



# TROY DEMOCRATIC CLUB

## TDC NEWSLETTER

August 2009



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*Put together by volunteer labor working at home in our "spare" time*

## **COMING EVENTS**

### **TDC EX BOARD MEETING AUGUST 12 7:00:**

The Troy Dems Executive Board will meet from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., Wednesday, August 12, at Vice-Chair Kathy Martin's house (707 Kimberly, Troy 48098). All Troy Dems members are welcome to attend to help plan the Club's 2009 activities.

### **TDC GENERAL MEETING AUGUST 19 7-9 P.M.**

Mark Brewer, the Chair of the Michigan Democratic Party, is our featured speaker. He will give us an update on MDP's plans to help elect leaders throughout the state. **There will also be details on the Troy Leadership Coalition City Council Forum the next day**

Meeting at 7-9 PM  
Troy Community Center, Room 304  
3179 Livernois Rd, Troy 48083  
(north of Big Beaver/16 Mile,  
east of I-75)

Admission is free Open to the Public

**We are asking for donations of nonperishable food for the Salvation Army**

*Their talks are a continuation of our "Neighbors Working Together" series. In which our invited guests share with us about their views on regional cooperation.*

Join our discussion about how we can collaborate to improve the quality of life for all communities.

## **CANDIDATES FORUM ON AUGUST 20**

### **TLC GIVES TROY RESIDENTS A VOICE IN CITY COUNCIL FORUM**

Have questions for the candidates in the upcoming Troy City Council election? **The Troy Leadership Coalition (TLC) is inviting all community residents to voice their questions from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 6 to 8 p.m. on Tuesday, August 11, at the Troy Public Library, 510 West Big Beaver, and on Monday, August 17, at the Community Media Network (CMNtv) studio, 1230 Souter Drive (south of Maple, east of Rochester Road). Questions will be videotaped by CMNtv on both dates.**

Pre-recorded questions will be selected randomly and posed to the candidates during a Troy City Council Candidates' Forum hosted by the TLC, which will be held from 7 to 9 p.m., Thursday, August 20, at the CMNtv studio. All seven candidates who filed petitions with the City Clerk have been invited.

The forum will be open to the public and broadcast on a schedule set by CMNtv. Seating is limited; so, early arrival by 6 p.m. is recommended. Moderating the forum will be Dan Brunet, co-managing director of Vital Skills International, LC, an organizational leadership consulting firm in Rochester Hills.

Founded in 2007, the TLC is an inclusive, nonprofit community group that espouses core leadership values based on criteria of the International Baccalaureate program. TLC members include the Troy Area Republican Club, the Troy Democratic Club, the PAC of the Troy Chamber of Commerce and other concerned citizens. The TLC's mission is "to engage and educate the Troy community on the serious challenges and opportunities facing our city and to foster, promote and elect leaders who will serve the diverse needs of our community."

For more than 25 years, CMNtv has provided support and management of public-access cable television to residents, organizations, schools and agencies of 11 southeast Oakland County communities. CMNtv provides low-cost access to television production, training and cablecast on a non-discriminatory basis.

The Candidates for the three Council Member positions up for election on November 3rd are

1. William Molnar
2. Wade Fleming
3. Doug Tietz
4. Carmen M. Johnson
5. Daryl Klinko
6. Dane M. Slater
7. Maureen M. McGinnis

*Monday, October 5 is the last day to register for this important election*

## **TDC COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Member ship**

*We've crossed over the 90 mark, so please help us reach that wonderful 100!*

We welcome new member Ann Erickson-Gault who joined at our picnic  
If you have any questions on membership, please contact Kathy Martin at [membership@Troydemocrats.org](mailto:membership@Troydemocrats.org)

### **Events (See [Coming Events](#) for the schedule)**

**We have many activities coming up in August & beyond and definitely need some volunteer support! Please contact Ed Spillers at [bluetiger@troydemocrats.org](mailto:bluetiger@troydemocrats.org) or Kathy Martin at [events@troydemocrats.org](mailto:events@troydemocrats.org). See also the “Community Connections” on the TDC website**

### **Campaign**

**The Campaign Committee has been discussing action items for the 2009 campaign. See their “Campaign Connections” on the TDC website. If you have any questions, please contact Terry Merriweather at [campaign@troydemocrats.org](mailto:campaign@troydemocrats.org).**

## **RECAP OF PAST EVENTS:**

### **[Lt. Gov. John Cherry on Streamlining Government](#)**

On the evening of July 16<sup>th</sup>, Lt. Governor John Cherry held one of a series of statewide Town Hall meetings at Wayne State University. He was charged by Governor Granholm to rethink how to best re-structure Michigan government so as to most efficiently deliver services to the citizens in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Lt Governor Cherry pointed out that the State now has 19 executive departments plus several constitutionally established agencies (such as the Secretary of State). This government structure was designed for a mid-20<sup>th</sup> century society, and it simply does not fit the very different society we have today. Other politicians are arguing about whether to cut taxes or cut services, but most of them seem to assume that the structure of State government cannot be significantly changed. Lt. Gov. Cherry is one of the few who believes that we should approach the tax/revenue problem not by shouting at one another, but rather by rationally analyzing what are the essential core functions of State government, and what is the best way to organize the government to deliver these core functions. Given this analysis, then the questions regarding cost and funding could be solved in a logical manner. I thought this approach was unique and worthy of our serious attention.

He started off by presenting seven core functions (not departments) of state government, and then asked the audience to secretly vote whether or not they agreed with these core functions. Lt Gov Cherry encouraged discussion

of each point, particularly from those citizens who disagreed with his suggestions. I had the strong impression that he and his staff paid serious consideration to these disagreements, that he was very interested in understanding the audience's reasons.

I will give here a quick summary of his seven core functions. You can access a full video of this and other Town Hall meetings by accessing his site on [www.michigan.gov](http://www.michigan.gov).

1. **Public safety:** The State should protect the citizens in good times as well as during crisis or disaster. (96% of the audience agreed). *The discussion pointed out that the present overlapping geographical organization of services may be outdated; it might make more sense for the State to provide expensive but necessary technical support services (e.g., crime lab, communications, etc) to which all county and local public safety forces would subscribe and use. Similar unusual and fresh ideas surfaced among all the discussions, which I omit from the rest of the report.*
2. **Education:** The State should promote a well-integrated network among the numerous childcare centers, primary & secondary schools, colleges, universities, and training/certification programs; as well as a statewide public library system. (88% of the audience agreed).
3. **Public Systems:** The citizens expect local/state/federal government levels to build & maintain infrastructure, including public transportation, water & waste management systems, information transmission, public recreation, and public facilities necessary to conduct state business. (84% of the audience agreed)
4. **Well Being:** The State should insure that its citizens will be free from hunger and have access to medical care and safe shelter (87% of the audience agreed).
5. **Sustainability:** The State should steward Michigan's land, air, ecosystems, and water resources in a sustainable manner. (88% of the audience agreed, and there was considerable discussion of the need to maintain **environmental quality** as well as sustainability).
6. **Economic Opportunity and Prosperity:** The State should work to advance the economic opportunity and prosperity of all its residents, communities, and existing and emerging business interests, and is providing evenhanded regulation of consumer affairs, occupations, and commercial activity. (71% agreed; there were requests that the State should make it easier for small business to compete for state funds, etc.
7. **Efficiency and Effectiveness:** The State should provide its citizens with efficient, transparent, and fair administration of general government; and shall match revenues with income in an honest and accurate accounting. (82% agreed; It was pointed out that a better term for this core function might be "**Accountability of State Gov't.**")

**This is still a work in progress.** I assume that once Lt Gov Cherry and his staff finish their Town Hall meetings, sort through and understand the data, then they will come up with a final version of the State's Core Functions. Given these, then the existing activities of State government can be scrutinized to determine whether or not they fit in with the core functions. Those that do can be retained and re-organized so as to enhance efficiency or effectiveness; those that don't can be phased out and their employees reassigned or retired in agreement with existing contracts. These changes, while they will be done in close coordination with the Legislature, can be done by executive order.

Given the final list of core functions and the State units necessary to carry them out in an effective manner, then it will be possible to rationally plan the budget necessary for this reorganized and lean State government to function, and to plan the revenue sources needed. This should provide a measure of rationality, which might supplant the yelling and fingerpointing that now characterizes our present budget "discussions".

**This will likely be a major plank in Lt Gov. Cherry's expected campaign to obtain the Democratic nomination for Governor in the next election cycle.**

### **TDC – OCPD July 4<sup>th</sup> Parade in Clawson.**

We celebrated the 233<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the independence of these United States of America by having – what else – a parade! The parade began at 9 a.m. at the Clawson Center (corner of Crooks and 14 Mile Rd) and then headed east on W. 14 Mile Rd, north on N. Main Street, west on W. Elmwood, and ended at the City Park at W. Elmwood and N. Bywood.

Commissioner Tim Burns, Congressman Gary Peters, Lt. Gov John Cherry, Senator Carl Levin and Congressman Sandy Levin walked in the parade, greeting their fellow Troy and Clawson constituents with waves and smiles. A great time was had by all, especially the

kids who received the candy that our people handed out so generously.



### **Troy City Manager Selection Took An Unexpected Turn**

The five candidates to replace interim City Manager John Szerlag gave public presentations and interviews during July to the city staff, the citizens, and the City Council. When City Council met to select the finalist, it turned out that 6 of the 7 Councilpeople agreed that NONE of the candidates were as well qualified as John Szerlag, and so by a vote of 6-1, they offered the

position to John pending agreement on contract terms (that agreement was announced a few days ago). So John Szerlag is once again our City Manager, and we are sure that he will perform admirably. The City Council discussion that evening made clear that the search firm hired did not have a deep selection of excellent and seasoned candidates, nor did their emphasis on private sector experience translate well into public administration. The political implications of this turn of events is pursued in the second editorial of this newsletter (see page 11).

### **TDC Picnic Saturday July 18 at Raintree Park**

We had a good turnout at the picnic despite the threat of rain. Lt Governor John Cherry came early and spoke to us both as a group and then in individual conversations. [See the article above on Streamlining Government for an in-depth look at his other activities.]. Congressman Gary Peters spoke to us about the push for new legislation regarding health care and financial regulation, and he listened to the opinions of many of us in individual conversations. County Commissioner Tim Burns addressed us and brought us up to date regarding his reform efforts in Pontiac, as did County Commissioner Gary McGillivray. Mayor Louise Schilling and Councilwoman Mary Kerwin each spoke to us regarding ongoing events in Troy. Andy Levin, from the State Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth attended as well, as did State Representative Marie Donigan.

Will Molnar, our candidate for Troy City Council, also spoke to all of us regarding his candidacy and what he hopes to accomplish when elected. And our candidate for State Representative, Ed Spillers, not only shared his thoughts on how he might improve our representation in Lansing; but when Ed won the 50-50 raffle, he then, being the great guy that he is, donated his winnings to the TDC. Such generosity should not go unrewarded! Thanks to Kimberly McFall, the TDC Fundraising Chair, for making the 50/50 Raffle so much fun.

The picnic was marked by good food and good talk, and for that happy marriage, we owe our thanks to Cathy Fucinari, Harry Philo, Kimberly McFall, Ken Zook, Kathy Martin, Terry Merriweather, Sandy Burgess, Kumar Bhatt and all of our friends and family for a job well done.

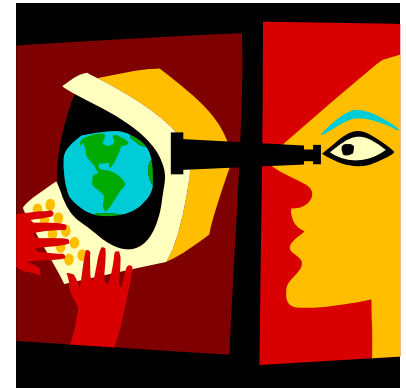
### **OCDP's Happy Birthday Party for President Obama**

On Saturday, July 25<sup>th</sup>, the Troy Democratic Club gave tremendous support for this event and the Oakland County Democratic Party and the Club came out winners. Thanks to the leadership of Carol Hundley, Kathy Martin, Carla Meier and Sandy Burgess the food and presentation were wonderful. We could not have enjoyed the food without the Chef skills of Terry

Merriweather and Seymour Hundley. Thanks to Ed Spillers, Ken Zook, Kevin Hrit, Will Molnar and Mayor Louise Schilling, we competed in the Tug-o-War, Musical Chairs, and the Three-legged Race, and won the biggest share. Larry Libbrecht contributed Obama to the party and Kathy helped give him proper prominence. Thanks to Chair Harry Philo and the Executive Board for making a monetary donation to help show-off the participation of the Club

### Big Brothers and Big Sisters Picnic

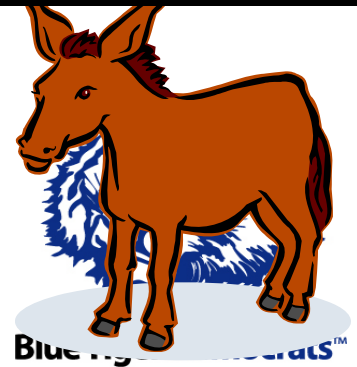
It was held on Saturday, August 1<sup>st</sup> at Raintree Park. Our involvement was lead by Community Service Chair Ed Spillers. According to the reports, it was an excellent event. Cathy Fucinari, Wanita Trojan and Sandy Burgess also participated.



### NEWS FROM OTHER DEMOCRATIC AND ALLIED GROUPS

**BLUE TIGER DEMOCRATS:** The TDC members have been involved with the Michigan Blue Tiger Projects for years.

Michigan Blue Tiger Democrats is a project of the Michigan Democratic Party and a movement dedicated to civic engagement and community service by Democrats. By demonstrating our commitment to the neighborhoods, individuals and ideals that make our Party great, we believe we can engage people year-round in volunteer activities that help people, and in-turn, strengthen the Party from our grassroots base.



The Gleaners Food Bank asked for assistance from the Troy Democrats for their Annual **BE A HUNGER HERO FOR KIDS** Food Drive. **When School is out for the Summer, more than 250,000 children in southeast Michigan go without the free or reduced-fee school lunches they rely on for their daily nutrition. Gleaners wants these children to have a happy summer, not a hungry one.** Their goal is to provide 2 million meals for kids and their families during the summer months, when kids are most vulnerable to hunger. Ed Spillers, Blue Tiger Chair, took charge of coordinating the TDC response to this plea for help, and did a fantastic job.

Ed received this communication and asked us to share it--Gleaners Community Food Bank thanks you for coming out to help with our Neighborhood Food Drive in Troy on July 25. We are grateful you didn't let a little rain slow you down.

Because of your hard work, we collected over 6200 pounds of food to help feed hungry kids and their families. We couldn't have done it without your help.

### **Calendar of Dems' Coming Events in 2009**

**Sunday, August 16 – Michigan Indo-American Democratic Caucus (MIADC) will have their India Day Celebration at the Rock Financial Center in Novi.**

**Saturday, August 22—MDP State Central Meeting, Marquette**

**Sunday, September 6—9<sup>th</sup> District Picnic, Drake Sports Park, West Bloomfield (Details TBA)**

**Sunday, October 4—49<sup>th</sup> Annual Phil Hart/OCDP Dinner with Keynote Speaker Barney Frank (more details TBD)**

### **9th Congressional District Democratic Party**

Unless otherwise noted, meetings of the 9th Congressional District Democratic Club Executive Committee will occur the first Thursday of every month at 7:00 p.m. at the Oakland County Board of Commissioners Auditorium in the courthouse complex of the Oakland County Service Center, 1200 N. Telegraph, Pontiac, 48341.

**The 9<sup>th</sup> District Picnic is Saturday, September 5th, from 1-4 p.m. at Drake Sports Park, 6801 Drake Road, West Bloomfield.**

**Fun, foods, raffles, auctions, card games, softball, guest speakers including Congressman Gary and Wife Colleen Peters**

### ***Habitat for Humanity***

Please join Congressman Gary Peters and other 9th Congressional District Democrats at our Habitat for Humanity Day. We need volunteers for a 4-hour shift to help with landscaping and lot clearing to help Habitat build a new home. Please join us at Habitat for Humanity's Pontiac office:

- Saturday, August 22nd
- 8am to 12 noon **OR** 12 noon to 4pm
- 150 Osmun Street, Pontiac MI 48342
- For more information visit Habitat for Humanity at <http://www.habitatoakland.org/>

### **Congressman-elect Gary Peters**

**Gary Peters, U.S. Congressman in Michigan's 9<sup>th</sup> District, is busy in Washington taking care of business. His district office is in Troy at 560 Kirts Boulevard, #105. Please contact him via that office if you have issues and**

concerns that he might help you with. Phone: (248) 273-4227 Fax: (248) 273-4704. Our own Kevin Hrit is on the staff at this office.

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- For more information visit Habitat for Humanity at <http://www.habitatoakland.org/>

### **Regional News**

#### ***Troy Jazz on the Corridor:***

The City of Troy and the Troy Downtown Development Authority offer a **FREE** series of summer music concerts, on Thursday evenings from 6:30 to 8:30 pm at the Columbia Center, 101 W. Big Beaver, as follows:

**Aug 13: The Pros Big Band**

***Music, Movies & Moonlight at Boulan Park***

**Saturday, Aug 22, Music: Mass Transit; Movie: Enchanted**



### **EDITORIALS: MASS TRANSIT?**

Listening to the radio, I heard one talk show host talk about the possibility of gas going to \$20 a gallon eventually. I didn't catch the whole story, but who would have "thunk" \$4 a gallon was possible not so many years ago. It got me to thinking. We in the Detroit suburbs are so vulnerable when it comes to transportation. We have come to rely on the car so much,

that we are hostage to it. I venture to say that over 90% of us rely on the automobile to commute to work, play and anything in between. Whole industries are geared to accommodating the automobile. From a car wash to a drive-in restaurant- you use a car. For the most part, be it a hotel, motel or resort – and with the exception of the airport shuttles; you can't get there without a car. **With rare exception, we either drive there or fly there.**

Fortunate – for them, some big cities have had the foresight to invest in mass transit. A significant portion of NY City commuters go by Amtrak and subway. Other big cities have a blend of mass transit systems be it light rail or reliable bus service. While we have been spoiled by the “set our own timetable” the automobile has provided and the limited bus service in the Metro Detroit area falls short of mass viability; we will face in the not too distant future, the need to compromise our time tables and live with the fragmented bus service now available. That is unless we take steps now to change that.

**It is time for us to do the same as other metropolitan areas. We can begin by reestablishing Amtrak service that went by the wayside over the past few decades. To my way of looking at it, we must now build an infrastructure that blends the automobile with a mass transit system(s). A “park & ride” for longer commutes and frankly I'm not sure how – but I confident it can be done – a viable, user friendly short commute within the communities. We just need the will. If we start now, the pain of giving up some of our autonomy won't be as bad.**

*Mike Smith*

## **2. THE FAKE ANTI-TAX CAMPAIGN APPEARS ONCE AGAIN**

Or

Thou Shalt Not Bear False Witness Against Thy Neighbor

I came home the other day to find stuffed in my front door a spiffy glossy advertisement. Only when I opened it up did I realize that it was in fact a campaign flyer, the first of the season, touting the candidacies of Wade Fleming, Carmen Johnson, and Doug Tietz for the three contested seats on the Troy City Council to be decided this November. The three reasons they give for voters to elect them to City Council are:

- 1, cut government waste;**
- 2, no tax hikes;**
- 3, cut red tape & attract job providers.**

The only problem with their platform is that their nice buzz words are NOT supported by reality. Let me explain.

1. **Cut government waste:** I watched much of the City Council proceedings, both formal and informal, in which the members discussed and debated the city's future budget numbers. Troy is, as I have pointed out repeatedly in past newsletters is a LOW TAX/HIGH SERVICE city. Troy's city tax rate is the lowest of any major city in Oakland County. One of the reasons that Troy was listed as the 22<sup>nd</sup> most desirable city in the USA, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> most desirable in Michigan, was its high level of city services (including public safety) and public amenities. Think of the parks and the library and the schools and the fee-supported public amenities available here to your family. **To baldly state that we should "Cut Government Waste" in Troy city government is to deploy the Big Lie by implying that it will be easy to cut city expenses without simultaneously decreasing the quality of city services.** The City Council has already done the "easy" cuts, for it has cut positions by attrition, decreased costs by sharing services with neighboring cities, and generally requiring city employees to do more with less. Expensive items, such as expanding the highly used public library, have been tabled. I listened to the city council members in their study session go through the budget in an organized manner, discuss the items with city staff, welcome their suggestions and input, and make reasonable changes and cuts. But none of the cuts could be considered as "waste", i.e., coming from programs which provided no real service to the citizens of Troy. Every cut involved a serious decision as to whether the monies saved were worth the decreased service and increased inconvenience it would cost the citizens of Troy. **There is no free lunch, and every cut has its cost.**

I can, however, think of one example where the City Council did in fact waste City Funds. This was the ~\$26,000 fee paid to a recruiting firm to find candidates for the then-vacant City Manager position. All of the firm's candidates were rejected by the Council in a 6-1 vote, and the acting City Manager, John Szerlag, was hired instead. **Many Troy citizens are justifiably angry that the Council wasted their \$26,000, which is equivalent to the city taxes paid by ~20 homeowners. But what must be pointed out is that this waste was incurred by the conservative quartet of Fleming, Broomfield, Eisenbacher and Howrylak as a result of their insistence on the city hiring a low-ranked recruiting firm to find candidates with extensive private sector business experience despite warnings that such experience was not fully pertinent to running a city. The firm brought in the candidates, the Council rightfully rejected them, and the money was wasted because the conservative quartet refused to do their homework before voting to spend the money.**

- **They did not research whether a private sector-oriented search firm could convince highly capable city managers to let their**

name be associated with a third-ranked firm with an inappropriate orientation.

- **They did not search the data** to determine if in fact city managers with extensive private sector experience and no or little public sector experience turned out to be effective city managers.
- And when Wade Fleming did finally ask the search firm representative this very question during the city manager selection process, she answered that in her experience, the answer was “NO.”
- Had Wade asked this question before he voted to hire her firm, he could have saved we taxpayers \$26,000. But he did not show this foresight, and so he wasted our money.

**Wade Fleming should not campaign for re-election on a platform of cutting government waste when he himself is a major creator of such waste.** Wade Fleming’s failure to seek and obtain the proper information before hiring this specific firm is a failure to act as a prudent steward of our hard-earned tax money. Wade should apologize to we voters for wasting our tax monies.

2. **No tax hike:** Nobody in City Council is, to the best of my knowledge, formally proposing that we should raise taxes. And when City Council meets informally to study the city budget, then it is in fact appropriate for them to discuss whether some city activity has such a high priority that any shortfall in the budget supporting this activity should be made up by a tax increase. In all the cases I watched, this option was not viewed favorably. So when Wade & Carmen & Doug write that “City Council should cut waste instead of talking about tax hikes”, they must mean that Council should not consider all financial alternatives when making hard cost/benefit calculations. **Why would they handicap themselves in this manner when their ideological guru, Ronald Reagan, cut taxes once and then raised them for the next seven years.** As did his successor. Why must they be more Right than Reagan? Maybe a discussion of raising taxes would not be necessary if Wade Fleming and his colleagues would stop wasting our tax money on ill-thought out ideologically based beliefs.
3. **Cut red tape and attract job providers:** This campaign statement implies that the City has failed to attract new companies and new jobs to locate in Troy. As reported in prior issues of the TDC newsletter, the City attracted several companies with a total of several hundred jobs to locate in Troy during 2008. Our Great Recession is deeper than anyone suspected last fall, and the data shows that the job cuts are significantly larger than since the Great Depression. Nonetheless, Troy has succeeded in attracting companies and jobs to locate in the City It is not fair of Wade & Carmen & Doug to imply that City Council and

staff have not attracted new jobs to Troy, nor is it fair for this Trio to blame the national economic recession and unemployment picture on the present members of City Council.

**This Trio styles themselves as “Troy’s Tax Fighting Team”. But:**

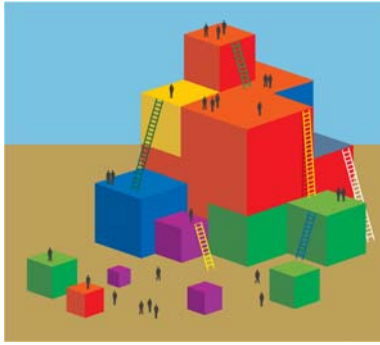
- 1. THERE IS NO PROPOSED TAX HIKE,**
- 2. Wade himself is THE SOURCE OF GOVERNMENT WASTE, AND THERE IS NO REASON TO SUSPECT THAT THIS IDEOLOGICALLY SIMILAR COLLEAGUES WILL BEHAVE ANY DIFFERENTLY, &**
- 3. THE CITY IS ALREADY ATTRACTING JOBS.**

**They are fighting strawman enemies that do not exist.** They remind me of Don Quixote, who famously tilted at windmills because his weak vision led him to mistake them as other knights who were challenging him. And so I think a decent respect for the facts of the matter must lead us to re-title Wade & Carmen & Doug as **“Troy’s Windmill Tilting Team”** - a group which would be humorous had they not already proved their ability to waste our tax money as well as their inability to clearly see and understand the serious problems confronting our City.

But the humor of the situation should not dull our senses to the fact that this **Windmill Tilting Team** has chosen to deliberately make inaccurate and misleading statements so as to falsely convince their fellow citizens that they will be good stewards of the City. **Misstating the case as they do only makes their claims as suspect as their facts. And if they cannot talk truth as candidates, then what will they say and do as elected officials?**

*Robert Arking*

**Yes we can...**



...build our community one person  
& one brick at a time -  
together!

*Harry Philo, Ed Spillers, Mike Smith, & Bob Arking  
contributed to this Newsletter.*

*Your Name Can Also Go Here - Just Share Your  
Words With Us.*