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OPINION

'The manner in which one endures what must be endured is more important than the thing that must be endured.'

— Dean Acheson

OUR VIEW

Dems prevail but change in the air in Portage

Although the dust from Tuesday's election is still settling, some trend-lines are clear.

Around the nation, a Republican resurgence seemed evident, but here in Portage County, the Democratic Party retained its clout as is evidenced by the election of Ravenna Mayor Kevin Poland and Attorney Mark Fankhauser to the two Portage County Municipal Court openings. The races are non-partisan, but the mayor and Fankhauser were both endorsed by the Portage County Democratic Party. The two spent more money on their campaigns than the others in the race also.

Kent and Ravenna will end up with new mayors as the result of the election. Former Councilman Jerry Fiala, demonstrating a door-to-door campaign can work wonders, is the apparent winner in Kent by two votes, although a recount is inevitable. Because Judge-elect Poland will vacate his position as mayor, Ravenna City Council in January will select a mayor to fill out two years left in his term.

Aurora Mayor Lynn McGill won a third term, and Art Scott, who had been serving as interim mayor in Streetsboro since the Tom Wagner vacated the post in May, was elected mayor in his own right.

In bizarre outcome, the voters in Deerfield threw out the township's zoning code, reopening themselves to the nefarious influences of past years. Not surprising given hard times, the 2.66-mill bond issue for a new Crestwood High School building was defeated, and the Streetsboro 9.5-mill operating levy, which would have let 3.5 mills expire next year, lost too. Both losses are regrettable.

Ravenna City Council may get an infusion of enthusiasm with its new faces: Amy Michael, president of Friends of the Park, who joins incumbent Joe Bica, both elected to at-large slots, and Sharon Spencer in Ward 1. This council has elements in it that are a reminder of an unusually progressive council during the 1990s. The re-election of Ravenna Board of Education members Michael Tontimonia, Deborah Davison, and Joan Seman promises needed continuity.

Incumbent Democrats Michael DeLeone and Robin Turner were returned to Kent City Council, along with newcomer Eric Valenta. That portends an effort to continue work with Kent State University to leverage its presence for the betterment of the community, but there may be a shifting of emphasis with the new mayor. Valenta, a River Bend resident, may give his neighborhood a voice it needs. The Kent Board of Education will gain a new voice in educator Marlene Dorsy, who succeeds Attorney John Flynn, who chose not to run after 20 years on the job.

In Streetsboro, the election of interim Mayor Art Scott indicates enough voters were satisfied with his performance to keep him on the job. He will be working with two incumbent at-large council members, Chuck Kocisko and Julie Sanders, both re-elected. Timothy Claypool is a newcomer.

In Rootstown, where responsibility for fire hydrants is disputed by the township and the nonprofit Rootstown Water Co., newcomer Brett Housley, an attorney who has not voiced a preference but advocates awaiting a judge's decision, has been elected trustee. Incumbent Diane Dillon was re-elected.

In Ravenna Township, the election of Vince Coia, a newcomer who was the lead vote getter in the trustees' race, is interesting because he is proactive about the township exploring contracting out services it cannot do economically and effectively.

The Field School District saw the election of Allyson Westover, Terry Kettering, and Donna Karg, all newcomers, with Westover and Karg educators seeking a compromise in talks with the faculty.

Some longstanding township trustees were ousted. These included J.J. Leet, first elected Freedom Township trustee 32 years ago, Ron Mishler of Suffield Township, with 14 years experience, Howard Furl of Windham Township with 10 years as a trustee, and Jack Groselle, a Hiram Township trustee for eight years.

Ohio's support of casino gambling, Issue 3, means those who like to use such facilities no longer will have to travel out of state to spend their money at them. The \$653 million the casinos are expected to generate annually in tax revenues will be split among cities, counties, school districts for the most part. Casino gambling has been defeated repeatedly by Ohio voters, so the recession and the promise that the casinos will generate thousands of new jobs may have had something to do with its passage.



VIEWPOINT

Rise and fall and rise again of Barack Obama

Scripps Howard News Service



MARTIN SCHRAM

Looking back, we can see how the Remarkable Rise and Fall and Rise Again of Barack Obama really began months ago, way back in November 2009.

It began when President Obama's top strategists scrapped their conventional, old-think strategies that were turning the president's visionary policy groundwork into quicksand. They rediscovered their populist appeal. All because they used a new, hi-tech strategy measuring instrument -- the Rove-O-Meter.

The device, a gift from a patriotic pundit, allowed Obama's brain trust to finally measure their handiwork by the standard they use to measure the craft of their opponents. Eureka! For the first time, they saw the flaws in their own strategies.

Using their Rove-O-Meter, the Obama strategists typed in one of their strategies. It appeared on the screen, superimposed over the image of Karl Rove, the kingmaker for George II. Below Rove's mug was this: "What would you be saying today if that was Karl Rove's strategy?"

Instantly, the Obama strategists saw the flaws. Instinctively, they attacked -- "a typical Karl Rove low road scheme!" one harrumphed.

Intuitively, they charted counter-strategies to defeat "Rove's" plan, starting with calls for decency, transparency and accountability.

Inevitably, the new Obama strategy became a high-road path. It's always easier to claim the high road as an outsider.

(Fair-and-Balanced Footnote: Obviously, the Rove-O-Meter was made for Democrats. It has left-hand drive specifications, but also comes with a right-hand-drive converter kit. Republicans can transform it into their own instrument for measuring and fixing failing GOP strategies. Thus converted, it becomes a Carville-O-Meter.)

Team Obama promptly calibrated its Rove-O-Meter to measure Obama's strategy for enacting health-care reform against Rove's yardstick -- and immediately saw why ordinary folks, especially independents, were suspicious. Especially caring people that were ill informed, confused -- susceptible to being frightened and stampeded by demagogues.

Seeing their manipulations as if Rove had ordered them, Obama's advisers knew they'd be screaming about deception if it were Rove who was rushing a vote on a 1,990-page bill no one had read. And if Rove countered by saying he'd put that legislative choke-wad online for 72 hours so the people could see it (as House Democrats promised in November 2009), the Obama strategists knew they'd have blasted the move as "arrogance of power."

Hmmm. Come to think of it, Team Rove really did that.

Rewind to Nov. 22, 2003: The House Republican majority strong-armed Bush's prescription drug reform plan to a late-night vote. Democrats accused Republicans of rushing a vote because the huge 678-page bill was filled with goodies for insurance and pharmaceutical companies. Republican Rep. Deborah Pryce of Ohio responded: "For those who are telling us to slow down, I say, seniors have been waiting for too long." House Republicans did more than slow down -- they stopped the House clock for three hours until they twisted enough arms to win by five votes.

Fast-forward to February 2005: Then-Rep. Rahm Emanuel (now Obama's chief-of-staff) taunted a Bush official at a hearing, using lines he heard from Republicans today: "If you're looking for a crisis, I would suggest you look at a crisis that was self-made in just last year, because the crisis exists in what's happened to Medicare by weighing it down. Those of us who told you it was going to cost twice as much were right."

Back in November 2009: Using their new Rove-O-Meter, Obama's strategists realized it looked deceitful to rush a vote on a bill no one had read. Finally, they knew what to do. Turning political necessity into populist virtue, the Obama strategists asked House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to announce a weeklong Health Reform Telethon, live on C-SPAN. As America tuned in, dozed off, tuned out, House Democrats went page-by-page, showing the bill's text and reading summary explanations of each section. They explained how each provision will work. Speakers charted 10 major provisions, explained costs, benefits and options for ordinary people.

Obama's new health-care strategy proved to be just what the doctor ordered. He no longer seemed to be a salesman who was too smooth by a half. He appeared to be the people's president, once again.

ANOTHER OPINION

The commander's duty done

In his midnight mission to honor the returning war dead, President Obama did more than personally extend the nation's condolences to grieving families gathered at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware. Without uttering a public word, Mr. Obama erased President George W. Bush's shameful attempts to hide the pain of war from Americans and to shield himself from paying public tribute to the thousands who died in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The long-overdue display of national gratitude

and regret by the commander in chief rekindled a note of most solemn ritual that the country owes sons and daughters in uniform sacrificed in war.

The true cost of war must never be denied by the nation or its leader. Mr. Obama's visit was entirely appropriate as he faces the decision of what comes next in Afghanistan.

The pity is President Bush never dared as much.

(Reprinted from *The New York Times*)

LETTERS

Joint fire pact for Windham lauded

I am very pleased that a joint fire district agreement has been reached between the village of Windham and Windham Township officials that will take effect Jan. 1, 2010. The success of the new fire district and the fire department still will depend on the desire and intentions of our elected officials on both sides to follow through in making it successful.

The equipment and remaining funds, held by the township trustees and clerk, were apportioned by the Portage County auditor on Sept. 17. Four days after the apportionment, on Sept. 21, the agreement was reached. The auditor was required to complete the apportionment under state law due to the Village Council's withdrawal from the township fire district in December 2008.

During the apportionment each side chose the equipment it wanted by alternating picks. Of the \$245,177 in total funds held by the trustees and clerk, \$179,538 will be transferred to the village fiscal officer and the \$65,639 balance will remain with the township trustees and clerk.

On Jan. 1, the village and township will transfer their equipment and funds to the new joint fire district board, as required in the agreement. The agreement can be read on the village of Windham's Web site (www.windhamvillage.com) Link Resolution #R-2009-31. The last page is the auditor's apportionment. The court documents can be found on the "joint fire district link" of the Web site.

The only issue preventing the final agreement on Sept. 21 was the size of the new joint fire district board. The financial incentives offered by the village had been resolved. The township trustees passed a resolution at their Sept. 17 meeting showing that they were adamant for a three-member board. The mayor and Village Council wanted a five-member board that would consist of three appointed residents (non-politicians) from the village and township and two elected politicians -- a trustee and a council member.

The agreement was reached after the township trustees finally agreed to the five-member joint fire district board and avoided an ugly split of fire and EMS service.

The financial incentive agreed to in the new agreement amounts to \$700,000 for five years and is less financially than was offered to the township trustees approximately 22 months ago. This was about the time the village lawsuit began. It's unfortunate that a new agreement was not reached at that time.

Village Council and the township soon will begin the process of appointing each of their representatives to the five-member joint fire district board. The board will begin in January 2010. Happy New Year to the village of Windham and Windham Township.

C. James Moore
Windham

(Moore is a former mayor of Windham and a former Village Council member.)

Dismayed by 'litter' candidates created

Monday, Nov. 2, when I went to my mailbox, I noticed a lot of white papers lying around. When I picked them up I saw that they were fliers for a candidate for Streetsboro mayor. As I walked down Seasons Road, I noticed many more of these papers on the ground.

Several weeks ago the trash was provided by another candidate, who actually had his fliers hung off the mailboxes.

This is wasteful and disrespectful of the environment and Streetsboro citizens, who have to go around picking up after politicians. Furthermore, I never gave my permission to have a politician use my mailbox as a billboard.

It's bad enough to have one's mailbox stuffed every day with unsolicited trash, but when would-be public servants are our foremost pollutants, we have a problem.

Political candidates should be fined for littering and an opt-in system should be instituted to govern junk mail, including political propaganda.

Deborah Markel
Streetsboro

DOONESBURY

