

Since 1993



The Bowfin Inquirer



October 2024

Another *Unscientific* Look at Inflation

by Jerry Lerman (344)

Inflation is being seen as a key issue for many voters in the upcoming election, so I thought I'd see what more I can learn about it since I wrote articles in the October 2021 and June 2023 BIs. In those articles, I found annual rates of 8.4%, then 7.8%

I recently came upon an unusual new data source: I found my check registers from the years 1974-1977, back when I was an apartment dweller in San Francisco (*Yes, you could call me a 'pack rat' !*). I found a few expenses paid then (telephone, rent, and a couple fees for educational exams) that I could match up with their 2024 costs:

| | | |
|---------|------------------|--------------|
| Phone: | \$ 12.14 then ; | \$ 81 now |
| Rent: | \$ 215.00 then ; | \$ 3,833 now |
| GRE | \$ 10.50 then ; | \$ 220 now |
| Nursing | \$ 13.00 then; | \$ 100 now |

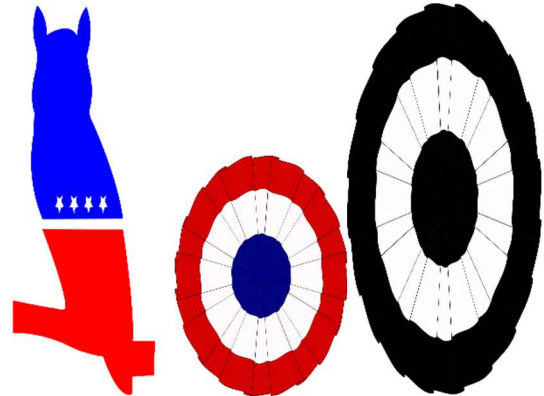
These are, of course NOT, BY ANY MEANS, all the expenditures incurred by households, but I thought I'd see what the "inflation rates" were for these:

| | | | |
|--------|-------------|----------|-------------|
| Phone: | 3.9% | Rent: | 6.1% |
| GRE: | 6.5% | Nursing: | 4.5% |

I checked the official U.S. inflation rates. A table of cumulative inflation since 1913 surfaces that inflation had reached 500% in 1975 and 2,555% by 2020.

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Aaron's Question Column



The owl of the Whig Party, logo of the Democratic-Republican Party and the logo of the Federalists

Question: There have been a number of political parties in the history of the United States that no longer exist. Can you provide a brief history of one or two of the vanished parties (e.g., the "No-Nothings" or the "Whigs" ... but you can pick others if you find them more interesting), touching on what were their chief objectives, who were their main or most successful candidates, and what might be the reason the parties failed. -Jerry

Aaron's Answer (A'sA): In today's United States of America, we really only have 2 political parties that get elected: the Republican Party and the Democratic Party. No other party really gets elected, however there are some "issue parties" that exist solely to attract attention to certain issues like the Green Party (which focuses on climate issues). However, throughout American history, many political parties emerged, became influential for a time, and then disappeared. I will talk about three examples of influential historical political parties in America.

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Solution to Last Month's Quiz

Creature Features

Thank you to neighbor, Gary Colman!

Here's my submission for the Bowfin Inquirer puzzle this month:

- A. After hours in the sun, he was a **LOBSTER**
- B. Don't be a **SHEEP**; think for yourself!
- C. Hard work is the **KEY** to success
- D. His head is always in the **CLOUDS**
- E. He's a **FISH** out of water at school
- F. He was a **BULL** in a china shop
- G. I've got **BUTTERFLIES** in my stomach
- H. Quit being such a couch **POTATO** and go outside!
- I. The science fair winner is a real **EINSTEIN**
- J. They're two **HEARTS** beating as one

That is: A – 8; B – 10; C – 7;
D – 3; E – 5; F – 1;
G – 2; H – 9; I – 4; J – 6

This Month's Quiz

HOLIDAY HODGEPODGE Word Search

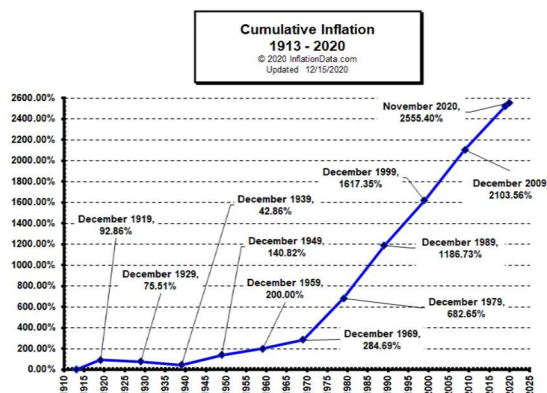
N N Y D O V K S A M Y C
O E D M W C N P G H K O
T E P U M P K I N C O S
E W Y F D U V D Y T O T
L O A A O I M E E I P U
E L F L O W E R E W S M
K L O L L C L U P Y E E
S A W L B V A M P I R E
G H O S T R E T S N O M
T A E R T R O K C I R T
T M Z O M B I E B M O T
E R A C S H A U N T E D

| | | | | |
|---------|-----------|---------|----------|----------------|
| BLOOD | HALLOWEEN | MUMMY | SKELETON | VAMPIRE |
| COSTUME | HAUNTED | OWL | SPIDER | WEREWOLF |
| FALL | MASK | PUMPKIN | SPOOKY | WITCH |
| GHOST | MONSTER | SCARE | TOMB | TRICK OR TREAT |
| | | ZOMBIE | | |

Inflation continued

That means that the average annual rate over that period was **3.8%**.

It is difficult to wrap your mind around 2500% inflation. But that means that prices increased by 2500% or they cost 25 times more.



Comparing that, I think we can say correctly that those recently experienced rates of 7% - 8% were high – even perhaps double our normal rate. But we should acknowledge that inflation of 3%-5% should be built into our expectations.

Also important, of course, is whether incomes have climbed sufficiently to overcome the effects of higher inflation. A website (statista.com), looking at statistics from the Bureau of Labor Statistics through May, 2024, answers YES – but barely:

By looking at cumulative wage growth and price increases since January 2020, we can answer the question of whether or not wages have kept up with inflation over the past four and half years. The answer is: yes, but just barely. While nominal wages have increased 22.7 percent since the beginning of 2020, consumer prices have also surged by 21.0 percent on aggregate. This leaves real wage growth at a meager 1.5 percent for the entirety of the past four and half years, which is equivalent to an annual (real) pay increase of 0.3 percent.

Aaron's Answers *continued*

Throughout American history, several major political parties have emerged, gained power, and eventually disappeared as the country evolved. The Federalist Party (1791–1824), led by figures like Alexander Hamilton and John Adams, sought to establish a strong central government, promote industry, and align the U.S. with Britain. However, the party's influence declined due to unpopular measures like the Alien and Sedition Acts and their opposition to the War of 1812, which made them appear out of touch and unpatriotic. In contrast, the Democratic-Republican Party (1792–1834), founded by Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, favored states' rights, agrarianism, and support for revolutionary France. Though it became the dominant party after the fall of the Federalists, internal divisions over national infrastructure and government power led to its collapse, giving rise to both the Democratic Party under Andrew Jackson and the Whig Party. The Whig Party (1834–1856) formed to oppose what they saw as Jackson's abuse of executive power and promoted Congressional authority, economic modernization, and infrastructure projects. Despite early successes, including the election of presidents like William Henry Harrison and Zachary Taylor, the Whigs fractured over the issue of slavery. Many Northern Whigs joined the new Republican Party, while Southern members aligned with Democrats, leading to the Whigs' collapse.

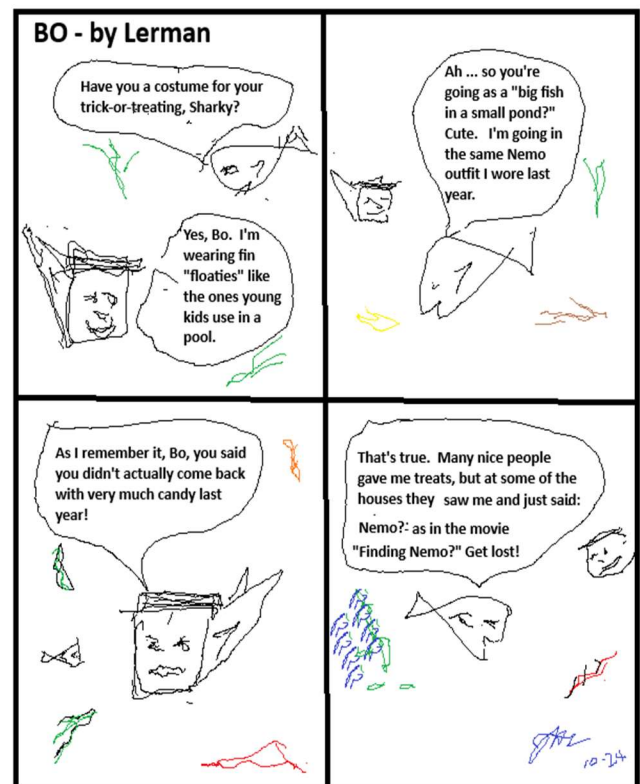
Although those parties are not around anymore, many countries still demonstrate that a three or more party system can function quite well, and introduce many new ideas, as opposed to the two-party system where it is extremely polarized and few ideas are allowed out.

Target Date for Next Month's Contributions:

November 15, 2024

Please reach us with your articles, news, photos, CHILDREN'S ARTWORK or ideas at

344 Bowfin, (650 572-9153) or email us at our email EDITOR@BOWFININQUIRER.COM *or by adding a NOTE on our Facebook Page or our website: BOWFININQUIRER.COM*



Weekly Farmers' Market

from the PJCC Website

Farmers' Market

Tuesdays • 9:00 am – 1:00 pm

Local farmers and artisans gather to present their finest harvests and crafts, offering everything from crisp vegetables and juicy fruits to artisanal pastas and handcrafted goods. It's not just a market; it's a community gathering, a place to connect with the rhythms of the seasons and the people who cultivate the beauty we often take for granted.

Welcome to the Farmers' Market at the PJCC!

Open to the Public | Join Us Every Tuesday!

- **When:** Tuesdays, 9:00 am – 1:00 pm
- **Where:** PJCC Lobby, 800 Foster City Blvd, Foster City

Step into a world where freshness meets community at the PJCC Farmers' Market, a vibrant hub for local farmers, artisans, and creators committed to offering the best seasonal produce and unique handcrafted goods. Open to everyone, our market invites you to explore the richness of local agriculture and artistry in a friendly and welcoming atmosphere.

Join us every Tuesday from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm at the PJCC Lobby. Come for the fresh fare, stay for the community spirit, and leave with a piece of the heart of our local ecosystem. See you there!

Flight or Fight ?

by Jerry Lerman (344)

Around July Eve and I booked a trip with a travel company that we know to be both excellent and reliable, based on our four previous trips with them. This upcoming one will be our first with them since the Covid pandemic struck in 2020.

We've been surprised to run into a problem already, several months before departure: In September we received a notification from the company that we'd been assigned **business class** seats on our flights – at an additional cost of \$6,000 per person, and an invoice was emailed to us. The letter claimed that we had requested the special accommodation at the time of our booking, but that was entirely incorrect. It took a lengthy bit of time on the phone with them before we managed to get that corrected and the charge expunged.

Fast forward to this week. The New Mexico couple with whom we'll be traveling called to let us know that THEY'D just had the company send them a reassignment to **FIRST CLASS** seats from their previously booked coach ones. It was accompanied by a steep \$14,000ish supplemental bill. The couple, Val and Fritz, hadn't requested any change – nor were they contacted before this modification was made. They were aware that a similar thing had happened to us and were quite displeased to have it happen to them, too!

We hope they'll have an easy time getting their seats and billing corrected, but both of us couples are growing very leery of this travel company and their sales ethics. We hope they're merely making errors, and not attempting to profit from a practice which very much feels like a form of 'elder abuse' !