalism in the American South, the Republicans increasingly frame their arguments in doctrinal terms, rather than pragmatic ones. And so the party has become more purist and more radical in the wake of its defeat. To give a simple example, last week the Republican candidate for the gover-

norship of Alabama was forced to offer the following campaign pledge: "I believe the Bible is true. Every word of it." He had previously gaffed that some parts of the Bible might not be taken literally, but as metaphor or parable. No, this is not Iran. It's America. In 2010.

Obama's promise was that he would try to end this culture war. My view is that — to great dismay among his own partisan base — he has largely fulfilled that promise. He went to dinner with conservative journalists before he schmoozed the liberal ones; he spent more time on Capitol Hill with Republicans in his first few months than Bush ever had; he asked the evangelical Rick Warren to deliver the invocation at his inauguration; he avoided abor-



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tion and gay rights issues; he refused to investigate, let alone prosecute, the war crimes of his predecessor; and he has ramped up the war in Afghanistan. He has cut taxes and refused to nationalise the banks.

But for all this, he is the target of almost relentless and extreme opposition, painting him as the most radical and extremist anti-American ever in the Oval Office. And with a Senate that requires a 60-40 majority to get anything done, that makes his promises very hard to keep. When Europeans wonder if America is ungovernable, this polarisation is the critical thing to keep in mind. Obama's gamble is therefore to outlast this reaction, to refuse to take the bait for total political warfare at home, and to enact as much as he can as quickly as he can in case the natural upswing of an opposition in a depressed economy renders his congressional majority moot by next November.

The Republican gamble, in turn, is that the extremism of their populist oppositionism doesn't rally the fringe of their base at the cost of alienating the critical middle that still holds sway in American politics. My own sense is that in a low-turnout mid-term election, they could do very well with this tactic. But at a strategic level, I suspect that this is a trap for 2012. If they cannot attract younger or minority voters, if they continue to fail to offer actual policy alternatives instead of recitation of right-wing dogma, they could manage to stymie Obama later this year at the cost of immolation in 2012. Winning in 2010 could even persuade them that becoming even more radical is the way to win in 2012. A Palin nomination is perfectly possible.

It's a war of nerves. If the Republicans win it, the culture war lives on. If Obama survives, he will remake the centre of American politics as a Democratic bastion again. Those are the stakes. And they keep getting higher.