

1/10/14

In This Issue:

- 1. County Board News.**
- 2. What's the Deal in 35A?**

COUNTY BOARD NEWS

Greetings, Watchdogs. The entire crew made it back alive and well from our yearly sojourn to the Caribbean. Enough rum and cigars were brought back to the U.S. to sustain us through Election Day, when we will hopefully be popping champagne to celebrate a re-balancing of American politics.

Let's get 2014 started off right with one of the few places where good things are happening in politics - the Anoka County Board.

This week, Commissioner Rhonda Sivarajah was re-elected board chair, while two new but stellar commissioners were elevated to committee chairs.

Commissioner Julie Braastad will chair the Intergovernmental Relations Committee while Schulte will chair the Transportation Committee.

Congratulations are in order to all three.

We look forward to quality leadership throughout 2014.

In other news, candidates for county board for the 2014 elections have begun to step forward and announce.

Because of redistricting that happened after the most recent census, two of the board's 7 seats were made two-year terms, meaning that they are on the ballot again in 2014 even though they were up in 2012 as well.

One of those seats is in District 7, where Scott Schulte showed Dan Erhart the door, even though Erhart was nearly permanently fixed to his chair after 30 years of careerism, cronyism, and junketeering.

Schulte just this week announced that he will seek re-election, which is a good thing for Watchdogs.

As expected, Schulte has brought a businessman's perspective to government and the common sense that can be found among auto mechanics, one of Schulte's many vocations.

Also refreshing is that Schulte has delivered on his campaign promises, the primary one being an ability to work with his colleagues, county staff, other elected officials, and his constituents.

Erhart, the arrogant blowhard that he is, had a great of difficulty interacting with other human beings, unless he was bullying or intimidating them.

So far, no one has stepped forward to challenge Schulte, and it wouldn't be a surprise if he ran unopposed.

Having said that, the Watchdog hereby encourages and calls on Dan Erhart to run.

The only thing more satisfying than seeing Dan Erhart get spanked would be to see him get spanked twice.

Alas, Old Danno is probably running out the clock up in Pine County, wearing Sansabelt slacks, fake gator skin loafers, and those oversized sun glasses that look like welding goggles.

On second thought, Dan, stick with the golf carts, pinochle nights, and tying up the line at the bank while you check your savings balance.

We're doing just great without you.

The other race is over in District 5, where Carol LeDoux is stepping down after a few years of doing, uh, nothing as far as we can tell.

The empty suit will has apparently decided that sitting around watching Matt Look and company get things done was exhausting and thus an inducement to retirement.

Good riddance.

So far, Andover Mayor Mike Gamache has announced his candidacy, which appears to be a mixed bag for Watchdogs.

The consensus is that he ran a fairly tight ship in Andover, consistently garnering high re-elect numbers from a deeply red conservative city.

Some sources tell us that he was restrained by a conservative city council, tamping down progressive desires.

This publication obviously doesn't know where the truth lies, but the facts are fairly solid, although he will have some explaining to do regarding some issues, such as his strong support for a "prevailing wage" ordinance on city projects, which raises the cost to taxpayers and is loved by labor unions.

Readers will recall that Anoka County just recently partially repealed their own such ordinance, much to the chagrin of local labor thugs like Ed Reynoso of the Teamsters.

In any case, Gamache will be a formidable opponent for any candidate.

Our Andover sources say that he is well liked across the city and has high name recognition in the district's most conservative area.

Moreover, Gamache's labor credentials will play well in Coon Rapids, where many voters support organized labor and have direct ties to unions.

On top of all that, he may end being the most conservative choice, depending upon the Composition of the field.

Sources in Coon Rapids have said that perennial candidate Becky Fink is considering another run for this seat.

Her views make Gamache look like Peggy Scott and Michelle Benson rolled into one.

Stay tuned on this race, Watchdogs.

WHAT'S THE DEAL IN 35A?

With precinct caucuses right around the corner, things in House District 35A over in Ramsey appear to be in some turmoil.

First, no one is really sure what Jim Abeler is doing.

Senate candidate? Candidate for re-election? Candidate for dog catcher?

On the one hand, the Watchdog has seen fundraising communications from Senate candidate Abeler that shout "in it to win it!"

On the other hand, he sends out invitations to fundraising events that state that contributions can be made either to the Senate campaign or his state House campaign.

So which is it?

One thing is for sure, the BPOU should in no way delay their endorsing convention for Abeler.

Having said that, Abeler shouldn't mind. He's ignored the endorsement before.

Now, the Watchdog has been hearing rumors that Jason Tossey, a Republican who has filed for this seat, may be terminating his campaign.

In fact, Tossey himself has cast doubt on his candidacy with recent cryptic statements on his Facebook page.

Currently, it looks as if Tossey is out.

The Watchdog knows Tossey to be a solid conservative and a worthy opponent to Abeler.

The worst possible scenario is to see Abeler run free and clear for yet another term in the House.

Geez, Jim, isn't 16 years in office enough?

Of course, the very worst scenario would be for Abeler to be the GOP candidate against Al Franken, but we're talking about what is possible and not what is fantasy (or nightmare).

This one is getting wild and wooley, folks.

Stay tuned to this one as well.

1/17/14

In This Issue:

- 1. DFL Loves Unearned Wealth.**
- 2. We Don't Need No Stinkin' Bonding Bill.**
- 3. Like Rats Fleeing the Titanic.**

DFL LOVES UNEARNED WEALTH

As we continue to watch the DFL and their leaders implode under the weight of their own morally and intellectually bankrupt programs, the entertainment only gets better as the explosions get bigger.

Like a battleship taking a direct torpedo hit, the DFL's own policies caused an initial explosion which created bigger ones as the ammunition and fuel bunkers catch fire. Come November Admiral Obama and Vice Admiral Dayton will realize that the USS Liberal has taken a catastrophic hit that will doom many of her legislative crew members who couldn't reach the life boats of legislative repeals regarding Obamacare, MnSure, the Vikings stadium, the \$2 billion tax increase, Benghazi, etc.

The latest shot fired from the DFL's special version of the [Polish Cannon](#) concerns Party Chair Ken Martin's ham handed attack on Stewart Mills, a Republican well on his way to unseating Democrat Congressman Rick Nolan up in the Eighth District.

Being part of the DFL DNA, Martin gave into his wealth-aversion genes and tried to crack a tired, shop worn funny regarding Mills' wealth as a part of the family that founded and continues to run Mills Fleet Farm.

Looking the part of a middle school nerd at the talent show, Martin stood before the microphone and stated that Mills "was born on third base but thinks he hit a triple." Crickets. Dead air. Give him the hook.

Of course, Martin thinks we don't realize that his guy at the top of the ticket is a rich guy in his own right. Born with a silver spoon. Trust fund kid with a trust fund housed in South Dakota. Never worked a day in his life. Enough leisure time to indulge in politics, occasionally winning but always failing to actually govern. Selling part of the family art collection to help pay for the campaign (everyone does that, right?). Just like any rich person's play thing,

politics for Dayton is all about the journey to election and never about doing something productive once you get there.

So what's the difference? Is it that Dayton's wealth is unearned while Mills has worked his way up the ladder at Fleet Farm, helping run the company and earning his stripes?

As we noted last week, the liberals have fallen off their game. A weak, unfunny, stale joke about wealth? Is that the best the leader of the DFL party can do?

It's almost as weak as the DFL attacks on Stewart Mills' beer drinking, ATV riding, huntin' and fishin' lifestyle.

Yeah, a guy who hates wearing suits and loves to drink beer and hunt is really going to offend all those voters up on the Iron Range who, well, drink beer and hunt and fish.

By the way, the fact that the Mills family runs a store that proudly sells guns, ammo, and Carhart jackets is a good deal as well. Where do you think all those good old boys buy their guns and fishing gear?

Both Mark Dayton and Rick Nolan wouldn't know which end of the gun to point at a pheasant.

Rick Nolan is a leftover of the 1970s, when he first served in Congress.

He's about as popular (and relevant) as a land line phone, a reel-to-reel tape player, and a pet rock. Groovy, man.

If Stewart Mills was born on third base and thinks he hit a triple, what does that make Mark Dayton?

Dayton was born at home plate and thinks he's on Mars.

WE DON'T NEED NO STINKIN' BONDING BILL

Governor Dayton this week released his bonding recommendations, all \$1 billion worth.

For readers new to politics and the Minnesota legislature, a bonding bill is a bill that finances state local government projects using debt (bonds), which is paid back with interest and added to the state's ledger of indebtedness.

As usual, the bonding [bill](#) is filled with outright pork:

- Palace Theater in Saint Paul (\$6 million);
- Giant's Ridge chalet in Biwabik (\$5 million);
- NorShor Arts Center in Duluth (\$7 million);
- Nicollet Mall "renovation" in Minneapolis (\$20 million);
- Minneapolis Sculpture Garden (\$7 million);
- Snowmaking at Spirit Mountain in Duluth (\$3.4 million).

When Republicans understandably criticized Dayton's spending orgy, he was quick to engage in his typical snark, deriding legislators concerned with \$1 billion in debt as "extremists" who "oppose everything."

Well, Governor Dayton, since you seem to lack any real creativity and innovative solutions to perennial problems, here's a win-win-win regarding the funding of these projects.

If the state insists on funding all these projects, why not pay cash?

After all, the state has a projected \$1 billion surplus.

After previous obligations are paid, some \$825 million would be left to blow on these projects.

Cash could be paid, thereby avoiding debt service payments and additional state debt.

Moreover, the spending would be on one-time projects, avoiding higher spending that's rolled into baseline spending for future budgets.

Finally, the DFL could avoid having to deal with those pesky GOP "extremists" by passing its own spending bill without GOP help.

You see, bonding bills incur debt, which requires a 3/5th supermajority, meaning that the DFL has to find some GOP votes to pass such a bill.

With a cash-only bill, a only a simple majority is needed, meaning the DFL can pass the bill all on their own.

Of course, this advice is offered in recognition of the political reality of total DFL control.

Under ideal circumstances, the entire surplus would be used to cut the taxes of those who created the surplus in the first place, thereby mitigating the massive \$2 billion DFL tax increase.

So come on, DFL. Take up the Watchdog and use cash. And since you're all politicians, feel free to take the credit.

LIKE RATS FLEEING THE TITANIC

Are we talking about Democrats running from [Obama](#) or [Obamacare](#)?
No, but we could be.

What we're talking about here is Minnesota Democrats running from the tax increases they foisted on the taxpayers just a few months ago.

While the legislative session doesn't begin until February 25th (thankfully), legislators were able to "pre-file" bills during January.

Overall, nearly 300 bills were filed.

What's funny is that a number of the bills were tax repeals filed by - wait for it - Democrats.

Isaacson introduced:

[H. F. 1877](#), A bill for an act relating to sales and use tax; repealing the tax on storage and warehousing services; amending Minnesota Statutes 2012, section 297A.61, subdivision 3, as amended.

Isaacson introduced:

[H. F. 1888](#), A bill for an act relating to taxation; sales and use; repealing the tax on repairing and maintaining commercial and industrial machinery and equipment; amending Minnesota Statutes 2013 Supplement, section 297A.61, subdivision 3.

Isaacson introduced:

[H. F. 1889](#), A bill for an act relating to taxation; sales and use; reinstating the exemption for telecommunications equipment; amending Minnesota Statutes 2012, section 297A.68, by adding a subdivision.

McNamar introduced:

[H. F. 1893](#), A bill for an act relating to taxation; sales and use; repealing the tax on repairing and maintaining commercial and industrial machinery and equipment; amending Minnesota Statutes 2013 Supplement, section 297A.61, subdivision 3.

Halverson, Rosenthal, Atkins, Selcer, Dorholt, Sawatzky and Savick introduced:

[H. F. 1896](#), A bill for an act relating to taxation; sales and use; repealing the sales tax on storage and warehousing services; amending Minnesota Statutes 2013 Supplement, section 297A.61, subdivision 3.

Johnson, S.; Atkins; Persell and McNamar introduced:

[H. F. 1900](#), A bill for an act relating to taxation; sales and use; reinstating the exemption for telecommunications equipment; amending Minnesota Statutes 2012, section 297A.68, by adding a subdivision.

McNamar; Persell; Sawatzky; Falk; Faust; Radinovich; Ward, J.E.; Johnson, C.; Savick and Lien introduced:

[H. F. 1950](#), A bill for an act relating to sales and use tax; repealing the tax on labor for farm equipment repair services; amending Minnesota Statutes 2013 Supplement, section 297A.61, subdivision 3.

This must be some sort of land speed record for running away from a tax increase.

Heck, the warehouse tax isn't even effective yet, and Dems are running for the life boats.

The Watchdog gets the feeling the CYA will be the theme of many DFL campaigns this year.

1/24/14

In This Issue:

- 1. The Family Re-United.**
- 2. LEA Scorecard is Out.**

THE FAMILY RE-UNITED

What's happening, Watchdogs? It's Friday, the weekend is upon us, and another edition of journalistic excellence is here for your reading pleasure.

Let's start with some good news right here in Anoka County.

This week, state Senator Branden Peterson and state Representative Kurt Daudt mended fences with their local GOP delegates, which will allow the Red Team in those districts to focus strictly on whuppin' the DFL up and down the ticket in 2014.

Over in GOP District 35, a previous vote of "no confidence" was lifted after local party leadership voted in favor of it in response to Sen. Peterson's vote in favor of gay marriage this past legislative session.

In District 31A, Rep. Daudt was on the agenda for a similar no confidence vote this week after local party leaders expressed disappointment that he didn't inform them of an incident in which he was a witness to alleged gun play after a car sale in Montana went awry.

Those local party leaders also stated that they were disappointed with Daudt's support for a past legislative bonding bill.

After a meeting between the parties, the scheduled no confidence vote was rescinded.

This is good news for all parties involved.

While the Watchdog can understand the angst of these delegates and knows them to be passionate and committed conservatives, a public vote of no confidence is a bit of an extreme reaction and a public airing of a family grievance that divides the GOP and delights the DFL.

After all, while some may disagree with the way each legislator has voted on a particular issue, the overall body of work of both is without question is one that favors more freedom for the citizen and less governmental control of our lives.

While there are many examples, Sen. Peterson has been an unquestioned champion of libertarian principles and values. In fact, it can be argued that he is the foremost champion of these interests in the entire state Senate.

Moreover, Sen. Peterson has led the charge in taking on the monolithic Teachers' Union. Many talk of taking on the union, Peterson did it, in his freshman term no less.

Rep. Daudt has also been a strong conservative who has shown his talent for leadership by rising to the rank of Minority Leader in a short time.

Folks, Kurt Daudt is poised to become the next Speaker of the Minnesota House and lead the House in very different direction than the one the current DFL has taken us.

On the other hand, fellow conservatives shouldn't be quick to condemn the local delegates who supported these censures.

While this publication believes them ill-advised, we can appreciate the hard work and dedication these folks put into reversing the disastrous course our nation is taking towards a European-style Welfare State that promises less liberty and more misery for the citizenry.

Their actions bespeak the a feeling shared by many Watchdogs that our society is at a crisis point and the situation is dire.

In other words, their hearts are absolutely in the correct place, but the actions stemming from that passion was misdirected.

It is January of 2014 and one of the most important elections of our lifetime will soon be upon us.

Now is the time for unity of purpose and unity of action.

Every man and woman, elected or not, who shares the belief that liberals must be defeated needs to come together to defeat a very well funded, well organized liberal machine.

Guns must be pointed outward, not inward.

There are people who will come after conservative candidates and attack them without mercy or regard for the truth.

Those people are called liberals and make no mistake, they are coming.

They're coming for Kurt Daudt, Branden Peterson, and the rest of the Red Team.

Only a united effort will prevail this November.

Had enough of Big Government? If your answer is "yes," you're a part of the family and we need to all be on board, though we may have differences of opinion in certain areas.

LEA SCORECARD IS OUT

Our friends over at the Legislative Evaluation Assembly (LEA) have published their 2013 legislative [scorecard](#).

The LEA's mission is to support:

the traditional American principles of constitutionalism, limited government, free enterprise, legal and moral order with justice and individual liberty and dignity.

Editor's note to LEA: Our friend Rep. Ron Kresha's name is spelled that way, not "KERSHA."

So how did our Anoka County GOP delegation fare?

We won't publish DFL numbers. Why bother? Given that the LEA values limited government and free enterprise, there's nothing in common with Democrats anyway.

The first number is the 2013 score and the second number is the life time score.

Sen. Michelle Benson - 78% 80%

Sen. Roger Chamberlain - 80% 84%

Sen. Branden Peterson - 76% 80%

Rep. Jim Abeler - 48% 46%

Rep. Kurt Daudt 81% 82%

Rep. Tom Hackbarth 79% 75%
Rep. Linda Runbeck 86% 81%
Rep. Tim Sanders 84% 71%
Rep. Peggy Scot 77% 77%
Rep. Mark Uglem 70% 70%

So, is any reader surprised that the LEA dunce cap belongs to none other than Jim Abeler?

We learned in grade school that under 50% is certainly an "F."

A lifetime score of 46%? Nothing short of pathetic.

Readers should keep this in mind as Abeler continues his campaign for the U.S. Senate, telling you all about his concern regarding Big Government and individual liberty.

Here are just two of the votes where Rep. Abeler disagreed with LEA:

1. Conforming to the Federal Affordable Care Act

HF779. Rep. Atkins. [SF662. Sen. Loury.]

"An example of heavy-handed state government, this bill dictates what health insurance policies are allowed to be sold. It limits who is allowed to sell them and sets price controls for the market, all under the guise of free markets without opening up the actual market to interstate competition.

It also mandates written notices be provided in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner consistent with the provisions of the federal ACA.

This bill adds major regulatory burdens, and will stifle innovation and freedom. It will drive healthcare costs higher as government intervenes further into an already over-regulated market. It is a violation of the principles of state autonomy protected by the 10th Amendment."

Given the near universal opposition to Obamacare, it is curious to say the least that Abeler voted to conform Minnesota to the Affordable Care Act.

2. Contracts Including Retroactive Pay Increases for State Employees Authorized.

SF58. Sen. Eaton. [HF95. Rep. Lillie.]

"While the bill seems innocuous, it actually obscures from public view the processes used to create these labor agreements. Instead of a professionally negotiated settlement, contracts are negotiated with appointees of partisan political leaders, who are either supporters or opponents of their union. The outcome of these negotiations is easily influenced by pledges of support or past assistance to those in power, causing an inherent conflict of interest.

In the case of these contracts, the previous subcommittee rejected them, because they did not rein in escalating medical insurance costs. After the election of the current legislature, which state labor unions spent millions to influence, a newly appointed subcommittee recommended approval."

This vote shouldn't be surprising as Abeler has had the endorsement of government employee unions many times.

Be an informed activist, folks. Know your candidates.

1/31/14

In This Issue:

Quote of the Week: *It only stands to reason that where there's sacrifice, there's someone collecting the sacrificial offerings. Where there's service, there is someone being served. The man who speaks to you of sacrifice is speaking of slaves and masters, and intends to be the master.*

- Ayn Rand

1. **The Status of the Race.**
2. **Bits and Pieces.**

THE STATUS OF THE RACE

Hey, Watchdogs. Another week in the books, and we're saying "good riddance" to January. It will be July at some point. As Jimmy Carter would counsel, turn down that thermostat and put on that ugly cardigan sweater. Somehow, all those solar panels aren't substituting for propane and natural gas. Make that sacrifice for renewable energy! (See above.)

It's been sometime since we've weighed in on the governor's race and there are some very interesting developments of late. Here are three developments were watching, in no particular order.

First, Dave Thompson this week chose Ham Lake state Senator Michelle Benson as his running mate.

For Thompson, both the substance to the pick and the timing were savvy and sophisticated.

The timing made a lot of sense because it provides Thompson an opportunity to change the conversation away from fundraising numbers.

Thompson's campaign reported totals well behind Jeff Johnson, Kurt Zellers, and Scott Honour, who will self-fund. (Marty Seifert has yet to report, but his totals will come with an asterisk as he got into the race in late 2013.)

It was a savvy move to announce a running mate and step on the conversation around money.

Moreover, picking Benson was a very good move and will yield a variety of advantages for the Thompson campaign.

First, for a candidate who has pledged to abide by the GOP endorsement, it makes sense to "double down" with the delegates by teaming up with a fellow conservative.

Benson's conservative credentials are sterling, and she will offer a voting record sure to please those who will confer the endorsement.

In addition, Benson has assumed a prominent role in fighting the MnSure debacle, a hot button issue with not only conservatives, but every Minnesotan except the most partisan liberal mouth breathers.

Second, she offers gender balance. Like or not readers, identity politics is something to consider given today's voting demographics. It makes sense to team up with a strong female leader of Benson's caliber.

The Watchdog also admits that this is a big point of pride since we're headquartered here in Anoka County.

On many occasions, we have expressed our pride in boasting of so many excellent female conservative leaders in our county. Michelle Benson for LTG, Rhonda Sivarajah for Congress, state Rep. Peggy Scott, Commissioner Julie Braastad, and so many more. The Good Ol' Boys got replaced by the Effective Ladies.

By the way, don't be surprised if another female conservative leader from this county makes a jump up the political ladder soon. Stay tuned.

Third, for those unfamiliar with Benson, she also offers some geographic balance, albeit one by proxy.

She grew up in rural Minnesota, in western part of the state. Suffice to say, she is familiar with farm life and rural life and can intelligently speak to issues of importance to Greater Minnesota.

Fourth, her personal story is compelling and will resonate with delegates and Minnesotans at large.

She's a dedicated mom, highly educated, with a resume that includes a demonstrated commitment to both professional and family life.

Her husband is a veteran and an entrepreneur, who is working on a recent business start up.

Some have observed that Sen. Benson is not well known and her lack of a higher profile is a drawback.

The Watchdog agrees but that isn't a fatal issue. Most Lieutenant Governor picks don't have a high profile. The immediate task is to introduce her to the delegates, which shouldn't be difficult since it's January, making this a fairly early pick.

The bottom line is that this publication believes Benson is a good pick and we're proud that one of our own is stepping up.

Having said that, it should be disclosed that this is not an endorsement of Thompson's candidacy by either this publication or Harold Hamilton personally. The Watchdog never offers endorsements and Hamilton is neutral on the governor's race for the time being, except to offer unbridled criticism of Governor Dayton, who doesn't deserve to be elected to student council, much less as chief executive of this great state.

The second big development of the race is the impressive fundraising haul by Kurt Zellers, coming in at an impressive \$403,000, which was more than Dave Thompson and Jeff Johnson combined.

These numbers demonstrate that Zellers is a heavyweight contender in this race and a viable primary candidate.

This fundraising report was critical for Zellers as he has not pledged to abide by the endorsement.

The simple fact is that a candidate who doesn't pledge to abide by the endorsement rarely wins the endorsement.

Therefore, Zellers needed to demonstrate to the GOP universe that he is a viable primary candidate, which in turns means proving that he has the financial resources to mount a credible primary challenge to both Scott Honour (who has declared he will run in a primary), and the endorsed candidate.

These numbers establish that Zellers can raise the cash needed to compete in an August primary, in what is shaping up to be at least a three-way competition.

Thus, Zellers's fundraising numbers are significant by establishing him as a bona fide primary contender, making for at least a table for two in the GOP primary later this summer.

Finally, the Watchdog is following with interest the Marty Seifert campaign.

Seifert's second run for governor is unique in that the candidate himself is unique among the contenders.

First, he's the only candidate hailing from Greater Minnesota. How will that play out? There is no doubt that he's playing to this fact by ardently courting rural delegates. Hardly a day goes by that Seifert doesn't post on social media describing a visit to some faraway corner of the state.

As far as the Watchdog knows, he is the only candidate who has a campaign airplane on retainer to generate economies of scale regarding these visits. There is little doubt that a cornerstone strategy is to lock up rural delegates.

Second, he's the only candidate who has previously sought the office, and having done so recently.

This fact appears to offer many advantages to Seifert. Primarily, it offers the advantage of a campaign infrastructure that can be resurrected quickly.

There is also an experiential advantage. Although other candidates in the race have run races themselves, running for governor is unique and Seifert can draw upon lesson learned from 2010 to emphasize the things that went well and avoid the things that didn't work so well.

The Watchdog will watch with special interest how the Seifert campaign unfolds, given the candidate's unique position as a rural person with very recent experience running for the office.

The bottom line is that the GOP is blessed with an embarrassment of riches regarding this race.

There is a bevy of well-qualified candidates who possess the tools and talents to win the office and be an effective chief executive for this state.

We know many of our readers have a favored candidate they believe the best and we know that when there is a small difference between candidates, those differences are magnified, which can lead to some nasty exchanges.

Such is life in politics. It's a huge deal to step forward and make a run for governor. We've got some great candidates to take on Mark Dayton and that's a wonderful thing.

BITS AND PIECES

The Bystander Governor - Again. Governor Mark Dayton once again demonstrated his bizarre brand of Governance-By-Vicarious-Witness when his staff jumped out of the way of a bus full of taxpayer disgust when it was revealed that the state paid some \$26,000 in bonuses to managers of the failed MnSure health exchange web site.

Spokesman Matt Swanson covered for his boss's limping backside by claiming that "It is led by an executive director and governed by an appointed board of directors. They have complete authority to set and administer MNsure's personnel policies. The governor's office was neither involved in, nor aware, of MNsure's bonuses."

Governor Mark Dayton led the fight to create this Leviathan and he appointed each and every director who thought it a good idea to reward abject failure.

Here is the [press release](#) in which the governor touted his exclusive appointments to the board.

Back then, Dayton was happy to be associated with this "leadership" group: "The individuals chosen to serve on this board represent a broad diversity of experience and expertise," said Governor Mark.

If this is a diversity of experience and expertise, where are the ones who fall under the category of "can walk and chew gum at the same time?"

John Kline is Slacking. Heritage Action, the political action arm of the Heritage Foundation, just released its 2013 scorecard and the results aren't pretty for Congressman John Kline.

Kline scored a miserable 49% approval on the [scorecard](#).

Numbers like that are in Jim Abeler territory. In fact, the Watchdog hereby announces that 50% approval on a legislative scorecard is now known as the "Abeler Line." With Kline below the Abeler Line, there is great cause for concern.

By comparison, Michele Bachmann scored a very respectable 82% while Erik Paulsen scored 61%. The House GOP average was 65%.

Can You Hear Me Now? For our president, the answer is a resounding "no!" The State of the Union address this past week drew the fewest number of viewers since Nielsen began tracking viewership in 1993.

Only 33.3 million tuned in to hear the president offer his bankrupt agenda coupled with a threat to act like the ruling general of a banana republic instead of the leader of the free world.

Here are Obama's State of the Union viewership numbers by year:

2009: 52.4 million

2010: 48 million

2011: 42.8 million

2012: 37.8 million

2013: 33.5 million

2014: 33.3 million

Booze But Not Medicine? House Republicans have offered a bill to allow liquor stores to be open on Sundays. That's all well and good, but the Grand Old Party will look pretty dumb if they push for the wider availability of liquor but not the right of patients and doctors to choose the right medicine, including marijuana, within the doctor-patient relationship.

Both should be passed as a matter of individual liberty, but the protection and enhancement of the doctor-patient relationship is paramount.

By the way, the Washington Times had an [article](#) this week regarding the GOP presidential candidates and their viewpoint that marijuana regulation is matter for the states.

Let's hope our other federal candidates here in Minnesota share that view.

So far, the Watchdog knows that Tom Emmer, running for the Congressional Sixth District holds that same view, which is also held by Rand Paul, Chris Christie, and Rick Perry.

2/7/14

In This Issue:

Quote of the Week: *"Who here is ready to throw out Mark Dayton and install some adult supervision in the governor's office and the House of Representatives? We are now closer to this end of this Democratic nightmare."*

- State Representative Pat Garofalo (R-Farmington) addressing his precinct caucus

- 1. Kurt Daudt Challenged.**
- 2. Caucus Night.**

KURT DAUDT CHALLENGED

House Minority Leader Kurt Daudt picked up an endorsement challenge this week from Oak Grove Mayor Mark Korin.

To cut to the chase, the Watchdog is a bit puzzled by this action and believes it to be unwarranted, unproductive, and potentially harmful to GOP chances of retaking the Minnesota House this November.

Having said that, let's be clear that the Watchdog has great respect for Daudt's challenger, Mark Korin.

Korin has done great work in putting conservative principles into action in Oak Grove.

This publication has praised Korin on many occasions and we stand behind that praise as it was well-earned.

Moreover, we acknowledge the right of a citizen to run for office and the right of the delegates to confer their endorsement on the candidate of their choice.

No elected official has a right to be re-endorsed and no elected official is above hearing criticism from his delegates, whether the criticism is warranted or not.

The delegates in Daudt's district have that right.

Having said that, there are important questions that Daudt's critics must answer if they are to be seen as credible and legitimate in their quest to push the Minority Leader out of the legislature.

Although some delegates in the district are claiming that this is strictly a local party issue, that just isn't the case.

The legislator in question is the Minority Leader and a man poised to become the next Speaker of the House, if we can keep from screwing it up.

As such, Rep. Daudt is at the very center of the House GOP's efforts to retake the majority.

He is at the forefront of fundraising, candidate recruitment, efforts to support vulnerable incumbents, and the legislative strategy that will frame the debate going into one of the most critical elections in many years.

So, it isn't just a local matter for the local delegates. It's much larger than that.

So what are some of the relevant facts regarding the Minority Leader?

- A lifetime score of 91% from the Taxpayer's League of Minnesota.

By comparison, here are the lifetime scores of current legislators seeking higher office:

Sen. Julianne Ortman: 86%

Rep. Jim Abeler: 53%

Rep. Kurt Zellers: 88%

Sen. Dave Thompson: 97%

Sen. Torrey Westrom: 77%

Rep. Mike Benson: 88%

- A lifetime score of 88% from the Legislative Evaluation Assembly (LEA).

Sen. Julianne Ortman: 70%

Rep. Jim Abeler: 46%

Rep. Kurt Zellers: 78%

Sen. Dave Thompson: 86%

Sen. Torrey Westrom: 66%

Rep. Mike Benson: 78%

- Minnesota Liberty Caucus score of 82%.

Sen. Julianne Ortman: 86%

Rep. Jim Abeler: 53%

Rep. Kurt Zellers: 76%

Sen. Dave Thompson: 86%

Sen. Torrey Westrom: 67%

Rep. Mike Benson: 65%

Rep. Daudt also sports a perfect 100% pro-life score from MN Citizens Concerned for Life.

He has also earned an "A" rating from the National Rifle Association.

Finally, Daudt has a perfect 100% score from the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) and is a "champion of small business" award winner.

In short, no thinking person can claim that Kurt Daudt is anything less than conservative.

The Watchdog as already heard from critics who have labeled him a RINO.

One critic went so far as to call him a Democrat.

Hey, if Democrats voted like Daudt, we would all be Democrats!

The other very important aspect of the campaign against Daudt are the broader concerns of those who have an interest in seeing the House Republicans retake the majority this November.

There is obviously no check against the unbridled liberalism of the DFL right now and retaking the House offers the best chance to reign in DFL overreach.

The state Senate is not up for re-election this cycle.

Yes, Mark Dayton is incompetent, but incumbent governors have a track record of being re-elected. Beating Mark Dayton would be sweet but the odds of taking the House majority are better.

As Minority Leader, Kurt Daudt is at the center of these efforts, working to raise money, recruit candidates, protect incumbents, craft the message, and execute both the campaign and the legislative plan to retake the majority.

Mark Korin's efforts jeopardize all of that.

If Daudt abides by the endorsement and loses or loses a primary, House Republicans would be left to find a new leader to pick up the pieces in March or August.

There is simply no way the caucus would carry on with a lame duck leader.

So what's the plan, Mr. Korin?

Have you spoken with House Republicans, donors, or Party officials to explain what the plan is if you are successful?

We've spoken with many of those people and, honestly, they're pretty ticked off with you and your crew right now.

There are new candidates worried about the status of caucus support they've been promised.

There are senior incumbent House Republicans worried that their opportunity to wrest control of committee gavels away from the DFL is in jeopardy.

There are vulnerable GOP incumbents from marginal districts worried about the continuity of support they've been receiving from Daudt and his campaign team.

There are donors concerned that the caucus may be left with no leadership at a critical juncture of the campaign to retake the House.

There are Senate Republicans worried that their chance to gain influence through a House GOP majority is in jeopardy.

Again, what's the plan for the House GOP Caucus if your plan to take out Kurt Daudt is successful?

The fact is that your interests, if successful, will put House Republicans in a bad position. If things turn out badly in November, fingers will be pointing your way.

That's the reality and those are the stakes for the entire GOP regarding this affair.

Just a local issue? Hardly.

CAUCUS NIGHT

Of course, Tuesday night was Precinct Caucus Night across the state, with activists from every major party conducting these localized meetings of their faithful.

With the DFL featuring no real contests for their races, the focus was on the GOP.

Here in Anoka County Watchdog country, eyes have been on the Sixth District race.

(For analysis of other straw poll results, visit the Minnesota Watchdog.)

Tom Emmer won the straw poll going away, garnering nearly 68% of the vote.

County commissioner Rhonda Sivarajah was in second place with nearly 18%.

Former state Rep. Phil Krinkie took third with about 10%.

On one hand, this is an impressive total for Emmer and is indicative of a strong level of support.

On the other hand, both Krinkie and Sivarajah have both declined to pledge to abide by the endorsement, so it isn't a huge surprise that those who attended caucus night didn't show a whole lot of love for them in return.

Moreover, the straw poll has been a poor historical indicator of the eventual winner.

But there can be no denying that it was a good week for Tom Emmer.

In addition to his straw poll success, he posted impressive fundraising totals, far outpacing both Sivarajah and Krinkie.

He has established a good deal of momentum going into the April endorsing convention.

It will be interesting to see how Sivarajah and Krinkie attempt to arrest that momentum.

What's the next "game changing" point in the race?

It's going to be an interesting few weeks.

2/14/14

In This Issue:

Editor's Note: Happy Valentine's Day, Watchdogs! We would tell the world that we love you, but the NSA already knows.

- 1. Whose House is Divided?**
- 2. Debt Ceiling Debacle.**
- 3. Buffoonery of the Week.**

WHOSE HOUSE IS DIVIDED?

If you listen to Legacy Media, not a day goes by without a story about the GOP on the verge of civil war.

Divisions over immigration. A split on how to attack the deficit and the national debt. A fight over government shutdown strategy. Libertarian wing vs. Conservative wing.

Hardly. While the GOP family certainly has its disagreements, where is the media on the Big Democratic Crack Up in Washington and in Minnesota?

Start with Obamacare. This is the signature legislation of our current Democrat president and is the signature "achievement" of the Democrat majority in Congress that passed the bill - with zero GOP support.

One would think that every self-respecting Democrat from the U.S. Senate down to dog catcher would be running on the wonderful political pixie dust of creating more health care, better health care, cheaper health care, and more accessible health care - all by government fiat.

Funny, it's not happening that way and the Democrat camp is at war with itself.

In one corner, Democrats like Senator Chuck Schumer and Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz are claiming that their candidates can - and should - run on Obamacare.

In the other corner, Democrat Senators like Senator Max Baucus and Joe Manchin use descriptions like "train wreck" and "melt down" to describe this signature legislation.

Our favorite is the anonymous House Democrat who wondered aloud to a Politico reporter how Obama "could have f***ed this up so badly."

And don't forget the Dems who are running away from Obamacare as if the Ebola virus had been hurled their way.

When President Obama visited North Carolina, vulnerable Democrat Senator Kay Hagan was nowhere to be found, the unfortunate victim of a "scheduling conflict."

When President Obama visited New Orleans in late 2013, Senator Mary Landrieu was nowhere to be found, the unfortunate victim of a "scheduling conflict."

Notice the pattern?

What's most hilarious is the effort by DEMOCRAT super PACs to run anti-Obamacare ads on behalf of Democrats.

Can you imagine what the media would do if, say, a GOP super PAC ran ads against a tax cut on behalf of vulnerable Republicans?

<http://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2014/01/whoa-liberal-super-pac-slams-obamacare-in-latest-ad-video/>

<http://dailycaller.com/2014/02/12/democratic-ad-bashes-obamacare-website/>

Yeah, those "united" Democrats.

And the fun doesn't end there.

How about the raging DFL civil war over mining in Northeast Minnesota? Talk about a heavyweight bout.

In the green corner, we have the radical environmentalists who want no mining, as that activity would disturb the pristine vistas of the vacation homes

they frequent when they're not back home in Minneapolis hosting fundraisers for all the Metro DFL leadership that all lives within 25 miles of the Capitol.

Then they drive their eco-friendly hybrid cars with batteries constructed of mined metals as they talk on the way to the cabin to their equally environmentally conscious therapists on smart phones made with mined metals before they attend the anti-mining rally that will keep U.S. mines closed while Chinese and Russian mines create the jobs and Chinese and Russian smelters pollute the world with virtually non-existent environmental standards.

In the blue (collar) corner, we have the traditional "Reagan Democrats" who are watching the very last reason to vote DFL go out the window as they struggle to retain the one thing that matters most - a good job.

The DFL screwed them on the Second Amendment and they stayed loyal.

The DFL screwed them on abortion and they stayed loyal.

The DFL then screwed them on traditional family values and they stayed loyal.

The DFL then screwed them on the work ethic that built the Iron Range by passing welfare laws that devalue work - and they stayed loyal.

Now, the most powerful faction in the DFL base is attempting to screw them by keeping the mines that promise jobs, prosperity, and economic self-sufficiency shuttered.

After all, isn't it better for the Dependency Party to keep the Iron Range dependent on government programs instead of real jobs?

That way, the hoi polloi up there in Virginia and Hibbing is easier to control when they start to get clingy on their guns and religion when Party bosses ram Minneapolis liberals down their throats for governor and U.S. Senate.

It is clear that the Minneapolis wing of the DFL is dominating the party scene at this time, especially as Governor Dayton dumped his Duluth-based running mate in 2010 in favor of a Minneapolis liberal to further unbalance the leadership team.

Right now, state Senator Tom Bakk of Cook is only DFL leader who lives more than 25 miles from the Capitol in Saint Paul.

The media has begrudgingly reported that there is some angst and concern that is maybe possibly brewing in the DFL Camp.

Hardly. It's full-blown civil war and therein lies an opportunity. If the GOP can seize it.

It won't be easy and will require the right candidates with the right message, but it can be done, as Chip Cravaack proved in 2010.

The charge will need to be led by Stewart Mills, who has the right profile to win.

Frankly, can Mills appeal to private sector union guys like steel workers and carpenters?

Can he find common ground like gun rights and is he willing to yield on union issues like right to work?

The Eighth Congressional District will be the region to watch this year.

DEBT CEILING DEBACLE

It is simply astounding that Republicans in Washington so thoroughly capitulated this week in agreeing to lift the debt ceiling with no strings attached.

It is equally astounding that Democrats are doing a victory lap over their "win" that lets them run up another trillion in debt without any obligation to put the nation on a path to fiscal sanity.

So we have Democrats in Washington who have admitted that they don't care about spending the country into oblivion and we have Republicans in Washington who have admitted that they are too scared to challenge those same free spending Democrats.

What a debacle.

The Republican surrender monkeys who voted for this ought to be ashamed.

Yes, they will tell us that the public will blame them for a shutdown if things went that far again. We need to focus on Obamacare, they say. We will get the stones to challenge the president after the election, they promise.

What a bunch of bunk.

That may all be true, but who's to blame?

It is astonishing that GOP leadership in Washington is so inept that they can't win the messaging war of pairing increases in the nation's debt with meaningful reform that will put us on a path to solvency.

It's even worse than that. These leaders have allowed the Democrats to frame their position of reckless and unchecked debt accumulation as the RESPONSIBLE course of action.

The fact that this leadership team can't properly message this issue is evidence that it is time to re-evaluate the leadership team. In fact, voters in Kentucky are doing so right now.

The real solution to the debt ceiling debate is to scrap the debt ceiling scheme all together and replace it with the old system by which Congress had to separately vote upon and approve each Treasury bond issue.

Right now, the Treasury borrows as it sees fit until the debt ceiling is reached, then the fight begins. It wasn't always this way. Prior to 1917, the Congress had to approve each bond issue and its terms.

It is time for Congress to reassert its authority in this area and force a debate and vote on each bond issuance, thereby bringing more accountability into these issues and placing another check on the ever-growing power of the chief executive.

Editor's Note: This piece borrows from an idea put forth by the editorial page of the Wall Street Journal.

BUFFOONERY OF THE WEEK

It was quite a week for the DFL as they continued to demonstrate their inability to govern.

Here's the top 5 "highlights" of the DFL week.

1. Did someone say bailout? After weeks of denial, Governor Dayton's executive board at the MnSure insurance exchange admitted that the exchange may need a bailout as the exchange seems to be running as well as the federal exchange, Northstar rail, and the E pull tab financing scheme.
2. Photo ID for me, not for thee. After a DFL precinct caucus turned into a WWE battle royal, it was determined by the DFL poobahs that the rescheduled event would require a photo ID to vote, just like most union elections but unlike the regular elections. You know, the elections where your vote and my vote are at stake.
3. Saint Paul teachers want more money. Education Minnesota and the DFL, their wholly owned subsidiary, are preparing to man (person?) the picket lines as teachers in the Capitol city prepare to strike in order to wring an 11% pay raise out of the district. This in a school district where only 50% of students graduate on time. Don't you wish you could demand a pay raise despite failing at your job half the time?
4. Senator wants union auto plant in Minnesota. State Senator David Tomassoni of Chisholm this week publically welcomed a VW auto plant in Minnesota should a plant in Tennessee unionize and thus jeopardize government incentives in that state.

With the DFL hammering business into the ground, it's laughable, even though Tomassoni was surely jesting himself. With high taxes and one auto plant already run out of the state, that's a pipe dream. Senator, you should stay focused on fighting your fellow DFLers who want to keep mining jobs on the sidelines up in your neck of the woods.

5. Who needs to work? In the face of a recent Congressional Budget Office (CBO) analysis showing that Obamacare would wipe out millions of work hours, Democrats adopted the amazing response that less work hours and fewer jobs would be an opportunity for under-employed Americans to better balance work and leisure time.

Gee, that's like saying that becoming homeless is an opportunity to be free of the hassle of cleaning bathrooms and cutting the lawn.

Or like saying that losing your teeth means you don't have to be bothered with brushing them anymore.

What a concept.

This is what you get with DFL rule, Watchdogs.

2/21/14

In This Issue:

Quote of the Week: *"There are two potential violators of man's rights: the criminals and the government."*

- Ayn Rand

In This Issue:

1. Mega-Projects Equal Mega Problems.

MEGA-PROJECTS EQUAL MEGA PROBLEMS

East Bethel sees the Latest Mega Project Failure

For many years, a dangerous and toxic synergy existed in Anoka County.

On the one side was the general populace in the county, eager to embrace "mega projects" because of a perception that Anoka County was continually short changed regarding the allocation of such projects.

"Everything goes to the South Metro," was the general sentiment for many people in a county that has long trailed other counties with respect to median income, education level, and other indicators of economic prosperity.

On the other side was a group of self-styled "movers and shakers" who sought to pull off the feat of simultaneously winning these projects for the county while helping themselves to the spoils along the way, with everything from taxpayer-financed dinners at fine restaurants to land purchases that enriched some of them.

Yes, these were the Good Ol' Boys. The amateur developers, minor league financiers, and junior varsity negotiators.

Fortunately, the exposure of these charlatans has led to their political demise. Unfortunately, their legacy continues to haunt the taxpayers.

Northstar commuter rail continues to act as a major subsidy suck while the trains don't deliver the ridership, run late behind oil trains, and otherwise can't seem to avoid unplanned meetings with automobiles.

The Ramsey Town Center is an epic failure, the child of not only failed social/economic engineering, but outright criminal activity and fraudulent behavior.

The project continues to crawl ahead, the beneficiary of government doubling down with subsidies, government tenancy (the VA clinic) and more social engineering (the Ramsey Northstar station that was rejected by the federal government and is just miles from both the Anoka and Elk River stations).

The taxpayers do count their blessings that a sales tax increase to fund a football stadium never passed.

It also looks like the taxpayers will dodge a bullet as the Northern Lights Express (NLX) train to Duluth will likely not be built.

But this isn't a trip down memory lane with the Good Ol' Boys.

The past few months has seen another Good Ol' Boys mega project melt down that has people wondering, is Fukushima, Japan East Bethel's sister city?

These past few months have seen another mega project implode, leaving property tax payers in East Bethel holding the bag.

In late 2010, a lame duck city council committed nearly \$50 million in leveraged debt to bring city sewer and water to the city, all built in future anticipation of a massive influx of home buyers and businesses.

In Las Vegas, that's called "betting on the come" and it's just as risky.

Now that city property tax payers are in line for big tax increases to pay back the bonds, the fingers are pointing.

It seems that many of those fingers are pointed at the Met Council, which is always a popular whipping boy and often times rightfully so.

But in this case, the anger and blame appear to this publication to be a bit misdirected.

The Met Council is well known for a policy of social engineering that seeks to coerce people into living in the urban core while at the same time limiting suburban "sprawl."

To initiate or encourage East Bethel, a fourth ring suburb, to expand by initiating a sewer and water system doesn't add up.

What recent media stories have missed in all this is the role of certain Good Ol' Boys who figured they could make some money off of bringing city sewer and water to a city that was only on well and septic up to that point.

Commercial land becomes far more valuable when sewer and water hook up is available, as opposed to the need for drain fields and large septic system for large businesses.

These self-anointed "movers and shakers" more than likely influenced the council to press the issue.

The Watchdog believes this to be true based upon discussions with people who were involved in this project as well as the effort to bring the same infrastructure to Ham Lake.

Make no mistake about it. The untold story here is that this was yet another failed mega project supported by people who collectively have a history of failure when it comes to this stuff.

To be clear, the Watchdog has no reason to believe anything illegal transpired regarding the failed East Bethel project.

But this project stands to yet another monument to amateur "deal makers" who don't know what they don't know.

Watchdogs in Ham Lake should thank their 2008 city council that didn't walk down this same road, despite the heavy and public support from then-mayor Paul Meunier.

Meunier would have put the city on a similar path to obtaining city sewer and water for portions of the city, all in the name of the prosperity that would surely follow.

Thankfully, the city council [disagreed](#) and kept the city out of a risky scheme that could have gone south, giving East Bethel a partner at the trough of misery.

By the way, that city council included Julie Braastad, now a county commissioner.

Meunier is a serial candidate for office, having run for every office except prom queen, it seems.

Besides being a serial candidate, he is a serial embarrassment.

Leave it to the Watchdog to refresh readers' memories of Meunier and his foot-in-mouth affliction.

Remember the time he [said](#) he "felt like a black guy in a room full of 30 white people."?

This comment was in response to Mayor Meunier not feeling that his colleagues on the council were giving his city sewer and water ideas enough validation at a council work shop.

Ugh. Remember this guy the next time you vote against him, probably for Connexus Energy Board, which seems to be the end of the line for politicians who have lost multiple races.

Elections matter, Watchdogs. This is just another example.

2/28/14

In This Issue:

- 1. State of Confusion.**
- 2. Moving On.**
- 3. It's Only Less Thievery.**

STATE OF CONFUSION

Greetings, Watchdogs. As you know, there was a slew of noteworthy political activity this past week, but we start this week with a prospective look at Anoka County politics.

Tomorrow, delegates in House District 35A will endorse a candidate to replace state Rep. Jim Abeler, who has decided not to seek the GOP endorsement for his own seat.

According to a recent [article](#) in Politics in Minnesota (PIM), Abeler's rationale is that he wants to be focused on his quixotic race for the U.S. Senate, where he has absolutely no chance to win.

This attitude towards re-election to his House seat is a big change. Just last month, Abeler held a fundraiser where he invited contributions to both his Senate campaign as well as his House re-election campaign.

Of course, Abeler is mum regarding whether or not he will simply run in a primary to reclaim his House seat, telling BPO leaders that he "hasn't really thought about it."

Riiiiight.

Of course, he would need to file to run in a primary in a timely fashion, which may not happen since he may run in a primary for the Senate.

Easy to follow, right?

In any case, now is the right time for thus BPOU to move on from the Rep. Abeler era and get behind a candidate who will better represent the principles and values of those who confer the GOP endorsement for that House seat.

While House District 35A may not be the most conservative in the state, it is a heck of a lot more conservative than the person who has been representing it in the House.

Moreover, it's time for a candidate who will show some more respect to the delegates.

Throughout this process, Abeler has been less than forthcoming regarding his plans.

This hampers efforts to find good candidates and allow the local party to move on with the best information possible to keep the seat in GOP hands and work to secure a House majority this November.

He owes it to the BPOU to clearly explain his plans regarding a potential primary run for the House seat he occupies.

To do otherwise is not only disrespectful, it's arrogant.

As this publication as mentioned in the past, however, respect for the delegates has never appeared to be a high priority for Abeler.

Let's hope the delegates get behind a good candidate tomorrow and that person builds a quality campaign that can overcome both a DFL opponent but also a potential primary challenge.

Right now, only one candidate, Abigail Whelan, has filed a campaign with state Campaign Finance Board.

The Watchdog knows nothing of this candidate.

The PIM news article, however, indicated that Don Huizenga is also seeking the endorsement.

Readers may recall that Huizenga was the endorsed GOP candidate in 2008 after Jim Abeler was denied endorsement for voting to override Governor Pawlenty's veto of a multi-billion tax increase.

Abeler prevailed in a primary, thanks to the support of organized labor [unions](#) as well as [missteps](#) by Huizenga.

MOVING ON

Now on to some past business.

Last weekend, House Minority Leader and Speaker-in-Waiting Kurt Daudt survived an endorsement challenge from Oak Grove Mayor Mark Korin.

Daudt secured the necessary support on the first ballot.

There is no need to rehash this battle. It's over and it is now time to close ranks behind Kurt Daudt and support his efforts to gain a majority in the Minnesota House.

As this publication has always noted, Mark Korin is a good man and an excellent mayor.

We are certain he will continue to lead his city in a conservative and exemplary manner.

We are also confident that there will be future opportunities for him regarding public service.

Having said that, there will no doubt be much introspection within the BPOU regarding some of the voices within who seem to be more focused on fomenting internal disputes and generally stirring the pot rather than focusing on the external threat posed by liberalism from all quarters.

We wouldn't be surprised to see the delegates and activists bring about some changes in the near future.

IT'S ONLY LESS THIEVERY

Well, well, well. This week, the House Taxes committee passed some \$500 million in tax cuts, including a repeal of the three business-to-business taxes that drew the ire of the state's job creators.

Count the Watchdog as unimpressed.

The DFL raised taxes by \$2billion last session.

So the taxpayers get a 25% "break" on the reaming they were set to endure.

That's like having some gang steal your tires, only to return one of them.

Recall that the November forecast (another to be released today, also expected to show a surplus) showed an \$800 million surplus.

What about the other \$300 million?

And don't forget, loyal readers, that this is just where things have started. The House bill must pass other committees and survive a floor vote.

And then the Senate may or may not agree.

Rest assured, even if some of this money is returned or future taxes staved off, the amount will very likely be less than \$500 million.

Instead of getting a tire back, it might just be a rim.

3/7/14

In This Issue:

- 1. Get Some of Your Money Back and Be Unhappy.**
- 2. Budget Reserves are Bad Policy.**
- 3. Reefer Madness.**

GET SOME OF YOUR MONEY BACK AND BE UNHAPPY

Well, that was easy to predict. The Minnesota House voted to suspend and return a portion of the massive tax increase they visited upon the productive during the 2013 legislative session.

As we mentioned last week, they stole the tires off the car and returned one.

Put another way, after promising to break our limbs, the DFL benevolently decided to only break both arms and just one leg.

How generous. How compassionate.

And just as predictably, the DFL's co-conspirators in the media were right there to trumpet the DFL business "tax cuts."

The media breathlessly shared the good news that the DFL had head the pleas of job creators and compassionately decided to intercede.

This at a time when many states are working hard to be job-friendly by lowering costs and regulatory burdens across the board in order to retain and attract job creators.

The DFL strategy of making Minnesota attractive by dialing back a fraction of the tax increases coupled with market-distorting direct subsidies to politically favored firms doesn't come close to matching what job leaders like Texas, Tennessee and North Dakota are doing.

In addition, let's not forget other job-killing DFL policies like MnSure mandates and the road blocks thrown up against mining.

Like any harvest, the bitter yield won't be reaped until later. The poison ingested today won't harm the economic body until tomorrow.

Fortunately, job creators are more sophisticated than many citizens and realize when they are on the end of a Faustian bargain.

Unlike some citizens who cheer tax refunds instead of realizing they are only recovering that which government wrongly over-collected in the first place, businesses wield a sharp pencil out of necessity and will ultimately operate where maximum shareholder value is realized.

BUDGET RESERVES ARE BAD POLICY

One of the more objectionable bills circulating around the Capitol these days is one that seeks to increase the state's budget reserve.

Just like tax refunds, this concept has a lot of surface appeal and attraction to the many low-information voters who rely on Rachel Maddow and the Star Tribune to tell them what to think about issues like taxes, jobs, and professional wrestling.

As an initial proposition, government should only confiscate those revenue needed to fund government spending obligations.

Because government does not earn wealth and merely diverts it from the private economy, a budget reserve is nothing more than an unnecessary impoundment of private resources that by definition are not needed by government. There is at best only a possible need for that money. In other words, it is idle wealth that could be deployed in the hands of its owners to generate more wealth and prosperity.

For government to confiscate and impound money it doesn't currently need is immoral and poor economic policy.

Moreover, budget reserves relieve politicians of the need to make uncomfortable decisions regarding the size and scope of government.

Let's face reality here. About the only time government even discusses reducing government in any way is when the money is tight. A government with a budget surplus will never pursue smaller programs or greater efficiencies. A government in financial distress might, might, actually do so.

A budget reserve allows politicians to avoid angering the many, many, many constituencies that enjoy an ever larger piece of the government-sector pie

and keep them in office by laundering government money into the re-election campaigns of those who hold the purse strings.

This is a twofer for politicians because that fat budget reserve also lets them off the hook by keeping the spending spigot open while avoiding the need to cover budget holes with unpopular tax increases.

It's a fair question to ask why it makes sense for business and families to keep a rainy day fund but not government.

This is because business and families are making decisions with their own money. From a moral perspective, that money represents a form of private property to be utilized in any legal way.

Government isn't in that position. The money it has it took from its owners by threat of force. Thus, the moral obligation is to take only that money needed to fund obligations and no more.

In addition, as mentioned above, a recession is the only time government is really forced to confront spending decisions and seek efficiencies.

Business and families undertake that task every day. If a business doesn't, it goes bankrupt. If family doesn't, they end up on the street.

Government isn't subject to that market discipline.

In sum, budget reserves needlessly drain money away from the private economy while insulating government from the occasional need to closely examine spending decisions in order to match spending with reduced revenues when the economy moves into a recessionary cycle.

A government budget reserve is little more than a trust fund for government.

And like a trust fund, it insulates the beneficiary from facing the realities of the real world and encourages immature and rash behavior.

Just ask Governor Dayton.

REEFER MADNESS

The Watchdog will confess to considering the medical marijuana bill before the legislature to be an issue with a profile much bigger than the reality.

Whether Minnesota passes such a law or not will not mean the rise or fall of Western Civilization.

But make no mistake. The Watchdog supports medical marijuana.

In fact, this publication stands with Milton Friedman and William F. Buckley in supporting the decriminalization of marijuana. But that's an item for a future publication.

The Watchdog does not claim to have a great deal of expertise with either marijuana in general or medical marijuana in particular.

As a first proposition, the government needs to get out of the exam room. The decision to employ marijuana as a treatment option is one to be made between a doctor and a patient within the sacred confines of that relationship.

It's the doctor-patient relationship. Not the doctor-bureaucrat-patient or the doctor-cop-patient relationship.

Second, 20 states have a medical marijuana law running the gamut from liberal states like Oregon to conservative state like Montana and Arizona to purple states like New Mexico and Michigan.

As far as we can tell, the buildings are still standing, the rule of law still prevails, and the sun still rises in the morning in those states.

Third, it appears that none of the 20 states with a medical marijuana law have repealed or have scaled back their laws. Things must be working fairly well.

It's also a bit peculiar that the opposition to medical marijuana is coming not from the health care folks but from law enforcement.

Excuse us, but since when did our cops become experts on health care? Do doctors come to the Capitol and testify on criminal justice issues?

Moreover, since when did law enforcement decide that it was proper and acceptable to influence the making of public policy.

Law enforcement is just that. Law enforcement. Like the military, law enforcement is merely an instrumentality of public policy, not a maker of it.

Watching law enforcement attempt to influence the making of public policy is as objectionable and inappropriate as it would be to see military officers testify for or against a foreign policy decision to use deadly force against an enemy.

Staking a position for or against public policy raises troubling doubts about law enforcement loyally and uniformly enforcing the laws our policy makers fashion.

The arguments that law enforcement representatives make against medical marijuana defy common experience and thus carry little weight.

For example, arguing that medical marijuana will make that drug more widely available is almost laughable. Marijuana is already widely available and has been for many, many years.

You don't need to con a doctor into writing a bogus prescription. You only need to head down to the local high school parking lot.

The only people who obey the drug laws are the law abiding and those who otherwise wouldn't use it but for their illness. Giving them safe and legal access to marijuana under a doctor's supervision won't collapse society.

The news reports and the committee hearing the Watchdog staff watched were filled with normal people trapped in desperate situations.

Children with aggressive seizures, veterans with physical and mental wounds, mothers who watched their children die an agonizing death.

We didn't see any stoners or advocates of an unconventional lifestyle.

The medical marijuana bill is very consistent with conservative principles regarding smaller government, health care liberty, and compassion for the sick.

Kudos to Senator Branden Petersen, and Reps. Pat Garofalo, Andrea Kieffer, David FitzSimmons, Tim Kelly, and Tom Hackbarth for co-sponsoring this common sense bill.

3/14/14

In This Issue:

- 1. Obamacare Update.**
- 2. Commuter Rail Fails Again.**
- 3. That Old Circular Firing Squad.**

OBAMACARE UPDATE

Greetings, Watchdogs. Welcome to another edition of the Dog.

Like the national debt, it can become easy to become desensitized to the mind-numbing failures of Obamacare.

Nonetheless, it's important to keep up with not only the failures of Obamacare, but the efforts of President Obama, the father of this ill-fated monstrosity to conceal those failures from the American people.

This is especially true as America nears the deadline for enrollment and we all witness the propaganda campaign to fool the citizenry into thinking it's really just hunky-dory in the land of nationalized health care.

This week, the Obama Administration stated that 4.2 million had selected a health care plan thus far.

That's somewhat interesting, but how many have actually paid their first premium, a better indicator of who's actually accessing the system?

The federal government tells the taxpayers that it doesn't know that number.

Let's set aside for a moment the damning excuse the government uses for not having that data (the computer system to track that information hasn't yet been built).

Insurance industry executives who spoke to the Washington, D.C. publication Politico that indeed they have turned over that information to the government. They claim that about 20% of those 4.2 million have yet to pay a premium.

Soooooo, someone here is being less than truthful. We wonder who that might be - not.

These numbers matter because the president and his health care bureaucrats established hard numbers by which to judge his health care contraption.

And just like commuter rail ridership numbers, government didn't come close and appears to be compounding the failure by lying about failure.

When the president promised to sign up 7 million people, 800,000 matter in the PR battle.

Our prediction is that the president will take a page from the commuter rail gang play book and arbitrarily reduce the numbers and then claim success.

Hey, if Northstar rail can count Twins fans as "commuter" rail passengers, maybe the president can offer Obamacare with the purchase of every Twins ticket and count fans as "enrolled."

Does it really matter anymore with this president? The facts went out the window a long time ago. Logic and rational thinking left the building long before that.

COMMUTER RAIL FAILS AGAIN

The folks at Metro Transit might want to update their [web site](#), especially the part that brags:

Northstar provides reliable and safe transportation and saves commuters significant travel time.

Uh, no, no and no.

After all sorts of problems this winter breaking down, running late, colliding with cars and generally falling victim to all the delays it's advocates (who today are nowhere to be found) said would never happen, The Expensive Train That Couldn't visited one more instance of indignity on its shrinking base of believers.

Because of the train's unreliability, the bureaucrats tried to create a simple text and email alert program to tell commuters of the train's unreliability and delays.

The only problem is that the system set up to warn of the train's unreliability was found to be itself unreliable.

According to [article](#) in the Star Tribune, the text and email alert system offers information that is vague, uninformative, and untimely, according to riders.

The Met Council responded by telling the taxpayers that the system works like crap because it was rolled out before it was ready.

Still in "beta testing" they say.

No word on whether the contractors who worked on this system were the same ones involved in the health insurance exchange web site development.

Really. How hard is this? Why does government have such a difficult time replicating things that the private sector perfected a long time ago?

It likely has something to do with that whole competition and profit motive thing, which is distinctly missing from the government's manner of doing business.

If there's one thing that will scare riders off mass transit, it's an unreliable system.

What a debacle. No wonder legislators like State Rep. Melissa Hortman can't be found touting Northstar these days.

THAT OLD CIRCULAR FIRING SQUAD

We hope you haven't gotten sick of the Republican Circular Firing Squad because it's not done.

This past week, the Minnesota Family Council (MFC) brought their [circus](#) of goons to Eden Prairie to deny endorsement to State Rep. Jenifer Loon.

Apparently, the beef with Rep. Loon is solely her vote in favor of same sex marriage.

RINO? Unworthy of support? You decide:

2013 Taxpayer's League of Minnesota score of 92%.
NFIB "Friend of Small Business" 100% rating.
2013 Minnesota Chamber of Commerce 100% rating.
2013 MCCL rating of 100%
"A" rated by the National Rifle Association

In short, it looks like the goons have gone on another fool's errand, attempting to knee cap the very candidates many of us consider to be doing good work in Saint Paul.

If these folks want any credibility, they should let us know when they plan on taking on and taking out Democrats.

You know, the folks who pass the tax and spend laws and believe in Big Government doing big things.

Being pro-jobs, pro-life, and pro Second Amendment isn't enough for a group that believes that, "Supporting Christ-centered statesmen and stateswomen to rebuild a foundation of godly leadership in Minnesota is one of our key strategies."

Taking out solid conservatives seems to be a strange way to achieve that objective.

All that strategy leads to is a DFL majority most assuredly not interested in "godly leadership."

Remember back in 2011 when the MFC and allied groups thought it would be pure political genius to put a ban on gay marriage on the ballot in 2012?

In 2010, voters listened to the GOP's promise to focus on jobs and the economy and made them a majority in the House and Senate.

In 2011, the GOP acted on that promise with their budget yet that promise was washed away by the focus on a high profile constitutional amendment campaign to write traditional marriage into the constitution.

This despite the fact that gay marriage was already banned under state law.

For the record, the Watchdog is opposed to gay marriage.

But we're more opposed to political ineptness and incompetence.

The backlash that effort engendered surely helped install a DFL House and Senate majority that completed a DFL political trifecta that has done the following in Minnesota:

\$2 billion in tax increases

Expansions of government employee union power and benefits

A solar energy white elephant

Unionized day care workers

Obamacare in Minnesota known as MnSure

Gay marriage

A new office building for senators

And this year, the prospect of a minimum wage hike and a "bullying" bill.

Great strategy, guys. Thanks.

The next time you want to pump out a press release bragging about all your "influence," do it when you actually do something to make this state a place of greater freedom and individual liberty. And that starts with focusing on the true obstacle to that freedom - liberals.

3/21/14

In This Issue:

- 1. Circular Firing Squad Follow Up.**
- 2. Barack Doesn't Get Economics? Impossible!**
- 3. Planet Dayton.**

CIRCULAR FIRING SQUAD FOLLOW UP

Last week's piece on the Minnesota Family Council's (MFC) effort to unseat Reps. David FitzSimmons and Jenifer Loon engendered a good deal of feedback from readers, much of it positive and some of it negative.

Unfortunately, the negative feedback seemed to be rooted in a failure to carefully read the piece.

A careful or even cursory reading of the item clearly stated that the Watchdog opposes gay marriage and supports traditional marriage.

"For the record, the Watchdog is opposed to gay marriage," we wrote.

The item went in to support the thesis of the argument by next noting, *"But we're more opposed to political ineptness and incompetence."*

There is no need to re-litigate the issue, but the Watchdog would note a couple of more facts that buttress the argument that the effort to whack Loon and FitzSimmons was more show than substance.

In 2013, both Reps. Loon and FitzSimmons scored a strong 92% approval [rating](#) from the MFC.

Yes, a 92% approval rating, meaning that both voted for the MFC position on every scored issue except one.

That's 11 out of 12 votes as selected by the MFC.

Using their score card, there were 122 legislators on both sides of the aisle who scored lower than Loon and FitzSimmons on the score card, including many who scored a "zero."

In closing, this publication will assign credibility to the MFC when and only when they show success in taking on the true enemies of traditional principles and values and not the people who disagreed on only one of the 12 most important 2013 session votes - as chosen by the MFC themselves.

BARACK DOESN'T GET ECONOMICS? UNPOSSIBLE!

For the uninitiated, the headline is play on a famous quote from Ralph Wiggum of "The Simpsons," who once [exclaimed](#), "Me fail English? That's unpossible!"

This week, the President of the United States demonstrated that his grasp of economics is as tenuous as Mr. Wiggum's grasp of the King's English.

In an [interview](#) with our own Julie Nelson of KARE 11, the President was asked about a Congressional Budget Office estimate that his minimum wage proposal would result in the loss of 500,000 jobs.

In response, he said, "Keep in mind we're constantly creating and losing jobs. And, what we've seen over the last five years is the unemployment rate has come down steadily under my administration, for a whole range of reasons."

Yes, the unemployment rate is falling. It's falling because more and more people are dropping out of the work force as the president's policies are creating a permanent underclass like the kind found in moribund European economies like those of France and England.

That's not a good thing, Barack.

More importantly, note the remark, "We're constantly creating and losing jobs."

Note that president either by design lies or by ignorance confuses two very separate and distinct types of job destruction.

In the **private** economy, it is true that jobs are created and destroyed all the time.

This "creative destruction" is a good thing because all resources, including labor, are limited.

Thus, labor is directed to its highest and best use through market forces that enforce market entrance and exit.

Fifty years ago, few workers were in the field of software architecture but many were working on black and white televisions.

Today, the black and white TV jobs have been destroyed and software jobs created.

This process leads to the creation of greater and greater wealth and thus greater prosperity for all.

Obama's version of creation and destruction has nothing to do with wealth enhancement and economic prosperity.

The jobs he creates through government fiat are not jobs that create wealth nor are they jobs the private economy demands. If the private economy needed them, it would have created them.

Instead, Obama uses debt and confiscated private sector monies to hire one guy to dig a hole and another to fill it.

He hands out perverse economic incentives to destroy productive assets (e.g. cash for clunkers) or simply to accelerate demand that is in the pipeline (clunker scheduled to be scrapped in the near future any way).

Most importantly, his policies, including minimum wage, destroy useful and productive jobs that would otherwise continue to exist but for government destroying them through economic policy.

So, no, Mr. President. "We" aren't creating and destroying jobs all the time.

The private economy is allocating resources efficiently, including labor.

In the meantime, you're destroying productive jobs and creating make work jobs.

You grasping basic economics, Mr. President? Impossible.

PLANET DAYTON

It's been an interesting couple of days on Planet Dayton.

After waking from his post-hip surgery slumber, the governor realized there was a legislative session going on and decided to amble back to the Capitol and see what was happening in his absence.

Of course, the governor wasn't sleeping the whole time back at the Mansion.

He took time out to tell the mothers of sick kids they could simply go out on the street to buy marijuana for their children.

On his first day back on Wednesday, the governor returned to prime form, lashing out in fairly incoherent fashion on a number of subjects.

First, he publicly spanked DFL Senate Majority Leader Tom Bakk for failing to quickly send him a tax bill repealing some of the harmful and foolish taxes he insisted upon just a few months ago.

The governor proceeded to air the dirty DFL laundry by revealing that the tax bill was, in his opinion, being held hostage by Sen. Bakk's desire to have the House authorize spending on the Taj Mahal Bakk Senate office building.

Bakk, holding his reddened back side, immediately announced that the DFL would shred the rule book and pass the tax bill without the normal Constitutional safe guards concerns enough time for legislators to actually read and understand the bill.

The DFL pushed the issue anyway, believing that can be no downside to passing a bill to find out what's in it. Just ask Nancy Pelosi.

Because the waiving of the rules requires a super majority, the GOP refused to comply, leaving the tax bill to be voted upon today at the earliest.

But don't forget that the Senate is poised to pass a House-originated bill that was different.

This means that there will likely be a conference committee on the bill, further delaying the bill.

Senate Minority Leader David Hann was absolutely correct when he observed that it's getting old watching the governor lash out time and again against legislation he himself agreed to sign.

Only on Planet Dayton.

3/28/14

In This Issue:

Quote of the Week:"The great virtue of a free market system is that it does not care what color people are; it does not care what their religion is; it only cares whether they can produce something you want to buy. It is the most effective system we have discovered to enable people who hate one another to deal with one another and help one another."

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- 1. Taxpayer-Subsidized Teams Disappoint.**
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TAXPAYER-SUBSIDIZED TEAMS DISAPPOINT

It's been a rough patch for Minnesota sports fans, and it's not the on-field product that stinks in this case. Yes, the on-field product reeks but we're talking about the odor of the taxpayer subsidies in this case.

First up is the Minnesota Vikings. Just minutes after suckering the mayor of Planet Dayton out of hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars for a new football stadium, Minnesota's most infamous New Jersey real estate baron sent his pinstripe-suited lobbyists back under the Capitol Dome to see if they could con even more money out of the public fisc in order to land a Super Bowl.

You see, we need a Super Bowl out here in fly over country to feel better about ourselves and to look slightly less hickish in the eyes of the East Coast elites who control America's biggest non-profit enterprise - the National Football League.

We're told that hosting such events for rich folk from elsewhere makes us a "big league" town, which is kind of like being selected to the fraternity or earning a letter jacket, we guess.

You see, if you want to be cool enough to land a Super Bowl, government must waive certain taxes on tickets, lodging, sales, and even income taxes on NFL personnel.

The waiving of taxes for NFL personnel is surely needed since those folks are undoubtedly in need, what with them devoting their professional lives to working for a non-profit like the NFL.

Taking time out from his quest to build a \$90 million office building for himself, DFL Senate Majority Leader Tom Bakk insightfully told the media, "It's going to cost money," to host a Super Bowl.

Really. And then there is Lester Bagley, the hapless chief lobbyist for Zygi Wilf, who has once again shown up on the political scene, much like the idiot uncle who shows up periodically to "stay for a few days" and borrow some money, usually around the Holidays.

Mister Bagley was quoted as noting that the tax exemptions were mandatory because other cities were offering them and we need to do the same in order to...wait for it... be **COMPETITIVE**.

Yes, the old competitive card got waived, as usual.

Hey, Lester. You suckered \$500 million out of Dayton and the taxpayers. If that isn't enough for a Super Bowl, too bad.

And speaking of competitive, how are things working out for the Minnesota Twins these days?

You know, the local 9 who got a shiny new stadium back in 2010 and have promptly lost more than 90 games in back to back seasons, with 2014 not looking any better.

This publication remembers back when the Pohlads were coming to the legislature hat in hand looking for a stadium, claiming that it was needed to...wait for it.... field a **COMPETITIVE** team.

It seems "being competitive" has become code for "give us some money."

And we're not done.

Minnesota's most chronically underachieving taxpayer-funded team, the Gopher football team, just this week ~~announced ground breaking for a \$70 million practice facility to compliment the new newer TCF Bank Stadium.~~

While subsequent news reports refuted the story, the erroneous news report provided an opportunity to take a look at just how effective a new stadium has been in making the Goofer football team more...wait for it... **COMPETITIVE**.

Since opening in 2009, here's how the grid iron Gophers have fared in the Big 10 and in Bowl games:

2009: 3-5 in Big 10 play, lost to Iowa State in the Insight Bowl

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So there you have it. One .500 season and zero bowl victories.

The public subsidy for these three facilities is approximately \$1.2 billion. Let's see how many championships and how much prestige we can get for \$1.2 billion.

We know that \$1.2 billion could build a lot of roads, fill a lot of pot holes, and otherwise meet core obligations of government.

SARAH PALIN WEIGHS IN

Erstwhile Alaska governor and former McCain running mate Sarah Palin came down from on high this week to make a Facebook endorsement of state Senator Julianne Ortman in her race to be the GOP candidate to take on Al Franken this fall.

Seriously, does Sarah Palin's endorsement mean anything? Is she considered an opinion leader in the GOP or in conservative circles anymore?

This publication has no issue with Sarah Palin and doesn't endorse candidates, but the immediate thought the staff had upon hearing the news was, "does it matter?"

You tell us, readers. Send an email to Harold at harold@anokacountywatchdog.com and tell us. Does the Palin endorsement make you more likely to support Sen. Ortman over her rivals?

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One of the mothers, corroborated by others in attendance, claimed that Governor Dayton told her to go out on the street to obtain marijuana.

Jessica Hauser, the mother of a child with severe epilepsy, "You can buy it on the street. It's decriminalized in Minnesota. There's a good distribution system here already."

Another mother at the meeting, Angela Garin, said she related to the governor the positive results her son experienced in using medical marijuana in Oregon.

He told her to take her son back there if it worked so well.

Let's put aside for a moment the Planet Dayton logic of encouraging otherwise law abiding mothers to become criminals to help their kids.

Re-read and consider the tone and civility used by the governor in addressing these taxpayers for whom Planet Dayton works.

Now imagine if Republican governor Tim Pawlenty had used those same words in the same situation.

The media and every liberal interest group in town would be going nuts and demanding the governor's head.

The Democrats accuse the Republicans of a "war on women."

So what do you call this?

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4/4/14

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4/11/14

In This Issue:

Factoid of the Week: The latest cost estimate for the Southwest Light Rail Line is estimated at \$1.7 billion to construct. If that money was repurposed for roads, it would fill 850,000,000 pot holes.

Editor's Note: The 2014 Minnesota Legislature is now on the Passover/Easter Break until April 22nd, giving beleaguered taxpayers a small respite. But make no mistake, the DFL made sure they got one last whuppin' before the bell. Minimum wage, a "cheaper" Senate Office Building, and a parental-rights, local-control sapping "bullying" bill were all visited upon us before legislators high tailed it back home, with Democrats desperately wanting to talk about something besides Obamacare.

- 1. Political Update.**
- 2. Planet Dayton Update.**

POLITICAL UPDATE

Given events at the Capitol during the legislative session, the Watchdog has naturally focused attention on Saint Paul.

Tomorrow, however, is the endorsement contest for Republicans who will confer party endorsement on a candidate for the Minnesota's Sixth Congressional District.

Tom Emmer and Rhonda Sivarajah will compete, with Phil Krinkie declaring that he will not compete in the primary.

Conversations with campaign observers indicate that the endorsement fight is likely to be short lived.

Insiders indicate that Emmer has over 70% of delegates committed to voting for him, which is more than enough to secure a first ballot endorsement victory.

And while Emmer is likely to walk with the endorsement, it won't solve a thing for the GOP in the Sixth.

That's because both Sivarajah and Krinkie have indicated that an endorsement loss will not chase them from the race.

In a recent Saint Cloud Times [article](#), both Krinkie and Sivarajah stated that they would take the race to an August primary.

Sivarajah's statement comes as no surprise, as she had stated as far back as her announcement event that she retained the right to run in a primary.

The question for her campaign is whether they can raise the resources to run a strong primary race.

That question involves issues such as whether Tom Emmer can keep up his fundraising pace and whether Sivarajah can up her pace or will she commit personal resources?

In a newsworthy development, Phil Krinkie announced that he may mount a third party challenge in the Sixth District as a third party candidate, taking his campaign all the way to November.

The article stated that Krinkie could run as a Constitution Party candidate or perhaps with the Independence Party.

The revelation of a potential third party bid stands as an indicator of his displeasure with the party, the delegates, his opponents, or some combination thereof.

A third party bid would almost surely not result in victory.

Instead, it implies the threat of a spoiler role that could siphon votes away from the GOP candidate or at least force the GOP candidate and allied forces to spend resources that otherwise wouldn't be allocated to that race.

Whether the Sixth District would be that kind of race under that scenario is open to debate.

It's non-presidential year, angst with the Democrats is sky high, there is no "anti-incumbent" dynamic at play, and the district is strongly GOP.

In short, it's hard to see how a third party bid would alter the GOP calculus in any meaningful way.

Or perhaps the talk of a third party bid is designed to gain some other advantage or provide leverage in other areas.

Is this simply a bit of anger or a stroke of political genius?

We are watching with interest.

PLANET DAYTON UPDATE

The Mayor of Planet Dayton, population 1, is really becoming unhinged these days.

It's a toxic stew of dishonesty leavened with a strong dose of contemptuous, condescending rage.

It all started with a media availability this past Tuesday at Planet Dayton city hall, otherwise known as the governor's office.

Dayton proceeded to lash out at his perceived enemies in the legislature, both Republican and Democrat.

In response to questions about the subject of medical marijuana and MnSure, both issues fumbled by Dayton, he became unglued and went on full tilt.

First, he claimed that the legislature should stop "hiding behind their desks" and vote on the medical marijuana issue. He went on to complain that he tired of taking the criticism on the issue while the legislature "stands on the sidelines."

Such news didn't go over well in the House and the Senate, where DFL leadership had stalled the bill in order to accommodate the governor's accommodation of law enforcement, a group that would rather see one million children suffer than let one harmless stoner go free.

After all, a quick check of the record shows that Senate Majority Leader Tom Bakk, House Speaker Paul Thissen and House Majority Leader Erin Murphy all voted in support of the issue in 2009.

There is no doubt that they were protecting Planet Dayton by stalling a bill he didn't want to see, at least until the Mom Lobby started pantsing him on the issue and DFL operatives started realizing that this was an issue they didn't

want to see on the campaign trail this fall. Suddenly, the Planet rotated on its axis, blamed the legislature, and asked that the bill be moved forward.

But the real fun took place when Dayton was asked about MnSure, the state's version of Obamacare and just as screwed up and failed as the federal version.

The latest MnSure incident started with a damning article in the Star Tribune that clearly demonstrated that the governor was made aware of the serious problems with the web site prior to launch.

Despite having that information, the governor not only went forward with the launch, he, yet again, lied to the people of Minnesota by declaring that everything was indeed just peachy keen with the MnSure health insurance exchange.

According to the article, Dayton was informed on September 19th that there were major problems with the web site.

Let's put aside for a moment why the governor of Minnesota wasn't asking long before September 19th about a web site months and months in the making. Then again, the Bystander Governor has spent the past three years claiming ignorance of the most critical aspects of his governorship. Soon after receiving news that the MnSure web site was in bad shape, the governor made public comments that MnSure was "ready to go" and in "phenomenal" shape.

"I did not have sexual relations with that woman - Ms. Lewinski." Oh, wait. Wrong Democrat.

Back to the press conference. In describing a joint legislative panel charged with MnSure oversight, Dayton lost the handle once again and described the panel as a "farce" and mere "propaganda."

That news undoubtedly came as a surprise to DFL Senator Tony Lourey and DFL State Representative Joe Atkins, the co-chairs of a committee described by the DFL governor as nothing more than a Soviet style show committee.

Unglued, indeed!

And speaking of MnSure, there is one important aspect of the debacle that has received little media attention.

Last week, MnSure CEO Scott Leitz, in between court appearances for his DUI arrest, was grilled by a Congressional committee regarding the web site's disastrous launch.

At one point, Leitz was asked about \$26,000 in bonus payments made to MnSure employees, an outrageous incident considering the debacle it has become.

When asked if anything was being done to recover the bonus money, Lietz stated that nothing is being done on that count.

Why in the world aren't GOP legislators making this an issue? Where is the bill or amendment to claw back the bonuses? Perhaps the Watchdog missed it, but we have heard nothing.

The GOP is rightly making the Senate Office Building an issue. We view the \$26,000 in MnSure bonuses in the same light.

Both are emblematic of DFL overreach, managerial incompetence, and outright arrogance

4/18/14

In This Issue:

Quote of the Week: "I don't think we're a low tax state. We've never been a low tax state."

- Mark Dayton, Mayor of Planet Dayton, Population 1

Finally, the governor, in a moment of lucidity, accurately assesses the nature of his world view and his governorship. Tax and spend is the name of the game with these folks.

Factoid of the Week: In 2012, 83 candidates for the Minnesota Legislature received the [endorsement](#) of Education Minnesota, the teachers' union. Only two of those 83 were Republicans. One of them was Jim Abeler, now a candidate for the U.S. Senate.

- 1. The Workin' Man Under Obama.**
- 2. Liberty Update.**
- 3. DFL in Trouble.**

THE WORKIN' MAN UNDER OBAMA

The mantra of the Left for generations has been that they're the party of the Workin' Man, the ones to protect the guy who rises early to work, gives it his all, and returns home at night to raise his family and contribute to his community and his country.

Then again, truth has never been a priority for the Left.

Under Obama, what has the Workin' Man really gained, besides the grand insult that he only "clings to his guns and his religion."

There can be no doubt that the urban liberal, swathed in the religion of environmentalism, statism, and nihilism, is ascendant and rules the Democrat Party.

The new elites who rule the Progressive Movement have no time for the Workin' Man's guns, faith in God, V8 pick up, traditional family values, and belief that government should be efficient and fair in delivering government programs.

The Workin' Man really has no place in the new liberal hierarchy, other than to serve as a political step stool to be stood upon each election cycle by the liberal elites who use his vote to attain political power they will then use to restrict his gun rights, eliminate his job, and force upon him a fiscal and social issue agenda with which he vehemently disagrees.

And this week, proof positive was delivered to demonstrate that the liberal elites, personified by Barack Hussein Obama, have delivered the coup de grace to the Workin' Man.

A Labor Department economist delivered a white paper measuring the distribution of the rise in household income from 2008-2012, a period that directly coincides with the first term of the Liberal Man in the White House.

During that period, the average income level showed that income lost during the height of the recession from 2007-2009 had actually been regained.

The real problem is that the gains weren't evenly distributed.

In fact, it wasn't even close.

Under Obama, the wealthiest 20% (the top quintile), realized 80% of the income gains.

The next quintile realized nearly 19% of the income gains, meaning that the next 60% saw no gains income.

In fact, the lowest quintile lost wages.

This under a president who now decries the "inequality gap," which is a gap of his own making.

Now, in what portends to be the most cynical political campaign in American history, the Democrats propose to run on a platform that blames Republicans for these economic ills while proposing legislative solutions that are little more than further job killing salved by welfare spending that enslaves more citizens under the yoke of government dependency to replace the dignity of work they once knew.

But there are signs of life in the Workin' Man. He elected Chip Cravaack to Congress in 2010 in the 8th Congressional District.

There are signs in the polling data that Stewart Mills may catch another wave of Workin' Man anger this year that could propel him to Washington.

Of course, the Workin' Man needs to be smart enough to realize he is being played by a party that changed the "L" in "DFL" years ago.

But the other party here, the GOP, also needs to be smart enough to offer an alternative that is meaningful and true.

LIBERTY UPDATE

As readers know, individual liberty is the cornerstone of freedom.

Unfortunately, technology has offered a clear path for government to intrude upon one of our most fundamental liberties, the right to privacy and freedom from suspicionless governmental surveillance.

Elected officials who work to protect our bed rock liberties deserve our thanks. This week, we once again recognize state Senator Branden Petersen (R-Andover), a tireless advocate for individual freedom and liberty.

Last week, just before the legislative break, Sen. Petersen offered an amendment to a bill that would allow government to store suspicionless surveillance data for 90 days.

The Petersen amendment would have cut that storage period to 72 hours.

For some reason, the Senate on a bi-partisan basis defeated the amendment.

Readers should be aware of the 18 Senators (17 of them GOP) who voted in favor of this common sense amendment:

Anderson, B. (R-Buffalo)
Benson (R-Ham Lake)
Brown (R-Becker)
Chamberlain (R-Lino Lakes)
Gazelka (R-Nisswa)
Hann (R-Eden Prairie)
Kiffmeyer (R-Big Lake)
Limmer (R- Maple Grove)
Newman (R-Hutchinson)
Ortman (R-Chanhassen)

Petersen (R-Andover)
Pratt (R-Prior Lake)
Ruud (R-Breezy Point)
Senjem (R-Rochester)
Thompson (R-Lakeville)
Tomasonni (DFL-Chisholm)
Westrom (R-Elbow Lake)

The nine GOP Senators who voted the other way should be asked by their delegates exactly why they think government ought to keep this data for 90 days, which amounts to a violation of Fourth Amendment rights.

DFL IN TROUBLE

A recent KSTP Survey USA poll shows that even in Minnesota, the DFL is heading for a pummeling this November, if Republicans can capitalize.

Consider the following:

54% disapprove of the job Obama is doing

49% approve of the job Dayton is doing

46% approve of the job Al Franken is doing

50% disapprove of the job the DFL legislature is doing

31% approve of MnSure

54% Disapprove of Obamacare

7% approve of the budget surplus being spent on government programs

See you at the polls in November.

4/25/14

In This Issue:

Quote of the Week: "If you're following the law, you have nothing to fear."

- Sen. Bill Ingebrigtsen (R-Alexandria) commenting on cell phone tracking technology used by law enforcement to track citizens without a search warrant and without demonstrating probable cause.

- 1. The Government is Officially Broken.**
- 2. Bonding Madness.**
- 3. The Man Without a Country.**

THE GOVERNMENT IS OFFICIALLY BROKEN

While there is no shortage of news stories that demonstrate that the federal government is corrupt, unresponsive, unaccountable, abusive, fraudulent and wasteful, one news story this week has confirmed beyond a shadow of a doubt that all of this is true, and perhaps irrevocably so.

A government audit released this week revealed that the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) handed out bonuses to more than 2,800 employees who had been recently disciplined.

The bonuses, totaling more than \$2.8 million, were given to employees who have engaged in misconduct ranging from a failure to pay taxes to abuse of travel cards to outright fraudulent behavior.

The audit, conducted by the Department of the Treasury Inspector General, found that the bonuses were awarded to employees who received written reprimands, suspensions, and even removal.

Really? IRS employees who owe back taxes getting a bonus? Employees fired for fraud getting a bonus?

Only in government and only under the provisions of a government employee contract.

Isn't a "bonus" for work above and beyond the call of duty?

It sure is, at least in the real world.

You see, there are no rules against bad actor employees getting a bonus. The collective bargaining agreement between the IRS and the government workers' union makes it clear that the award of a bonus isn't connected to conduct on the job.

No, that's not a misprint. At the IRS, bonuses aren't connected to conduct. In fact, the bonuses are little more than extra pay.

About 2/3rds of IRS employees took a bonus in fiscal year 2012.

In typical unaccountable fashion, the IRS response to this flagrant taxpayer abuse was that the audit didn't find any violations of federal regulations.

That's precisely why this abuse is so egregious.

Our federal government is so out of control, giving bonuses to bad actors doesn't run afoul of the rules. There are no rules against such conduct.

And in typical arrogant government fashion, the IRS published some flowery language that took no responsibility, fixed no accountability, and offered no apology.

"We strive to protect the integrity of the tax system, and we recognize the need for proper personnel policies."

Bulls**t, pure and unadulterated.

This is what happens when Democrats and their union buddies rig the system while Republicans don't show enough spine to take a stand against it.

BONDING MADNESS

The congenital tendency of Democrats to spend - and deficit spend - has been on full display this week as the Mayor of Planet Dayton has once again become unhinged.

This time, the unhinging is related to GOP insistence that a bonding bill "only" spend \$850 million, which was exactly the amount that the Mayor of Planet

Dayton and the DFL leadership agreed to with the GOP just a few short months ago.

The Mayor of Planet Dayton justifies renegeing on the agreement by noting that the state now has a projected budget surplus, a circumstance that causes all Democrats to immediately wonder how government can spend that extra cash.

Apparently, a deal isn't a deal when there's extra cash to throw around.

Also recall that the \$850 million deal was part of a budget package last year that also spent \$125 million in bonding.

That's in addition to the spending the DFL has in an additional "cash only" capital investment bill floating around the capitol.

In the typical less-than-statesman fashion that we've come to expect from Planet Dayton, the governor blamed the GOP for refusing to trash the deal and spend more, saying, "they've been wrong since I got here."

That will win over GOP votes for sure.

Moreover, there is some hostage taking going on with Dayton as well, as critical and worthwhile projects in GOP districts are threatened with omission unless the GOP agrees to the DFL ransom.

The GOP has no choice here but to stick to their guns.

Capitulating to this type of tawdry, unbecoming behavior will only embolden the DFL, what is left of them in Saint Paul after voters render their verdict on one party rule in November.

Second, any party to a deal should demand that the other party hold up their end of the bargain.

That's life.

The DFL agreed to this deal and should abide by it, especially when a good argument can be made by the GOP base that an \$850 million bonding bill, especially in the form offered by the DFL House, is filled with projects utterly lacking merit.

Finally, the DFL can go it alone if they wish. There is a large projected budget surplus that would allow the DFL to pass a cash funded capital investment bill that only needs a simple majority to pass, which would require no GOP votes.

The Watchdog has every belief that Senate Minority Leader Hann and House Minority Leader Daudt won't fold.

The real question is whether the DFL will pick off enough individual GOP votes to gain the 3/5th majority needed to pass a bill by putting pet projects for GOP districts in the bill.

The bonding bill is the session clinching bill. Stay tuned.

THE MAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY

With April wearing on and May approaching, political campaigns across the state are starting to mature, and like a person, some age well and some don't.

One campaign that has aged like an octogenarian who's been smoking four packs a day since age 6 is the U.S. Senate campaign of state Rep. Jim Abeler, who has been desperately searching for some kind of traction in his bid to convince Republican delegates that he's the right guy to take on Al Franken.

Just this week, his wheezing and gasping campaign announced that Jim is "all in" against Al Franken, a development that will not permit him to seek re-election to his House seat.

The news was met with enthusiasm only by GOP delegates in his district and other Anoka County taxpayers who have endured 16 years of less-than-conservative votes on a variety of issues.

If Abeler is pushing Franken "all in," it's a bet that Franken can more than cover.

Franken has thus far raised over \$15 million, with nearly \$6 million cash on hand.

Abeler has raised thus far \$109,000 with a paltry \$13,000 cash on hand.

The reality is that no candidate can be called legitimate in this race who has yet to raise at least \$1 million.

The lack of enthusiasm for the Abeler campaign, as demonstrated by lackluster fundraising numbers, is really no surprise.

Conservative donors aren't impressed by Abeler's voting record and many of the special interest groups that bolstered Abeler in the past (e.g. when he faced a GOP primary) won't help and thereby cross Al Franken, a man with his hand on the federal money printing machine.

After all, Franken can deliver goodies in a manner far more audacious than Abeler ever could.

In a political sense, Jim Abeler finds himself to be a man without a country.

Conservatives have options and so do the progressives.

The result is a moribund campaign that won't be around for long, no matter what the candidate may say in announcing his intention to run in a primary.

5/2/14

In This Issue:

Quote of the Week: "Giving money and power to government is like giving whiskey and car keys to teenage boys."

- P.J. O'Rourke

1. State of Confusion.

STATE OF CONFUSION

Finally, the Mayor of Planet Dayton got around to delivering the annual speech we've all come to expect like a visit to the dentist.

The State of State serves as a gauge of just how out of touch governors are with reality as they regale the assembled legislators and other guests with a full on blast of propaganda worthy of any Politburo confab.

And with the Mayor of Planet Dayton, Population 1, you can bet that the nexus between reality and his perception of it is about as tight as the connection between a fish and a unicycle.

The Mayor of Planet Dayton essentially focused on three areas in his remarks: Jobs, Education, and Transportation.

JOBS

Dayton took credit for creating 150,000 jobs since he took office and claiming, like President Obama, that the economy is just hunky dory and jobs are aplenty.

No word on how many of those jobs are part-time that used to be full time.

No word on how many of those jobs are low paying service jobs that used to be manufacturing jobs before Obama's war on coal, industry, and profits.

No word on the job participation rate, which shows that fewer Americans and Minnesotans are working as percentage of the adult population than at any time in the past 40 years.

No word on how many of those jobs are working as ObamaCare "navigators."

No word on how many of those jobs are those working to rectify the disastrous "MnSure" web site that still can't deliver basic functions.

And no word on how many of those jobs are government jobs, which don't create wealth and are funded at the expense of private sector jobs that could be funded if government wasn't confiscating so much private capital to fund make work jobs in the bureaucracy.

Here's what do know.

Government is still the biggest employer in Minnesota.

The state employs more citizens than any other employer in the state.

After that? Well, that's the federal government.

What Democrats don't get is that not all jobs are created equal.

Private sector jobs create wealth and grow the economy.

Government jobs don't.

According to Democrats the man who is paid by government to dig holes and the man who is hired to walk behind him and fill them have "jobs" that are equal to the engineer who designs the medical device that saves lives and the man who runs the company he founded and creates hundreds of jobs.

EDUCATION

As one would expect, remarks in this area focused on the liberal definition of a "quality education," which really means spend more money, eliminate accountability, and expand the role of schools into quasi-family care institutions.

Of course, the mantra is all about the "adequate" funding of our government schools, even though "adequate" is never defined.

In this case, the bragging was about an extra \$223 million spent on education, although it was never explained exactly what return-on-investment taxpayers

realized in the form of higher test scores or other metrics used to measure progress.

Mark Dayton also assured teachers and students that he was working hard to eliminate standardized tests, one of the few objective measurements of student progress and teacher effectiveness.

Of course, the Teachers' Union works hard to eliminate all accountability of their rank file, instead seeking to base pay on little more than how much seniority a teacher has as well as how many online classes at National American University they managed to take in order move over a few "lanes" on the Soviet-era pay grid.

Moreover, the governor fretted aloud over the testing anxiety students feel.

We bet your prep school education at [Blake School](#) included more than a few tests, Mr. Dayton.

But then again, Blake doesn't recognize a teachers' union.

Finally, the governor called for schools to provide more meals, after hours services and other functions that the family used to provide.

The governor lamented that he has seen school playgrounds closed during the summer break, worried about what the kids were doing in the absence of any access to the school playground.

Oh, maybe they were with their parents enjoying family time.

Or at church.

Or in their own backyards under the careful supervision of loved ones.

Only a liberal would see a closed government facility and worry about it.

Here's what we know about education in Minnesota and America.

Only 36% of black males graduate from Minneapolis high schools, which spend more per capita on education than any district in the state.

According to the highly regarded Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), America ranked 30th in math.

The U.S. was outscored by Latvia.

Fully 25% of American students tested into the lowest level of math proficiency.

The testing report noted dryly that deficiencies in curriculum could be to blame.

Really.

In science, the U.S. was 23rd, coming in behind powerhouses like Vietnam and Poland.

Yet our government keeps talking about how well we're doing in math and science.

No wonder our kids score poorly on math yet demonstrate high levels of confidence in their math skills.

Their elected leaders are showing the way.

TRANSPORTATION

The governor acknowledged that he doesn't a darn thing for transportation, especially roads and bridges, since he walked in the door.

He's been too busy working to increase taxes to "adequately" fund education and pursuing light rail for Eden Prairie.

This despite the fact that the state has over 1,500 bridges that are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete.

Over half the roads are in poor condition.

Over 35% of bridges are more than 50 years old.

We have pot holes all over the place.

The public knows the state of our state and of the country is poor under Democrat leadership.

That's why polling numbers for Mark Dayton, Barack Obama and other liberal politicians are so weak.

A wave election is coming this November and no amount of spin, happy talk, and outright BS will change that reality.

5/9/14

In This Issue:

Quote of the Week: "Thinking men cannot be ruled."
- Ayn Rand

- 1. Does the Legislature Ever Adjourn Early?**
- 2. Lawless Obama.**
- 3. Racial Disparities Should Matter to Conservatives.**

DOES THE LEGISLATURE EVER ADJOURN EARLY?

Greetings and salutations, Watchdogs. As the legislature careens towards the finish line under one-party rule, the publication is going to step away from weighty public policy issues for a moment to explore a bit of trivia.

The legislature annually speaks to getting done early to prove that the party in control can "mange the place" while also sending their incumbents home to raise money and work the constituents.

So, does the legislature ever adjourn prior to the constitutionally mandated adjournment date of the first Monday after the third Saturday of May (Article IV, Section 12)?

Here's what the Legislative Reference Library recently said regarding the subject:

Since flexible sessions began in 1973, the Legislature has never adjourned early in the first half of the biennium. The Minnesota Constitution limits the length of a regular session in two ways-it requires that the Legislature adjourn by the first Monday after the third Saturday in May of any year and it limits the number of legislative days in a biennium to 120.

The second year of the biennium is another story-they have adjourned sine die before the constitutional adjournment date in all but two years since 1973. And those two years are subject to interpretation. On May 16, 2010, the Legislature adjourned a day before the deadline. But they adjourned with unfinished business and went into special session on May 17th. In 2002, the House adjourned two days before the required adjournment date of May 20th but the Senate didn't adjourn until the deadline.

The Legislature has adjourned as early as March four times-- over fifty days before the May deadline.. The earliest March date was March 17th in 1986. Other March adjournments happened in 1974, 1978, and 1982. March 29, 1974 was notable because they had already used 116 of the allotted 120 legislative days.

So yes, the legislature does adjourn early. And that's a good thing. A very, very good thing.

By the way, that adjournment date this year is May 19th.

LAWLESS OBAMA

The biggest news out of Washington this week was the vote in the U.S. House, on a bi-partisan basis, to hold disgraced IRS bureaucrat Lois Lerner in contempt of Congress for her refusal to come clean regarding the targeting of Tea Party-aligned groups by the IRS.

This pivot by Republicans marks an important turning point the narrative leading up to the November election.

For many months, the spot light has been on the incompetence of the Obama Administration, ranging from Obamacare to foreign policy to the economy.

Now the focus is turning to the lawlessness of the Administration.

The IRS targeting scandal, Benghazi, Justice Department gun running (Fast and Furious) and spying on the press are just a few of scandals that have demonstrated that this president leads an arrogant and corrupt White House that neither respects nor obeys the rule of law.

These scandals will act as a hammer while Obamacare acts as the anvil to hammer Democrats this fall.

It is indeed shaping up to be a good election for the GOP.

RACIAL DISPARITIES SHOULD MATTER TO CONSERVATIVES

There has been a great deal of discussion in Minneapolis of late regarding racial disparities and efforts to close the gap.

Conservatives often ignore this important conversation and dismiss the debate as one wrongfully focused on group identity politics and which liberal policy will be adopted - and ultimately fail in every possible way.

Conservatives ignore this issue at their peril.

As we draw closer to election day this fall, the Watchdog will occasionally commentary on issues that can help build a sustainable center-right governing coalition in Minnesota and America.

There will be a temptation to allow this year's election to mask some serious structural deficiencies in the attempt to build a sustainable majority.

One of those challenges is to move beyond serving as a protest party in the minds of many voters. In other words, winning support from some voters only when they are mad at liberals.

The other challenge is to consistently win over demographic groups that normally don't vote conservative.

Minority groups are among these groups.

Competing for the support of this growing demographic is critical if conservatives are to reach long-term political goals.

Aside from politics, seeking to reduce racial disparities is good public policy and one that is tailor made for conservative policies.

Having millions of fellow citizens on the economic side lines hurts the country's competitiveness, engenders massive social costs, and raises moral issues regarding opportunity and the achievement of the American dream.

What is ironic about this issue is that liberal social policy is precisely to blame for this lack of opportunity.

Liberal policies aren't designed to foster independence and wean people from the largess of government.

Instead, all liberal policy designed to either placate some constituency (public employees) or make people dependent upon government in order to empower

both liberal policy makers and those who support them with political contributions.

Many minority children are sentenced not only to failing public schools, but some of the worst public schools in the country.

A failure to control crime and blight chases jobs away from areas where jobs are most needed.

Social service policies do little to nothing to promote self-sufficiency and independence from welfare programs.

Unduly harsh criminal justice policies regarding low-level crimes create criminal records that can be impossible to shake in today's world of electronic records.

To be clear, an indictment of bad public policy doesn't mean that individuals are absolved from personal responsibility.

Many people, regardless of race, are in difficult circumstances because of poor decision making and should rightly be held accountable for those choices.

But it cannot be denied that liberal government policies have failed to create an opportunity society where all have an opportunity - but not a guarantee - to succeed.

And this is where conservative ideas come into play.

After all, regardless of race, every person seeks the same goals: economic prosperity, freedom from violence, and the hope that their children will do better than they themselves have done.

Conservative policies are right in this wheelhouse.

Leaders in the movement should jump foursquare into the debate, offering a package of proposals to create economic opportunity where it is most needed.

The first starts with education. A good education is the primary ladder to upward economic mobility.

Good schools are the foundation of great nation.

And good schools, like any sector, are forged in the crucible of competition.

Parents should be empowered with economic tools to choose the school that best fits their child's needs.

Parents, not bureaucrats, should make educational choices for children.

No child should be sentenced to failing school.

And choice means more than open enrollment to another government school. Parents should be given broad choice to select a school that best meets their kid's needs.

Second, conservative candidates should offer a series of criminal justice reforms that run the gamut from privacy violations like license plate readers to a reduction in sentencing or the elimination of criminal penalties for low-level, non-violent crimes.

Again, one does not have to be a particular skin color to be offended by government surveillance and other violations of the Fourth Amendment.

Third, economic opportunity is paramount. Once a person attains a quality education, they need a place to apply their skills to earn a paycheck.

In addition to low taxes and less regulation, tax incentives targeted to certain areas could create an environment that produces jobs and other spin off effects that build economic prosperity and make an area desirable.

Yes, these tax incentives can create market distortions and rankle economic purists.

The reality is that we live in an imperfect world and yes, we are trying to score some political points here in order to advance a higher cause: to repair areas that have been disproportionately harmed by liberal policies and show people who normally don't vote conservative that our ideas are for everyone.

And that's exactly the point. Conservatives should embrace the debate regarding racial disparities because we offer an alternative to failed liberal policies that can and should appeal to all.

It won't be easy to break the status quo, but that is no excuse to get to work.

Political realignments can only take place if someone is there to challenge the existing framework.

This is a discussion worth having for both political and policy reasons.

5/23/14

In This Issue:

1. The Tickets Come Into View.

THE TICKETS COME INTO VIEW

Good morning, Watchdogs. This email update finds all of us liberated from the clutches of the DFL as the 2014 legislature has inflicted its damage on productive and successful Minnesotans and gone home to figure out ways to convince Minnesotans that one party rule was a good thing for us.

Good luck with that.

Republican eyes now turn towards Rochester and the state convention that will begin next week.

By far, the most intrigue and interest surrounds the race to determine who will carry the GOP standard into battle against Mark Dayton to determine the state's next chief executive.

And if the governor's race is the most interesting, the lieutenant governor selection comparisons are the hottest parlor game in town.

Why do we care about the second name on the ticket?

After all, the office of lieutenant governor (LTG) has lost some luster of late, if it ever had a lot to start.

The last two second-in-command occupants at the Capitol had a portfolio smaller than any back bench State Rep. in the minority ever had.

Carol Molnau, after turning in a disastrous performance in her debut as the first LTG to serve as a cabinet head, wasn't seen anymore in public, apparently serving out the remainder of her term under house arrest in some banana republic near the Equator.

After Tim Pawlenty declared Molnau a "one woman SWAT team" who would clean up the Department of Transportation, he would soon discover that she would execute a no-knock warrant and throw a few stun grenades at his reputation for astuteness and judgment.

Molnau's successor was Yvonne Prettner-Solon, who seemed to be the perfect balance to Dayton.

She was from Greater Minnesota, helping strengthen his political credentials in the critical Eighth Congressional District.

She had long legislative experience and knew the players in Saint Paul.

She was articulate. He has trouble reciting the alphabet.

She was widely respected for her judgment, dignity and poise, as compared to Dayton's irrationality and outright goofy demeanor.

The honeymoon didn't last.

According to sources, Prettner-Solon found herself on the outside from day one and became increasingly alienated from the governor, to the point that the two rarely speak.

These sources also speak of a recent blow up where staff proposed to shunt her to a smaller office space until she threatened to go public with her grievances against the governor, possibly staining his carefully crafted image as a champion of Feminism.

Moreover, the office is supposed to serve as a bullpen of sorts should the current governor vacate the office for some reason.

This hasn't happened in modern Minnesota history save for 1976, when Governor Wendy Anderson selected himself to replace Walter Mondale in the U.S. Senate and made Rudy Perpich governor.

Having said all that, we care about the LTG pick because it says something important about the candidate for governor.

The choice of LTG speaks to the selector's judgment and ability to attract a quality running mate.

The LTG choice is also important politically.

The running mate really experiences the apex of his/her influence and power before ever assuming office.

During the critical and hectic months leading up to election day, the LTG candidate serves as a co-candidate for governor, engaging in similar activities as the candidate himself.

It's the last time the two will be anything close to equal.

In short, the LTG candidate can win or lose an election.

So who are the LTG candidates and what do we know about their strengths and weaknesses

Michelle Benson.

Running with Dave Thompson.

Quick Bio:

Resides in Ham Lake

Current state Senator

Married, 3 children.

BA, College of Saint Catherine

MBA, Saint Thomas

Strengths.

- Conservative credentials
- Expert grasp of health care law
- Widely respected in her caucus
- Metro-based, but understands rural/farm issues well
- Never lost an election
- Gender balance

Weaknesses.

- Geographic balance
- Relatively new, working hard on name ID

Analysis: As the Watchdog has said in past issues, Thompson hit a home run with his pick. Benson is a very strong selection who compliments Thompson well. She adds big value to the ticket. Conservative but presents the message very well. Can appeal to multiple audiences. Geographic balance is a minor issue, especially with Benson born and raised on a farm in western Minnesota.

Bill Kuisle.

Running with Jeff Johnson.

Quick Bio:

Famer/former state Rep.

Resides in Olmsted County

Married, two children

Strengths.

- Geographic balance
- Understands Ag issues well
- Convention is in his backyard
- Legislative experience/committee chairman
- Business owner

Weaknesses.

- Lost re-election in his GOP-leaning district
- Lost bids to retake the seat
- Little political involvement since defeat in 2004

Analysis: Kuisle would be a solid pick under most circumstances, but perhaps not this one. Kuisle has been out of politics for the most part since he lost his House seat in 2004. With the convention just days away, it appears that most delegates outside of Olmsted County will likely have little familiarity with him. Since Johnson has declared he will abide by the endorsement, securing delegates is the name of the game. How does Kuisle win delegates for Johnson?

Pam Myhra.

Running with Marty Seifert

Quick Bio:

Current state Rep.

Resides in Burnsville

Married, 3 children

CPA, graduate of Saint Thomas

Strengths.

- Knocked off an incumbent in a swing district in 2010
- conservative credentials
- geographic and gender balance
- Poised and thoughtful
- Legislative experience

Weaknesses.

- Little political experience
- Not the most dynamic personality.

Analysis: Like Benson to Thompson, Myhra is a great pick for the guy up-ticket. While Benson is like Thompson, Myhra provides a counter-balance for Seifert. Known for his acerbic wit and red meat speeches, he needs a running mate who can efficiently block and tackle while he runs down field. She won't score the highlight reel touchdown, but she will provide the blocking to make it possible. She is also versatile in that she appeals to delegates but also has the business experience and personality to appeal to a primary and general election audience. An excellent pick for Seifert that will compliment him well in different political environments.

Dean Simpson.

Running with Kurt Zellers.

Quick Bio:

Former state Rep.

Very successful, self-made business owner

Resides in Otter Tail County

Married with four children and six grand children

Strengths.

- Successful rural job creator
- Legislative and local government experience
- Excellent reputation for judgment and problem solving
- Geographic balance

Weaknesses

- Gender balance
- Distaste for partisan politics

Analysis: This is an outstanding pick for Zellers and one clearly calculated to play to a primary and general election audience. Simpson, known for his no non-sense attitude and distaste for partisanship, would be of little value in securing the endorsement. But that doesn't matter to a guy running in the primary. Simpson will appeal to less partisan voters. More importantly, he will help raise money from the business community, who will find Simpson's business background and focus on solutions in line with their thinking. Zellers will go to the primary without the endorsement and without personal wealth to fund his campaign. Therefore, he will need to raise money in big chunks and in a regular manner. Simpson will help him do that.

By June first, one and perhaps two tickets will be silenced, with the endorsed candidate moving to the primary to meet multiple opponents.

Given the primary dynamic and the weakness of the incumbent, this will surely be an exciting race until election day.

5/30/14

In This Issue:

Quote of the Week: "We cannot expect our young men and women to serve in our armed forces if we are not making sure that when they come home, they are getting the treatment they deserve."

- Barack Obama, 2008

Quote of the Week II: "We're going to cut those backlogs, slash those wait times, deliver your benefits sooner."

- Barack Obama, speaking to the VFW national convention, 8/17/2009

Quote of the Week III: "For Barack Obama, words clearly have no meaning."

- Harold E. Hamilton

- 1. McFadden is the Guy.**
- 2. The Circular Firing Squad - II.**
- 3. My Health Care!**

MCFADDEN IS THE GUY

As GOP delegates gather in Rochester to determine their endorsed candidates for state-wide office, drama and intrigue surround what is sure to be a hard-fought contest to determine who will take the gubernatorial endorsement to an August primary, which in turn will produce the challenger to the buffoon currently living in the mansion on Summit Avenue.

No such drama, however, should accompany the question regarding the U.S. Senate race.

The simple fact is that Mike McFadden is the only guy with the means to challenge Al Franken.

It's that simple.

The other challengers lack the resources to take on Franken and that makes McFadden the only realistic option.

This isn't an endorsement of Mr. McFadden. Like our readers and many GOP activists, we don't know where the guy stands on key issues and he certainly has made no real effort to clarify his world view. Moreover, he has shown no real interest in cultivating support from delegates.

"Aloof" would be a charitable description.

But that doesn't matter. Like it or not, financial viability is a necessary, critical component in mounting a credible, realistic challenge to Franken.

There's only one person in Minnesota who has demonstrated that viability - Mike McFadden.

Remember Kurt Bills?

Through the second quarter of 2012, he raised about \$400,000. His opponent, incumbent Amy Klobuchar, raised over \$6.3 million by that point.

After first quarter 2014 numbers were posted, the mountain is even higher this time around. Al Franken has raised over \$15 million in 2014.

McFadden has raised nearly \$3 million in 2014, the only Republican to bring in over \$1 million and the only one to even come close.

State Senator Julianne Ortman raised over \$600,000 and can claim that she is ahead of where Kurt Bills was at this point in 2012 with respect to fundraising.

Saint Louis County Commissioner Chris Dahlberg has raised nearly \$150,000.

State Representative Jim Abeler is bringing up the rear at \$109,000. This is a very respectable number - if he were running for State Senate. Wrong senate, Jim.

We can talk about "grass roots" all we want. We can speak the high-minded idealism of who we believe to be the "principled conservative" in the race.

None of it matters at this point.

If you want to join the world's most exclusive club, you need the money to get out your message.

If you doubt it, check your recent history. The year was 2012 and the race was Bills vs. Klobuchar.

An Internet search will show all sorts of articles and quotes about Kurt Bills and the optimism despite the lack of money.

He got whipped like a wayward dog.

You can cite other 2012 atmospheric such as the Obama re-election campaign, and that was also certainly a factor.

But you don't run for U.S. Senate in the 21st Century and win by raising less than \$1 million.

That may have been enough for Moses Clapp to win in 1914, but not for any serious candidate in 2014.

Hey, the good news here is that we have a guy who can compete with Al Franken. Plus, McFadden has to be a heck of a lot smarter and more principled than Franken, the erstwhile coke head and current poster boy for anger management issues.

Onward, Watchdogs!

THE CIRCULAR FIRING SQUAD - II

Back in mid-March, we reported that state Rep. Jenifer Loon (R - Eden Prairie) was under assault by certain elements who were angry about her vote in favor of gay marriage while claiming that they were also angry about certain other unspecified transgressions.

Loon's local GOP unit denied her the endorsement and sent delegates home without an endorsed candidate.

There will now be a GOP primary in the district, as the person who challenged Loon at the endorsing convention has filed to run against Loon.

Of course, no elected official is entitled to a free pass to the endorsement and it is also the right of any legally qualified person to run.

Sheila Khine, whose web site notes that she has been involved in the GOP only since 2006, will take on Loon to determine who wins the August primary and goes on to represent the GOP in the November election in a district that trends reliably Republican.

Again, it appears that this is all about the gay marriage vote.

While Khine also alleges that Loon didn't do enough to cut spending when the GOP controlled the House from 2011-2012, it should also be noted that a clown named Mark Dayton was in the governor's office at that time.

To think that somehow legislative Republicans were going to run the table on a governor, even an incompetent one, is grossly naive.

Especially when that governor is a liberal governing in a liberal state. Dayton barks and Liberal Minnesota claps millions of fins in unison.

And let's not pretend that Loon led the charge to moderation, much less capitulation.

Here's what certain groups think of her voting record:
2013 Taxpayer's League of Minnesota score of 92%.
NFIB "Friend of Small Business" 100% rating.
2013 Minnesota Chamber of Commerce 100% rating.
2013 MCCL rating of 100%
"A" rated by the National Rifle Association

So it isn't about the fiscal issues, it's about one social issue.

And that's fine if that's what motivates a candidate to run. They should just be up front about it.

While the Watchdog opposes gay marriage, it's time to put the issue behind us. It's over and done.

It's time to focus energies on defeating liberals as we acknowledge that which unites us in that task, not divides.

But we also find it just a bit ironic that the Minnesota Family Council, the group that thinks gay marriage is the biggest deal in the history of the universe, also likes Jen Loon, even though they are behind the attacks.

Would you believe that this group recently gave Loon a 92% [approval](#) rating?

Hey it's a free country, schizophrenic or not.

Good luck with all that, even though this publication strongly believes that energy would be far better spent taking on some true liberals.

MY HEALTH CARE!

Friends, the Watchdog staff is having fun wallowing, just wallowing, in an ocean of [schadenfreude](#), as we watch Big Labor get walloped with massive health care cost increases thanks to Obamacare, legislation they pushed with the help of the man they supported for president.

You see, millions of union members have health insurance through what is called a "Taft-Hartley Multi-Employer Plan."

These plans are seen as too generous and as "Cadillac" plans under Obamacare, so they must be thoroughly punished so as to help ration the health care we have all been promised but which can never be delivered.

Now, the same folks who brought our veterans the Veterans' Administration health care system will visit that same efficiency, compassion, and quality on all of us.

But back to our friends in Big Labor, who thought that Obama meant someone else when he talked of "sharing the wealth."

In addition to new taxes, Obamacare also visits large cost increases on these plans thanks to a host of mandates, such as "children" up to age 26 staying on mommy and daddy's health care plan as they contemplate getting that 4 year degree in 8 years while hiding in the basement from the all the obligations of adulthood.

Contract negotiations across the country are mired in arguments over who will foot the bill for Obamacare.

If the Watchdog ran the management side of the table, our answer would be simple.

You guys asked for it, you guys endorsed the supporters of this, and now you get to pay for it.

In what may be the quote of the year, one Labor Poobah complained to the Wall Street Journal, "When we first supported the calls for health care reform, we thought it was going to bring down costs."

That ranks right up there with "I'm going to run the most transparent administration in American history."

Or, "Running up the debt is unpatriotic."

Suckers.

6/3/14

In This Issue:

Quote of the Week: *"Depending on what is happening, I sometimes go back and forth more than once a day."*

- Governor Mark Dayton

The Watchdog says, "And some days, the governor even knows what his decisions mean."

1. Convention Wrap Up.

CONVENTION WRAP UP

The 2014 GOP State Convention is in the books, and all in all, it was a pretty successful affair.

The Party walked out of Rochester with solid candidates for the Constitutional offices as well as endorsed candidates for the two most high-profile seats on the ballot.

THE SENATE RACE

The endorsement contest in the U.S. Senate race yielded somewhat of a surprise when Mike McFadden walked away with the victory.

The result was somewhat surprising because it showed a pragmatic, realistic side to the delegate base, which contains the most ideological and strident of any party's activists.

This is especially true since McFadden came into the convention as the object of scorn among many delegates for his perceived unwillingness to court delegates and reluctance to clearly articulate his viewpoint on many issues.

McFadden should be given credit for executing a solid convention strategy, but success in life is also a product of timing, and he benefitted from a unique set of circumstances that created a favorable environment for a candidate of his type.

The first was the ghost of Kurt Bills. Not only did he lose to Amy Klobuchar in 2012, he lost in spectacular and rather embarrassing fashion.

Bill's claim that he would win with a "grassroots" campaign went over with voters like New Coke, the Betamax, and the Edsel.

Delegates recognized that statewide campaigns, especially for U.S. Senate, need money and lots of it. A candidate without money is like a race car with three tires.

McFadden smartly centered his strategy on a narrative of being well-funded while being "conservative enough."

The second factor was the Franken factor. In addition to being a horribly unlikable and insufferable jackass, Franken "won" a close election that featured some "unusual" twists and turns.

The delegates have a burning desire to beat Franken and McFadden tapped into that desire by demonstrating that he was the candidate with a realistic plan to do so.

The final factor was that the competition was rather weak, with each candidate featuring large flaws.

Chris Dahlberg started with miniscule name recognition, no ties to the donor base, and no experience running a major race.

Julianne Ortman seems to simply be a polarizing personality where ever she goes, and this race was no different.

The Watchdog got feedback that frequently centered on her personality. People tend to either like her a lot or dislike her a lot.

Whether it's her own BPOU, her caucus, or some other campaign, she tends to be a polarizing personality.

This isn't an opinion of this publication. It is simply the feedback we've received over time from her colleagues and others who know and work with her.

Jim Abeler was never in the race, which surprised no one except Jim and the three college interns who worked for him.

And just to prove that he's totally out of touch with reality, he now running in a primary - with all \$13,000 he's got in the bank.

So there you have it. Mike McFadden was the best possible pick for the endorsement here, as the Watchdog predicted last week.

THE RACE FOR GOVERNOR

The convention produced an endorsed candidate, but did little to clear the field.

State Senator Dave Thompson of Lakeville dropped out after the third ballot, but the other four major candidates stayed in, declaring their intention to take things to an August Primary.

Former House Speaker Kurt Zellers and businessman Scott Honour didn't compete for the endorsement, while former state Rep. Marty Seifert declared his intention to go to the primary after Hennepin County Commissioner Jeff Johnson secured the endorsement.

This primary race promises to be a barn burner - and very expensive.

Scott Honour has personal wealth to spend while the other three candidates are veteran candidates who know how to raise money.

Regarding money, there are two key questions.

First, how much can Honour spend? Can he spend enough to drive a strong pace that bleeds out the other three?

Second, the other three will be competing for essentially the same donor base. Can one of the three emerge as the champion fundraiser? Can any of the three expand the big dollar donor base?

Johnson can boast of being the endorsed candidate while Zellers and Seifert have the rolodex, having served as House GOP caucus leaders.

This question also raises the prospect of an interesting narrative from the Honour Camp.

Like Mike McFadden, can Honour make the case that he should be the guy because he has the money to survive a hotly contested primary and still have the resources necessary to take on a well-funded incumbent in Mark Dayton?

After all, that message was well received by the delegates regarding the Senate endorsement.

While Honour would be well served to make the case, he needs to exercise some caution and recognize the situations are somewhat different.

First, Mike McFadden has occupied that political space, so to speak.

There is a risk that Honour's opponents could say that the rich-middle-aged-white-guy-business-tycoon profile is the wrong message for the GOP to send with not only one, but both candidates at the top of the ticket.

Like it or not, this is a populist state and men who have experienced success in the business world don't find that the skills and experience necessarily translate to political success.

Wheelock Whitney and Brian Sullivan are two names that come to mind. We could throw in John Grunseth as well, but that implosion may have been related to other "unpleasantness."

It will also be interesting to see the narratives that Johnson, Zellers, and Seifert craft for themselves.

There are certainly some obvious pieces of each narrative. Johnson is endorsed and can unify the base. Seifert is the only rural candidate. Zellers is electable and pragmatic, yet conservative choice.

But will a candidate assume the mantle of social conservative, for example?

It will be interesting to see what the candidates say about gay marriage, as the Minnesota Family Council (MFC) is still fighting the last war, asking candidates to commit to working to repeal the recent law, which just won't happen, especially with the DFL in control of the Senate until at least 2016.

Like those Japanese fighters who hid in caves until the 1950s, the MFC hasn't gotten word that the gay marriage fight is over.

They initiated the fight and the other side ended it. End of story.

Will any of the candidates work to claim the "liberty" mantle?

Johnson would appear to be in the best position to claim that mantle, especially as an early supporter of medical cannabis.

Will the candidates work to claim the "corporate" mantle, which appeals to the large donors but can alienate some, even in the GOP base?

For Watchdogs, this will be an incredibly interesting race and one that has not been seen in modern Minnesota GOP history.

How each candidate evolves and messages their candidacy will surely command the attention of the Republican faithful.

6/13/14

In This Issue:

Quote of the Week: "We came out of the White House not only dead broke, but in debt ... We had no money when we got there, and we struggled to, you know, piece together the resources for mortgages, for houses, for Chelsea's education."

- Hillary Clinton

When the Clintons left the White House, this was their situation:

- A \$200,000 annual pension payment for Bill;
- An \$8 million book advance for Hillary;
- A \$2.85 million home in Washington, DC;
- A \$1.7 million home in suburban New York City;
- Tuition, room and board at Stanford University for Chelsea.

The median household income that year in America was \$42,228.

Poor Hillary and Bill. Perhaps they could have bunked up with other similarly situated liberals like George Soros or Tom Steyer until they got back on their feet with those speaking fees at \$200,000 a pop.

1. Tea-ing Off.

TEA-ING OFF

America's Tea Party movement scored a history-making, game-changing victory Tuesday night when House Majority Leader Eric Cantor of Virginia's 7th District was ousted in the Republican primary by a little known and woefully underfunded challenger.

The odds against Dave Brat seemed overwhelming and constituted a classic David versus Goliath match up.

Cantor raised \$5.5 million during the cycle, receiving support from 377 registered political action committees.

His opponent raised about \$200,000 and spent about \$122,000.

Brat had 2 paid staffers. Cantor 23.

Cantor had an internal poll showing him up by 34 points.

The result was a convincing 12 point victory for Brat.

There are three major takeaways from this race.

First, populism will be a powerful theme this cycle.

Dave Brat was successful fundamentally because he effectively appealed to the populist sentiments pulsing through the veins of the Republican Body Politic.

He successfully painted Cantor as a tool of corporate and political elites while also painting him as an ally of unfettered and open immigration.

While Left Wing populism finds fault only at the top (think the "1%"), Right Wing populism sees issues with the middle class being squeezed from the top and bottom.

Start at the top. Brat, like many on the Left, spoke out against the abuses of corporate interests and Wall Street.

To be clear, the criticism was not against capitalism. The outrage came from special interests leveraging governmental influence to gain wealth and protections the free market would never grant.

In one of the great quotes of this year's election cycle, Brat argued, "Many of these Wall Street guys should have ended up in jail. Instead, they ended up on Eric Cantor's rolodex!"

Regarding downward pressure, Brat labeled Cantor as "100% all in" on amnesty for illegal immigrants.

There is little doubt that many voters, feeling the economic pressure of stagnant wages, have grown angry with what they see as governmental favoritism and cronyism for those above and below them on the economic spectrum.

The rich enjoy bailouts and loan guarantees while the ranks of those who don't work or pay taxes grows exponentially.

The stock market is booming at the same time the number of Americans on welfare booms as well.

All of this is a recipe for middle class outrage and the rise of populism.

Second, reports of the Tea Party's death have been greatly exaggerated.

While this movement certainly hasn't batted a thousand, there is no doubt that the Tea Party never went away and will continue to play a major role in our political discourse.

This state of affairs isn't a surprise to this publication.

The Tea Party is the real keeper of the Constitutional flame in today's politics.

It is the political faction dedicated to not only stamping out graft, corruption, favoritism, nepotism, and crony capitalism. It is also dedicated to the fundamental American values of liberty, free markets, and the rule of law.

The massive and powerful special interests in both the DFL and the GOP who benefit from the status quo have unleashed a smear campaign against the Tea Party that rivals the worst the country has seen in politics.

"Wing nuts," "crazy," "wackos," "haters," and "dangerous," are just a few of the adjectives hurled against them.

We've always wondered what was so "wacko" about supporting our Constitution, but it never really was about the facts. Instead, it was always about tearing down a group opposed to the status quo. Since they didn't have the facts, the Establishment did what came naturally - ad hominem attacks and appeals to emotion.

Finally, the Legacy Media has been quick to report upon, and exaggerate, the rift between the Tea Party and GOP establishment.

The Legacy Media are all over the supposed "GOP Civil War."

And while there are certainly tensions between the camps, the media is happy to point to the splinter in the GOP eye while ignoring the log in the DFL party eye.

To begin, both the hard line ideology of the Tea Party and the obsequious pragmatism of the Establishment have both been overplayed by the media to feed a story line.

An excellent example is the endorsement of Mike McFadden for U.S. Senate, a consensus, if not a compromise, pick of both the Tea Party and the

Establishment in the name of getting rid of Minnesota's embarrassing junior senator.

This cycle has seen both "Tea Party" and "Establishment" candidates prevail.

And what of the DFL civil war over the environment?

What of the war between the environmentalists (talk about wing nuts) and the blue collar union folks?

Silica sand mining, copper/nickel mining and the War on Coal have sparked nothing short of a deeply divisive battle within the party.

The recent state convention, at least behind the scenes, was devoted to keeping this war under wraps and pretending, at least until after the elections, that all is happy in the DFL family.

And while the Cantor election proved that the Tea Party faction is alive and well, readers can rest assured that the GOP family will go to the polls united in November to deliver a well deserved butt kicking to Democrats who have run the nation into the ground, led by a president mired in failure and a governor who can't seem to remember where he stands on the critical issues.

6/20/14

In This Issue:

Factoid of the Week: In a recent NBC/WSJ poll, a whopping 54% of Americans disagreed with the statement, "Do you think he (Obama) can lead and get the job done?"

The Watchdog wants to know how 46% of Americans can manage to live under a rock.

Factoid II: The current national debt clock reads \$17,536,326,480,365.00. That's \$55,100 for every man, woman, and child in America.

1. Local Elections Taking Shape.

2. Student Loan Debacle.

LOCAL ELECTIONS TAKING SHAPE

Aloha, Watchdogs. Another week passes as we creep closer to November and the hopeful liberation of Minnesota and America from the failed leadership of the Democrats and the re-introduction of some balance in our public policy.

Events in Virginia have provided a glimpse of the future!

Let us not forget, however, that local elections will be on the ballot and they are important as well.

Why? How about taxes? Your city council has the power to levy taxes and that makes them dangerous straight away.

And while the filing period for some cities has yet to open, others have closed and we can offer some perspective on certain candidates.

As readers know, the Watchdog does not endorse candidates, but we do our best to educate voters, especially regarding candidates who support liberty and limited government.

Here's what we know so far:

Andover.

The mayor's seat will be open for the first time in 12 years as current Mayor Mike Gamache runs for county commissioner.

Although the filing period hasn't opened in this city, the Watchdog can exclusively report on a candidate who has decided to run for the office.

Current council member Sheri Bukkila will be running for mayor and has begun her campaign.

Watchdogs in Andover should know that Bukkila supports limited government and has worked to keep a lid on taxes and spending in that city.

Regarding a council seat in Andover, the Watchdog can report that Jim Goodrich will be running. Goodrich is also a Watchdog who believes in limited government.

Columbia Heights.

In this city, a log jam of 8 candidates is seeking two council seats. In this race, the top two vote getters win the seats while the other six hang their heads in collective shame as they experience the agony of defeat.

Incumbent Donna Schmitt has been a true friend of the taxpayer and is well known to Watchdogs in the city.

Greg Sloat is another of the 8 declared candidates. His past candidate statements published in Watchdog have clearly shown that he is committed to taming Big Government.

Fridley.

In Fridley, long-time Watchdog Pam Reynolds is taking on entrenched incumbent Dolores Varichak.

Reynolds has been leading the charge against the city's drive to take over trash collection by eliminating the current free market system that forces haulers to compete for business.

Instead, the city seeks to implement a "consortium" system, which is a pleasant way of saying "cartel."

In this system, the current haulers would divide the city into fiefdoms for each hauler, leaving citizens stuck with one hauler, like it or not.

This scheme is little more than a government-sanctioned cartel that prevents new haulers from entering the market while protecting market share for favored haulers no matter how bad the service or the price.

If you're in Fridley, get to know Pam Reynolds.

Ramsey.

Talk about a city out of control. From the scandalous "Town Center" debacle to the never-ending quest to spend some money on the failed and nearly as scandalous Northstar commuter choo choo, Ramsey is one messed up city in need of adult supervision.

And speaking of "adult," don't forget that this is the city that spent money to buy out one porno shop only to see another one open up on the other side of the street.

Those denizens of Ramsey are apparently a [randy](#) lot.

Sadly, Watchdog Jason Tossey has decided that he's had enough and will be stepping back into private life.

However, two Watchdogs are among four candidates seeking a council seat under Ramsey's ward system.

Wayne Buchholz and Terry Hendriksen would both bring a strong measure of sanity to the current situation, one that makes the Obama Administration look competent.

The Watchdog will keep readers informed of other candidates as information becomes available.

Remember that the information chain works both ways.

If you know of a candidate who shares our view of limited government, send that information to Harold Hamilton at harold@anokacountywatchdog.com.

Moreover, candidate statements are always welcome.

Candidates who wish to inform readers of their candidacy and agenda can send a statement to Harold Hamilton at the email listed above.

STUDENT LOAN DEBACLE

Government has screwed up the pursuit of higher education just as surely as it has screwed up home ownership, by attempting to rig markets and substitute government policy for the efficiency of free markets, where the supply/demand curves ensure the proper allocation of resources.

The preferred tool of governmental intervention in the higher education market place are student loans.

Start with the misguided premise that every young person should go to college, which is every bit as misguided as the policy that every American adult should realize the "dream" of home ownership.

While college can certainly provide a path to upward mobility, it may not be the right path for everyone.

Why a young person should walk around with a degree in women's studies (and a mountain of debt) instead of skill training (and no debt) as an electrician or pipefitter is testimony to the folly of liberalism.

Of course, if free markets were allowed to work, we wouldn't see these higher education costs shooting out of control and well beyond rates of inflation.

Under a rational system, as costs rose, there would be less demand for the higher education process, leading colleges and universities to control costs and find efficiencies.

Under the current system, which Obama wants to juice up with more government loans, institutions of higher education have no incentive to keep costs down because whenever costs rise, government subsidizes those price increases by giving students ever more access to student loans.

Colleges and universities keep raising prices, and students keep taking on debt to subsidize those rising costs.

There result is nothing short of a disaster for students, who are already saddled with \$17 trillion in federal debt.

Student loan debt stands at \$1.2 trillion dollars today.

Of that amount, \$124 billion is more than 90 days delinquent.

More than 70% of the class of 2013 graduated from an institution of higher learning with loan debt, which averaged \$35,200 per student.

That might be an acceptable circumstance if it led to a good job.

Sadly, estimates state that about half of college graduates take jobs upon graduation that don't require a college degree.

The answer to this problem isn't more government loans.

The answer is less government involvement and a return to a rational supply/demand dynamic that exposes colleges and universities to the realities of irrational financial decisions.

Moreover, such a state of affairs would reduce student exposure to debt and get the country away from an arrogant and destructive philosophy that emphasizes college for all and deemphasizes the skilled trades and other professions that provide a quality standard of living even though a college degree isn't required.

The student loan bureaucracy is headed towards the same melt down as that experienced by Fanny and Freddy in the real estate markets.

6/27/14

In This Issue:

Quote of the Week: "No one should be surprised if a computer fails, especially at the I.R.S. in light of the aged equipment I.R.S. employees often have to use in light of the continual cuts in its budget these past four years."

- IRS Commissioner John Koskinen

The Watchdog Sez: Apparently the budget for junkets wasn't cut, as \$50 million was spent during that time by the IRS. [Video](#).

- 1. Government Spends to Lobby Government.**
- 2. Big Government IS Big Government.**
- 3. More Mark Dayton Buffoonery.**

GOVERNMENT SPENDS TO LOBBY GOVERNMENT

Would you believe that government spends money to hire lobbyists to lobby government?

Of course you would. After years of Mark Dayton and Barack Obama, nothing surprises taxpayers anymore.

Especially when there is an army of government lawyers out there who do nothing but sue other levels of government, who are in turn represented by their own army of government lawyers.

As loyal readers know, the Minnesota State Auditor releases a [report](#) each year that documents what government spends on lobbying activities to lobby other units of government.

Readers should know, however, that this report only captures a small segment of this government-to-government lobbying.

The Auditor's report is limited to what local units of government spend to lobby the state of Minnesota.

It does not capture what these local units of government spend to lobby the federal government or what the state spends to lobby the federal government.

In any case, the report does a good job informing taxpayers of exactly what their local units of government are spending to lobby the state for goodies.

In 2013, local units of government spent just over \$8 million in taxpayer dollars to either directly employ lobbyists (staff and/or private lobbyists) or pay dues to organizations (e.g. the League of Minnesota Cities) that lobby the state.

Of the \$8 million, about half was spent hiring lobbyists and the other half was spent on dues paid to organizations that lobby the state.

Compared to 2012, \$260,000 more was spent in 2013 on these lobbying activities.

So who are the big spenders? Here is the top 10 list of spenders on lobbyists:

City of Minneapolis: \$306,953
Hennepin County: \$244,543
Western MN Municipal Power Agency: \$206,390 (whoever they are)
City of Saint Paul: \$157,936
Ramsey County: \$151,143
Metropolitan Airports Commission: \$148,853
Minneapolis Parks and Rec Board: \$138,000
Saint Louis County: \$112,195
Anoka County: \$111,544
MN Sports Facilities Commission: \$108,276

Of course, the question is begged as to why cities and counties can't simply use existing staff and elected officials to lobby.

For the Watchdog, headquartered in Anoka County, it is especially disappointing to see our home county continue to remain in the top 10, even after many Watchdogs have worked so hard to install a taxpayer-friendly board.

The board could start by eliminating its hired gun lobbyists and rely instead on the in-house lobbying staff already on the payroll.

Anoka County is one of only 10 local units of government in the entire state that employs both in-house lobbyists and contract lobbyists.

Let us hope that the 2014 report finds the home of the Watchdog missing from this ignoble list.

BIG GOVERNMENT IS BIG GOVERNMENT

The latest Liberal Media attack on the Tea Party concerns a narrative that Tea Party members of Congress are "anti-business" and thus so extreme that even traditional GOP allies are being alienated by their radical agenda.

The latest chapter of this narrative concerns the Export-Import Bank (Ex-IM), an entity that essentially provides taxpayer subsidies and guarantees for private, for-profit corporations that are rent seeking for their export activities.

House Republicans are poised to let the bank's charter expire later this year, which has caused the Liberal Media and rent seeking corporations to lose their minds over the prospect of government actually shrinking, even if by just a microscopic amount.

The simple yet powerful reality is that the concept of being "pro-business" is becoming seriously disconnected from the concept of being "pro-Capitalism."

In other words, many corporate interests are less and less for free enterprise and more and more in favor of Big Government.

The media and many politicians are confusing the two.

It isn't free enterprise when big banks seek more regulations to strangle community banks and credit unions.

It isn't free enterprise when "green" energy companies seek regulations to subsidize themselves and to drive coal out of business.

An unholy alliance of Big Business and Big Government exists for their mutual benefit.

Big corporations seek laws and regulations that fence out or hobble competitors while Big Government enjoys the growth and empowerment that puts the central government in control of market activity.

Of course, all of this is bad for the economy and our prosperity.

An overbearing regulatory state stifles economic growth and protects market sectors from the competition and constant change that defines a dynamic and growing economy.

The status quo reigns supreme, even if the status quo no longer provides the best product at the best price.

Related to that point, when status quo prevails, the innovation and improvements that define a dynamic economy are suppressed.

Often, small businesses that are new market entrants are the ones that drive this process.

It's often the guy who is operating from his kitchen table who brings the next Big Idea to market and brings prosperity to the next level.

When that guy is prevented from entering the market, he is denied his opportunity to make a buck. On the other side, the existing guys are relieved from the obligation to build a better mouse trap because the competition has been conveniently excluded from the market by governmental barriers.

This state of affairs is extremely dangerous.

Innovation has been the cornerstone of American economic growth and is arguably the most important reason why we have the largest and most prosperous economy on the face of the planet.

Killing innovation and competition is a recipe for economic stagnation, right Mr. President?

Thus, the rhetoric of Big Business about the need for politicians to be "pro-business" is really nothing but code speak for special breaks unavailable to their competition, which lacks the resources to hire lobbyists, make political contributions and otherwise influence government.

The Tea Party members in Congress who are saying no to the "pro-business" line are saying YES to free markets, free enterprise, and capitalism.

Big Business interests who are in cahoots with Big Government are asking for trouble.

They are like the lamb that gets invited to dinner with the wolves and asks "what's for dinner?"

MORE MARK DAYTON BUFFOONERY

Moments ago, we received an email from the Mark Dayton campaign that began:

Friends,

Did you hear? The Koch brothers and their right-wing agenda of tax breaks for corporations are coming to Minnesota!

Really?

We didn't know the Koch Brothers built a football stadium for the Wilf's football business.

We didn't know the Koch Brothers provided a bunch of tax breaks to the NFL to bring the Super Bowl here.

We didn't know it was the Koch Brothers who engaged in secret negotiations to provide a raft of tax breaks to Baxter Medical.

We didn't the Koch Brothers were a part of the negotiations to give all those tax breaks to the Mayo Clinic.

What a joke. The Democrats are absolutely shameless in their hypocrisy.

Whether its blasting Stewart Mills for being wealthy or blaming the Koch Brothers for exercising their rights to political speech, the Democrats have zero credibility.

Here's one difference, however. The Koch Brothers and Stewart Mills earned their wealth. The other guy is a trust fund baby who has never created a job in his life. And the same goes for his ex-wife, who is the queen of buying elections here in Minnesota.

Hey, Dayton. Your campaign called. They need money for another email. Time to sell another piece of art.

7/4/14

In This Issue:

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, AMERICA!!!

Editor's Note: The Watchdog will not publish next week, with Watchdog Founder and CEO Harold Hamilton and staff taking a mid-summer break at an undisclosed location high in the Rocky Mountains.

This week is dedicated to reflecting upon the Nation's Founding.

Action of Second Continental Congress,

July 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,

WHEN in the Course of human Events, it becomes necessary for one People to dissolve the Political Bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the Earth, the separate and equal Station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent Respect to the Opinions of Mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the Separation.

WE hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness-That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed, that whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its Foundation on such Principles, and organizing its Powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient Causes; and accordingly all Experience hath shewn, that Mankind are more disposed to suffer, while Evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long Train of Abuses and Usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object, evinces a Design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their Right, it is their Duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future Security. Such has been the patient Sufferance of these Colonies;

and such is now the Necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The History of the present King of Great-Britain is a History of repeated Injuries and Usurpations, all having in direct Object the Establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid World.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public Good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing Importance, unless suspended in their Operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the Accommodation of large Districts of People, unless those People would relinquish the Right of Representation in the Legislature, a Right inestimable to them, and formidable to Tyrants only.

He has called together Legislative Bodies at Places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the Depository of their public Records, for the sole Purpose of fatiguing them into Compliance with his Measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly Firmness his Invasions on the Rights of the People.

He has refused for a long Time, after such Dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative Powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the Dangers of Invasion from without, and Convulsions within.

He has endeavoured to prevent the Population of these States; for that Purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their Migrations hither, and raising the Conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary Powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the Tenure of their Offices, and the Amount and Payment of their Salaries.

He has erected a Multitude of new Offices, and sent hither Swarms of Officers to harrass our People, and eat out their Substance.

He has kept among us, in Times of Peace, Standing Armies, without the consent of our Legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil Power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a Jurisdiction foreign to our Constitution, and unacknowledged by our Laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For quartering large Bodies of Armed Troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from Punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our Trade with all Parts of the World:

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

For depriving us, in many Cases, of the Benefits of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pre-tended Offences:

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an arbitrary Government and enlarging its Boundaries, so as to render it at once an Example and fit Instrument for introducing the same absolute Rule into these Colonies:

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the forms of our Governments:

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with Power to legislate for us in all Cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our Seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our Towns, and destroyed the Lives of our People.

He is, at this Time, transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the Works of Death, Desolation, and Tyranny already begun with circumstances of Cruelty and Perfidy, scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous Ages, and totally unworthy of the Head of a civilized Nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the Executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic Insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the Inhabitants of our Frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known Rule of Warfare, is an undistinguished Destruction, of all Ages, Sexes and Conditions.

In every stage of these Oppressions we have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble Terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated Injury. A Prince, whose Character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the Ruler of a free People.

Nor have we been wanting in Attentions to our British Brethren. We have warned them from Time to Time of Attempts by their Legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the Circumstances of our Emigration and Settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and Magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the Ties of our common Kindred to disavow these Usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our Connections and Correspondence. They too have been deaf to the Voice of Justice and of Consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the Necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of Mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace, Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the World for the Rectitude of our Intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly Publish and Declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be, FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES, that they are absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political Connection between them and the State of Great-Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which INDEPENDENT STATES may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm Reliance on the Protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our fortunes, and our sacred Honor.

Fascinating Facts about the Declaration of Independence

There is something written on the back of the **Declaration of Independence**, but it isn't a secret map or code. Instead, there are a few handwritten words that say, "Original Declaration of Independence/ dated 4th July 1776". No one knows who wrote this, but it was probably added as a label when the document was rolled up for storage many years ago.

Once the Declaration of Independence had been written and signed, printer John Dunlap was asked to make about 200 copies to be distributed throughout the colonies. Today, the "Dunlap Broadside" are extremely rare and valuable. In 1989, someone discovered a previously unknown Dunlap Broadside. It was sold for over \$8 million in 2000. There are only 26 known surviving Dunlap Broadside today.

Although Thomas Jefferson is often called the "author" of the Declaration of Independence, he wasn't the only person who contributed important ideas. Jefferson was a member of a five-person committee appointed by the Continental Congress to write the Declaration. The committee included Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, Robert Livingston, and Roger Sherman.

Robert Livingston, one of the members of the committee who wrote the Declaration of Independence, never signed it. He believed that it was too soon to declare independence and therefore refused to sign.

One of the most widely held misconceptions about the Declaration of Independence is that it was signed on July 4, 1776. In fact, independence was formally declared on July 2, 1776, a date that John Adams believed would be "the most memorable epocha in the history of America." On July 4, 1776, Congress approved the final text of the Declaration. It wasn't signed until August 2, 1776.

After Jefferson wrote his first draft of the Declaration, the other members of the Declaration committee and the Continental Congress made 86 changes to Jefferson's draft, including shortening the overall length by more than a fourth.

When writing the first draft of the Declaration, Jefferson primarily drew upon two sources: his own draft of a preamble to the Virginia Constitution and George Mason's draft of Virginia's Declaration of Rights.

Jefferson was quite unhappy about some of the edits made to his original draft of the Declaration of Independence. He had originally included language condemning the British promotion of the slave trade (even though Jefferson himself was a slave owner). This criticism of the slave trade was removed in spite of Jefferson's objections.

On December 13, 1952, the Declaration of Independence (along with the Constitution and Bill of Rights) was formally delivered to the National Archives in Washington, D.C., where it has remained since then.

The two youngest signers of the Declaration of Independence were both from South Carolina. Thomas Lynch, Jr. and Edward Rutledge of South Carolina were both born in 1749 and were only 26 when they signed the Declaration. Most of the other signers were in their 40s and 50s.

Philosopher John Locke's ideas were an important influence on the Declaration of Independence. Thomas Jefferson restated Locke's contract theory of government when he wrote in the Declaration that governments derived "their just Powers from the consent of the people."

Thomas Jefferson and John Adams both died on July 4, 1826, the 50th anniversary of the vote to approve the Declaration of Independence.

Some of the most famous lines in the Declaration of Independence were inspired by Virginia's Declaration of Rights by George Mason. Mason said: "all men are born equally free and independent." Jefferson's Declaration of Independence said: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal." Mason listed man's "natural Rights" as "Enjoyment of Life and Liberty, with the Means of acquiring and possessing Property, and pursuing and obtaining Happiness and Safety." Jefferson listed man's "inalienable rights" as "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness."

Nine of the signers of the Declaration died before the American Revolution ended in 1783.

In the summer of 1776, when the Declaration was signed, the population of the nation is estimated to have been about 2.5 million. (Today the population of the U.S. is more than 300 million.)

The oldest signer of the Declaration was Benjamin Franklin, who was born in 1706 and was therefore already 70 at the time of the Declaration. Franklin

went on to help negotiate the Treaty of Alliance with France in 1778 and the Treaty of Paris, which ended the Revolutionary War in 1783.

The only signer of the Declaration of Independence to survive beyond the 50th anniversary of the signing was Charles Carroll of Maryland. Carroll died in 1832 when he was 95 years old.

The copy of the Declaration of Independence that is housed at the National Archives is not the draft that was approved by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776. Instead it is a formal copy that the Continental Congress hired someone to make for them after the text was approved. This formal copy was probably made by Timothy Matlack, an assistant to the Secretary of Congress. This copy was signed on August 2, 1776.

No one who signed the Declaration of Independence was born in the United States of America. The United States didn't exist until after the Declaration was signed! However, all but eight of the signers were born in colonies that would become the United States.

The first public reading of the Declaration took place on July 8, 1776, in Philadelphia. A fictional story written in the 1840s suggested that the bell now known as the Liberty Bell was rung that day to bring the people together. However, historians now doubt that this happened. The steeple that housed the bell was in very bad condition at the time and the bell was probably unusable.

Although August 2, 1776, was the date of the official signing ceremony, there were several people who signed on later dates. Some of these late signers included Elbridge Gerry, Oliver Wolcott, Lewis Morris, Thomas McKean and Matthew Thornton.

7/18/14

In This Issue:

- 1. City Council Candidate Update.**
- 2. The Sean Nienow Affair.**
- 3. Inversion Imbroglio.**

CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATE UPDATE

After a recent piece regarding candidates for city council across Anoka County, many Watchdogs weighed in with their opinions regarding not only our thoughts, but their thoughts regarding candidates who were not mentioned in the article.

In Coon Rapids, many readers contacted the Watchdog to express their belief that Jerry Koch would be a fiscally conservative mayor.

In Ramsey, readers vouched for the conservative credentials of Frank Howsman in Ward 3 and Terry Hendricksen for the at-large seat.

Most interesting, Watchdogs in Columbia Heights contacted this publication to express their outrage over a recent vote cast by councilmember [Donna Schmitt](#).

In early July, Schmitt cast a vote in favor of moving forward with a [bond issue](#) of up to \$7 million for a new library.

These Watchdogs were upset over the vote and feel that it was a betrayal of Schmitt's professed fiscal conservatism.

Watchdogs in the city will have to decide for themselves if Schmitt remains worthy of the "Watchdog" title in light of this development.

Stay tuned to the Watchdog for further information regarding local candidates, who all too often slip under the radar but nonetheless hold the power of taxation.

THE SEAN NIENOW AFFAIR

Much has been made this week of news that state Senator Sean Nienow (R-Cambridge) has filed for personal bankruptcy.

The filing stemmed primarily from business debt incurred to start and maintain a small business endeavor that ultimately failed.

Too much has been made of this news in the opinion of the Watchdog.

On the whole, there is really no real news here.

Every day in America, citizens take a risk to start a small business. The reality is that most of these businesses fail.

But it's these entrepreneurial pursuits that build wealth and prosperity through the innovation and competition inherent in these activities.

For every failed business, there's a Microsoft started in a garage. For every bad idea, there's someone who identifies the proverbial better mousetrap. For every man who grinds out a career at a desk in some faceless corporation, there's a man who puts his name on the door and takes the massive risk involved for the opportunity to make the Forbes 500.

In fact, our society's encouragement of these activities is in large part what has made our economy so dynamic and our nation so wealthy.

Sean Nienow started a business and it failed. He wasn't the first guy to suffer this fate and he won't be the last.

No one has alleged that he did anything illegal or unethical.

Having said that, it is certainly fair to question his business model and his proposition to the marketplace.

It's also fair to question the role of government in funding these pursuits. In fact, this publication would argue that the government should play no role in acting as a venture capitalist in funding these start ups because the government lacks the incentive and tools to properly assess and weigh risk in the same way that a private entity would.

But the critics have gone well beyond these boundaries. In fact, they have enjoyed a good collective laugh at his expense, apparently because Nienow is a Republican and one who believes in conservative principles and values.

For Democrats, compassion and the "we're all in this together" world view are apparently reserved only for fellow liberals or those who have experienced hardship through poor lifestyle choices.

Compassion for the welfare recipient who loves dope and hates to work? You bet.

Compassion for the man who takes a risk to start a business that fails? No way.

Of course, this open contempt for Nienow and others like him should come as no surprise at all.

This is because liberals both fail to understand and dislike conservatives and entrepreneurs.

As proof, the Watchdog analyzed the listed occupations of every DFL legislator in Saint Paul to see how many have jobs that involve either the private sector or an understanding of the private market.

We even dared to see if any DFL legislators themselves had ever created a job or met a payroll.

Before you read on, take a moment to guess what the five most listed professions were on the DFL side.

Go ahead, guess...

Ok. Here are the five most popular occupations listed by DFL legislators as stated in their legislative biographies:

1. Attorney.
2. Legislator.
3. Teacher.
4. No occupation listed.
5. Retired (mostly from teaching jobs).

There, loyal readers, is proof positive that the DFL has no understanding of what it takes to start a business and create a job.

And let's not forget the work history of the head of the DFL, Mark Dayton.

There's a guy who not only hasn't ever created a job, he's never held one.

No wonder there's such hostility towards job creators in the DFL.

INVERSION IMBROGLIO

The U.S. has the highest corporate tax rate in the developed world.

Moreover, the Democrats have no qualms when it comes to punishing job creators in other ways, such as Obamacare or the minimum wage.

This is because Democrats have both a dislike for job creators and a lack of understanding of what it takes to start and maintain a business (see the previous article).

Thus, it came as a total surprise and shock to liberals when they realized recently that American corporations are looking for tie ups with foreign corporations in order to minimize tax exposure in the U.S.

It was even rather amusing to watch them lose their collective minds as they realized that these mergers and acquisitions will likely "cost" the Treasury nearly \$20 billion.

Of course, there are now calls for the Congress to make these transactions impossible.

The rhetoric is couched in terms of "closing the loophole" and "stopping this abuse of the tax code."

Liberals just can't understand why corporations won't simply sit still and get hammered by confiscatory levels of taxation.

After all, as Joe Biden has said, it's the "patriotic duty" of these corporations to turn their money over Barack Obama. It's all rather "public spirited" if you will.

Of course, this comes from a man who pays very little in taxes and gives even less to charity.

What the liberals don't understand is that a corporation exists primarily to make a profit.

The fiduciary duty of the directors and officers of the corporation is to maximize shareholder value, not pay taxes.

That fiduciary duty includes the very rational behavior of seeking to minimize tax liability.

As usual, the prescription of the liberals is more of the same poison.

Instead of working to essentially impound corporate revenues in America, the Congress should be working to eliminate the disincentives to repatriating revenues into America or moving revenues to foreign locations through various legal transactions.

For example, lowering the corporate tax rate would actually bring in more revenue in much the same way the Reagan tax cuts resulted in more tax revenue.

Democrats should face the reality that the reason why corporations are engaging in "inversions" has nothing to do with markets and everything to do with government policies.

Instead of providing the stick in an attempt to keep corporations and their profits here, the carrot should be provided in that pursuit.

We won't hold our breath waiting for Joe Biden, Nancy Pelosi, Harry Reid and Barack Obama to understand this simple yet powerful concept.

7/25/14

In This Issue:

Factoid of the Week: Scott Honour and Mark Dayton are both rich. The difference is that one man earned his wealth while the other did not.

- 1. City Council Update - Ramsey.**
- 2. Columbia Heights Ballot Question on the Move.**
- 3. We CAN Shrink Government.**
- 4. Aimless Amy from Minnesota.**

CITY COUNCIL UPDATE - RAMSEY

Hey, Watchdogs. Welcome to another week of America in Crisis.

This past week, a number of Watchdogs have contacted us to vouch for the conservative credentials and integrity of Wayne Bucholz, candidate for the at-large council seat in Ramsey.

His [Facebook](#) page notes that he is a veteran of the Marine Corps who seeks to restore fiscal accountability and transparency to city government.

It looks like voters in Ramsey who want fiscal conservatives in office will have a chance to make it happen in August and then November.

COLUMBIA HEIGHTS BALLOT QUESTION ON THE MOVE

The Watchdog has reported in recent editions regarding the city council's recent decision to issue general obligation bonds to finance a new library.

Many Watchdogs were upset with councilmember Donna Schmitt's vote in favor of the bond issuance, which passed on a 4-1 vote.

In response, those same Watchdogs are moving forward with a petition to put the bond issuance on the November ballot, giving taxpayers a chance to vote on the issue.

According to the minutes of the July 3rd city council meeting, the city charter requires the greater of 700 signatures or a number equal to 10% of the turnout of the most recent election, that number being 1,010.

The Watchdog can report that this past Wednesday, a petition was delivered to city clerk Katie Bruno containing 1,310 signatures, which need to be certified.

As of this edition, it looks like Watchdogs in Columbia Heights will be successful in putting the library bond issue on the ballot and giving taxpayers a chance to weigh in on this large issuance of debt.

Way to go, Watchdogs!

WE CAN SHRINK GOVERNMENT

A recent Star Tribune [profile](#) of Republican gubernatorial candidate Kurt Zellers was filled with the typical liberal media bias we've come to expect.

One passage of the profile mocked the principle that Zellers and fellow Republicans share when it comes to shrinking the size of state government.

In condescending fashion, the author says of this goal, "He said if given a few years, he believes he could shrink the total size of state government, a goal promoted by many Republicans but never achieved in recent history."

The reporter is either misleading readers or is hasn't bothered to do his homework - or both.

The Watchdog will now load our loyal readers in the time machine and transport you way, way, way back to the 2010-2011 state general fund budget.

It was a bygone era when smart phones were common, the Internet connected people, and women had the right to vote.

A young whippersnapper named Tim Pawlenty was governor and Mark Dayton was still just a part of the idle rich crowd and not yet governor.

No word on whether Dayton had yet sold any precious art to finance his run.

During that 2010-2011 biennium, the state's general fund budget was 29,961,691.

The previous biennial general fund budget (2008-2009) was 33,866,405.

Huh. That looks like a 3,904,714 reduction in general fund spending, which translates to an 11.5% reduction in general fund spending.

These numbers come straight from Minnesota Management and Budget, the state's official agency for fiscal matters.

Archeological digs from the period and thorough reviews of news from the era indicate that society indeed did not collapse from the "draconian" and "mean-spirited" budget cuts.

The evidence indicates that the buildings remained standing, the rule of law continued to prevail, and the streets were not filled with the rotting corpses of the destitute and hopeless masses who confronted a meager general fund budget of only \$29 billion.

We only wish we could say the same of other collectivist utopias like North Korea, Cuba, and Venezuela.

The bottom line is that the mainstream media narrative that implementing smaller government is some crazy pipe dream of nutty Republicans is a bunch of bunk.

It can be done and has been done - as recently as fiscal year 2010.

AIMLESS AMY FROM MINNESOTA

The Watchdog finds it a bit amusing and also befuddling that there is buzz around Senator Amy Klobuchar running for president.

Yes, we understand that the Democrats keep a pretty low bar for presidential campaigns, they of the Jimmy Carter, Barack Obama, Ted Kennedy, John Kerry, Al Gore, Mike Dukakis crowd.

The news has been of late with news that Klobuchar will be heading back to Iowa in August to campaign for the Democrat running for the Senate down there, who is in trouble after inserting his foot in his mouth and then leaving it there.

Yet, Amy Klobuchar has to be one of the emptiest suits we've seen on the political scene in a long, long time.

One would think that a United States senator, especially in this time of trouble, would be immersed in taking on the serious issues facing the country - the national debt, the Ukraine, Israel, the southern border, ObamaCare, etc.

So what is Aimless Amy working on to help the country?

According to a recent Star Tribune headline, she is tackling the important issue of distracted driving.

The headline of July 20th blared "Sen. Klobuchar Highlights the Perils of Distracted Driving."
Oh my!!!

Then, two days later, Senator Klobuchar was again in the headlines, this time demanding an investigation into claims that Big Oil was being mean to Big Ethanol, as if that crowd doesn't already get enough assistance from the federal government, like creating and propping up an entire market sector.

Way to take on the tough and important issues, Amy.

This coming from the senior senator who is also known for federalizing other high profile issues like pool drains and foreign adoptions.

Look, those issues are important to some people, but they are from the most important issues facing the nation and are certainly low on the priority list for most Americans.

The simple fact is that we have a U.S. Senator who appears to be interested in playing it safe and preserving her image instead of rolling up her sleeves and getting to work on the tough issues, which would require making tough decisions and disappointing certain constituencies.

Aimless Amy is yet one more example of the complicity of the mainstream media in protecting Democrats.

If a Republican Senator had such a paper-thin record after 8 years in office, the "do nothing" label would have been applied long ago.

Oh, yeah. That's already happened to Michelle Bachmann.

At some point, Klobuchar will have an opponent, Republican or Democrat, who will look her in the eye at some debate and ask her to name her most significant accomplishment and we will hear crickets.

That Klobuchar is considered a legitimate contender for the presidency shows little Democrats have to offer the nation.

Can we say something nice about Aimless Amy? Yes. She isn't Joe Biden.

8/1/14

In This Issue:

Quote of the Week: "Stop being mad all the time. Stop just hating all the time. Come on."

-President Obama referring to Republicans in Congress

Harold Hamilton says: This is what the end of a failed presidency looks like. And who is the hater? Who is angry? Who is lashing out all the time? It's the man in the Oval Office who has presided over ObamaCare, the IRS, the VA, Syria, Israel, the Ukraine, and a massive run-up in the national debt. A failed president, indeed.

- 1. End of the Line?**
- 2. A Pay Raise is Not in Order.**
- 3. House Fundraising Numbers Tell the Story.**
- 4. Lois Lerner - Potty Mouth.**

END OF THE LINE?

Greetings and salutations, Watchdogs. Lots of exciting things are happening across Minnesota and Anoka County, starting with the failed train known as Northstar commuter rail.

The Watchdog has learned of discussions that are taking place regarding the future of Northstar, including an innovative and brilliant plan to end the taxpayer subsidy and constant drain of public dollars to prop up the train.

Because of the sensitive nature of the discussions, the Watchdog has agreed to refrain from sharing details of the plan and the names of the elected officials and local leaders involved.

Rest assured, once details become public, Watchdogs will be excited by the idea and the prospect that it will become reality.

As the Watchdog predicted years ago, Northstar rail has become an abject failure that hasn't come close to reaching ridership goals and other promised benefits while massive subsidies are required to entice people to ride the train.

In any case, taxpayers should be grateful for many of our elected officials in our area.

Their hard work and willingness to challenge the status quo to make government more efficient and accountable is worthy of our respect and support.

Elections matter. This is yet another great example.

Details to come!

A PAY RAISE IS NOT IN ORDER

More governmental foolishness raised its head this week when the Star Tribune ran an article about suburban mayors and council members whining about their need for a pay raise.

To be fair, some local elected officials are not pushing for more money.

To be honest, it's rather easy to dispatch this bogus argument.

Those pushing for a pay raise essentially argue for more money for the following reasons:

1. The number of hours devoted to the job;
2. The daunting and significant managerial duties;
3. The inability to attract and retain a large pool of qualified candidates.

Regarding the first argument, it may very well be true that some of these folks regularly devote many hours to the job.

That's irrelevant to the pay discussion.

Serving in suburban government isn't supposed to provide a professional salary or compensation comparable to a profession like accounting or lawyering.

Put another way, the job isn't supposed to provide a living, even if the politician in question works 20 or 40 hours per week at the job.

Suburban government isn't a career and isn't supposed to be one.

Instead, it should be viewed as a public service opportunity limited in time.

Paying a city council member \$20 or \$30 bucks an hour will just encourage careerism.

The second argument contains no merit whatsoever and the most specious.

These mayors and councils don't "manage" the budget or any other aspect of city government.

Given the statutory framework of city government in Minnesota, it is staff that run the city and not the council.

For better or worse, the city manager/administrator and other senior staff make these decisions.

At best, the council and mayor ratify staff decisions. At worst, they rubber stamp them.

To suggest that there are mayors running around the suburbs with spreadsheets and big calculators is laughable.

Let's remember that this argument works in reverse. Remember salary caps on government employees in Minnesota?

The largest complainers were local units of government, who argued that they needed to pay a city manager \$150,000 or \$200,000 per year because of all the big responsibilities they had.

It's also similar to the arguments they make to hire well-heeled lobbyists.

The bottom line is that mayors and council members aren't really in charge of their cities and thus don't deserve to get paid like it.

Finally, the Watchdog isn't aware any cities that have suffered some kind of brain drain because the job doesn't pay a king's ransom.

The cities seem to run pretty well and don't seem to have trouble finding people willing to serve.

How ironic that Blaine Mayor Tom Ryan is the among the prominent whiners for higher pay.

He's been in the mayor's chair for over 20 years.

The "low pay" to which he feels he has been subjected for the past two decades hasn't seemed to dissuade him from holding on to the mayor's sash and refusing to let others have a turn.

There is nothing wrong with some form of reasonable compensation to recognize the commitment involved in serving.

That moderate pay shouldn't, however, turn into a salary and thus a career choice.

HOUSE FUNDRAISING NUMBERS TELL THE STORY

Like it or not, money is the fuel that makes a political campaign machine run.

No money, no chance is the typical out come.

Yes, some can tout their "grassroots" campaign or their penny pinching ways, which is really code speak for "I don't have any money and can't run an effective campaign."

Of course, money doesn't always equal success, but it's a strong indicator of it.

This week, the fundraising numbers came in for state House races.

So who's up in the fundraising department and who's down?

Here's the tale of the tape:

THE GOOD

In District 14B (Saint Cloud area), former state Rep. Jim Knoblach has raised \$57,000 compared to incumbent DFLer Zach Dorholt's \$30,000.

In District 17B (Willmar area), GOP challenger Dave Baker has raised a very impressive \$70,000 compared to incumbent DFLer Mary Sawatsky's \$48,000.

In District 44B (Minnetonka area), Republican Ryan Rutzick has raised an impressive \$53,000 in an open seat, although his prospective DFL challengers have also done well raising money.

In District 48B, incumbent Republican Jen Loon has raised a whopping \$83,000 compared to GOP primary challenger Sheila Khine's modest \$25,000.

And in District 49A (Edina), GOP challenger Dario Anselmo (no relation to Phil), has brought in an eye-popping \$84,000, far above incumbent Ron Erhart's \$59,000.

THE BAD

District 15 B (Mille Lacs area) is represented by a freshman legislator who voted for gay marriage, a very unpopular position in the district.

In 2012, GOP challenger Dale Lueck lost by a handful of votes.

Lueck is once again running for the seat in what should be a strong GOP year, running against a freshman who often times voted against his district.

How disappointing it was to see that Lueck has raised a paltry \$15,000 so far this year, compared to the incumbent's \$74,000.

Getting outraised nearly 5 to 1 is reason for strong concern. Let's hope Minority Leader Kurt Daudt is on the case and lighting a fire under Lueck.

Next door in District 11 B (Mora area) GOP challenger Jason Rarick has been outraised 2 to 1 by vulnerable incumbent Tim Faust.

Let's go, guys! History waits for no one!

All in all, House GOP candidates are doing very, very well fundraising.

They will need to, considering all the outside money that will pour in from the liberal mega donors who are used to buying elections. Education Minnesota and Alida Messinger being two of the fattest cats on the monied planet.

LOIS LERNER - POTTY MOUTH

Disgraced IRS bureaucrat Lois Lerner has been proven to be a power-mongering, hyper-partisan and biased public servant.

We have now learned that Lefty Lois is also a profane potty mouth, and a biased one at that.

Of the treasure trove of emails that weren't eaten by her dog and then "recycled," one was particularly revealing of Lois's hatred of conservatives and Republicans.

In one missive, Lerner used her taxpayer funded email account to rant against Republicans, calling them "a\$\$holes."

This coming from a woman who worked for government, worked for the IRS, and abused her position in a hyper-partisan manner.

If a hyper-partisan, law abusing bureaucrat isn't the definition of an a\$\$hole, we don't what is.

Aloha, Watchdogs.

8/8/14

In This Issue:

Quote of the Week: *"But frankly, he (President Obama) should never have said as much as he did, that if you like your current health care plan, you can keep it. That wasn't true. And you shouldn't lie to people. And they just lied to people."*

- Former Democrat Congressman Barney Frank

- 1. The Watchdog Scoops Again.**
- 2. Candidate Statement.**
- 3. The Saddest Statistic.**

THE WATCHDOG SCOOPS AGAIN

As our loyal and long-time readers know, The Anoka County Watchdog has spent nearly a decade serving as the primary source of quality news and opinion here in the county.

Further proof of the Watchdog's preeminent journalistic status was revealed last week when we scooped the story of discussions underway to radically change Northstar commuter rail's failing operating plan.

Even the state's largest newspaper was eager to squeeze us for information.

Here's an email sent to Harold Hamilton from Star Tribune reporter Pat Doyle on August 1st:

Hi Harold,

A colleague of mine at the Star Tribune sent me a copy of your note on the possibility of ending subsidies for Northstar. Can you give me a few details? Is there a good number to reach you at?

Thanks.

Pat Doyle

Staff Writer
Minneapolis Star Tribune

When the largest news paper in Minnesota is calling asking for the news, you know you're doing something right.

By the way, Harold Hamilton had no interest in returning the email, as you can imagine.

You can always count on the Watchdog to be your primary source of news, information, and opinion!

CANDIDATE STATEMENT

Jim Goodrich is a candidate for the Andover City Council. In the interest of informing our readers, the Watchdog periodically publishes candidate statements in their entirety, without edit.

Goodrich's statement follows:

Twenty year Andover resident, James Goodrich, is running for Andover City Council. James is married to his wife Janna of twenty-four years and has three adult children: Zach, Emily and Miriam. James is a twenty nine year veteran of the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office and has attained the rank of Lieutenant. James has had a number of different assignments over the years: Narcotics Investigations, Background Investigations, Internal Affairs Investigations, Emergency Services Unit (Swat), Civil Service Unit Supervisor and Warrant Apprehension Unit Supervisor. James also led a group of relief workers from the Hennepin County Sheriff's office to Louisiana after the Katrina hurricane for several weeks.

James has been a member of Constance Free Church since 1994 where he volunteers several hours a week. James is also a member of the Rapids Archery Club where he competes in archery leagues and volunteers teaching kids and adults the sport of archery.

James loves his country and community. "I believe I've had a front row seat in life with my 29 years of experience in Law Enforcement. I've been witness to many different public policies and management styles over the years; some that work and some that don't. I will bring common sense public management policies that work to Andover City Council. These policies will maintain individual rights, low taxes, sensible regulations and codes that will be to the benefit of the individual and Andover's growing business community alike.

I'm starting to get concerned that our freedoms and liberties are slowly slipping away. By the people, for the people, is a very important concept. This is one of the things that made our nation great. I want to make sure, on a local level, it stays that way.

I've been talking to a lot of Andover folks about a lot of different issues. There are about 33,000 people in Andover right now. When I take a particular position on a certain issue, I understand that some folks are going to agree with my position and some folks, not so much. That's an obvious reality with any politician. But know this, the decisions that I make, will be the most informed decisions that I can make with as much input as I can get from every side of the issue. And that those decisions will maintain the freedoms and liberties of the individuals who call Andover their hometown!"

James will be retiring from his service in Law Enforcement in November of this year and will have ample time available to give to the needs of the Andover City Council. He would appreciate your consideration in voting for him in the General Election on November 4th.

<http://electjamesgoodrich.com/>

THE SADDEST STATISTIC

Given President Obama's incompetence and his stewardship of our government, there is no shortage of depressing, disheartening statistics that demonstrate starkly demonstrate what every thinking American knows: we are on the wrong track and our chief executive has no plan to get us on a path to prosperity.

Whether it's the national debt, the pending insolvency of every entitlement program, or the president's own underwater approval ratings, warning signs are flashing everywhere, signaling distress.

But there is one statistic that is deemed by the publication the most depressing and shocking of all.

In a recent Wall Street Journal/NBC poll, a whopping 76% of respondents feel that their children will be worse off than they are.

Three out of four Americans feel the next generation will be worse off than this one.

That number, by the way, is an all-time high.

This number is further proof that the very foundations of American Exceptionalism are under assault.

The belief that future generations will have it better than the current generation is an article of American faith and goes to the very heart of the Promise of America.

To be sure, the 76% we are speaking of are fearful and pessimistic for good reason.

There is very little to indicate that life will be better for future generations.

The country, especially the federal government, is providing a raft of very expensive goodies to current citizens, paid with borrowed money that will be the responsibility of future generations to repay.

Instead of spending tax dollars on core public goods that will provide a benefit moving forward (e.g. roads, bridges, ports), Washington spends money on one-time programs with no real public policy benefit, like bailouts for favored friends and subsidies for ridiculous market sectors like electric cars.

In a real sense, Washington is mortgaging our future to buy political favor, handcuffing our kids and grandkids to a mountain of debt they can't possibly repay.

While the majority of the shame belongs to Democrats, it must be acknowledged that Republicans share the blame by lacking the courage to stand against this immoral state of affairs.

It should come as no surprise that Democrats are behaving in this manner.

Democrats really have no universal and unifying set of core values.

Instead, Democrats work to concentrate political power.

And the way to concentrate political power is to buy off various constituencies, which the Democrats have done with shameless abandon under Obama.

Using the economic crisis as a pretext, Obama and his cronies have turned on the governmental spigot to pay off constituencies rich and poor.

There are increased subsidies, payments and bailouts for big business (GM, Bank of America, Solyndra), the middle class (student grants, farmer subsidies, daycare subsidies), and the poor (food stamps, welfare, immigration benefits).

Truly, the ends justify the means.

To simplify, if you can vote for Democrats, you can get a benefit, paid for by those who can't vote for them.

Hence, future generations, who can't vote, are part of the class of people victimized in what is really a high-class mugging scheme where one group is knocked over in order to get money to give to another.

Obviously, this scheme is antithetical to the American Dream and a reason why so many Americans are rising up against this garbage and also rising up against Republicans who refuse to do anything about it.

This is why leaders like Justin Amash, Ted Cruz, and Rand Paul are so popular.

They are willing to stand up against the very powerful and growing coalition of those who enjoy the looting of the federal treasury.

America is waking up. Hopefully it isn't too late.

8/15/14

In This Issue:

Quote of the Week: "The reason Matt Entenza lost -- and I think this should be a wakeup call to candidates like Mike McFadden - look what happened yesterday with two candidates, Scott Honour and Matt Entenza, who tried to buy the election."

- DFL Chair Ken Martin

Harold Hamilton Says: Does this mean Mark Dayton won't be selling any of the Dayton Dynasty's precious art to fund this campaign, like in 2010?

In This Issue:

1. Don't Mind the "Enthusiasm Gap."

DON'T MIND THE "ENTHUSIASM GAP."

Greetings, Watchdogs. There are less than three months to election day 2014.

Regarding this week's primary, you know how things turned out, unless you are a hyper low-information voter. In that case, you'll be voting Democrat anyway and no amount of information will stop you from clapping your flippers and barking for Dayton and Franken on election day.

In reality, the much vaunted GOP primary turned out to be a rather sleepy affair that never caught fire at any level, except maybe the legislative level.

Certainly, the for the big races, the fuse disappeared into the fire cracker and then died.

This has led to no small amount of hand-wringing amongst the chattering class about an alleged "enthusiasm gap" that is supposed to concern friends of the GOP everywhere.

We are supposed to be losing sleep and twirling our collective hair nervously because more liberals voted in the DFL primary than ours.

So what.

The enthusiasm gap doesn't exist and Tuesday's vote numbers say very, very little about how many people are going to show up in November when the pre-season is over and the political Super Bowl is upon voters.

First, let's look at some facts.

Comparing apples to apples would dictate that we look at 2010, also a year in which there was an August primary and a governor's race on the ballot.

In that year, 130,408 citizens cast votes in the GOP primary.

This past Tuesday, according to preliminary numbers from the Secretary of State, 183,086 voters participated in the GOP primary contest.

That's an increase of about, oh, 39%. About the same percentage that the national debt has gone up under Obama's "leadership" of the nation's finances.

Look, a 39% increase has to be seen in nothing but a positive light.

And the DFL had a larger turn out in real terms?

That's to be expected. Many of their faithful are dependent upon government and thus have a direct stake in who controls the spigot of debt-financed governmental largesse.

Moreover, despite the mainstream media downplaying things, the most hotly contested races were on the DFL side and NOT the Republican side.

Think about it. The damn state auditor's race turned into a full-on civil war, with over \$1 million in total spending, which has got to be an all-time record and one that will probably not be broken until sometime after we retire the national debt.

It was a nasty affair, with punches thrown everywhere. Even after it is over, DFL Chairperson Ken Martin couldn't refrain from plunging another bayonet into Entenza's political corpse, noting that Entenza had "tried to buy the election" and "burned bridges" in the process.

No word on whether Martin has sent soldiers from Education Minnesota to Entenza's estate to burn the buildings to the ground and sew his yard with salt.

And how about that Phyllis Kahn donnybrook over in Minneapolis?

The endorsing convention itself featured an epic brawl that put the Taiwanese legislature to shame.

Then came the allegations of (gasp!) voter fraud.

Apparently, it's only voter fraud if a Democrat is disadvantaged by it.

On primary election day, peacekeepers were deployed to deter violence and voter intimidation.

Remind us, who had the hotter primary races.

Second, this publication has yet to see any poll, even one, that shows an enthusiasm gap in favor of the DFL anywhere in the country.

To the contrary, there is a raft of polls showing a gap amongst likely voters in FAVOR of the GOP.

In a recent Pew research poll, 76% of self-identified Republicans said they were "absolutely certain" to vote. That's three out of four, folks.

This is a nine-point advantage over Democrats who said the same.

If there's a reputable that shows the opposite, we haven't seen it.

Third, there really wasn't a motivating race, although at least on paper, there should have been.

The U.S. Senate race was over the day state convention ended.

You didn't need to be Nostradamus to see that Jim Abeler was going to get whopped like a rented mule. In fact, it looks like Mike McFadden won every corner of the state with exception of Abeler's neighborhood.

The congressional races offered no drama, either.

The First District race barely made the newspapers, with two guys who looked fairly indistinguishable.

In the Sixth District, the race tilted heavily in Tom Emmer's favor when he won a decisive first ballot endorsement victory and nothing changed the calculus through primary day.

Even in the governor's race, there was no animating factor.

The race was low key, low profile, low spending, and low on emotion.

There were no strong contrasts between the candidates and no scandal or drama to significantly shift the base each candidate built.

In other words, if one of these guys was acceptable to a voter, then the other three likely were as well.

And let's keep in mind that the turn out wasn't bad to begin with, seeing as turn-out was up 39%.

Yes, we know some of the more passionate and involved activists will ping us with complaints that the candidates were really different.

Kurt Zellers was dirt because he greased the skids for a Vikings stadium. Jeff Johnson was evil because he wanted to expand the sales tax base. Marty Seifert was raised by wolves because he sent his delegates home in a bid to block the endorsement.

Folks, this is all deep inside baseball. Even among motivated Republicans, this stuff was small ball in comparison to the big issues, in which all four were pretty lock step.

Finally, it's a fact that many voters of both parties are motivated to vote against things, such as Mark Dayton and Al Franken.

That opportunity didn't present itself on Tuesday.

In sum, there the facts don't show this alleged gap and neither do other indicators.

On election day, there will be a big GOP turn out.

For one, there will be a very clear contrast and a very clear choice between the major GOP and DFL candidates.

Mike McFadden and Jeff Johnson will present a very clear choice for voters between themselves and their DFL opponents.

Voters will have a chance to send a message to Barack Obama as well. Do you doubt the enthusiasm to do that?

In short, the stakes will be very, very high.

This is the choice between Johnson and Dayton, not the choice between Johnson and Zellers.

It's McFadden versus Franken, not McFadden versus nobody-who-can-win.

In addition, don't down play the Minnesota summer.

August in Minnesota is sacred, especially for those who work for a living.

Put another way, November isn't August.

No matter what the chattering class may say, the GOP will get their folks to the polls in November.

Just make sure you're one of them, Watchdogs.

8/22/14

In This Issue:

Quote of the Week: "...through all the generations of political extortion, it was not the looting bureaucrats who had taken the blame, but the chained industrialists, not the men who peddled legal favors, but the men who were forced to buy them; and through all those generations of crusades against corruption, the remedy had always been, not the liberating of the victims, but the granting of wider powers for extortion to the extortionists."

- Hank Reardon

1. Deja Val - All Over Again.

DEJA VAL - ALL OVER AGAIN

Watchdogs, as we've said before, it's vitally important to be informed with respect to candidates for local office.

They often run without any sort of ideological identification and offer scant information regarding their principles and values, instead mostly offering vague platitudes about making city X a "great place to live" or ensuring "good neighborhoods."

As readers know, city and county jurisdictions have the power to tax and exercise law enforcement functions. In short, what they do is important and is often times overlooked.

Such is the case with Val Holthus, who is running - yet again - for city council in Andover.

And while the good Watchdogs of Andover have a higher stake in this particular office, her candidacy should be a lesson for all Watchdogs regarding candidates for local office.

Back in 2012, the Watchdog reported on Holthus' political leanings, which are still relevant and are reprinted later in this piece.

What is happening here (and happened in 2012) is that we have a candidate who appears to hold a world view very much out of step with those of the majority of her neighbors.

Thus, it is very much a proper function of this publication to explore those views and help voters make an informed decision.

To start, Holthus is seeking the endorsement of the DFL party, as indicated by the 6th District DFL web site.

According to their [web site](#), the Anoka County chair, wrote of their June 19th meeting:

Mike Gamache is running for Anoka County Commissioner, 5th District, Andover, Coon Rapids and Fridley. Valerie Holthus is running for Andover City Council. They will be at the June 19th meeting seeking our endorsement.

Furthermore, a blog entitled "Observations from Andover" gives us yet another window into Holthus' world view that is absent from her Facebook page.

The author of the [blog](#), Wes Volkenant, describes himself as the following: chairman of the local DFL (senate district 35), a delegate to the sixth district DFL, a member of the DFL central committee, and a 24-year member of AFSCME, a government employee union.

He falls all over himself to support and celebrate Holthus' candidacy, noting her work in another union, Education Minnesota.

In fact, she is not only a member of Education Minnesota, she is an [officer](#) of the local affiliate serving the Anoka-Hennepin school district.

On the other hand, Volkenant directs nothing but venom at both city council candidate Jim [Goodrich](#) and state Representative Peggy [Scott](#), a true champion of limited government.

Just this week, he wrote of Goodrich: "Andover does not need a second Hennepin County Sheriff's Deputy on its Council, representing the same religious right, pro-gun, heavily-tilted law enforcement viewpoints that

Councilwoman and possibly Mayor Bukkila addresses right now. I will not vote for or recommend a vote for James Goodrich."

He also brags about a letter to the editor he wrote to local newspaper attacking Peggy Scott.

The letter begins, "In her July campaign flyer disguised to appear like an official '2014 Legislative Report' to the voters of District 35B, Peggy Scott shares common Republican half-truths and lies."

While it is true that these words are not those of Holthus, it certainly appears that she is aligned with self-identified Democrats, public sector labor unions, and at least one man who despises "pro gun" citizens and state Rep. Peggy Scott, who shares "Republican half-truths and lies."

Since about 64% of Andover voters support the Second Amendment, the Republican Party, and state Rep. Peggy Scott, Val Holthus might want to rethink her friends. Unless, of course, she shares his take on things.

If not, Holthus should feel free to contact the Watchdog to renounce the venom.

Finally, it bears re-reading what this publication wrote two years ago regarding her candidacy back on September 7th, 2012:

Watchdogs ought to know just a little bit more about Valerie Holthus, who is running for city council in this deep red Republican city.

First, Holthus is an officer for Anoka-Hennepin Education Minnesota (AHEM), the local teachers' union.

According to AHEM's [web site](#), Holthus is the group's Government Relations honcho, coordinating political activities and running the group's candidate endorsement process. In other words, she works to elect Democrats and defeat Republicans, including legislators like Peggy Scott and Michelle Benson, two principled conservatives who are serving Andover well.

Holthus is also [endorsed](#) by [Women Winning](#), a radical feminist group that helps to elect women who favor abortion.

Moreover, according to the group's web site, [endorsement](#) must be proactively sought. In short, you have to ask them for it.

You might ask yourself why this group would bother with city council candidates. After all, city councils don't pass upon abortion or other life issues.

The obvious answer is that city councils often act as a political farm system, just like in baseball.

City council candidates cut their campaign teeth at the local level and gain valuable name recognition and experience for potential runs later on for the legislature or Congress, two bodies that most definitely consider abortion issues.

It's a sophisticated stealth operation that seeks to build a candidate's name recognition and political bona fides without revealing true principles and values before they can no longer be hidden in a partisan political race.

If Holthus isn't really interested in a future run for the legislature or otherwise, than why seek this group's endorsement?

Moreover, you can't find a single mention of either Holthus' pro-abortion stance or her work on behalf of the teachers' union on her campaign [web site](#).

Why is that? Well, let us just hazard a guess that the good people of Andover are strongly pro-life and would never elect Holthus is they knew of her pro-abortion stance.

###

There you have it.

Cast an informed vote in November, Watchdogs.

8/29/14

In This Issue:

Quote of the Week: "The man who damns money has obtained it dishonorably; the man who respects it has earned it."

- *Ayn Rand*

1. Political Arsonists.

2. Different Year, Same Poor Results.

3. The World Belongs to Those Who Show Up.

POLITICAL ARSONISTS

In his never-ending quest to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that he doesn't understand how the world works outside of his trust-fund/ governor's mansion bubble, Governor Dayton this week sent a letter to federal bureaucrats complaining that railroads aren't doing enough to transport grain and other crops from field to market.

Like the snotty third grader who sits in the front row desk by choice, Dayton acted the part of the tattler. "Oh! Oh! Teacher! Teacher! The railroads aren't playing fair! Punish them!"

Now, if Dayton were something other than a totally disengaged, incompetent and liberal chief executive, he would understand both the science, the math, and the finances of the situation.

There is only so much capacity on a rail line. Therefore, when demand goes up, the capacity goes down.

More oil trains means less capacity, including less capacity for agricultural commodities.

Moreover, BNSF is a private, profit-seeking (gasp!) entity.

They operate their trains and manage their track capacity in a manner that maximizes shareholder value.

If that means giving priority to oil over grain, so be it.

Having said that, what is really galling and insulting to the intelligence of the average person (or below average person) is that the problem is, in large part, of the government's making.

Frequent and dangerous oil trains are racing through densely populated areas because the governments of both Mark Dayton and Barry Obama have refused to grant permits for the building and expansion of pipelines that would reduce the need for oil trains.

Moreover, the government holds "right of way" legal rights over BNSF tracks to give under-utilized Northstar commuter trains priority over the same tracks.

Thus, a true problem solving elected official would work to expedite pipeline permits and either mothball or suspend Northstar in order to assist both the oil industry and the ag industry, two market sectors that are driving growth and prosperity, unlike the solar and electric car industries.

Instead, political hacks like Dayton fan the flames of emotional and irrational thought, pointing fingers at corporate bogeymen and "demanding" answers from them as to why they can't defy physics and make more trains run on the tracks than the tracks can physically handle.

Now, some folks might see deeper politics at play. You see, a buddy of Barry Obama, Warren Buffet, owns BNSF Railway. Hence, some are tempted to say that the resistance to oil pipelines is really part of an effort to keep Buffet's railroad in the black while strangling a competitor.

Now there could some merit to this, as Obama is truly America's foremost Crony Capitalist president.

But the more likely scenario is that what we are seeing is really just another example of political arson.

The way this metaphorical arson works is that liberal politicians "set the fire" by passing or refusing to pass some law and then they run back to the scene, waving their arms, spraying the garden hose, and then pointing fingers at innocent parties, demanding that they prove they weren't to blame.

Refuse to grant pipeline permits. Send letters and make statements blaming the railroads. Propose even more government to "solve" the problem.

The political arson construct can be applied to numerous other issues.

Take the tax inversion issue.

Obama and company do nothing to lower America's high corporate tax rate. They do nothing to eliminate the double taxation of repatriated profits.

Set the house on fire.

Corporations do the rational thing. They go offshore.

Run around screaming "fire" and point fingers while you hold a gas can in one hand and a lighter in the other.

So why do they do this? The answer is simple. This model maximizes governmental power and control.

In this model, the politicians control the whole process from problem to "solution."

The low information voter eats it up and the most business interests are too intimidated to stand up for themselves.

And this readers, is one of the fundamental truths of liberals. They have no real interest in true public policy solutions. Instead, they only seek to concentrate power in their own hands.

DIFFERENT YEAR, SAME POOR RESULTS

What's the old saw about insanity and doing the same thing over and over while expecting different results?

The same can be said for Minnesota's education system.

They tinker around the edges but retain the same old system of teacher seniority and Soviet-era pay grid so as to not offend the teacher union.

The latest standardized test scores could be the test scores of last year, the year before, or any year you choose, for that matter.

They're pathetic.

Here's the breakdown:

STATE-WIDE, ALL GRADES:

Science: 53.4% proficient

Math: 60.5% proficient

Reading: 58.8% Proficient

STATE-WIDE, HIGH SCHOOL

Science: 54%

Math: 49.8%

Reading: 60%

STATE-WIDE, HIGH SCHOOL, BLACK STUDENTS

Science: 23.6% Proficient

Math: 19.8% Proficient

Reading: 33.6% Proficient

More data can be found [here](#).

Something is horribly wrong when only about 5 of every 10 or 6 of every 10 students are proficient in math, science, and reading.

Moreover, these test scores are stagnant. Nothing has changed.

What HAS changed, and always does, is the amount of money poured into the system.

Government is pouring ever more money into this system, mostly to increase teacher pay and benefits.

But that system is far from ideal.

There is little to no accountability and little to no competition derived from parental choice.

Thus, there is really no incentive for teachers and schools to get results because there is no penalty for doing otherwise.

Bad teachers still teach and bad schools still provide a bad education.

The utterly shocking test results for black students contain yet another indictment of government.

For better than 50 years, we have seen the utter lack of positive results from liberal social welfare programs.

Today, far too many minority citizens remain mired in neighborhoods marked by poverty, crime, broken homes, and lacking in meaningful opportunities for economic advancement.

And while it is ultimately the duty of every person to take responsibility for their own life choices, it is also the duty of government to provide an atmosphere that allows for the opportunity to achieve success.

It is crystal clear that government programs have utterly failed on that account.

That's because these programs aren't so much designed to achieve the stated goal.

Instead, they often serve as a platform for powerful special interests to get stuff out of the public treasury.

Welfare programs benefit government union administrators and the non-profits who distribute the money, taking a cut off the top.

Education programs first and foremost benefit teachers and empower the teachers' union. Guess why we don't empower parents with vouchers? Guess why teacher pay scales reward only seniority?

But until the very people who are harmed by these programs rise up and demand change, we will continue to see the very same outcomes.

THE WORLD BELONGS TO THOSE WHO SHOW UP

This publication shares the angst felt by many who witnessed the vote to unionize home health care workers this week.

Having said that, it's hard to feel too much sympathy when only about 21% of eligible voters bothered to show up and vote.

Their economic and work place freedom was directly at stake and about 8 of 10 didn't care enough to vote.

You get the government you deserve. And the union you deserve.

9/5/14

In This Issue:

Quote of the Week: "Al Franken ain't here because he gives a f**k about the North Side. It's the same old bulls**t ... just as he told y'all to your fu**ing face: 'I got to go to the State Fair and talk to more important people.'"
- North Minneapolis voter Ron Brown

Full story [here](#).

- 1. The Not-So-Awesome Economy.**
- 2. Who's for Jobs?**
- 3. Mike "Meekling" McFadden.**

THE NOT-SO-AWESOME ECONOMY

As readers know, one of the primary missions of the Watchdog is to counter the blatant bias of the mainstream media.

With election season in full swing, and with Democrats in charge everywhere in Minnesota, the Watchdog's BS detector is going wild as the media rushes to cover for the incompetence and failure of the DFL at every level.

Such was the case when the StarTribune, the most biased of media outlets, published the headline, "With an economy on the upswing, Dayton is tough target."

The byline also read, "Minnesota Republicans hoping to seize control of the governor's residence have a problem when it comes to the economy: The news is too good."

It doesn't get much more biased or blatant than that.

Especially when the economy isn't doing so well.

Of course, with the economy the biggest issue heading into the election, it's only natural that the liberal media would seek to downplay the issue.

Polls clearly indicate that the economy is the number one issue on their minds, although Obama's bungling of other issues like foreign policy could change the dynamic.

Moreover, most average citizens know their economic circumstances.

That's why the Real Clear Politics average shows that 66% of Americans think the country is on the wrong track while only 25% believe it's on the right track.

71% in a recent poll believe the recession did permanent damage to the economy.

In a recent Gallup poll, 61% disapproved of the way Obama is handling the economy while only 35% approved.

No wonder the media is trying so hard to downplay the Democrats' poor handling of the economy.

And it is no wonder that the polls say what they say. The hard numbers regarding the economy show an economy that is in trouble and leaving many behind. Hence, poll numbers that reflect frustration and desperation.

While the media dangles the unemployment rate in front of us like a talisman, the reality is that the unemployment rate number is a poor reflection of the state of the economy.

Other more important stats tell a more accurate story.

For example, the workforce participation rate is falling and remains at a historically low rate of 70%.

This number is important because it better captures adults who aren't looking for work and have given up. The unemployment rate only captures those who are actively seeking work.

The Obama economy has given rise to a permanent, European-style underclass that has given up hope of landing a job and instead is relying on essentially a lifetime of government benefits.

A second number to watch is the underemployment number.

The Obama-Dayton economy has given rise to the "Starbuck's MBA," the person who is working at a job for which they are overqualified because they can't find work in their chosen profession.

Dayton's own administration estimates that nearly 1.6 million working Minnesotans are underemployed.

Again, according to the administration's own statistics from the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) show that fully 37% of those who graduate with a four year degree are still unemployed a year after graduation.

Of course, some of those folks aren't prepared for real work. When you get a degree in gender studies, there's not much of a market out there.

It appears the "all good" economy is leaving a lot of people behind.

And check out the unemployment disparity by race.

Under Dayton, the white unemployment rate stands at 4% while the black unemployment rate stands at 10.7%.

No wonder the party that claims to exercise exclusive representation of black voters is hearing an [earful](#) these days.

The Hispanic unemployment rate stands at 8.5%.

Perhaps Dayton is tone deaf on the economy because he lives inside a trust fund bubble.

When you've never been truly "employed" in your life, it's hard to understand "unemployment" or "underemployment."

It's like a fish trying to understand a bike.

If you're a prominent liberal like Mark Dayton, Alida Messinger, Tom Steyer, or Warren Buffet, the economy does look pretty good, as your stock market portfolio marks significant gains, bolstered on a sugar high of easy money, bloated federal balance sheets, and other easy money policies.

Just imagine the headline and the news story if these same economic numbers happened under Tim Pawlenty.

These media types are without a shred of credibility.

WHO'S FOR JOBS?

While we're on the subject of DFL hypocrisy, let's take a moment to examine the issue of pipelines.

The building and maintenance of pipelines not only ensures a steady and affordable supply of critical items like natural gas and petroleum products, it creates jobs.

So why is it that Republicans seem to be the only political party fighting hard for these jobs (and mining jobs, too)?

Yes, they aren't the type of jobs that the liberal 1% would work or would even deem acceptable (as they contribute to "climate disruption"), but why not support the working man, the "Labor" in D-F-L?

The case for supporting the expansion of pipelines in Minnesota is summed up in excellent fashion by Dale [Lueck](#), who is running for a seat in the Minnesota House against a DFL incumbent who isn't so supportive of pipelines.

Below are Lueck's comments to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) regarding one pipeline project in his hometown area of Aitkin:

Lueck Comments on Pipeline Route

On August 21 Dale Lueck submitted written comments to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission supporting construction of the new Sand Piper Pipeline on the route which would include Aitkin County.

Lueck's letter stated: *"RE: Docket Number CN 13-474, PPL 13-474*

I am a former Aitkin County Commissioner, and as such, I understand the positive economic impacts of the proposed Sandpiper pipeline to our County.

We have not been provided independent information as to the precise economic impact of the pipeline on our property taxes. However, I understand that many advocates have been working to exclude Aitkin County from the pipeline route. As I understand it, on Aug. 7, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission chose to delay the project and decided to examine additional routes, all of which exclude Aitkin County.

I recently urged the Aitkin County Board to conduct an independent analysis of the impact on local property taxes the Sandpiper Pipeline would have if constructed on the current planned route through Aitkin County.

On Aug. 12, an Enbridge representative appeared before the Aitkin Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors. The representative told the chamber that Enbridge estimates the new annual property tax revenue for the Aitkin County portion of the pipeline to be about \$4 million per year.

I don't accept the Enbridge number at face value, but I do believe the number would be somewhere between \$1 and \$4 million. With a county property tax levy of just over \$11 million, \$1-\$4 million of new revenue would provide a huge impact on the amount we pay in annual Aitkin County property taxes, and that money could be used for significant public improvements or tax relief for our hardworking taxpayers.

We can't afford to let this project pass us by. Please support the preferred route without delay."

Lueck's position is in direct contrast to Representative Radinovich's April 4th letter to the commission attempting to block the pipeline route from including Aitkin County.

Lueck said, "Since my high schools days working at the Aitkin Iron Works and my many years of maintaining Navy ships, including Navy nuclear submarines, I am confident that we in Minnesota can build and safely operate an oil pipeline through Aitkin County". He added, "We don't need crude oil unit trains constantly rumbling through Aitkin, McGregor or Tamarack like they currently do over in Little Falls."

MIKE "MEEKLING" MCFADDEN

Ok, the headline is a bit harsh, but this publication was a bit put off this past week when McFadden tried hard to distance himself from his firm's 2012 involvement in a tax "inversion" process.

McFadden noted that he had no direct knowledge or involvement in the inversion and further intoned that tax inversions "are bad for America."

It would have been nice to see McFadden stand up and clearly state that what's bad for America is the ridiculously outrageous corporate tax rate that provides massive incentives for corporations to invert.

Of course, the back peddling didn't stop Al Franken's campaign from mouthing off about tax "dodging" and trying to blame him personally for the inversion.

You're not going to beat an incumbent DFL senator with severe anger management issues by playing nice, Mike.

If you're going to whimp out in the face of this angry, chunky, loud mouth, you need to take off the gloves, man.

9/12/14

In This Issue:

Quote of the Week: "I think Target Field puts us in better position to make sure that we have a competitive team from year to year. Names will come and names will go, but overall the objective is always to have the best team on the field."

- Twins owner Jim Pohlad, 2010

1. Those Poor, Poor Democrats.

2. A Race to Watch.

THOSE POOR, POOR DEMOCRATS

The Watchdog received a large amount of positive feedback and praise for our piece a few weeks ago regarding the political arson of the DFL.

That is, they themselves pass laws that create problems and then propose to ride to the "rescue" and save the day for Minnesota and America.

The second act of the political arson comes in the form of campaign finance.

No one has been more successful in the post Citizens United landscape of unfettered political donations than the Democrats.

They have raked in gobs of money from unions, special interest groups, and the filthy rich in order to outright buy seats, much as they did so infamously in Colorado.

But now comes the 2014 election cycle and the need to find some distractions from the abysmal record the Dems have compiled.

What better way than to create a campaign finance boogeyman (or men) in the form of the Koch Brothers?

Watch how the cynical and manipulative leaders of the DFL feign crocodile tears as they decry the role of money in politics.

Watch as they cluck their tongues, wag their fingers, and self-righteously demand "reform" while damn the very money that is flowing into their coffers.

Just this week, both of Minnesota's U.S. Senators helped sponsor a constitutional amendment to limit campaign spending by special interest groups.

Said Angry Al from the floor of the Senate, "Citizens United was one of the worst decisions in the history of the Supreme Court."

Yeah, that Dred Scott decision was nothing compared to Citizens United. Or that ruling that magically found a constitutional right to an abortion under something called a "penumbra" of privacy rights.

DFL party chairman Ken Martin fell in line with the chanting points as well, proclaiming in a recent interview that "outside" money had "perverted" the electoral process.

And up in the 8th Congressional District, incumbent Rick Nolan can't seem to talk about anything other than the Koch Brothers and their campaign spending.

You would think that Nolan was running away from a horrible voting record or something, the way he focuses attention away from Washington and onto a couple of guys who aren't even from around here.

What hypocrisy.

The simple fact is that all of the aforementioned politicians are sucking up oceans of cash and using it to bash the snot out of Republicans in a cynical attempt to distract from a record of failure.

There is no need to go through the numbers in exhausting detail, but a bit of a primer on who is giving to the DFL is important.

In Minnesota, the top political giver is Alida Messinger, who gave 100% of her donations to the DFL.

All told, Messinger alone has contributed more than \$1.6 million in Minnesota in the last three cycles.

And what of those special interest groups?

Education Minnesota, the teachers' union, seems to think spending money on politics is for the children.

No special interest group has spent more than the \$4.8 million they've dumped into elections the past three cycles, almost all of it going to support Democrats.

The unions, the ultra-rich like Tom Steyer and George Soros.

So who's benefitting from the largesse of the 1%?

Here's the easy way for the DFL to demonstrate some sincerity.

The DFL party should return every donation from special interest groups and wealthy donors like Alida Messinger.

Same with Rick Nolan. And Al Franken. And Amy Klobuchar.

If this money is so evil, return it. Ask groups like the so-called Alliance for a Better Minnesota to stop running ads.

Let's see what happens.

A RACE TO WATCH

Periodically until election day, the Watchdog will highlight certain races worth watching, especially races that may be flying under the radar of the political talking heads, who all parrot each other regarding the same 8-10 races.

One race to watch is house district 36B in Brooklyn Park.

GOP challenger [Peter Crema](#) is taking on entrenched DFL incumbent Melissa Hortman.

You say there's no way a Republican can win this seat?

Think again.

There are three good reasons to watch this race.

The first is the quality of the challenger.

Crema is a tier one candidate, highly motivated, intelligent, and following a disciplined plan to win.

He fits the district well and is has name recognition most challengers only wish they had.

Crema has served with a number of non-profit organizations in the city, including coaching youth athletics and involvement in church leadership.

Moreover, he's an incumbent city council member, having been first elected by beating an incumbent.

In other words, he knows his district and what it takes to run a winning campaign.

In the latest campaign finance reports, Crema reported outraising Hortman by about 60%.

The second factor is the incumbent.

The Watchdog spoke with sources in both the GOP and the DFL camp about this race and heard some interesting feedback from both camps.

Republican loyalists who have been door knocking with Crema report not only positive reactions to Crema based upon his community involvement, but also multiple instances of negative reactions to Hortman that appear to stem from her personality more than her partisan affiliation.

These same people report interactions that run something like this: "Who is he running against? Hortman? He's got my vote. And leave a lawn sign as well."

On the DFL side, the Watchdog can report that Hortman has some detractors who aren't eager to help out.

Now, every legislator accumulates some barnacles after years of service, but Hortman certainly has accumulated a few.

Finally, there's the district and the political environment and the district.

Yes, the seat has been in the hands of Hortman for 10 years.

But looking back to 2010 provides a clue.

That year, Hortman only pulled in 51% in a three way race against a poor GOP candidate and a conservative leaning Independent.

In addition, this is an environment Hortman hasn't seen. Headwinds against her, her party, and a great candidate in Peter Crema.

Peter Crema is a race to watch. Trust the Dog on this one.

9/19/14

In This Issue:

Quote of the Week: "Of course we support the Affordable Care Act for all the good things it's done for so many people, but that doesn't mean we're done. We're not going to be done until we have a single payer system!"
- Congressman Rick Nolan (D - MN 8)

- 1. The Great Garbage Grab - Post-Mortem.**
- 2. In Bed with Zygmunt and Adrian.**

THE GREAT GARBAGE GRAB - POST-MORTEM

We all know that government continues to creep into every corner of our lives, whether it's health care, child care, paper clips - or garbage.

Some cities continue to pursue the takeover of trash collection, substituting a consumer-driven open market system to a government-ranted monopoly system (so called "organized collection") that deprives citizens of choice and provides an anti-trust exemption for haulers to operate in a manner that otherwise would violate laws against price fixing and other anti-competitive conduct.

In the City of Lexington, citizens dodged a bullet when the city was caught red-handed trying to move to such a system but was found out by the haulers serving the city.

And while the city was ultimately shamed into keeping the current system, the whole system provides a window into the ways in which these changes occur behind the backs of both citizens and the haulers who have their business at stake.

In an exclusive, the Watchdog reviewed hundreds of pages of internal city documents related to the issue that were obtained under a Freedom of Information Act request by another organization.

Citizens not only in Lexington but across the county should be concerned about the way city staff operates in an atmosphere that clearly lacks the transparency we all deserve.

For example, staff denied that the city was pursuing organized collection while at the same time was pursuing a consultant who could assist the city in doing just that.

On March 7th, an executive from Ace Solid Waste, which operates in Lexington, sent Bill Petracek, the city administrator, an email essentially asking what's going on:

It has come to my attention that the City of Lexington is actively considering a significant change to how trash is collected in the community. As you are probably aware this could have a major impact on current haulers like ACE Solid Waste. Based on what I have "heard" to date, the council may already be taking a position without at least some input from the haulers.

In response, Petracek wrote:

Changing our trash collection process is just a discussion, and there is nothing definitive at this point.

Yet on March 27th, nearly three weeks after the initial inquiry, Petracek wrote in an email to Dan Krivit, a consultant on "organized collection:

Hi Dan! I was given your name by Trudy Richter from Richardson, Richter & Associates as a consultant who may be willing to help us through the process of organizing solid waste and recycling removal in our community. We currently have four (4) licensed haulers in the City of Lexington, and with the new laws in place, the City Council would like to move forward with making this happen.

Read that statement again. Does that sound like nothing definite? "The City Council would like to move forward with making this happen."

Not only that, but the consultant actually counsels the city administrator to conceal the fact that they are in contact.

In an email from Krivit dated April 1st, Krivit asks some basic questions regarding the situation in Lexington. He finishes the email by stating:

We recommend the City keep this discussion and any future Foth proposal confidential at this time.

By this point, Lexington has been pursuing this issue for at least a month, with concerned citizens, the media, and affected trash haulers all asking what's going on.

In at least one email, the city administrator tells a hauler that there's really nothing happening.

At the same time, the same city staffer is telling a consultant that the city would "like to move forward with making this happen."

The consultant, in turn, counsels the staffer to keep things "confidential."

Is this Minnesota or some banana republic?

This state prides itself on open and transparent government.

In fact, the state's freedom of information act clearly states: This chapter regulates the collection, creation, storage, maintenance, dissemination, and access to government data in government entities. ***It establishes a presumption that government data are public and are accessible by the public for both inspection and copying*** unless there is federal law, a state statute, or a temporary classification of data that provides that certain data are not public.

Even though the council ultimately backed down, taxpayers in Lexington need to ask their city council if this is the way public affairs are conducted in the city.

If so, Watchdogs in the city should demand that the city conduct its affairs in a more open and transparent fashion.

This is especially true as some members of the council are asking for their vote as they seek re-election.

Mayor Michael Pitchford: mpitchfordlexingtonmn@comcast.net
Councilmember Betty Bailey: bbaileylexingtonmn@comcast.net
Councilmember John Hughes: jhugheslexingtonmn@comcast.net
Councilmember Carin Payment: cpaymentlexingtonmn@comcast.net
Councilmember Jack Plasch: jplaschlexingtonmn@comcast.net

Moreover, Lexington and cities across the county are now on notice that the Anoka County Watchdog and like-minded citizens and organizations will use Minnesota's sunshine laws to keep government accountable with respect to its obligations to operate in an open and transparent fashion.

The motto of the Watchdog is "Always on the Watch!"

Lexington City Administrator Bill Petracek now knows this to be true.

IN BED WITH ZYGMUNT AND ADRIAN

There are many, many politicians walking around Minnesota these days with significant egg on their collective faces.

They seem to be more than just a bit embarrassed that their business partners, Zygi Wilf and Adrian Peterson, stepped on their cranks when it was revealed that Peterson's nickname "all day" refers to both his fertility and his willingness to whip the snot out of his kids from sun up till sun down.

You have thought that legislators and Governor Dayton would have done just a bit of due diligence before handing over a few hundred million bucks from the public fisc to the Vikings to build them a new place of business.

They just may have learned that the Vikings lead the NFL in the number of players arrested.

If the Minnesota penal system had a Super Bowl, the Vikings could finally hoist a trophy.

They could have also learned that Zygi Wilf himself has some integrity issues related to his business dealings.

Back home in New Jersey, where dirty dealing is a way of life, a judge found that Wilf had defrauded business partners out of \$84.5 million dollars.

In addition, the judge found that Wilf had demonstrated "bad faith and evil motive" in his trial testimony.

And in the land of Tony Soprano, no less.

The judge added, "I do not believe I have seen one single financial statement that is true and accurate."

Thus, taxpayers were forced to become unwilling business partners with a fraudster and his merry band of criminals.

The kicker, of course, is that the Vikings keep all the profits.

So spare us all the chest thumping and high minded talk, politicians.

You chose these clowns as a business partner and now you own it.

And since both the governor and all 134 members of the Minnesota House are on the ballot, here is a list of how legislators voted, so you may give them your opinion when they knock upon your door to ask for your vote in November.

9/26/14

In This Issue:

Fact of the Week: The federal corporate tax rate of 35% is the highest in the developed world. In addition, the United States is the only country in the developed world that taxes corporate profits earned abroad.

And some chowder heads wonder why corporations go through the inversion process. It's time for the president to get serious about tax reform and get America out of last place when it comes to corporate tax policy. Standing behind the likes of Belgium and New Zealand is embarrassing.

1. Debbie Johnson for Commissioner?

DEBBIE JOHNSON FOR COMMISSIONER?

The primary mission of this publication is to help educate citizens regarding happenings in government and politics here in Anoka County.

We believe that if the electorate is educated, the best possible decisions are made regarding public policy.

Thus, we receive regular and frequent questions from our readers regarding candidates. Who are they? Are they conservative? What do we know about their character, work ethic, and commitment to public service?

We have received questions in this regard lately concerning Debbie Johnson, a former state Senator who is running for county commissioner in District 5, an open seat being vacated by the retirement of ~~Scott's Wife~~ Carol LeDoux. Andover Mayor Mike Gamache is the other candidate in the race.

The race is now coming into focus with the primary over and Election Day about 6 weeks away.

The most frequent question we field concerns whether or not the candidate is "conservative" in world view, as reflected by their voting record, if one exists.

In the case of Johnson, a ten year voting record from Senate service provides an extensive record regarding views on social and fiscal issues.

This publication's touchstone on those votes is the annual legislative scorecards from both the [Taxpayer's League of Minnesota](#) (TLM) and the [Legislative Evaluation Assembly](#) (LEA).

Johnson's lifetime TLM score is a marginal 81%. Also keep in mind that missed votes are not counted against the legislator under the TLM model (more on that later).

Her lifetime LEA score is 61%, a full 20 points below the TLM score.

In fact, Johnson scored only in the 50s for five of the ten sessions she served:

2010: 52%

2009: 50%

2007: 55%

2006: 55%

2005: 53%

In 2001, Johnson's approval rating clocked in at 38%.

For the TLM scorecard, Johnson scored in the 50s twice:

2009: 50%

2005: 56%

More importantly, let's take a look at some of votes she took contrary to the position of the either the TLM or LEA.

Tax Increase (SJ3430) (2009 - TLM). This bill was \$2 billion tax increase, one of the largest in Minnesota history. It was also a top priority for Governor Dayton and the DFL legislature. (Passed 35-30).

Vikings Stadium (SJ8273 (2009 - TLM). This amendment would have stripped funding for a study to determine the feasibility of a Vikings stadium. At the time, Dan Erhart and the Anoka County Board were in partnership with the Vikings to bring a stadium to Blaine. (Amendment passed 41-22).

Legislator Pay (SJ428) (2008 - TLM). Johnson voted to increase her "per diem" payments by 45%. (Passed 59-7).

Cigarette Tax (SJ613) (2005 - TLM). This was the infamous "health impact fee" that was in reality a \$400 million tobacco tax, the first major tax hike in Minnesota in a long time. (Passed 60-6).

Northstar Rail (SJ179) (TLM - 2005). Johnson voted against an amendment to strip funding for Northstar rail. (Failed 6 - 57).

Bonding Bill (SF 713) (LEA - 2009). This is government spending put on a credit card. Worse, over half the transportation projects in this bill were for mass transit and not roads. Finally, this bill broke the tradition of bonding only in even number years. Recall that when the legislature went from meeting every other year to every year, the reason was that a separate session was needed to pass a bonding bill (Passed 59 - 8).

DNA Ownership (SF3138) (LEA - 2008). For years, the state had been collecting DNA samples from newborn children without parental consent. A judge ruled the state was in error in doing so. A bill was crafted to eliminate the parental consent requirement. Johnson supported the bill, which passed, but was vetoed by Governor Pawlenty. (Passed 51-12).

A second issue regarding Johnson's public service concerns missed votes. In fact, Johnson's attendance record was the focus of her 2006 re-election campaign, when her opponent made her missed votes an issue.

The TLM and LEA scorecards confirm that indeed, missed votes were an issue during her tenure.

For example, in 2003, Johnson missed 25% of the scored votes on the TLM scorecard. In 2010, Johnson missed 27% of scored votes on the LEA scorecard.

Some of her missed votes include:

A bill to create an embedded chip driver's license, a first step to a national ID (2010)

A bill to raise the minimum wage (2008)

A bill to exempt military pensions from state taxes (2007)

A bill to eliminate government price controls on gasoline (2005)

A bill to raise the gas tax and license tab fees (2003)

A bill to prohibit school districts from using taxpayer money to promote levies (2003)

An omnibus bonding bill (2007)

A bill to establish a sales tax increase constitutionally dedicated to arts and the environment (2006)

A bill to allow "conceal and carry" for handguns (2005)

A bill to establish a program to counsel women regarding alternatives to abortion (2005)

Finally, over the years the Watchdog has heard from numerous Watchdogs in her senate district who were deeply disappointed in Johnson's poor constituent services and lack of participation in community activities.

For example, many Republican delegates in her BPOU (the local party structure) were incensed by her lack of attendance at functions, including monthly meetings.

In fact, this issue was the impetus for Michelle Benson to challenge, successfully, Johnson for the Republican endorsement in 2010.

According to a news [article](#) in the Anoka County Union, Benson notes that she hadn't planned to challenge Johnson until these issues came to the fore.

Benson sent Johnson packing on the second ballot.

Readers who live in District 5 will ultimately decide how much weight, if any, they want to assign to the information presented by these scorecards and associated news items.

10/3/14

In This Issue:

Quote of the Week: "It's false to say that Dayton cut taxes, so false that it nearly overwhelms everything else that's true in this ad."

-KSTP reporter Tom Hauser, who put this Dayton political [ad](#) to the "truth test."

1. Reports From the Field.

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

Greetings, Watchdogs. So here we are, just a month out from an election where observers are attempting to pick their metaphor to describe the election.

Is it a wave? A tsunami? A yawn?

Lately, insiders have been calling it the "Seinfeld" election. Readers will recall that "Seinfeld" was the hugely popular comedy that touted itself as the "show about nothing."

At least at the state level, the view at ground level is that there is no real animating issue or set of ideas around which voters are rallying.

In our view, those self-described "insiders" really don't have a deep knowledge of what's transpiring in the field and instead are trading on rumors and tid bits of information.

At this publication, we would describe this election as a volcano. While there appears to be calm at the surface, there is a great deal of seismic activity taking place underground that is working its way to the surface and will surprise a great many people when the massive eruption happens on Election Day.

And much like a volcano, the warning signs are out there, though they can be hard to detect for the untrained.

The Watchdog says this because we have spent the last two weeks engaging in detailed conversations with our sources who hail from both sides of the aisle as well as non-partisan third parties.

The picture that emerges today, with four long weeks to go until the election, is that Republicans are poised to not only take over the Minnesota House, they are on the verge of a wave-type victory that could deliver a majority that runs into the high 70s and could even touch the 81-seat majority they sported after the 2002 elections.

These sources indicate that a wave is building to wash away a number of DFL seats and is climbing.

DFL insiders describe a triage strategy of total defense, working to assess where to build firewalls in hopes of retaining at least 68 seats and the majority.

The task of looking for pick up opportunities has turned to the grim task of deciding which patients are worth the resources to save and which ones to abandon.

On the GOP side, operatives are assessing a map of competitive races that has grown recently.

The expanding map is welcome news to the GOP and presents a host of opportunities.

The challenge for Red Team is to decide where to expend resources without getting stretched too thin.

In short, the GOP is riding high this week while the DFL is coming to grips with a tough map that seems to get tougher.

Like any good political prognostication, here is where we insert all the caveats.

First, many House seats will be decided by very low margins, perhaps in the hundreds of votes and perhaps less than that. Just last cycle, state Rep. Mary Franson (R - Alexandria) was up by only one vote until a recount gave her a 12 vote win.

Thus, slight shifts in the political landscape can push a leading candidate quickly into the losing column.

Second, there is a very legitimate concern on the part of GOP leaders that the liberal 1%ers who own and operate the DFL and allied interest groups will flood key districts with a multi-million dollar infusion of attack ads and other propaganda to knock down a rising GOP candidate.

The harsh reality is that the DFL is populated with a number of ultra-wealthy donors who are capable of writing a check for \$2 million and grossly tipping the spending balance in favor of the DFL in any number of House districts.

In short, it's not too difficult to buy a House election and these liberal donors have shown a strong willingness to do so.

Finally, all elections zig and zag throughout the cycle. Especially in legislative races, many voters don't make up their minds until the waning hours of the campaign. The bad news for the DFL is that most voters break against the party in power and they own it all.

So let's get to the good stuff. Here are six House seats with a DFL incumbent where the consensus is that that the DFL incumbent is toast (2 of them), on the razor's edge (2 of them) as well as 2 surprise seats that were considered safe DFL but now appear to be very much within GOP reach.

Smelling Burning Toast.

House District 11B is looking like a certain GOP pick up, where incumbent Tim Faust is unpopular and Mitt Romney won the district, albeit by a slim 51-47 margin.

This race serves to remind Minnesotans that the gay marriage issue isn't over. Observers on both sides say Faust's vote in favor of gay marriage is an animating issue.

One operative who has spent time in the field in the district notes that one of every three households where someone answers the door raises the issue of gay marriage, expressing anger with Faust's vote.

The district voted in favor of the constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage by a 63-37 margin.

Another rural district, 12A, is one that appears to be falling into the "GOP pick-up" column. Jeff Backer, Jr. is challenging incumbent Jay McNamar, a first-term legislator.

Romney carried the district 52-46.

This is another district where gay marriage is an issue.

The district voted in favor of the constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage by a 64-36 margin.

Moreover, the governor's ham handed farm equipment repair tax went over like flatulence in church in this rural district.

On The Bubble

Both bubble seats are located in what we should perhaps describe as a bubble zone, the area of the south Metro encompassing Eagan, Burnsville, and Apple Valley.

This area has replaced Anoka County as the bell weather for Minnesota elections.

The area has followed swing district trends, electing Democrats in 2008 and 2012 while electing Republicans in waves like 2010.

There are approximately four House races in the area that could be described as pure "toss ups" at this point.

One of them is District 51A, located in Eagan.

Incumbent state Rep. Sandra Masin won the district (then 38A) 52-47 in 2008.

Masin then lost the seat in 2010 by a nearly identical margin.

She reclaimed the seat in 2012 by a 55-44 margin.

It looks like 2014 will produce a winner by a similarly small margin.

A bit farther to the South, the Burnsville area is producing a rematch of the 2012 election in District 56B, where incumbent Will Morgan won his seat by a scant 170 votes in a year where Obama won the district by double digits.

The cycle before, Morgan was swept out by challenger Pam Myhra on a 50-47% vote.

Morgan won re-election convincingly in 2008 by a 56-44% margin.

He first won in 2006 by 53-47% count.

The Surprises

Here are two DFL seats that are in play, one rural one Metro, that serve as evidence that a wave is building across the state.

District 17A is a strong DFL area, including Swift County, that has been represented by the DFL for eons but has slowly been trending towards the GOP, what with them clinging to their guns and religion and all.

Third term incumbent Andrew Falk is in trouble and may very lose in November, especially given his social votes.

This is clearly a pick-up opportunity that may signal a broader political realignment in the rural regions of the state.

Even more surprising in District 43A, which is comprised primarily of Maplewood and stretches to the North and East into Willernie and Mahtomedi.

Incumbent Peter Fischer holds this seat, which re-elected Barack Obama (56-42), Amy Klobuchar (68-28), and Betty McCollum (58-35).

To think that Maplewood could very well be represented by a Republican shows the direction things are trending in this race.

In closing, it should be noted that one other reason many of these races are competitive is because of strong GOP challengers who are mounting what all observers agree are strong campaigns.

District 11B: Jason [Rarick](#)

District 12A: Jeff [Backer](#)

District 51A: Andrea [Todd-Harlin](#)

District 56B: Roz [Peterson](#)

District 17A: Tim [Miller](#)

District 43A: Stacey [Stout](#)

10/10/14

In This Issue:

Quote of the Week: "This year, voters aren't so sure. They've voted Republican in the past and have been disappointed. They don't want to wake up on Nov. 5 to find that nothing has changed. It's why pollsters tell us voters have been saying they aren't as excited about voting this fall as one might expect, and it's why significant numbers are weighing the wisdom of casting a "protest" vote for independent, third-party or libertarian minor candidates - even in close races."

- David Keene, the Washington Times

1. What's Wrong with the Economy.

2. Let's Go, Jeff!

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE ECONOMY

Even with President Obama and Governor Dayton either ignorantly blathering or outright lying, Minnesotans know that the economy isn't as hunky dory peachy keen as they claim it to be as they attempt to save DFL backsides on election day.

This publication has laid out the many economic indicators that show our stagnating economy, running the gamut from workforce participation to stagnating wages to underemployed workers.

Famed economist John Steele Gordon recently laid out five reasons our economy has sputtered into an anemic recovery.

Read these five reasons and ask yourself which party and politicians are guilty of supporting these policies and therefore guilty of strangling our economy.

Reason Number One: Counter-productive energy policies that reduce domestic production, and therefore jobs, and cause more oil to be imported.

Reason Number Two: Burdensome regulations and taxation, such as restrictive licensing requirements and the highest corporate tax in the developed world.

Reason Number Three: Crony capitalism that reduces competition in the private sector in exchange for political contributions.

Reason Number Four: Disincentives to work, such as ever-expanding entitlements.

Reason Number Five: Poorly enforced trade agreements that allow China to manipulate its currency and export more goods to the United States, costing U.S. jobs.

Reasons number one through four look like they are straight out of the DFL party platform. Democrats love all those things.

Now, let's also admit that there are plenty of Republicans in Washington and Saint Paul who love some of these items, particularly the crony capitalism piece, such as particular tax credits and incentives paid for by all but enjoyed only by a select few corporations.

It's interesting (and pathetic) that unlike many countries, the United States doesn't confront economic problems caused by natural problems such as a lack of deep water ports or natural resources.

Instead, our primary economic barriers are created by government, particularly Democrats.

The good news is that a problem caused by government can be fixed by government - if we have the courage.

LET'S GO, JEFF!

A couple of weeks ago, the Watchdog enthusiastically described Republican prospects for retaking the Minnesota House of Representatives.

Unfortunately, that same enthusiasm doesn't yet extend to the governor's race, where it feels like Mark Dayton is gliding to re-election while Republican Jeff Johnson doesn't seem to be gaining traction - yet.

At least for us, we feel like we're still waiting for the Johnson campaign to kick into gear and start challenging Dayton head on while laying out a case for firing the incumbent.

Specifically, it feels like the campaign is lacking a unifying theme that serves as Johnson's "proposition" to the political market place.

In other words, what's the "Big Idea" anchoring the Johnson narrative?

To be clear, this isn't a piece bashing Jeff Johnson as a bad candidate or a piece claiming he is running a horrible campaign.

This publication doesn't believe that to be the case.

However, it's a piece designed to offer constructive criticism and provoke some thought amongst our readers, including those close to the Johnson campaign.

The stakes are high and we need a gubernatorial campaign hitting on all cylinders against an incumbent who won't be easy to beat.

While time is certainly growing short, there is indeed time to gain traction through a unified narrative.

So what is the Big Idea?

In this publication's humble opinion, this is the perfect election to hit upon a theme that is central to every election - the pocket book of the average voter.

While Dayton's clownish incompetence is tempting, it isn't as direct an experience as economic issues.

Same with dumb DFL ideas like building a \$90 million office for part-time politicians.

The reality is that the Obama-Dayton economy has left behind millions of citizens it promised to help.

Their government-first approach hasn't helped anyone except the bureaucrats who populate government and the crony capitalist friends of Obama and Dayton, like Zygi Wilf.

You can hear Dayton tout the fact that he "fixed" the state budget by raising taxes \$2 billion to solve a \$500 million deficit.

Clearly, the Obama-Dayton plan is to worry about the government and not about the main street.

In the minds of those two, so long as government and the 1% are okay, everything is okay.

Polls in Minnesota show that in response to the question of "are you better off than you were four years ago," THREE out of FOUR Minnesotans say they are worse off or the same than they were back in 2010, in the depths of the recession.

There is no doubt that economic anxiety is running high in Minnesota, especially among the those who aren't in Mark Dayton's income tax bracket.

Therefore, the Big Idea needs to center on the promise of a growth economy that provides maximum economic opportunity for all.

It's a focus on the family budget and kitchen table issues.

It's not a new idea but it's a powerful idea - the idea that the best jobs program is a good job.

That includes ideas like unleashing Minnesota's natural resources (i.e. mining) and reducing government barriers to private sector job creation, like burdensome regulations and uncompetitive taxes.

Of course, Johnson will need to contrast this narrative with Dayton's performance in office, which isn't too hard.

Johnson ought to take Dayton's happy talk about the economy and ram it right up his backside.

He needs to show that Dayton is so out of touch and so beholden to the special interests, he claims the economy is fine when real incomes are down, wages are stagnant, and our quality of life isn't what it was years ago.

To start, the narrative should be prosecuted that Dayton has been focused on the government budget and taking care of the bureaucracy while the family budget has suffered.

While the economy burned, Dayton was busy growing government and hiring bureaucrats while goofing around with MnSure, Minnesota's Obamacare.

He was also busy engaging in crony capitalism with buddies like Zygi Wilf.

Instead of looking out for the interests of the average citizen, Dayton was busy taking care of government (read "government unions") and his crony capitalist buddies.

By contrast, Jeff Johnson will focus on the family budget.

Build pipelines, mine the minerals, grow meaningful jobs and empower people by reforming and taming government.

Someone needs to stand up for main street and that man should be Johnson.

In 2010, Republicans won because they promised to focus on jobs and the economy.

Republicans lost in 2012 because they muddled that promise by engaging in divisive and unproductive social issues like putting a gay marriage ban in the constitution even though it was already banned in the statute books.

Focus groups and ample polling data tells us that the economic anxiety that drove the GOP to a historic majority in 2010 is still evident today.

It's time for a Big Idea moment and less a time to focus on sideshow issues that don't resonate nearly as well as traditional pocket book issues.

It's about the economy, stupid.

10/17/14

In This Issue:

- 1. MetroCentric.**
- 2. Official Time.**
- 3. Met Council - Fast Facts.**

METROCENTRIC

The Democrats are spending a lot of time these days doing what they do best - denying facts and essentially lying about their politics and their public policies.

Example #1: MnSure rates. After engaging in some creative math, the Dayton Administration proclaimed that MnSure premium rates would increase "only" an average of 4.5%.

Part of the creative and deceptive math is based on the fact that the Department of Commerce didn't weight membership numbers in calculating the average increase.

For example, UCare's average 9.1 percent decrease in premiums for fewer than 600 enrollees got equal weight in the Commerce calculation as the 17.2 percent average increase for 9,900 MNsure enrollees covered by Blue Cross.

This department is sophisticated and well versed in parsing statistics.

Put another way, this is blatant deception on the part of the Dayton Administration.

Never mind the fact that Dayton and the DFL claimed for months that Minnesota-ObamaCare would save the average Minnesota family \$500 per year and give them a reduction of 30% in those same premiums.

Never mind that we were all promised that if we liked our doctor we could keep our doctor.

Never mind that we were all promised that if we liked our health care plan we could keep our health care plan.

This week we also learned that people who have coverage through provider Preferred One will be experiencing some of that Obamacare-will-lower-your-healthcare-costs magic next year.

Insurance brokers are seeing scenarios where premiums will jump 40-60% for many Preferred One customers.

Example #2: The Watchdog is now aware of two examples of House DFL legislators outright lying about their vote in favor of the \$90 million new office building down at the Capitol.

The building has become an embarrassing symbol of DFL profligacy and misplaced priorities.

Our friends over at the Minnesota Jobs Coalition have done a great job exposing these truth-challenged DFL incumbents.

Down in Albert Lea, incumbent Shannon Savick got caught trying to claim that the office building was settled before she got to the legislature and she didn't vote it.

Yes, she [did](#).

Now, the same thing is happening in Burnsville, where incumbent Will Morgan is running for his political life, also claiming that he didn't "[support](#)" the office building.

Yes, he voted for it.

Now the latest example of truth twisting.

After being accused of favoring and representing the interests of the Metro area, the DFL is claiming that they don't and they aren't.

Let's take a simple look at the facts here.

In reviewing campaign finance records, we can easily determine the address and zip codes of the DFL candidates for statewide office and the Minnesota House, all of them on the ballot next month.

Mark Dayton (Governor): Saint Paul, 55105

Tina Flint Smith (Lieutenant Governor): Minneapolis, 55408
Lori Swanson (Attorney General): Eagan, 55122
Rebecca Otto (Auditor): Marine on Saint Croix, 55047
Steve Simon (Secretary of State): Hopkins, 55343
Paul Thissen (House Speaker): Minneapolis, 55419
Erin Murphy (House Majority Leader): Saint Paul, 55105
John Persell (Majority Whip): Bemidji, 56601
Lynn Carlson (Ways and Means Chair): Crystal, 55427
Ann Lenczewski (Taxes Chair): Bloomington 55431
Frank Hornstein (Transportation Finance Chair): Minneapolis 55410
Michael Paymar (Public Safety Chair): Saint Paul 55155
Phyllis Kahn (Legacy Amendment Appropriation Chair): Minneapolis 55401
Deb Hilstrom (Judiciary Chair): Brooklyn Center 55429
Tom Huntley (Health and Human Service Chair): Duluth 55803
Paul Marquardt (Education Finance Chair): Dilworth 56547
Joe Atkins (Commerce Chair): Inver Grove Heights 55076
Alice Hausman (Capital Investment Chair): Saint Paul 55108
John Lesch (Civil Law Chair): Saint Paul 55103
Tim Mahoney (Jobs and Economic Development Chair): Saint Paul 55106

There you have it.

Out of 20 major offices and key House committees, only 3 belong to DFL legislators outside the Metro area.

Just 15% of the most powerful positions represent rural Minnesota.

In fact, that's really just 10% as Rep. Huntley is from Duluth, which is a city of the first class in population and is hardly rural.

In fact, half of these position are represented by someone from the urban core of Minneapolis and Saint Paul.

It's hard to deny you're a MetroCentric party when 90% of your key positions represent the Metro and 50% of those positions represent Minneapolis or Saint Paul.

OFFICIAL TIME

Here's one massive taxpayer rip-off we bet you've never heard of - "official time."

Ever heard of it?

"Official time" is a term used for federal employee to use paid work time to handle union issues.

In 2012, the latest year for which official figures are available, federal employees spent 3.4 million hours of work handling union duties, meaning they were paid not to work for the taxpayers but to dink around with union issues like nuisance grievances.

Taxpayers paid over \$157 million dollars in 2012 for federal employees to essentially work for their unions.

For example, the rightly maligned Veterans' Administration (VA) shelled out \$47 million for their employees to work on union time, money that could have easily been spent treating patients for their illnesses or at least treating them better than animals, which has been the sad case at many facilities across the country.

Heck, the time was probably spent pushing management to hand out more bonuses.

Homeland Security spent \$8 million, which is time those employees could have spent stealing things out of passenger luggage or strip searching 8 year-old kids or the elderly.

The Transportation Department shelled out over \$17 million in paid "official time."

Good thing the roads and bridges are all in top tip condition.

Candidates for Congress should be asked whether or not they support this scam.

Al Franken, Rick Nolan, Colin Peterson, and Tim Walz in particular should be asked why they tolerate this particular taxpayer abuse and whether or not they support ending it.

Read the report [here](#).

MET COUNCIL - FAST FACTS

The Met Council has been in the news recently, this time in a positive light.

Positive because many elected officials, many of them representing Anoka County, are standing up to the Met Council and attempting to retain the governing authority that rightly belongs to them, primarily because those local elected officials are just that - elected.

Fact: It's the fourth largest government in Minnesota

Fact: 4,200 employees

Fact: an annual operating budget of \$890 million

Fact: It has the power to tax

Fact: It's 16 member governing board is unelected and appointed solely by the governor

Understanding these facts, it's high time for the GOP to push for more accountability from the Met Council, including having its leaders stand for election.

In short, this is an unelected taxing authority, which is un-American and unconstitutional.

10/24/14

In This Issue:

Quote of the Week: "The bottom line is though, these are all folks who vote with me; they have supported my agenda in Congress."

- President Obama speaking of Democrat Senators who are running away from him as they try to fool voters into believing they are independent of him.

1. Dayton Fails Again.

2. Our Top 10 House Races.

DAYTON FAILS AGAIN

If they handed out dunce caps to politicians, surely Mark Dayton would get one.

The man who gave himself an "F" for his U.S. Senate and has earned a failing grade from numerous organizations for his work as governor, has earned yet another F'er to add to his transcript, giving him a political GPA that would shame Otter, Bluto, Flounder, and the other members of [Delta House](#).

Recently, the Cato Institute rendered another "F" grade for Dayton's 2014 performance.

Here's what they had to say:

Minnesota

Mark Dayton, Democrat Legislature: Democrat

Grade: F Took Office: January 2011

Governor Dayton replicated his grade of "F" from the last Cato report card. Under Dayton, general fund spending increased 13 percent in 2013 and an estimated 4 percent in 2014. His poor score also stems from his large tax hikes. In 2012 he signed into law higher taxes on gaming. In 2013 he approved a package raising annual revenues by \$1 billion, which is almost 5 percent of total state tax revenues. The package created a new top individual income tax rate of 9.85 percent above the current top rate of 7.85 percent. It also raised cigarette taxes by \$1.60 per pack. In 2014 he partly reversed course and signed into law modest tax cuts that reduced estate taxes, ended the marriage penalty under the income tax, and reduced sales taxes on business purchases.

Notice the disingenuous tripe here on the part of Dayton. Raise taxes \$2 billion and then cut taxes by a fraction of that amount and pat yourself on the back for tax cuts.

Talk about waking up at third and thinking you hit a triple.

Way to go governor. Make us proud. And poor.

OUR TOP 10 HOUSE RACES

If you're keeping score at home, the GOP needs a net gain of seven seats to capture the Minnesota House and retake the majority they lost in 2012.

In fact, let's drop the "net" as there isn't a single GOP-held seat that is in jeopardy this year.

It's all about gaining at least seven seats and gaining some semblance of balance and adult leadership at the Capitol.

The Watchdog will spend the next two editions, the last two before election day, examining some key races and, of course, making some predictions.

Isn't that what political blogs are supposed to do this time of year?

So, which are the ten prime candidates to flip from DFL to GOP this cycle, gaining the majority?

While there could be other seats that arguably belong in the Top 10, this is our top five for this week, with the other five to be included in next week's edition.

Seat Number 1: House District 11B, incumbent Tim Faust.

This seat, centered on the Pine County area and bisected by Interstate 35, has many factors that make it the most likely seat to flip this cycle.

First, Mitt Romney carried the seat in 2012.

Second, the Marriage Amendment passed with 63% approval in 2012, while Rep. Faust voted to legalize gay marriage.

While the gay marriage issues has gone dormant in many areas of the state, it is alive and well in some districts, including this one.

It is a high profile and emotional issue. When 63% of the district says they don't support gay marriage, it's near political suicide to cross your constituents.

When a major issue is adjudicated in politics, the winners tend to stand down while the losers remain active and engaged in the issue.

Third, the GOP has a quality candidate in Jason Rarick, who fits the district well and is running a quality campaign.

Finally, Rep. Faust isn't an [attractive](#) candidate.

He looks like the lead for "Revenge of the Nerds 15, the Senior Years."

Check out the photo and tell us he doesn't look like the kid who suffered the Atomic Wedgie in school.

Not the standard underwear-snugly-in-the-crack wedgie but the underwear-over-the-head wedgie.

Nerds!

GOP Challenger: [Jason Rarick](#)

Seat #2: House District 12A, incumbent JayMcnamar

This seat is out in the western part of the state west of Fergus Falls and running north to south from Ortonville to the north part of Wilkin County.

The seat features many of the same dynamics as the seat described above.

And also much like District 11A, this rural seat features an economy that is still sluggish, not producing jobs in rural Minnesota and not producing higher wages.

This, even though the multi-millionaire governor from Minneapolis and his running mate (also from Minneapolis) have been patting themselves on the back regarding this situation.

And unlike Rep. Faust, Rep. McNamar is a freshman legislator with a decidedly undistinguished record thus far.

A first-termer who is known for little more than the gay marriage vote in a socially conservative district with a bad economy isn't a formula for re-election.

GOP Challenger: [Jeff Backer](#)

Seat #3: House District 56B, incumbent Will Morgan

This seat is a Metro area seat in the Burnsville/Lakeville area.

This seat has a history of swinging between DFL and GOP representation, with the GOP winning in 2002, 2004, and 2010 and the DFL winning in 2006, 2008 and 2012.

In 2012, Obama won the seat by about 1%.

Most importantly, GOP challenger [Roz Peterson](#) lost by a scant 170 votes in a great year for the DFL.

This is one race where the quality of the challenger is making a big difference.

Peterson is a great candidate who will very, very, likely be able to overcome the 170 vote difference from 2012.

In a classic swing district like this, dissatisfaction with the DFL and especially Obama, will prove to be Rep. Morgan's undoing.

Seat #4: House District 10B, incumbent Joe Radinovich

This seat sits on the north end of Lake Mille Lacs and runs into Aitkin County and west into Crow Wing County.

There's not much going right for the DFL here.

Romney carried the district by 10 points in 2012.

The gay marriage amendment passed with 63% voting in the affirmative.

The economy here is in the tank, with stagnant wages compounded by a decline in tourism on Lake Mille Lacs.

Moreover, Rep. Radinovich is a freshman who now has to run on his record, not some theoretical talk about what he might do if elected.

We trust he never told voters he favored legalizing gay marriage back when he was running in 2012.

Oh, yeah. Radinovich only won by 323 votes in 2012.

And the same guy who narrowly lost that race is running again this year.

GOP Challenger: [Dale Lueck](#)

Seat #5: House District 27A, incumbent Shannon Savick

District 27A is centered on Albert Lea and surrounding areas.

This is another swing seat that has seen the electoral pendulum swing back and forth over recent years.

The marriage amendment passed with 60% approval yet Obama also took a 13 point victory in 2012.

The DFL social agenda has not played well here nor has the sputtering economic recovery in southern Minnesota.

Moreover, incumbent Shannon Savick has earned the dubious distinction of perhaps the least talented newcomer to Saint Paul.

Political observers of both parties share a view that Savick possesses a tenuous grasp of the issues.

For example, she recently claimed that the \$90 million new Senate Office Building wasn't her doing, that it was approved before she arrived in Saint Paul.

Not true. She voted for it and the record shows it.

We don't believe she is lying. We believe she honestly didn't know she voted for it.

Is it too harsh to claim she's unfit for legislative service?

We don't think so.

We also think highly of her challenger [Peggy Bennett](#), who is well-prepared for legislative service.

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11/7/14

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POST-ELECTION SPECIAL

Quote of the Week: "My staff and I have the privilege of running the most important organization on the planet - the U.S. government."

- Barack Obama

The Watchdog says: Well, now we know what the whole problem is regarding the president.

ELECTION 2014 ANALYSIS

By now, readers know it was a banner night nationally as Republicans laid a massive beat down on the Democrats from coast to coast, with minor exceptions, including Minnesota (more on that later).

Election Night was a stunning and sweeping rebuke of President Obama and the policy failures of his administration and the Democrats in Congress who have enabled him the past six years.

The depth of the rejection is almost overwhelming:

The House GOP majority is the biggest since 1928 and is so large, Democrats are privately conceding that they may have to wait until the next redistricting in 2020 to have a chance to retake the body.

In Arkansas, the congressional delegation is totally Republican for the first time in 141 years, cementing the South as a Republican stronghold. Even the Clintons couldn't save Arkansas from the Obama curse.

Democrats no longer hold a single seat in Coal Country and no white male holds a Congressional seat in the Deep South.

The deep blue states of Illinois, Massachusetts and Maryland elected Republican governors.

In the state legislatures, Democrats are aggregately in a minority not seen since prior to the Great Depression.

History will show that Barack Obama cost his party plenty. Comparing 2009 to 2015, the Democrats have lost: 15 U.S. Senate seats, 52 U.S. House seats, 10 governor's mansions, and control of 34 legislative chambers.

In Minnesota, the result was as disappointing as the national news was uplifting.

Al Franken was sent back to the U.S. Senate for another six years of buffonery. At least his antics will be done in a minority status.

Mark Dayton, the incoherent wonder, was handily re-elected as well.

In fact, all state-wide DFL candidates won, continuing a depressing streak of GOP futility in winning state-wide elections.

Finally, the promising campaigns of Torrey Westrom in Minnesota 7 and Stewart Mills in Minnesota 8 weren't successful.

In short, Minnesota defied the national trend and is looking in many respects like a semi-permanent blue state.

But the news wasn't all bad.

Minority Leader Kurt Daudt and his team ran a masterful campaign and flipped 11 seats to regain the majority and put the brakes on shameful runaway spending train we've seen the past 2 years.

And speaking of 11 flipped seats, we should review the Watchdog picks just prior to the election and see how well we predicted things.

We were correct on the state-wide picks, with the exception of Stewart Mills. We thought he would win that one.

For the Minnesota House races, we were on the money.

The Watchdog predicted a pick up of 12 seats, just one off the mark, which was Kirk Stensrud's narrow loss in the West Metro.

We correctly called and profiled the losses of DFL incumbents Andy Falk, Jay McNamar, John Ward, Will Morgan, Tim Faust, Zach Dorholt, Shannon

Savick, and Joe Radinovich.

While the overall news on election night was good, the Watchdog, like other conservatives, is thinking ahead to what the next two years will bring and what the implications are for 2016.

While we would like to be optimistic, a sober analysis urges caution against too much optimism and a realization that there is much work to do if we are to make the gains of 2014 more permanent than the short-lived gains of 2010.

On a national level, GOP gains were primarily the result of an epic turnout collapse of the DFL base, and not because of a newfound trust in the GOP among voters.

Polls show that the GOP remains relatively unpopular and that the plummeting approval ratings of the DFL have yet to translate into gains in GOP popularity.

The opportunity is there, but Republicans in Washington need to take advantage by truly implementing a pro-growth, pro-jobs agenda while putting spending on a sustainable trajectory.

If the next two years represent the status quo and it's business as usual in Washington, Republican will rightfully fail to build a sustainable center-right governing coalition.

If voters want a massive, unresponsive, goodie-dispensing, debt-ridden government, they will pick the experts, the Democrats, every time.

If history is any guide, we doubt things will change in Washington.

At the state level, it will be important to calibrate expectations.

Republicans have only won a slender House majority and still must contend with a DFL-led Senate and a DFL governor.

In short, there isn't much the team can accomplish in terms of policy victories and instead will be playing defense against the worst ideas of the DFL.

Moreover, the House GOP must be focused on how their ideas and opposition to DFL ideas are good for society and make Minnesota a better place to live.

We can already tell you that the DFL game plan for the next two years is to paint the House GOP as a party that has no ideas and no positive agenda. Obstructionists who simply say no to everything, they say of the GOP.

Like it or not, that message resonates with voters, who want government to work.

The good news is that making government work isn't mutually exclusive to the idea of a smaller, efficient government.

Making government "work" should be a GOP idea.

And so should the philosophy of having government do fewer things.

Moreover, it is important to calibrate expectations because the crew of incoming GOP representatives has a decidedly rural flavor. Of the GOP gains, only one came in the Metro area.

While these new Republicans are smart and talented, they represent areas that quite honestly like a good measure of government.

We frankly doubt that there will be a lot of calls to reduce local government aid, nursing home assistance, ag subsidies, or reductions in education monies for rural schools with declining enrollment.

In short, the strategic goal for the next two years should be careful and prudent management of the budget, an avoidance of unproductive social issues fights, and a focus on spotlighting DFL overreach.

Let Dayton and the DFL engage in overreach.

While this publication would love to see a return to bold and vigorous conservative governance, that just won't happen under the arrangement coming up for the next two years.

Doing so only invites a repeat of the 2010-2012 cycles, and a repeat of total DFL control must be avoided.

In sum, the goal is to govern in a manner that sets the table for defending and

expanding the gains of 2014 by showcasing GOP ideals while avoiding overreach and misreading the results of this election.

Rome wasn't built in a day, folks.

Similarly, the Leviathan the DFL built won't be reformed in two years.

11/14/14

In This Issue:

Quote of the Week: *"There was no wave of approval for the Republicans. I wish them congratulations, they won the election, but there was no wave of approval for anybody."*

- House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi

Quote of the Week II: *"Lack of transparency is a huge political advantage. And basically, call it the 'stupidity of the American voter' or whatever, but basically that was really, really critical to getting the thing to pass."*

- Jonathan Gruber, architect of ObamaCare

1. Fridley Garbage Grab - It's Real!

FRIDLEY GARBAGE GRAB - IT'S REAL!

Regular readers know that the City of Fridley has been behind closed doors for some months working on a plan to take over garbage hauling by replacing the current free-market system with one that is directed and managed by government.

Well, the bitter fruits of those secret negotiations are now public.

The city and the trash haulers working in the city have reached a [tentative agreement](#) to implement a "consortium" hauling system to replace the current free market system.

A "consortium" system is a cute word to describe what is really an economic [cartel](#), whereby the city grants the haulers the authority to carve up the city into zones, with each hauler getting sole and exclusive rights to haul in that zone.

Moreover, the city controls the cartel through the terms and conditions of the contract, which determines every aspect of the cartel, including prices, days for pick up, how the zones are made up, and the market share each hauler gets.

This is a classic economic cartel, whereby two or more firms conspire to fix prices in a particular industry.

Want more proof? The [state law](#) that grants cities this cartel authority specifically grants an exemption from the anti-trust laws that exist to protect consumers from illegal price fixing and other anti-competitive conduct:

Subd. 7. Anticompetitive conduct.

(a) A political subdivision that organizes collection under this section is authorized to engage in anticompetitive conduct to the extent necessary to plan and implement its chosen organized collection system and is immune from liability under state laws relating to antitrust, restraint of trade, unfair trade practices, and other regulation of trade or commerce.

(b) An organization of solid waste collectors, an individual collector, and their officers, members, employees, and agents who cooperate with a political subdivision that organizes collection under this section are authorized to engage in anticompetitive conduct to the extent necessary to plan and implement the organized collection system, provided that the political subdivision actively supervises the participation of each entity. An organization, entity, or person covered by this paragraph is immune from liability under state law relating to antitrust, restraint of trade, unfair trade practices, and other regulation of trade or commerce.

So what does that mean for the residents of Fridley?

It means that they are giving up their freedom to choose their hauler.

If you like your hauler, you can't keep your hauler, unless you happen to be lucky enough to live in the zone your hauler gets.

It means that you lose the ability to shop around for the best hauler at the best price.

You have to pay the price for garbage that the city negotiates for you.

It means that if you don't like the price or the service of the hauler in your zone, that's too bad. There's nothing you can do about it. There is no ability to fire your hauler and hire another. There is no ability to call your hauler and bargain for a better price.

FOR SEVEN LONG YEARS.

Yes, the tentative agreement is for a term of 7 years.

In short, the government of Fridley is stepping in bargaining for trash services on your behalf.

Where does this concept of government knowing better than individual citizens end?

And let's not let haulers off the hook.

They sat at the table and participated in this cartel scheme.

Getting a guaranteed market at a guaranteed price for seven years had to be attractive.

But it's the consumer that gets hurt by the monopolistic schemes.

Even if the current tentative agreement saves a couple of bucks, what do you think will happen to price and service in the long run.

The long sweep of human history would dictate that service will go down while prices go up.

In the absence of competitive pressures, there is no incentive for either good service or competitive pricing.

So why did the city do this? Why did they embark on this path to take over trash collection through a consortium cartel?

Read the city's words for yourself, from their [web site](#):

Resident complaints about the number of garbage trucks travelling over newly paved streets have raised concerns for the City officials. The City maintains 107 miles of city roads, making these streets one of the City's largest assets and trying to preserve the lifecycle of city roads has been an ongoing effort. About a year ago, acting on a recommendation from the Environmental Quality and Energy Commission, Fridley City Council initiated the process for considering organized collection of residential solid waste. Five different refuse companies have scattered accounts throughout Fridley. On collection day, residents may have five different refuse trucks, plus 5 different yard waste trucks and any additional special collection trucks, rolling down their street. The City currently has organized collection for recycling. On average, one garbage truck creates the same wear and tear on a road equal to 1400 cars.

So the city wants to take over trash collection to reduce road wear and tear.

Our research can find nothing that quantifies the savings or points to any empirical or scientific data to support the notion that moving to a consortium cartel system will actually do anything to save the roads.

In fact, we have found research to the opposite effect, showing that there is NO correlation between government taking over trash collection and a meaningful reduction in road wear and tear.

We found the following studies:

[Moore Engineering 2011](#): "Generally, it appears there is not a definitive correlation between the type of garbage collection system and the cost per mile to maintain streets."

[URS 2005](#) (for Arden Hills): "Reducing the number of heavy truck loadings should have positive effects on the lifespan and quality of local streets, however environmental factors are generally responsible for the majority of pavement wear and deterioration for Arden Hills streets and therefore significant extensions of pavement life are unlikely."

If the city is going to take away citizen choice, then the city must prove up its case for road wear and tear.

Every taxpayer in Fridley should demand the following from the city council and city staff:

ONE. Please provide the scientific analysis used to conclude that the city - THIS city - will save money through a reduction in road wear and tear by limiting the number of garbage trucks on the street. Please provide the scientific methodology used.

TWO. Please quantify the exact savings that the city can expect to see from this reduction.

THREE. If the city will experience these savings, than surely those savings will be passed along to the taxpayer. Please quantify the property tax reduction taxpayers can expect to see if this consortium cartel is adopted.

It's hard to believe that the city would have walked down this road without an objective, provable reason to do it.

If the city cannot provide a scientific document that exactly quantifies the savings, be very, very suspicious.

We've heard enough damn promises out of government lately. If you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor. Here, government promises to take your hauler if you like your hauler.

The good news is that this deal isn't final. There are three ways Fridley taxpayers can weigh in with the final approving authority on this - the mayor and council.

First, attend the open house the city is holding on November 20th and make your voice heard.
6PM at city hall that day.

Next, the city council will hold a formal public hearing on December 8th at their regular council meeting.

Finally, contact the mayor and your city council member [directly](#).

Folks, we need to stop this government interference in our lives and the loss of freedom.

It's time to start, Fridley. Do it!

11/21/14

In This Issue:

Quote of the Week: *"Obama is now fully exposed as nothing more, in common parlance, as a lying con man."*

- Rush Limbaugh

1. Lower Taxes, Yeah Right.
2. Beware The Train.
3. Intellectually Bankrupt.

LOWER TAXES, YEAH RIGHT

Had enough of the DFL parade of untruthfulness? Don't worry, there's always more.

In this case, we're talking about the whopper that the DFL "cut" and/or "held down" property taxes.

The [meme](#) throughout this election cycle was that the DFL "held down property taxes for the middle class."

After jacking up taxes by over \$2 billion, Governor Dayton and his DFL co-conspirators shared the loot with local units of government, thereby "buying down" property taxes this year.

Of course, nothing was reduced or brought down by this pay off.

It was merely a sleight of hand that pushed the payment for all the local government spending on to a different ledger, all paid for by the taxpayer.

This is similar to another DFL stunt, "freezing" college tuition at state institutions by jacking up state aid, which again does nothing to reduce spending and only provides illusory relief so long as the increased state monies flow and/or until colleges and universities once again jack up spending to ever higher levels.

For local units of government, including cities and counties, they have already eaten through the state booty and are now back to jacking up property taxes to cover the long-running trend of spending more and more and more to cover

unsustainable programs, including gold-plated retirement benefits and health care benefits that ironically will soon be killed by ObamaCare.

Right now, local units of government are setting "preliminary" property tax levies, which will be formally and finally adopted in December for taxes payable in 2015.

In the aggregate, property taxes are set to rise 4%, double last year.

Here they go again.

This is what happens when liberal government engages in not one but two scams against the taxpayer.

The first is when taxing accountability is decoupled from spending authority.

When the state collects tax revenue and then turns around and hands it out to another level of government to spend, the already low level of accountability and restraint is lost. There is no incentive to actually reduce spending or be a good steward of taxpayer funds.

Second, these "buy downs" are illusory and only temporarily mask government spending.

To the low-information citizen, it looks like a "freeze" or "reduction," but it isn't.

Clearly, the only way to truly freeze or reduce government expenditures is to do just that - freeze or reduce them in real terms.

BEWARE THE TRAIN

This week provided yet another embarrassing news story regarding Northstar rail and its abject failure to deliver upon the promise of high ridership, traffic congestion relief, and economic development.

This isn't because gas is cheap. Or because oil trains are eating track capacity. Or because the weather is bad. Or because the train doesn't run to Saint Cloud (which, by the way was a decision of the federal government, not Tim Pawlenty).

It's because Northstar commuter rail was sold on a foundation of misrepresentations, half-truths, and bogus promises.

The epic fail that is Northstar is a cautionary tale for both the new House GOP majority in Saint Paul as well as communities that would "benefit" from light or commuter rail (we're looking at you, Eden Prairie).

Recall the history here in Anoka County.

When all the promises were made, right thinking taxpayers asked why a commuter train was deemed a better option than an expansion of Highway 10.

The response was a wave of the hand and a paternalistic and dismissive retort that "all the studies show it."

When these advocates were pressed to provide those studies, they prevaricated and dissembled and delayed.

With a Cheshire smile, concerned citizens were told that "of course we'll provide the studies."

They were never provided.

Worse, once they were pressed time and again to produce data, the advocates got personal.

Confronted with the reality that they would lose on the facts if they were objectively presented, the advocates began a whisper campaign against the people asking the hard questions, with ad hominem attacks offered in response to legitimate questions regarding the viability of the project.

As is human nature, many were cowed and intimidated into supporting the project or supported it because they wanted to be on the side that was popular at the time.

The result was disaster.

The project is a failure and always will be.

Now, those left to defend the project (Met Council bureaucrats) do what they do best - deflect real accountability.

Taxpayers are told that the true value of Northstar is off in the future and the benefits are unquantifiable until that unspecified future time.

Funny, no one was talking that way when the project was being pushed through in a manner that would have made a Soviet information officer blush.

Four legs good, two legs better.

In fact, it's impossible to find the elected officials and opinion leaders who supported the project to own up to their support today.

No wonder this train is a spectacular fail.

House Republicans must demand that any transportation funding bill contain no funding for trains.

The reason? We can give you 317 million of them.

INTELLECTUALLY BANKRUPT

The Democrats are seriously out of ideas and out of things to say - at least as far as the newly minted minority in the Minnesota House is concerned.

After losing big in rural Minnesota, the DFL responded to the GOP's commitment to rural Minnesota by calling it a "divide and conquer" strategy.

Really. Is that the best they can do?

The GOP delivered on its promise to properly represent rural Minnesota and truly represent their values.

When put in charge, the GOP delivered by creating committees focused on rural issues, made the agriculture committee once again a stand-alone committee, and appointed a large number of committee chairmen from rural districts.

Imagine that.

Of course, if the GOP had failed to do this, the DFL would have jumped them for broken promises.

Get used to it, Democrats. You've elevated the concerns of your urban limousine liberals over those of rural voters.

Opposition to mining cost you.

Support for gay marriage cost you.

Radical gun control cost you.

Obamacare cost you, with a lack of plan choice in rural Minnesota as well as a huge tax on union health care plans.

And so did a leadership team, including the governor, who all hail from the urban core.

Liberal elites, led by Barack Obama, are supremely arrogant and consider the masses to be stupid, especially in rural America.

They aren't. And that thinking is catching up with Democrats, who continue to lose support in rural areas faster than politicians deny knowing Jonathan Gruber.

Enjoy the Obama-Dayton millstone around your necks for the next two years, Democrats.

You deserve it.

11/28/14

In This Issue:

Editor's Note: Harold Hamilton and the entire Watchdog staff wish you and yours a very happy Thanksgiving! We are most thankful for the much needed check and balance the new GOP majority in Washington and Saint Paul will provide next year. We firmly believe our political institutions are resilient enough to overcome the damage wrought by two chief executives who epitomize lawlessness and incompetence.

Quote of the Week #1: *"Democrats must embrace government. It's what we believe in; it's what unites our party; and, most importantly, it's the only thing that's going to get the middle class going again."*

- Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-NY)

Quote of the Week #2: *"After passing the stimulus, Democrats should have continued to propose middle-class-oriented programs and built on the partial success of the stimulus, but unfortunately Democrats blew the opportunity the American people gave them. We took their mandate and put all of our focus on the wrong problem-health care reform."*

- Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-NY)

Quote of the Week #3: *"At the core of liberalism is the spoiled child - miserable, as all spoiled children are, unsatisfied, demanding, ill-disciplined, despotic and useless. Liberalism is a philosophy of sniveling brats."*

- P.J. O'Rourke

- 1. Obama's Political Death Knell.**
- 2. Serious Questions for Sen. Ortman.**
- 3. Meanwhile in the Saint Paul Public Schools.**

OBAMA'S POLITICAL DEATH KNELL

Of course, much has been written in the aftermath of the recent election regarding Barack Obama and the remaining two years of his failed presidency.

Is he irrelevant? Can he regain momentum and prosecute an agenda? How can he unite his party, Democrats in Congress, and the coalition that propelled him to the highest office in the land?

The short answer is that Obama is done, politically speaking. The final years of his presidency will be marked by a slow march of the status quo until he leaves office.

This knell was not sounded by Republicans, even though they understand their mandate to stop Obama's lawlessness. This knell wasn't even announced by the decisive rout the GOP visited on Democrats election night.

Instead, it was sounded this week when one man in a subtle and skillful manner cut the president off at the knees, in much the same way a skilled boxer delivers a knockout blow in the blink of an eye.

That man is New York Senator Charles E. Schumer, one of the most powerful Democrats in Congress.

In a widely-followed speech this week, Schumer called the pursuit of ObamaCare, the president's signature policy initiative, a mistake and the wrong priority (see quote above).

That single quote in a lengthy speech was a declaration by Senate Democrats that they will no longer fall in line behind the White House.

They've moved on from the Obama years 24 months early.

Senate Democrats will chart their own course, even if that agenda conflicts with the president's agenda.

Yes, they are soon to be in the minority, but the votes and public statements of these senators will send strong signals to the Democrat base and the rest of America regarding the president's ability to lead.

The president is officially a lame duck.

You see, the Congress plays the long game. A president, at best, is in power for 8 years. Senators often serve for decades beyond that number.

Schumer, who is thinking of rebuilding his party and enhancing his own influence, is looking ahead to 2016 and beyond.

He well understands that his agenda must include distancing the party from the disastrous policies, operational blunders, and outright lies of the president.

Look for Senate Democrats to join Republicans in passing popular legislation like the Keystone pipeline, repealing the medical device tax, and generally asserting the prerogative of the legislative branch.

To be clear, it's not that Senate Democrats have suddenly become concerned about good public policy and responsible government. They haven't.

Instead, they are doing what they believe will save their political hides and put them back in control of Big Government.

Senate Democrats are over Obama. Too bad they spent the previous six years enabling his lawless and utterly destructive ways.

SERIOUS QUESTIONS FOR SEN. ORTMAN

We understand that many of our readers long ago nixed the Star Tribune - and for good reason.

But this week, that publication via contributing columnist Michael Brodkorb, [uncovered](#) shocking and very serious allegations against state Senator Julianne Ortman and her campaign manager that, if true, comprise a serious breach of legal and ethical boundaries.

The first allegation concerns Ortman's campaign manager, Andy Parrish. Two GOP candidates who were competing against Ortman for the GOP endorsement for U.S. Senate say that Parrish approached them at the state convention, offering to retire campaign debt in exchange for an endorsement of Ortman's candidacy.

In fact, one candidate, Monti Moreno, alleges that Parrish indeed wrote him a check in a partial (parsimonious?) pay off of that quid pro quo.

Expect multiple investigations to resolve this issue to determine exactly what happened and what Sen. Ortman knew and when she knew it.

This is just the latest in a string of legal and other controversies that seem to follow Mr. Parrish like stink on manure. Like this [issue](#) and this [issue](#). And this [issue](#).

Moreover, what does that say about Ortman's judgment that she would hire a guy with obvious judgment and self-control issues.

The second issue reported by Brodkorb is the serious problem the Ortman campaign is experiencing in properly filing campaign finance reports.

As reported, the Ortman campaign has had long-running problems in filing both timely and accurate reports.

In fact, a recent submission to the federal elections authorities contained amendments to every previously filed campaign report.

Even more troubling, the latest amendments all correct previous understatements of campaign spending that understated spending by tens of thousands of dollars in some cases.

The effect of the underreporting was to show a healthier state of finances than was the actual case.

This situation begs a very important and fundamental question: Was Ortman's campaign that incompetent or did the candidate intentionally overstate the financial health of her campaign in order to mislead delegates and the public into believing it was stronger than it really was?

After all, financial strength is an important indicator of candidate viability, especially in an endorsement contest, where other indicators like polling are often lacking.

Only the candidate herself knows the answer.

The state GOP better get after this issue and demand a firm resolution. There has been way too much controversy and drama in the family of late.

Whether it's an endorsed candidate's legal antics over a DUI or a party leader calling for an entire class of people to be "fraggged," we've had enough of this garbage distracting from a party that is doing good work to rebuild the brand and dig out of a serious financial hole.

The last thing our new House majority needs is a legislator sitting under a legal and ethical cloud that distracts from the upcoming mission of governing the Minnesota House against the DFL Senate and a DFL governor.

MEANWHILE IN THE SAINT PAUL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Unless you were living under a rock this week, you saw Saint Paul School Superintendent Valeria Silva issue an ignorant and thoughtless Tweet regarding the Ferguson situation:

"No indictment for officer Wilson! Very sad day in America. How do I explain this to my black students?"

The ignorance and foolishness of the Tweet stands on its own and is unworthy of comment.

In the meantime, here's what happening in the Saint Paul government-run schools regarding the achievement of black students:

In reading, 25% are proficient;
In math, 26% are proficient;
In science, 13% are proficient.

Perhaps Ms. Silva should spend more time on academic achievement and less time pontificating on issues in faraway Missouri. After all, which is more important to the black students she references in her ill-conceived Tweet?

12/5/14

In This Issue:

Factoid: In the U.S. House of Representatives, Democrat members represent only 14% of America's land mass, mostly concentrated on the far coasts and urban core centers, and Minnesota.

Factoid II: America has enough natural gas to meet electricity needs for around 575 years at current fuel demand and to fuel homes heated by natural gas for 857 years.

- 1. Budget Surplus Euphoria.**
- 2. The Draz Man Cometh.**

BUDGET SURPLUS EUPHORIA

There was a lot of high-fiving, back slapping, and a reported Icky Shuffle or two yesterday as government types celebrated the fact that some practitioner of the dismal science proclaimed that his crystal ball tells him that Minnesota government will have a budget surplus in the coming months.

Thank goodness. Surely anarchy would break out if the state didn't have the money it thought necessary to rule every corner of our lives.

A budget surplus tells this publication that government has overtaxed citizens (at least the shrinking number who pay taxes) and the higher the surplus, the bigger the over-taxation error.

The euphoria over a budget surplus is similar to the elation some low-information citizens feel when they get a tax refund.

They fail to understand the government essentially took their money for a few months and used it, interest free, before giving it back.

At its core, a budget surplus is nothing more than an acknowledgement of over-taxation.

Of course, that hasn't stopped people in positions of power and authority from breathlessly whispering out loud "how should we spend it?" like a group of middle schoolers who found a fiver on the locker room floor after gym class.

While it is easy for Watchdogs to see the profligate and foolish spending schemes, there are two that readers must beware and watch against.

DFL Senate Majority Leader Tom Bakk sounded rational, intelligent and almost statesman-like this morning when he warned against new spending and new government programs.

He spoke against new spending because, in his words, inflationary increases would eat most of the surplus, leaving little room for new spending.

For many years, democrats have been working hard to get the citizenry to buy into the idea that "inflation" should be built into the state budget.

Of course they would.

While inflation is a fact of economic life, in government it acts as an automatic spending increase that bypasses any sort of analysis as to why a particular governmental program should grow automatically, no matter what is happening in the private economy.

Moreover, when the democrats speak of "inflation," they mean much more than the increase in the price of goods and services in the broader economy.

In this regard, they also speak of government entitlement programs.

Entitlement programs are areas of government spending that uncapped and thus allowed to grow without restriction.

Many health and human services programs are entitlement programs that can see spending increases of well over 30% from bi-ennium to bi-ennium.

This is where we get the false meme of "draconian budget cuts."

HHS program areas will call for spending increases of 30%.

Republicans will suggest capping the spending at a healthy 25% growth.

Democrats scream about a 5% "cut" to the budget.

And so it goes.

The most pernicious and seductive argument, however, is the one that calls for a strong budget reserve.

We hear all sorts of happy and idealistic talk of government acting in a fiscally prudent manner to create a "rainy day fund" or a "cushion" against economic down turn.

We hear romantic and emotional comparisons to Mother Government acting just like any prudent family in Anytown America, frugally and fastidiously saving their pennies for the dark days that beset every family.

Not exactly. Unlike a family, government doesn't earn the money it spends.

Instead, it extracts money from private citizens under the coercive threat of imprisonment.

Thus, government shouldn't extract one more penny than what has been deemed necessary to meet projected expenditures.

The idea that government should intentionally overtax and then retain privately earned dollars in order for government to have its own cushion against economic hardship is absurd and morally bankrupt.

Only a hard core statist or a low-information elected official would embrace this idea.

Excess taxation should be returned to the private economy where those who earned the money can deploy it in the form of higher wages for employees, investment in capital equipment, spent on consumer goods, or invested to earn a future return.

Diverting excess money from the private economy into the public economy deprives the overall economy of the benefit of the allocative efficiency that happens when those who earned the money spend or otherwise deploy the money.

The real dirty secret of fat budget reserves is that politicians on both sides of the aisle favor them because it relieves them of politically unpleasant decisions during economic downturns.

While rhetoric about limited government and shrinking government is loud and unmistakable, the true appetite to cut spending or otherwise reform government is far weaker.

In other words, a budget surplus deprives the state of an opportunity to make perhaps unpopular but necessary reforms that are never considered in times of economic prosperity.

In sum, when one digs beneath the rhetoric and romantic narrative of a governmental reserve fund, it is extremely poor public policy that deprives the private economy of wealth while insulating government and politicians from the duty to reform government at precisely the time that reform is needed.

THE DRAZ MAN COMETH

Incoming House Speaker Kurt Daudt is a friend of the taxpayer.

As such, he has had the foresight and wisdom to hand the gavel in the House Property Tax and Local Government Finance Committee Rep. Steve "Draz" Draskowski.

It is quite proper and fitting that a staunch and principled conservative like Draz.

Local government taxing and spending in Minnesota is a hot bed of unaccountability and profligate spending.

We know Draz will honor the taxpayer and put forth common sense ideas to put some guard rails on the big spenders down at the local level.

One of the first things his committee should take on is the bad public policy called local government aid (LGA).

LGA is massive transfer payment scheme whereby the state taxes money and then transfers it to cities and counties to spend.

Separating the taxing accountability function from the spending function is always a bad idea.

When a level of government can spend the money without having to tax for it, it encourages irresponsible spending.

The basic premise behind LGA is that property tax poor cities and counties need some money to plow the streets and respond to 911 calls.

Of course, LGA goes for way more than that, funding shrubbery at city hall and new dugouts at the local ball field.

Moreover, LGA insulates local government from making tough and needed decisions about consolidation and annexation.

If a city doesn't have the property tax base to deliver core services, the answer isn't a subsidy from Saint Paul.

The answer is to unincorporate and become a township.

Minnesota has 87 counties. If some counties can't provide services, they should merge with other counties. There is nothing sacrosanct about the number 87. It could just as easily be 77. Or 67.

The same goes for school districts. We don't district with a couple hundred students. That's inefficient.

It is high time for Draz to lead the charge and ask these cities and counties why they loll around and rely on LGA, which is really welfare for government, instead of doing something more concrete and permanent like merging or unincorporating.

And the same goes for Minneapolis and Saint Paul. Some readers may not realize that the two richest cities in the state also take LGA welfare.

If they can't run their cities on the ample property tax base they enjoy, that ought to be too bad for them. Get a new city council, not another LGA appropriation.

Go get em', Draz!

12/12/14

In This Issue:

Quote of the Week: *The principles involved in right-to-work laws are identical to those involved in FEPC [Fair Employment Practices Commission]. Both interfere with the freedom of employment contract, in the one case [FEPC] by specifying that a particular color or religion cannot be made a condition of employment; in the other, that membership in a union cannot be.*
- Milton Friedman, in "Capitalism and Freedom"

- 1. Government Overreach You Won't Believe.**
- 2. Gangster Government.**

GOVERNMENT OVERREACH YOU WON'T BELIEVE

These days, it isn't hard to find sickening examples of our government reaching well beyond the limits imposed by the federal and state Constitutions. Government is on a runaway train to tyranny and the train is speeding up, not slowing down.

And while we are all familiar with the anti-liberty posture of the federal and state governments, tyranny is alive and well at the local level, too.

Even sleepy suburbs like Mounds View are capable of the kind of lawmaking that our Founding Fathers would roundly condemn.

Check out the latest revision to the city's ordinance regarding garbage hauling, which seems to be a favorite whipping boy for Big Government these days.

Trash hauling is a private business, where owners take all the typical risks that a business owner takes in the market place.

Yet, you would think that hauling is some sort of utility where government thinks it can do whatever it pleases in the name of environmental extremism.

For better or worse, a hauler must have a license from a city to haul waste in the city.

Cities like Mounds View are abusing the licensing process to impose radical and heavy-handed terms and conditions in order to simply engage in free-market commerce in a city.

Consider the text of the Mounds View [ordinance](#):

Schedule of rates. When the application is submitted, the applicant shall file with the city administrator a schedule of maximum rates to be charged during the license period. Every licensee shall provide thirty (30) days' prior written notification to the city and the licensees' customers of any increase in rates to be implemented during the license period. **Failure to provide such notice shall void the rate increase.** Verified evidence that the licensee is charging more than the maximum rate on file with the city administrator shall be cause for license revocation.

Before you re-read that, consider the situation in Mounds View.

Trash is collected by private sector haulers who have no ties to government and are private, for-profit entities.

They collect trash pursuant to private, arms-length contracts with each citizen. Government has nothing to say about the transaction other than a mandate that everyone have trash service, in the name of public health.

So where in the world does the city get off in grabbing so much power from these private haulers in exchange for a license to do business in the city?

Imagine if this language was applied to other services?

"When the application is submitted, the applicant shall file with the city administrator a schedule of maximum rates to be charged during the license period. "

Suppose that a dentist had to tell the city the maximum price the dentist would charge for a routine exam in the next two years?

First, why does government have any need to know of the price of a good or service provided via private contracts within normal commerce?

Second, how can a business know of its costs years into the future? For example, what if government in the near future slapped a huge tax on dental services that wasn't foreseen?

Since when do private actors have to divulge the cost of the good or service they provide in order to obtain a license?

"Every licensee shall provide thirty (30) days' prior written notification to the city and the licensees' customers of any increase in rates to be implemented during the license period."

Wow. Since when does a private business have to inform government (in advance, no less) of a rate increase? And to every customer? Suppose dry cleaners had to suffer this mandate. What costs are imposed here that will be passed along to customers?

"Failure to provide such notice shall void the rate increase. "

This one takes the cake and makes this law a candidate for Communist Law of the Year.

This publication would love to know where the city supposes that it has the power to set price controls on trash collection or any other private contract or otherwise void a price that both parties have agreed to pay.

Moreover, the state Constitution, in the Bill of Rights, specifically forbids laws that impair the obligation of contracts:

Sec. 11. Attainders, ex post facto laws and laws impairing contracts prohibited.

No bill of attainder, ex post facto law, or any law impairing the obligation of contracts shall be passed, and no conviction shall work corruption of blood or forfeiture of estate.

Perhaps the Mounds View City Attorney ought to get acquainted with the Constitution.

"Verified evidence that the licensee is charging more than the maximum rate on file with the city administrator shall be cause for license revocation."

More significant overreach. License revocation means that a hauler will lose all business in the city, simply for charging more than what they told government they thought they would need to charge.

North Korea or America?

Whether you live in Mounds View or not, contact the [mayor and council members](#) and tell them they ought to be ashamed of themselves for passing such a heavy-handed and unconstitutional ordinance.

Talk about Gangster Government.

GANGSTER GOVERNMENT

Speaking of Gangster Government, would it surprise you to know that Mark Dayton has filled his administration with political hacks and cronies who occupy their positions because those folks helped Dayton politically?

Of course not.

In addition, would it surprise you to learn that Dayton's administration was showering taxpayer dollars on the non-profits of political cronies, who in turn were using the funds to underwrite lavish lifestyles instead of engage in the non-profit's mission?

Of course not.

So it shouldn't surprise you to learn that a Dayton political crony, now appointed to state government, has been funneling taxpayer money to a non-profit run by a Dayton crony, even though bureaucrats were raising alarm bells the entire time regarding the way the non-profit was using the money!

By now, you are surely aware of the Community Action of Minneapolis scandal, under which a Dayton crony's non-profit diverted taxpayer dollars to personal expenses like cruises and trips to a day spa.

What taxpayers didn't know until recently was that Commerce Department employees were raising red flags for years regarding the program's spending habits.

What taxpayers also didn't know was that Commerce Commissioner Mike Rothman, a Dayton political crony, was aware of the misspending and nonetheless did nothing to stop it, [admitting](#) that he did so for "political considerations."

So, here we have a Dayton crony dispensing taxpayer dollars to another Dayton crony.

Regulators raise red flags galore about the spending and the warnings are ignored in order to apparently fulfill some sort of political payoff.

What's so shocking is how brazen Commissioner Rothman was in admitting the political relationship.

I guess if Obama can engage in Gangster Government and Crony Capitalism at a breathtaking level, Dayton and friends can do it on a smaller scale, if only because doesn't have as much money to steal as the federal treasury possesses.

12/19/14

In This Issue:

Quote of the Week: Some parents say it is toy guns that make boys warlike. But give a boy a rubber duck and he will seize its neck like the butt of a pistol and shout 'Bang!'

- George F. Will

- 1. The Hole Gets Deeper.**
- 2. We Don't Daudt It.**
- 3. Crony Capitalism.**

THE HOLE GETS DEEPER

For all those legislators who are still interested in promoting trains this coming session, especially as part of a large transportation package, we at the Watchdog will continue to point you North, as in "Northstar."

The troubled commuter train continues to act more like an airplane than a train. Like an airplane without an engine. Or wings. Or landing gear.

Talk about crash and burn.

As ridership continues to plummet, the brain trust down at the Met Council. ~~elected~~ appointed to do what's best for you, has decided to turn to publicity stunts and gimmicks as they all sit in their bunker waiting for the inevitable implosion.

The stunt in question involves a "money back guarantee" if the train is more than 11 minutes late to either terminus.

Big deal. This is all style and no substance.

First, the train is so heavily subsidized that the ridiculously low fares aren't worth the hassle.

So your train is an hour late on January 3rd. You get to wait for over a month to get a check for \$3. It's not even worth the hassle to get down to the bank to cash it. Heck, most refunds from Menard's are for more than the cost to ride Northstar.

Oh, yeah. You also have buy a "Go-To" card or other pass to be eligible. If you used that green paper with dead presidents on it, you're out of luck.

There's nothing like taking a money losing program and losing more money by first cutting, and now refunding, fares.

Only in government would that be labeled as a turn-around plan.

No word on whether Governor Dayton has awarded performance bonuses to the Northstar bureaucrats like the MnSure guys got for their brilliant performance.

It's also amusing to consider that the money-back guarantee program is only running for the month of January.

Apparently, the brain trust thinks the trains will all be running on time by February 1.

Perhaps most laughable and tragic of all is that the train's abysmal on-time performance has been blamed on the weather.

Say what?!

This publication was there when Northstar was touted as a transit option impervious to weather.

We saw all the artist's renditions of warm, content Northstar passengers mocking and flipping off stranded drivers on Highway 10 as blizzard conditions annihilated the drivers of global warming-contributing gas guzzlers.

We saw the sketches of frazzled drivers fighting to get to work while train riders whizzed past them while sipping hot chocolate and enjoying foot rubs from super courteous and professional Met Council staff.

Funny, the cold weather hasn't slowed down traffic on Highway 10.

The time has come for the legislature to seriously consider mothballing Northstar.

While there would no doubt be shut down costs and penalties, that number has to weighed against the losses of continuing to operate a train that is seeing not losses, but mounting losses.

Epic fail.

WE DON'T DAUDT IT

It has to be tough for the no-candidate-is-ever-conservative-enough-for-us crowd.

The circular firing squad had a tough end to the week when one of their favorite targets, Speaker-Elect Kurt Daudt, laid his stones down on the table and made a call unprecedented in the Minnesota House.

This week, Daudt booted radical enviroweenie Rep. Jean Wagenius from her long-time perch on the House Environment Committee.

A Minneapolis liberal's liberal, the self-described Mother Earth feminist had used the committee to foist all sorts of nutty ideas to save our Mother from the depredations of the evils of leaf blowers and lawn fertilizer.

Her 28-year "career" in the legislature has been marked by the kind environmentalism that only Earth First could love.

The insult was elevated this past biennium when the DFL majority gave Wagenius both the gavel of the Environment Committee but also expanded the authority of the committee to oversee agriculture issues, where farmers could be duly punished for growing the food that feeds us all.

For as long as observers can remember, the minority party in the House was granted their choice of whichever legislator they wanted to fill particular committee slots.

Not this year.

Daudt made the call and yanked Wagenius off the committee. This move coming after he also re-established the Agriculture Committee has a stand-alone entity.

So where are the Daudt critics this week? Where is all the talk of the Speaker-Designate being too soft to take on the tough issues? Where are all the tough talkers who have never won an election (and never will), dispensing their unwanted and unproductive political drivel?

It's back to mom's basement for a couple more games of Call of Duty until they re-emerge for another round of grievances and "accountability" lectures.

Well played, Rep. Daudt.

CRONY CAPITALISM

The problem with feeding at the public trough is that you can't limit the number of pigs who will come running to the sound of free slop sloshing out of the taxpayer-funded pail and slapping loudly as it hits the bottom of the trough.

This is especially true when blue-ribbon corn-fed hogs like Zygi Wilf and the Pohlads are face down in the largess.

There emerges a feeling among every under-capitalized business with a shaky business plan that they are entitled to receive from the taxpayers what no somewhat competent bank or venture capital firm would offer: money.

Just this week, two piglets came running to the trough looking for some scraps.

The first is a company on the Iron Range called Magnetation. This company converts waste and low grade iron ore into commercial grade iron ore pellets.

Apparently the company has suffered cost overruns in building out a facility on the Range and is looking for a bridge loan from the taxpayers.

Hey, guys. There's a place to apply for a bridge loan to get you through a cash flow pinch.

It's called a bank.

Competitors of the company are grouching that government is subsidizing a private market actor.

Great point. So long as those complaining aren't also asking for handouts from the taxpayer.

There are fewer and fewer of those kinds of businesses around these days.

Oh, yeah. The second company.

It's major league soccer.

Does that really merit any discussion?

12/26/14

In This Issue:

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS EDITION!

Editor's Note: On behalf of Harold Hamilton, we here at the Watchdog wish you a very Merry Christmas and much Prosperity in the coming year!

The Watchdog will pause next week as Harold and the Watchdog staff will be celebrating the new year with rum and cigars at an undisclosed Caribbean location.

We resume publication January 9th as the Watchdog will enter our 10th year of journalistic excellence.

Without further ado, let's move on to the last edition of 2014. Enjoy!

Factoid: When Barack Obama assumed office, 77% of Americans described race relations as "good." Today, only 40% say that. The president can't seem to fix anything.

- 1. A Turning Point in History.**
- 2. Victory in Fridley!**
- 3. Political Arson.**

A TURNING POINT IN HISTORY

While the Christmas Holidays are a time to celebrate many good things in life, be it family, friends, faith, good health, prosperity or otherwise, it also an important time to reflect upon the blessings of liberty we enjoy here in the Land of the Free, especially as those sacred freedoms are under assault from a government that whose encroachments would appall our Founding Fathers.

In December 1776, our new nation and her army were in full retreat as the British hounded the Continental Army across New York, New Jersey and into Pennsylvania.

The future of this great nation was in serious jeopardy as General Washington drew up a plan to save the army - and the nation.

Below is an excerpt from [Eyewitness to History](#) that recounts one of the most pivotal moments in American history, one that we must never forget.

December 1776 was a desperate time for George Washington and the American Revolution. The ragtag Continental Army was encamped along the Pennsylvania shore of the Delaware River exhausted, demoralized and uncertain of its future.

The troubles had begun the previous August when British and Hessian troops invaded Long Island routing the colonial forces, forcing a desperate escape to the island of Manhattan. The British followed up their victory with an attack on Manhattan that compelled the Americans to again retreat, this time across the Hudson River to New Jersey.

The British followed in hot pursuit, chasing the Americans through New Jersey and by December had forced the Continental Army to abandon the state and cross the Delaware into Pennsylvania. With New Jersey in their firm control and Rhode Island successfully occupied, the British were confident that the Revolution had been crushed. The Continental Army appeared to be merely an annoyance soon to be swatted into oblivion like a bothersome bee at a picnic.

To compound Washington's problems, the enlistments of the majority of the militias under his command were due to expire at the end of the month and the troops return to their homes. Washington had to do something and quickly.

His decision was to attack the British. The target was the Hessian-held town of Trenton just across the Delaware River.

During the night of December 25, Washington led his troops across the ice-swollen Delaware about 9 miles north of Trenton. The weather was horrendous and the river treacherous. Raging winds combined with snow, sleet and rain to produce almost impossible conditions. To add to the difficulties, a significant number of Washington's force marched through the snow without shoes.

The next morning they attacked to the south, taking the Hessian garrison by surprise and over-running the town. After fierce fighting, and the loss of their commander, the Hessians surrendered.

Washington's victory was complete but his situation precarious. The violent weather continued - making a strike towards Princeton problematic.

Washington and his commanding officers decided to retrace their steps across the Delaware taking their Hessian prisoners with them.

The news of the American victory spread rapidly through the colonies reinvigorating the failing spirit of the Revolution. The battle's outcome also gave Washington and his officers the confidence to mount another campaign. On December 30 they again crossed the Delaware, attacked and won another victory at Trenton on January 2, and then pushed on to Princeton defeating the British there on January 3.

Although not apparent at the time, these battles were a decisive turning point in the Revolution. The victories pulled the languishing Revolution out of the depths of despair, galvanized colonial support, shocked the British and convinced potential allies such as France, Holland and Spain, that the Continental Army was a force to be reckoned with.

VICTORY IN FRIDLEY!

Speaking of freedom and liberty, the interests of those noble goals were served this week when the forces of Big Government lost in the City of Fridley.

As loyal readers know, the city was attempting to hijack trash hauling services in the name of lower prices, better roads and greater safety.

Everyone who thinks that government can negotiate a better price for trash hauling, or any service for that matter, raise your hand.

Everyone who believes that government trash hauling will deliver more efficient and more responsive service than the free market, raise your hand.

Everyone who believes government can decide better for you than you can decide for yourself, raise your hand.

Let's see, one man with his hand raised.

That would be Fridley Mayor Scott Lund, the man who pushed for the government takeover but was rejected by his own council.

This past Tuesday, the proposed hijacking was presented to the city council for adoption.

Obviously, the mayor and his city manager believed they had the votes to ratify the takeover or they would have never gone through with the vote.

Lo and behold, three smart members of the city council heard their constituents and scotched the plan on a 2-3 vote, effectively killing the hijack plan and leaving in place the free market hauling system that offers consumers their choice of hauler and the benefits borne of fierce marketplace competition that results in the best service at the best price.

Alas, it appears that that mayor's plan to introduce Soviet-style waste hauling are dashed for the time being.

Come now, Watchdogs, celebrate this victory with your brethren in Fridley and do just a little dance as freedom won the day. A victory, unfortunately, that is all too rare these days and in this political environment.

Now on to Anoka, where the mayor and a couple of other council members need to get their heads screwed on right and move off their flirtation with Communist waste hauling.

No, we don't need government picking our trash hauler.

No, we don't need any promises regarding all the good things government trash hauling will do for us (which won't come happen, anyway).

And, no, we don't need any more government in our lives!

POLITICAL ARSON

Readers of this publication are familiar with the phrase "political arson."

for the uninitiated, "political arson" is a situation whereby a politician creates a problem by passing or failing to pass legislation and then swoops in and tries to solve the problem they themselves created in the first place.

This is similar to the MO of many arsonists, who set fires and then attempt to play the hero by being the first to call 911 or to put out the fire themselves.

One of the most prolific offenders in this regard is Governor Dayton, whose incompetence creates numerous problems he then attempts "solve," mostly by wrongly blaming others for starting the fire.

Such was the case this week, when the Governor showed up in Coon Rapids for a roundtable discussion on rail congestion in the city and the attendant problems it is causing.

The city is home to two mainline tracks which carry a large volume of freight to the West Coast.

These tracks have become congested, mostly because of oil trains, which is causing not only an inconvenience, but is creating safety issues as trains block intersections and the oil trains remain a risk for derailment.

Geez, guv, we could have spared you the trouble of getting out of bed back home at the mansion and coming on out to visit the Unwashed Masses here in Anoka County.

The answer is to start building the pipelines you have been blocking with your disingenuous guise of needing more environmental studies.

If you get the oil off the trains and into the pipelines, safety is greatly enhanced and track congestion is reduced.

So don't come up here to Anoka County and give us the song and dance about your concern for all of us, combined with your finger pointing at the railroads, which provide jobs in the county and are only doing their jobs.

Where are the pipelines, Mr. Dayton?