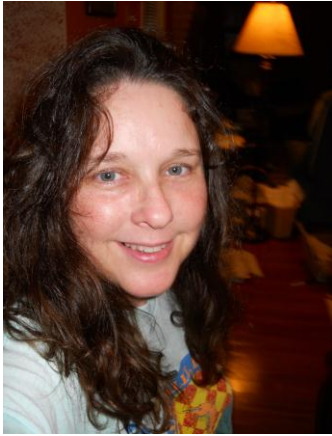


PRESIDENT PONDERINGS

Rick Santorum was the leading figure in every parish for the March 24th Presidential Primary race; Mitt Romney and Newt Gingrich switched 2nd and 3rd positions in each parish; and Ron Paul consistently came out as the least favorite of the four choices. How is it, then, that Ron Paul delegates won the Caucus race on April 28th?

As I was pondering the situation aloud with my 21-year old son, who differs from me in his devoted enthusiasm for Ron Paul, I realized that he never has a bad word to say about his candidate. Nor do his friends. Nor do any of the older people who support RP. And I must admit I have to admire the tenacity with which they stick together. They believe in their chosen leader and therefore showed up at Caucus polls to vote---which leads me to the conclusion that Ron Paul delegates won in the Caucus because his supporters stuck together.



The Republican Party, on the other hand, has been metaphorically nit-picking potential candidates to death. The constant backstabbing and fault finding is enough to make even the strongest man weak at the knees. The open negativity by the very party these potential candidates are supposed to represent undermines the cohesiveness of the party, while sapping a candidate of his will to further the group's success.

From the start, the dissension within the Republican Party has been publicized, with the faults of each candidate perhaps being exaggerated by the media, polarizing voters as a result. The honeymoon period of each candidate was short-lived. Republicans wasted no time in pointing out the various faults of their own candidates. As the saying goes, "With friends like that, who needs enemies?"

Ron Paul supporters and many Independents are tired of the bickering that goes on in party politics, not just between Democrats and Republicans, but within the Republican Party itself. Though Republicans are supposed to share similar values of limited government, economic independence, and personal Responsibility, the group is divided by the political maneuverings of a few within.

It all comes down to power grabs by the naysayers, who either want to be in control or to have their personal favorite in power. These people do everything they can to tarnish reputations and keep certain candidates from being successful. They whittle the candidates down until there is no desire to stay in the game, to 'do good,' as it were, in the big picture.

After all, if a presidential candidate can't have the support of people s/he's supposed to represent when it comes to minor issues, then how can that person hope to have the party's support to accomplish larger issues. When a potential leader is too busy fending off attacks, there is no time, nor energy, to work for the greater good. At the same time, if a potential leader does not defend himself against venomous onslaughts, he stands the chance of having his character destroyed. It's a double-edged sword.

By tearing apart fellow Republicans who may have been former friends, these types of Republicans tear down the chance of building up the Party. The saying, "United we stand, divided we fall" may just as well read, "United we succeed, divided we WILL fail."

It's embarrassing, to say the least, to be considered a part of this pettiness and un-Christian like behavior and, undoubtedly, exhausting for the candidates to fight off the constant barrage of insults and criticism. No one is uplifted--neither the candidates nor the voters---when this kind of self-centered behavior goes on. There is no desire to rise above. Many people, especially young ones, do not want to have anything to do with Republicans. So it's natural that they would be attracted to Ron Paul's ideals and his followers. It could be said that his supporters support one another in their support for Ron Paul.

When I was about 11 years old, a nun at the Catholic school I attended, gave me a book called Winners and Losers, by Sidney J. Harris. One saying in there always stuck with me, and I had even used it for a bulletin board slogan when I was student-teaching high school students who were only 4 and 5 years younger than I was. It read: "Winners respect those who are superior to him; Losers look for chinks in their armor." This party has done nothing but look for chinks in our candidates' armor, and as a result, we all lose.

Julie LaLonde Robinson

RESIGNATION NOTICE: It has been my privilege to serve as your president since January 2012 and prior to that to write the minutes of Board meetings since August 2011 and to start the newsletter in November 2011. Time constraints---and other factors---compel me to resign as president and discontinue my membership in the Pachyderms of Greater Baton Rouge. I apologize for any inconvenience or disappointment this may cause.

**Minutes of the April 26, 2012 Regular Meeting
Submitted by Larry Dyer**

The social and dining period was opened at 6:00 PM. The meeting was called to order by President Julie Robinson at 6:45 PM. The Invocation was given by Judge Duke Welch,, and the Pledge of Allegiance was made by all. Harold LaCour introduced the speaker for the night, Brigitte Nieland, Vice President of Communications for the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry (LABI).

Ms. Nieland gave an overview of her organization. It has 4700 members companies in the state and exists to support business interests before the state legislature. They also become involved in local races and rate state legislators in terms of their support for business. LABI uses technology and social media to mobilize its constituency regarding legislative issues.

Ms. Nieland discussed the major changes made in the educational reform bills recently approved by the state legislature and enacted into law. She described how tenure rules will change and school board members will no longer be able make hiring decisions except for the school superintendent. The school superintendent will be the only one with the authority to hire or fire personnel. Many questions from the audience were in regard to vouchers and school choice. Ms. Nieland explained that opportunities for students to move to better schools will be very limited at least in the first year.

Ms. Nieland also discussed some other topics impacting the state, including pension costs, legacy lawsuits against oil companies. LABI is actively opposing health care mandates, repealing bus driver tenure, and state payroll deductions that support political activism.

After her talk, a question and answer period was held.

The April newsletter was distributed to those present.

The minutes of the March 22 regular meeting were approved as amended.

The meeting continued with a discussion for members regarding the issue of the time for the meeting. A vote at the next regular meeting will be made as to whether the meeting will come to order at 6:30 PM or 7:00 PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Good luck, Mike Walker!
