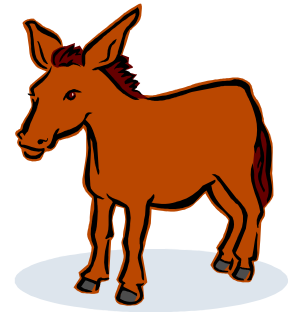


TROY DEMOCRATIC CLUB

TDC NEWSLETTER



October 2009

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

PREPARATION FOR NOVEMBER 3 ELECTION

Absentee Ballots are being mailed from the Troy City Clerk Now. I ask that TDC members WAIT--due to late-breaking developments on City Budget Issues--until after our General Membership Meeting on October 21 (See details below) to complete their ballot. Harry Philo, Chair

Troy Dems Members to Vote Support/Nonsupport October 21

The Troy Dems will have a vote of "support/nonsupport" for a candidate or candidates in the November 3 election. We will be deciding on City Council, Citywide Ballot Proposals and Troy School Board members

To vote, you must have been a Troy Dems member in good standing (current dues paid) for at least 30 days before October 21.

COMING EVENTS

Troy School Board Candidates' Forum, Wednesday, October 7

Wednesday, October 7, 2009 from 7-8:30p.m. at Troy School Services Building, 4420 Livernois (south of Long Lake on the east side of the street. Look for the Troy Schools sign, pull in the driveway and veer to the left when the road splits). Four candidates are running for 2 four year seats, and two people are running for 6 year seats (Incumbents Unopposed). See <http://www.lwvtroyarea.org/> for the Election Voter Guide, containing bios and answers to three questions.

See the Campaign Committee Report for the names of the Troy School Board candidates, plus Avondale (Precincts 3, 4, 5 and 6), Birmingham (Precinct 29) and Royal Oak (Precinct 30).

Troy Leadership Coalition Meet and Greet, Sunday, October 11, 6 p.m.

Please join the Troy Leadership Coalition for a "Meet and Greet" Honoring Well Qualified Candidates for Troy City Council

Maureen McGinnis, Troy Attorney
Will Molnar, CPA and former Oakland County Commissioner
Dane Slater, Police Captain for City of Troy – Retired

The event is Sunday, October 11, starting at 6 p.m., at the Martin Residence, 707 Kimberly Drive, Troy, MI 48098-6917, (248) 879-7077

Desserts will be served. Donations are welcome. RSVPs are appreciated at Troy Chamber of Commerce (248) 641-8151

TDC EX BOARD MEETING OCTOBER 14 7 P.M.

The Troy Dems Executive Board will meet from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., Wednesday, October 10, 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.

Troy City Council Candidates' Forum and Ballot Proposals, Thursday, October 15

Thursday, October 15, 2009 from 7-9p.m., Community Media Studios, 1230 Souter Blvd. 7 candidates running for 3 four year terms, 6 Ballot Proposals will be explained by Troy City Attorney Lori Grigg Bluhm. Questions will be taken in writing from the audience at both programs. See <http://www.lwvtroyarea.org/> for the candidates bios before the event.

The City Council race will appear on all ballots for all precincts

TDC GENERAL MEETING WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21 7-9 P.M., with Potluck Dinner, starting at 6 p.m, at the Troy Community Center, Room 304

We will be hearing from Troy City Manager John Szerlag about the City's 6-Year Budget Plan. Before that, the council candidates that the Troy Leadership Coalition supports have been invited. Bring a dish (casserole, salad, vegetable or dessert) or beverage to share & come as close to 6:00 as possible.

Please RSVP with your food item to events@troydemocrats.org

TROY BUDGET DEFICIT

PRESENTATIONS FROM TDC MEMBERS, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

On Monday September 28, there was a informational hearing called for the purpose of discussing City Manager Szerlag's Six-Year Organizational Restructuring Plan for the City of Troy; Fiscal Year 2009/10 through 2014/15. He

has proposed several options, which would severely affect operation of the Troy Public Library, Community Center, Nature Center, Museum and Police Department. After an extensive presentation from the City Manager, there was a lot of public comment, including remarks from several Club members. They are presented here. See above for details on John Szerlag's visit to Troy Dems on October 21. Also see editorial 2 for additional comments on this issue.

Remarks by Cathy Fucinari.

In 1976, my husband and I shopped for a community where we could raise a family and have a solid investment financially. We built a house in Troy.

We took our children to story time at the library, to swimming lessons at community ed, to participate in sports programs and dance classes at the community center. They both attended Poppleton School. We participate in a variety of enrichment classes ourselves. We were able to expose our kids to a wide variety of interests at affordable prices, with other children whose families who had similar goals. All of this took place in a diverse community that taught all of us the value of multicultural opportunities.

Troy fulfilled all of the elements we desired in a family community, and more. The amenities available here is what drew our families together. Troy's quality of life has made it the best city to live in Michigan, one of the safest in the nation. We have affordable housing, great schools, quality public services, and a solid bond rating.

In the past few weeks at the grocery store, the fitness center, community meetings, and walking the dog, I have heard from friends, neighbors, and colleagues how shocked they are by the announcement made by Mr. Szerlag and the prospect of losing the amenities that brought us together, the very elements that provide quality of life in Troy . I have heard their dismay that we have found ourselves in this position. I have listened to them express their disappointment with the rancor and obstructionist behavior within our city government that has made it difficult to prevent the damage that now threatening our community.

From what I understand, our revenues are declining primarily due to market conditions, assessed valuations, and a reduction in state shared revenue. The reduction in our revenue due to this decline is what we need to replace. A millage increase to maintain our current level of taxation will preserve the level of services and our quality of life. The difference between the decline in assessed taxes and raised millage is minimal. I am asking each of you to stand up and do what is right for our community.

Our family of three voters will support a 2 mill increase that would retain these desired services. We will do this by voting for it when it comes up for voter approval, by voting in November only for those council candidates who also support such a revenue increase, and by encouraging our friends, neighbors, and colleagues to do the same.

Remarks from Ed Spillers--

Thank You to the following:

-Mr. Szerlag for painting the most eloquent and real life picture of our great City's present state and the decisions that must be made to protect its future. I also commend you on your passion, commitment and love for this City and you do not get enough credit for such.

-The City Council for seeing the urgency and need to act quickly.

I don't need to go into context of the current state of our economy to deliver my message. So, I will get right to my points. We are at a critical point in our City's history. As Mr. Szerlag mentioned at the last

Council meeting on the 14th, what you decide as a governing body and ultimately what we decide as Residents of Troy will dictate what the City will look like in the future. My concern is if we do not act correctly two things will be our City's emanation:

1. We will lose our status as the most livable city and most safest city. Be witness population deterioration and rapid decline in the Business Sector.
2. We will become a City no longer accountable to the Citizens and see a severe dissolution or worse, loss of the very Services we cherish and what makes us unique.

Now, I am not here to pit one services or operation against each other. The loss or privatization of the library, community center and other city services including reductions in police and fire would be devastating. I am sure you have people who will want to speak on those specific services.

Yet, I want to convey to the City Leadership another service that is in jeopardy due to the budget concern here in Troy. It is simply what I like to call "Our Greatest Opportunity". I am speaking specifically about the Birmingham-Troy Transit Center. For the past few years, this City has made significant strides in the planning and development of this excellent opportunity along with the City of Birmingham. Now, we face a budget shortfall that could cripple our abilities to deliver to the citizens of Troy an opportunity to bring the Jobs and sustainable Economic Growth that is unmatched.

If we are ever to return Troy to its proud stature of being open for business and promoting growth for businesses of all sizes and services, we must make the hard decisions. We cannot stand at the threshold of possibility and now suddenly back out and close the depot of prosperity. The Transit Center is this City's best bet to take a major step forward and solidify Troy as a small City with Big Opportunity. To see across the board economic growth, population boost, cultivation of the Tri-County area and increase in the quality of life for everyone is possible. Troy can stand and really show leadership on this issue while standing in the face of economic vulnerability. Saying we did it. We made the hard choices and we protected our City and its future. I lead a committee here in Oakland County that is a grass roots organization working regionally to bring Mass Transit to the Tri-County area, and I am willing to work with this Council to see it flourish in this City and help Troy take Leadership on this opportunity.

However, the only way to secure the future for the Transit Center, Library, Community Center, Nature Center, Historical Museum, City Offices, Fire and Police in jeopardy of cuts, closures or privatization is simple. The people of Troy must be allowed to be at the bargaining table. Simply shutting down and/or cutting these vital services sends the wrong message. While privatization may seem to be an easy route, its does not offer the same level of service we cherish right now. With Privatization, these services no longer are accountable to the people of this City. While I believe privatization has a savings that is sought after, who's to say these private firms will not look to increase the cost to do business when they know we won't have the capacity to takeover the services ourselves if it became too expensive to contract with them anymore.

We have to make the tough decisions to reap the benefits later and to continue our growth. Believe me, I do not like taxes but, we must stop demonizing government and believing that it is an institution bent on reducing our abilities to live our life and grow because of its tax structure. Taxes are not a four letter word. They are investments in the community and the services that we cherish in this city. Those tax dollars are the hundreds of your neighbors that go to work for this City everyday so we can live a quality of life that is peerless to other City's our size. Taxes are not abominable; they are an investment, a commitment and a responsibility. It is what the founders of this Country established and cultivated as a vision for the future and the growth we benefit from now.

That's why this Council must approve a ballot proposal, for the 2 mils suggested by Mr. Szerlag, to allow the people to make a decision to keep these beloved services and protect our future. Even if we pass a millage, the two mils will not hurt our pockets and we will still have one of the lowest tax structures in Oakland County.

Remarks by Harry Philo

I am a Professional Research Librarian who has lived in Troy for more than 22 years. I use the Library frequently, because of the resources that are offered, the availability and high speed of the computers, and the helpful staff. Being a citizen of Troy and having access to the Library and other threatened city services is very valuable.

For much of my work, I prefer to use this Library over local University and Research Libraries. The electronic databases are much appreciated, as well as the medical and scientific professional journals.

My observation is that all ages use the Library, from school kids preparing research papers to other people needing help finding online materials.

It would be reasonable in my opinion for the Council to ask the Citizens of Troy for a 2 mill Millage Increase.

Remarks by Bob Arking

My wife and I moved to Troy 34 years ago because of the good schools and the plentiful green spaces of the park system. When we became 'empty-nesters', we decided to remain in Troy because of the many fine city services available. And as we became older, it was these services and the City's focus in the master plan to support seniors 'aging in place' that led us to stay in Troy for the foreseeable future. We need and enjoy these services. If the City Council decides to cut them back significantly, then the City can no longer fulfill our needs. In that case, it would be in our self-interest to leave Troy for a better place to live. We would rather that the services be maintained. We will support a revenue increase to maintain those services. We will vote for such an increase. We will vote only for city council candidates who support such an increase. We will in future support those present members of city council who support such an increase.

Remarks by Sandra Burgess,

I am a 36-year resident of Troy who started my business here 23 years ago. You've heard from many people tonight. But what you haven't heard from yet is the U.S. Constitution. I thought it might be helpful in guiding you as you make your decision.

The Constitution establishes a government "to form a more perfect union" and to "promote the general welfare."

How do you promote the general welfare? Well, in Section 8 of Article I, the Constitution assigns the legislative body "the power to levy and collect taxes" to "provide for" the "general welfare."

I conclude from this that our Founding Fathers, whom I prefer to call our "Founding Parents," found nothing inherently evil in taxes. They saw it as a way for people to make financial contributions to provide for the general welfare, although taxes can be evil if they become so onerous that they impoverish the people so that they're not able to provide for the general welfare.

So, I urge you to use the Constitution as your guide: to cut where you can without sacrificing the general welfare and when you can't cut any further without harming the general welfare, then to take the rest to the people in a February election. And let them decide whether they want the future of Troy to be one of decline and decay or whether they want it to continue to surge forward so that it can remain the "city of tomorrow...today."

And in conclusion, taxes are nothing more nor less than the price of admission to a democracy that cares about all of its people.

The soonest a tax millage question could come before voters would be in a special election Feb. 23. For this to occur, the council must approve ballot language by Oct. 19.

TDC COMMITTEE REPORTS

Membership

We've crossed over the 90 mark, so please help us reach that wonderful 100!
If you have any questions on membership, please contact Kathy Martin at membership@troydemocrats.org

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.

In addition to the City Council election and ballot proposals, there are School Board Elections on November 3 in the following communities

TROY SCHOOL DISTRICT

LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD MEMBER – VOTE FOR NOT MORE THAN TWO – SIX YEAR TERM

Ida Edmunds 1304 Player Dr. Troy, MI 48085

Wendy R. Underwood 1947 Chatham Dr. Troy, MI 48084

INCUMBENTS UNOPPOSED

LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD MEMBER – VOTE FOR NOT MORE THAN TWO – FOUR YEAR TERM

Bruce Bloomingdale 4264 Tallman Troy, MI 48085-4823

Paula Fleming 3820 Victoria Ct. Troy, MI 48083 **Incumbent Trustee**

Bernie Lourim 1850 Kristin Troy, MI 48084

Nancy L. Philippart 1302 Bradbury Troy, MI 48098 **Incumbent Secretary**

AVONDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT—Troy Precincts 3, 4, 5, and 6

LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD MEMBER – VOTE FOR NOT MORE THAN FOUR – FOUR YEAR TERM

Sean L. Johnson 861 Polo Place Auburn Hills, MI 48326

Sid Lockhart 3504 South Blvd. Bloomfield Twp., MI 48304

John T. Nofs 6699 Pine Way Troy, MI 48098

Cyndi Pettit 2217 Hickory Leaf Dr. Rochester Hills, MI 48309 **Incumbent Vice-President**

Cynthia Tischer 1725 Ledbury Dr. Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304 **Incumbent President**

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF THE CITY OF BIRMINGHAM—Troy Precinct 29

LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD MEMBER – VOTE FOR NOT MORE THAN ONE – FOUR YEAR TERM

Katie Reiter 30510 Red Maple Ln. Southfield, MI 48076

Lori Soifer 1053 Willow Ln. Birmingham, MI 48009 **Incumbent President**

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF THE CITY OF ROYAL OAK—Troy Precinct 30

LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD MEMBER – VOTE FOR NOT MORE THAN TWO – FOUR YEAR TERM

Carrie Beerer 3026 Columbus Ave. Royal Oak, MI 48073

Jeff A. Brinker 1210 Edgewood Royal Oak, MI 48067

Arthur Makarewicz 2315 Hawkins Ave. Royal Oak, MI 48073

RECAP OF PAST EVENTS:

TROY DAZE SEPTEMBER 18-20

Troy Daze Chair Kathy Martin offers Many thanks to all of you for your support and efforts at Troy Daze! Troy Dems had a very positive presence. A very special thanks to those who helped with the huge job of set up and tear down. We couldn't have gotten it done without the strong guidance from Ed Glac. A special thanks to Larry Libbrecht as well for the donation of the Obama cut-out. It was fun to watch the many people who had their picture taken with it.

Among those visiting the booth were Congressman Gary Peters, County Commissioner Gary McGillivray, State Senator Alma Wheeler Smith and Andy Levin from the Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth.

NEWS FROM OTHER DEMOCRATIC AND ALLIED GROUPS

Congressman-elect Gary Peters

In Mid-September, the House of Representatives passed the Advanced Vehicle Technology Act (HR 3246) of 2009 by a broad bipartisan majority of 312-114. This bill, which I authored, will help reduce our dependence on foreign oil and preserve and create auto industry jobs here at home. Its passage is great for the U.S.--and even better for Michigan.

This legislation authorizes nearly \$3 billion for the Department of Energy's Vehicle Technologies Program, which funds research and development grants for automobile manufacturers, engine and other vehicle component manufacturers. It will bring strategic funding to companies as they emerge from the global economic crisis and increase their global competitiveness. It will help ensure that the cars of the future are built here in the U.S., and right here in Michigan.

Money for research and development means job creation. That's my top priority - and that's why I'm so pleased that my bill passed with strong bipartisan support. By putting more fuel efficient cars on the road, the legislation will also reduce America's dependence on foreign oil and save consumers money.

The bill was endorsed by a broad-based coalition of unlikely allies, from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers to the UAW and the Big 3 Automakers, as well as the League of Conservation Voters

and the Sierra Club. I look forward to continuing to work across party lines to bring jobs to Michigan and make our nation more energy independent.

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.

Tim Burns: County Commissioner

OAKLAND COUNTY ABUSES STIMULUS DOLLARS

Oakland County Commissioner Tim Burns was recently stunned by the blatant abuse of discretion by the Oakland County Board of Commissioners in allocating federal stimulus dollars to build a BRIDGE TO NOWHERE in Oxford Township. At its September 2nd meeting, the Board of Commissioners authorized approximately \$450,000.00 dollars to fund a brand new ¾ mile boardwalk along a rural road in Oxford Township from a \$1 million dollar federal stimulus grant that could have benefited repairing existing infrastructure in several local communities, including Clawson and Troy.

Go to <http://www.timothyburns.org/> for more information on this topic

Commissioners Burns is now working to change the way Oakland County evaluates its grant allocation methodologies and economic development initiatives. He hopes that in the future preferences are given to funding those projects that benefit communities most in need of assistance with a focus on rebuilding and maintaining existing infrastructure in Oakland County's aging communities before building new projects in the county's rural fringes.

FLU SHOTS

Troy and Clawson can get their seasonal flu shot for \$10 at the upcoming flu shot clinic for Clawson and Troy residents at the Troy Community Center hosted by the Oakland County Health Department. It will take place from 10 am to 3 pm on Thursday, October 15th. Note that this clinic does not involve the H1N1 flu shot, but just the seasonal shot.

OAKLAND COUNTY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS

The schedule for business development workshops in October is now posted on Commissioner Burns' website, <http://www.timothyburns.org/> , to view the calendar and for additional information.

BURNS PASSES THE GAVEL AT TROY COMMUNITY COALITION

County Commissioner Tim Burns passed the President's gavel for the Troy Community Coalition to Captain Gerry Scherlinck (Troy Police Department) at the organization's September 3 meeting. [Click here](#) for more information.

"FRIEND" COUNTY COMMISSIONER TIM BURNS ON FACEBOOK

To receive regular updates on what is going on with Commissioner Burns' full-time job at the Better Business Bureau, useful information on programs and services from Oakland County government from his role as our local County Commissioner, and other personal items of interest from Tim Burns, "friend" him on Facebook by visiting www.facebook.com/TimBurns.

TIM BURNS
COUNTY COMMISSIONER
19TH DISTRICT [Clawson and Troy]
www.timothyburns.org

National Equality March, Washington, D.C., Friday and Saturday, October 10-11, 2009

On October 10-11, 2009, we will gather in Washington, D.C. from all across America to let our elected leaders know that now is the time for full equal rights for LGBT people. This is simply a major national strategy to kick start our national grassroots Equality Across America campaign. We will gather. We will strategize. We will march. And we will leave energized and empowered to do the work that needs to be done in every community across the nation. **This is only the beginning.**

Our single demand: Equal protection in all matters governed by civil law in all 50 states.

Our philosophy: As members of every race, class, faith, and community, we see the struggle for LGBT equality as part of a larger movement for peace and social justice.

The Michigan Democratic Party's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender & Allies Caucus will be helping to organize 2 buses to travel from Ann Arbor, MI to Washington D.C., leaving Friday October 9, 2009 and returning Sunday October 11, 2009. It is vital that Michigan LGBT & Ally voices are heard and that we are represented at this historic event. The Caucus will also be pushing for individuals to meet with their congressmen to discuss how important equal rights are for all people
www.mdplgbt.org

Michigan Democratic Party's LGBT & Allies Caucus, 1382 Russell St, Ypsilanti, MI 48198, Please contact Duane Breijak at dbreijak@gmail.com or (517)902-3857 with any questions

CAMP MILLIE – TRAINING ON HEALTHCARE, November 7-8

This is the same, highly-successful Camp Millie basic training on how to win an election. This year, each event will have a title theme and the training program will include messaging relating to that progressive issue. This event is focused on Healthcare.

Camp Millie continues to give participants the tools for effective progressive political action including: **Framing Your Issues and Message Development; Volunteer Recruitment; Techniques and Strategies to Get-Out-The-Vote; Door-to-Door Canvassing; Phone Banking; Fundraising; Campaign Finance Compliance; Voter Protection Information; & Democratic Party Structure Information.**

Where: Teamsters Local 406, 3315 Eastern Ave., SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49508

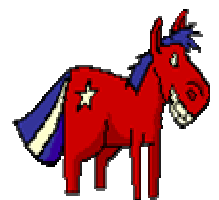
When: Sat.: Registration 8:00 a.m.; Program 8:30 – 5:30

Sun.: Program 9 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Cost: \$35 tuition includes training materials, continental breakfast, snacks and 2 lunches

Send registration form with \$35 check to David Shindell, JC Treasurer, 115 Holmes Rd., Ypsilanti, MI 48198-3020. To pay with Credit Card, fax form to 866 616-5828 & then Call David with card information at 734 483-8228. Call Charlene Snow at 313 342-2327 for more information. Online registration coming soon at www.JusticeCaucus.org

**Future Camp Millie Training Events will focus on: Education & LGBT
Sponsored by the Justice Caucus, Michigan's Progressive Democratic Caucus.**



EDITORIALS:

1. From Partisanship to Pathology

When does paranoia and partisan politics become a sickness? When school districts like Rochester, my own Clawson, and a few others in the area, say they will only show the President's speech to high school students – or not at all because of “parents concerns”, I have to wonder – what are they afraid of? President Obama is going to “contaminate” their children with talks about studying hard and staying in school? Or is there a more nefarious yet subtle reason for their restrictions? I suspect there is.

I didn't hear any protests or concerns when President Bush read a book to little school kids on 9/11. And there shouldn't have been. Nothing wrong with the President of the United States taking an interest in the education of our children – but apparently now some think so. I noticed there was no similar uproar going back in recent history when Bush #1 did that (outside the beltway anyhow), or Ronald Reagan address school kids – and he talked about his tax cuts. There can only be two reasons for this unprecedented action – either “they” are worried he will somehow try indoctrinating them in his less than 30 minute speech into some “socialist” or Democratic spiel – or they just plain don't want a black President talking to their kids. The first is paranoia and the second is racist.

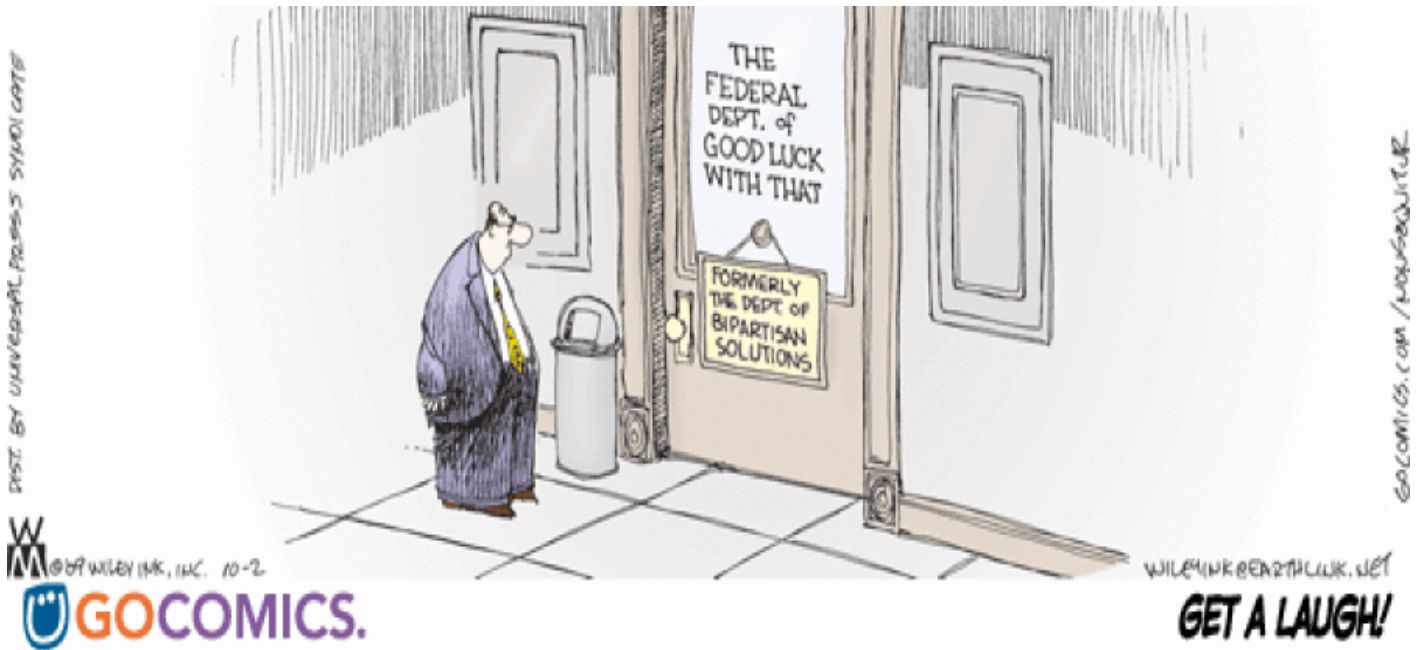
I think it is a gross insult to the President of the United States – even if it hadn't been Obama. Have we become so partisan – so paranoid, that even a simple “pep” talk by our President to kids is viewed with some nefarious intent? Is this America? For God sake, the man has two elementary school kids of his own – how much more engaged with education could you expect?

I am insulted as a resident of Clawson, and a citizen of this country – and dismayed by this blatant disrespect and yes, racism. It shows the level of social discourse – really the lack thereof, by those on the Right. It is one thing to have a vigorous debate over the course of this country – to mount opposition to policies you disagree with – but this – this is not only a national insult to the Office of the President of the United States, but undeniably racist. Oh I can hear the “protests” that “they” were just concerned about a partisan speech President Obama may give. Baloney!!! Our children are exposed to many speakers throughout their school lives, and I suspect darn few have ever been subjected to any “pre screening” those on the Right are now demanding. Have you so little faith that you are not able to impart your values to your children – that one little pep talk will distort their psyche? Give me a break!!!

So it is with shame that I am resigned to the fact, that unfortunately our country has not come as far as I had thought in race relations – nor civil discourse. What happened to “the content of his character – not the color of his skin” that I joyously embraced in my youth? Those officials that made the decision NOT to air the Presidents talk should hang their heads in shame. At the least you are partisan hacks – and worse – purveyors of racism.

I went to the school board to register my complaint. They said that it was inconvenient to air his speech on that Tuesday due to half day schedules, chaos at first day of school, some parents registered “concern” – etc, etc, etc. Their solution – it is online IF any parent wants to show it to their kids. Ya Right!!!

Mike Smith
Clawson



2. A Clean Choice

This month we citizens of Troy were given a clean choice: Lower Taxes or Maintain our Services. The City Manager pointed out that Troy revenues will decrease for the next six years at least; and he was backed up in this by the even more dire report of Oakland County Deputy Executive Robert Daddow. To maintain our current level of services in the face of declining revenues will require a 2 mil increase, which must be approved by voters if City Council approves this ballot measure. This would cost the average residential tax payer ~\$206, while that same tax payer will receive a decrease in their tax bill of ~\$158. Failure to approve a tax increase will result in the elimination of the Nature Center, Museum, Community Center, Library, Risk Management, and Community Affairs departments; plus the privatization to varying degrees of the Building Inspection, Engineering, Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Human Resources, and Real Estate & Development units; plus the elimination of ~160 City positions (i.e., jobs).

Given that City Council has been struggling for several months with the problem of decreasing revenues, none of these suggestions should have come as a surprise. And yet even seasoned observers were surprised by the magnitude of the cuts and upset at how much that is good about Troy was going to be discarded.

And yet this crisis has dissipated the confusing gibberish that characterizes so much of our political and pundit talk, and instead has let us see clearly the choice before us: Taxes or Services. It would seem that individuals all through this town independently understood what was at stake and decided to speak up. At the recent Troy City Council Special Meeting, hundreds of people showed up

and upwards of ~72 people signed up to make their remarks to the Council (a few of which are reproduced on page 3). By my tally as well as that of other observers, the people opted for Services over Taxes by a 3.5 to 1 ratio. That translates to a ~78% vote in favor of Services.

Note that I do not write that 78% of the people voted for higher taxes, although that will be the outcome of their preference. What they did recognize is that money is important but it is not itself the measure of all things. They recognized that Troy's public safety and library and nature center and museum and community center and other offerings were important to them and their families; that their childrens' education and future depend on the excellence of the Troy Library and schools ("*Only the educated are free*", *Epictetus, ca 100 AD*); and that these services meant the difference between living in the best city in Michigan, or living in another decaying Rust Belt city. They also understood that services, once dismantled and the employees fired, cannot be easily nor quickly re-established. These Troy residents agreed with what Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. wrote in 1904: "**Taxes are what we pay for civilized society.**"

Not everybody thought that our City services were more important than taxes. Several people, including Council Candidates Douglas Tietz and Carmen Johnson, opted for cutting our expenses so as to match our revenue; or in other words, that low taxes were more important than good services.

There will be a City Council election next month. The Pro-Service candidates will face the Anti-Service slate. We will have a clean choice. We should make a clean decision. Money is important only for what it can buy. By itself, money cannot make a community. But when ministered by a City Council who see themselves as wise stewards of their fellow citizens' needs and hopes, then money can buy us the multiple services that all of us enjoy but none of us could buy individually. We are a community.

Robert Arking

**"The Work Goes On,
The Cause Endures,
The Hope Still Lives,
And The Dream Shall Never Die"
Edward M. Kennedy**