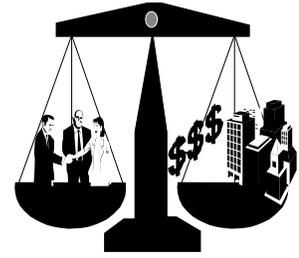


Citizens for Common Sense



September 2014

Seeking government that is responsible and responsive to taxpayers in St. Joseph County, IN

Election 2014: HOW TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- 1)** Come to our Meet the Candidates Night to hear from all the candidates for state and local offices. Ask questions, read their bios, talk to them afterward.

Meet the Candidates Night

Thurs, Oct 9, 2014 7-9 pm

St. Paul's Memorial UM Church - 1001 W. Colfax. SB

- 2)** Go door-to-door, phone bank, put out yard signs, walk in parades, make donations to help local candidates. Call party offices or check their web pages to learn what you can do. Wondering who to donate to or work for on the national, state or local level? Come discuss!

Citizens for Common Sense Discussion

Thurs, Oct. 16, 7-8:30 pm

Mishawaka Library - 209 Lincoln Way East, Mishawaka
There will be cookies and beverages, and ample time for your input.

- 3)** Vote at your usual polling place one last time. Next election you should have over 3 dozen places to choose from in the county as we go to Vote Centers.

VOTE! Tues, Nov 4 – Your polling place

Not sure where? Check indianavoters.in.gov or call County Voter Reg. 235-9521

LOCAL ISSUES THAT MIGHT GIVE YOU PAUSE

South Bend Housing Deal

A local development company plans to build houses for low-income families using state and federal dollars (plus a South Bend tax abatement). The families will pay “carrying costs.” Is this wise? One thing we can all agree on is this: The house being given away should not be worth a quarter of a million dollars. Yet, if you do the math, that’s just what this project will do, and at your expense.

South Bend Mutual Homes will get \$3.2M in state tax credits and a \$400,000 federal grant (i.e., all of it is from YOUR tax dollars) to build 18 houses for low-income families. DO THE MATH! \$3.6 million divided by 18 means we’re spending \$200,000 per house -- wholesale. More like \$250,000 in retail.

Are we really putting low-income families in “Knollwood” houses that the rest of us can’t afford? Or is it possible, that \$1 million is going to some attorney and \$1 million to some politician and \$1 million to some agency, and the 18 homes that are being built for the remaining \$600,000 and costing \$33,000 each (retail value \$40,000).

Neither version sounds good. And doesn’t South Bend already have \$40,000 houses needing occupants? Who is thinking this through?

County Leaf Pickup: Again?

A history of Leaf Pickup in St. Joe County would appear to be the setup for a shaggy dog story -- (A shaggy dog story is a plot with a high level of build-up and complicating action, only to be resolved with an anti-climax or ironic reversal, usually one that makes the entire story meaningless.) But worse, this one refuses to end.

How many times over have we spent a million dollars on leaf pickup only to have it rained out or unappreciated or the vendor folds or snow comes too early, etc. etc. After each failure, county officials vow never again – and then forget it ever happened and try again – with the same result.

This time, we were sure it would be gone for good. Not only was last season a colossal failure with

the vendor starting in the townships least needing it, then the snow covering the townships most needing it, then the snow failing to melt, then the vendor coming through AFTER all the residents had scraped the frozen leaves off their yards – and never did do all the promised pickups. But on top of this, the county is so desperately short of money, having been surprised by the Circuit Breaker (how was this a surprise? The time frame was laid out two years ago!), that they told all department heads to freeze new hires and cut their budgets by 3%.

After all this, the logical response was to spend another \$1 million on Leaf Pickup? WHO is making these decisions?

The standard argument back is “We have to do Leaf Pickup because we passed the Burn Ban!”

Last I checked, the same entity that can pass a law can pass another law to undo it. Then go ahead and put out *recommended* burn dates. Ask citizens to actually talk to their neighbors – to check if a burn will be okay or to ask if it can be delayed to another day. And the county can put out press releases detailing how to burn leaves safely with minimum smoke. OH, WAIT. . .

- * Burn only dry leaves.
- * Clear a 6 ft. diameter area of any flammables.
- * Light the fire without accelerants.
- * DON’T TURN LEAVES ON TOP OF EACH OTHER.
- * Watch the fire at all times.
- * Keep a garden hose nearby.
- * Soak the ashes when the fire dies down.

There. I just saved the county a million dollars. Now we need our elected officials to do the rest:

Lift the burn ban and drop the leaf pickup!

Disarming Park Rangers

South Bend Parks are considering disarming their park rangers. The argument seems to be that there is no violence in the parks, so who needs rangers with guns? Gee, do you suppose there’s no violence BECAUSE the rangers have guns? And why would you want your rangers to be the only people NOT allowed to carry guns in a park? In our opinion, unless you distrust your rangers, they are the people who most need to be carrying.

Issues at the national level ----

Obamacare

A number of alternatives have been put out there but the Senate won't take them up. Can we elect enough new Senators who will take on the task? Who are they?

ISIS

Radical Moslems are committing acts of barbarism in the Middle East, beheading Christian men, forcing women into slavery. And now Americans are being beheaded in

front of cameras. At what point do we realize this is not a religious disagreement. This is a clash of ideologies – one of which has vowed to kill the other. What is our next move?

Business and Individual regulations

Businesses can be told they can't move, what they must sell, and new products they aren't allowed to market. Individuals can be told what they can and cannot eat, and their conversations and drive routes can be recorded. And we're okay with all of this? Have you read *Atlas Shrugged*?

Want to discuss what we can do next? ----

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Mishawaka-Penn-Harris Library

209 Lincoln Way East, Mishawaka, IN

There will be cookies and beverages, and ample time for your input.

If you are not on our e-mail list, you are missing lots of announcements, articles and helpful links.

E-mail citizensforcommonsense@gmail.com and say SUBSCRIBE.

We are working on getting a local showing of Atlas Shrugged III

AMC Showplace 16 on Chippewa in South Bend showed I and II.

Maybe if enough of us call, they'll show III. If you would like a group of us to be able to go see it together locally, please give AMC a call at

(574) 299-6060

A SUCCESSFUL FAILURE - Thomas J. Miranda

One way of judging a person's performance is to measure the success or failure of whatever that individual accomplishes. Recently we celebrated President's Day to honor our past presidents. Presidents' Day replaced George Washington's Birthday on February 22. Honoring President Washington, who was a giant of a president, made good sense. With political correctness we now try to honor all presidents, which has diminished the honor of the day set aside to honor the Father of our Country.

I recall that the University of Notre Dame held this holiday in high esteem and bestowed a Patriot's Award on their selected candidate. Ronald Reagan, among other, received the award. Then as political correctness crept in, the award was trivialized to be more acceptable to left wing politics. To illustrate the point, Bob Hope was selected to receive the award, but due to pressure from the students and leftist groups, they instead awarded the honor to Whitney Young. This was a real slam to a patriot like Hope as ND moved farther down the road to becoming a secular university.

Over the years political scientists and historians tend to rate presidents. Some of those who received the honor of worst president include Martin van Buren, Jimmy Carter and the current monster in the White House. Jimmy's claim to fame was his unique ability for not making a decision. When the Iranians took over our embassy, his first step was to ask for a book on Islam so he could understand what was going on. In an amusing effort to solve the problem, Jimmy called for Herb Cohen, a noted expert on negotiations. In fact, Herb gave me an autographed copy of his book; **You Can Negotiate Anything**". So Herb came to the White House and they asked him how to get the hostages back. Herb told them how: * Monday cut off medical supplies to Iran, * Tuesday cut off all food supplies, *Wednesday freeze all assets, *Thursday begin bombing Iran, *Friday the hostages come home.

The Nobel Laureates in the Carter Administration told Herb that they couldn't do that. So Herb told them that in such a case the hostages would not come home until January 21, fifteen months later. And so it was that Carter rejected Herb's solution and it took the election of Ronald Reagan to free the hostages 15 months later.

While some consider Obama the worst president, I believe that he is the most successful. This monster took one of the world's greatest countries and in five years turned it into a banana republic. With a soaring debt, a destroyed health care system, brown shirt surveillance of citizens, high unemployment, loss of respect around the world and emasculating congress and the Supreme Court, Obama has been the most successful president we ever had. He has single handedly done what no armies could do and without firing a single shot. With the assistance of a compliant media and people like the Bilderbergs and business tycoons like George Soros and Jeffrey Immelt, he must be the most successful president we ever had.

During the last election campaign, President Obama was overheard reassuring the Russian Premier that after the election Obama would have more flexibility to help Putin. Isn't it strange that with the Border Crisis, Putin steps in to redirect attention to Ukraine by having a plane shot down saving Obama's hide. Coincidence or cooperation between two tyrants? This truly makes Obama a successful failure for dumping America onto the trash heap of History!

Granger Water – Again - Kelly Havens

With monotonous regularity, St. Joe County officials sound the alarm that Granger is in danger of poisoned water if it doesn't put in public utilities [SBT 12-19-13]. Please! For at least the fifth time in 22 years, let's review the facts:

- 1) The danger being referred to is nitrates in our water. Nitrates are a normal part of our diet, only of concern in excessive quantities. Carrots, for example, are high in nitrates. So are tomatoes.
- 2) Nitrates in the water are NOT evidence that septic systems are leaking into wells. Granger was previously farmland. Of course, it has nitrates. Nitrates are also in lawn fertilizers. Septics are installed under rules that assure biohazards cannot make the horizontal stretch to a well.
- 3) The federal government's nitrate danger levels are very conservative and Granger is not hitting them except in isolated cases. Even then, they are a danger only for infants. Solution: Buy a filter for your house if you have high nitrates and an infant.
- 4) If two dozen of the 20,000 homeowners in Granger have concerns about their nitrate levels, it makes far more sense for them to buy filters or bottled water than to force all their neighbors to pay \$10,000 or more to put in sewer connections they don't need -- and for which they'd be paying usage fees for the rest of their lives.
- 5) Public sewers tear up yards, landscaping, privacy fences, sidewalks and roads. We've paid for school buses driving in circles around road and sewer work on S.R. 23 three times already. Enough!
- 6) Public sewers create a single concentrated point of failure unknown to private septic systems. Nature processes septage over the broadest possible area so the ground can process away contaminants. Only humans come up with the brilliant idea of putting it all in one place so it has to go somewhere (typically the St. Joe River), and any failure

along the way backs sewage into other people's homes, knocking out whole neighborhoods at a time, while a septic problem is confined to a single house.

- 7) Public sewers would not solve a nitrate problem anyway! If nitrates are already in the soil, new sewers wouldn't change that for another 20 years until all the nitrates have leached out. So after they've put in the million dollar sewer, everyone will suddenly realize this fact and want to put in millions of dollars of public water, too.

Given all these facts, why do St. Joe County officials keep pushing public water and sewer? Answer: Follow the money. Any time your office can be put in charge of a multi-million dollar project, you get more power, more job security, and more opportunity to throw bones to people you want backing you.

Three years ago when a couple of Granger businesses didn't want to pay for new septic systems, they got the county to call for a sewer and rope in all the other businesses and some 75 residences even though none of these people had problems. The other businesses and homeowners gathered together and signed a petition showing they did not want the sewer. They also hired a soil scientist to do a study, and he reported that NONE of the problems listed as the reasons for the sewer was actually true. The groundwater table was NOT high, there were not seasonal problems, nitrates were not at dangerous levels, and there were no confirmed instances of septic contaminating wells.

Yet Granger was torn up for months and over 100 businesses and homeowners were forced to pay thousands of dollars each for systems they did not need. Why? Did the spouse of one of the county officials get a contract to put in the sewer?

Once you let someone take away your private well or septic system, they can change the rules and the rates at any time, and you will never be free to make your own choices again.