

GOP’s Porridge Bowl

It was as if the GOP Mama Bear set out three bowls of porridge to determine which Wood County Republican would run for the nomination for Congress after the untimely death of U.S. Rep. Paul Gillmor. Each of the three candidates sampled the porridge and came up with a plausible reason why they would or would not run for the 5th District seat.

The real reasons for the in or out decision appear different than their stated ones.

First, Commissioner Tim Brown, fresh from a close race for re-election where he got only 52 percent against Democrat Melanie Bowen, took a spoonful that appeared to whisper “too gay.” Having been outed by a political blog, he said that he could not raise the money to compete.

Second, State Sen. Randy Gardner, who gets most of his headlines outside Wood County these days, touched spoon to lips and heard a raspy “DC is too far from home” and stayed out.

Third, State Rep. Bob Latta, who has been very quiet since his pal Tom Noe went to the clink, sampled the stuff. “You are just right,” the porridge whispered and Latta got in the race.

I would speculate that the real reasons for their actions are as follows:

Brown needed an excuse to announce that he was gay and seized on the idea that he was being persecuted by the blog to distract attention from his lifestyle in our rock-ribbed GOP county that George W. Bush twice carried running against gays. The Republican mouthpiece Sentinel-Tribune gave Brown the most sympathetic coverage imaginable. Brown has three years before he is up for re-election, lots of time for people to forget. Brown never had a chance in a primary against Latta or Gardner. He still could run for state senate in 2008 if Latta makes it to Congress. Cry no tears for Brown. He made a calculated, cynical, political decision to out himself. **As to his, my, your, and Mama Bear’s lifestyles. Who cares? Nobody’s business.**

Gardner’s real reasons are more complicated and even more politically calculating, especially because he is better known in the 16 county 5th District than son of a congressman Bob Latta. First, he avoids being in a party bloodbath with Latta and Wauseon State Sen. Steve Buehrer. Second, he gains stature by “thinking about” running and diverts attention from the fact that he will once again circumvent legislative term limits by running for state rep in 2008. He switched from state rep to state senate in 2000 while Latta did the opposite.

Besides Gardner is more interested in bringing the biodigester – cow manure burner – to Wood County to cover up his inability to block the invasion of factory farms.

Latta just wants to be able to walk in Daddy Delbert’s shoes. He lost the primary to Gillmor two decades ago by 27 votes. He has been waiting for Gillmor to retire ever since. He announced the day after Gillmor’s funeral. Latta is not favored by the Sentinel-Tribune but he is the fair-haired boy of the Toledo Blade, that circulates in two-thirds of the district. Latta has little to lose because in the event of defeat, he just goes back to job swap with Gardner.

My prediction is that State Sen. Steve Buehrer will beat Bob Latta in the primary. Buehrer possesses more of the right-wing conservative profile that Del Latta had. It is the kind of “evil” that 5th District voters typically dig.

Meanwhile, Democrats have Robin Weirauch back for a third try after getting 43 percent of the vote against Gillmor in 2006, carrying Wood County and again winning the Blade endorsement.

OVER

So far, Robin Weirauch's campaign has been full of errors.

First, she missed the opportunity to announce her candidacy the day after Gillmor's funeral. She waited a week instead. Then she mistakenly announced her campaign on YouTube, the internet TV service. Whoever suggested that she use a hip television technique to launch her campaign in a hide-bound conservative, rural, red, white, and blue district should be fired. She got lousy coverage in the Blade and Sentinel, not surprisingly. Latta announced his campaign on the steps of the Wood County Courthouse and Buehrer in a Fulton County courtroom.

Early indications are that Latta and Buehrer understand the district and Weirauch does not.

Furthermore, it appears that neither the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee nor the Ohio Democratic Party give Weirauch any chance of winning the race and are sitting the campaign out.

This is unfortunate because unhappiness with President Bush and the botched Iraq War are enough to turn the district to a moderate Democrat.

Unless Weirauch proves she is within striking distance of the survivor of the GOP primary Nov. 6, the DCCC and ODP will continue to sit on their hands for the Dec. 11 showdown.

She needs some fortified porridge.

I'll give her a slogan: SEND BUSH A ROBIN.

-- John K. Hartman, Editor and Publisher

BGSD Rolls Fall; New Competing High Schools Likely

The Sentinel-Tribune is finally on the case of the declining enrollment in the Bowling Green School District (BGSD). You read it here first. There second.

Last November, the bond issue to build a new junior high school passed by a whisker. It appeared to lose election night, but some uncounted ballots later put it over the top.

Now the district is going full-tilt to spend those millions **while it neglects building up the district's educational programs and selling them to the public and the district's parents.**

The district quietly dropped the high school's accreditation by North Central, the regional accrediting agency. Now the high school in a university community no longer has to live up to the highest standards.

This is beyond unfortunate. It is embarrassing.

Meanwhile, not one, not two, but three private schools in Bowling Green are contemplating opening their own high schools in the next five years.

This will further reduce enrollment in BGSD's high school and junior high schools, causing empty classrooms in the new junior high and old high school buildings, further enrollment reduction and elimination of more teaching and staff positions.

The smaller BGSD gets, the smaller BGSD's reputation gets.

I hope the leaders of the district wake up before it is too late. I see no signs of it.

BG 4 Corners You Read It Here First Tip Of Month: Read my column about USA Today and free newspapers in the Sept. 22 issue of the Toledo Free Press (toledofreepress.com)

BG 4 Corners Lamest Lack Of Coverage Of Month: BGSU is hiding \$192 million in a so-called internal endowment fund skimmed from tuition, room and board and state subsidies. You would not know this if you read the Sentinel-Tribune, Toledo Blade and the BG News. Only the Columbus Dispatch had it.

BG 4 Corners News & Views of Bowling Green was founded June 1, 2005 by John K. Hartman, its publisher. Its purpose is to provide additional news and points-of-view to citizens of Bowling Green in the belief that thorough awareness of and discussion of issues makes for a better community. It will be available free at various drop-off points in Bowling Green and by email by sending your email address and request to John.Hartman@dacor.net. Patrons may support *BG 4 Corners News & Views* for \$10 per issue. Ads may be purchased for \$20 per issue. Comments and submissions are welcome. Contact information: John.Hartman@dacor.net; 419-352-8180; 1400 Wren Road, BG, OH 43402. Back issues at www.dacor.net/john.hartman Copyright 2005-2007, John K. Hartman, All Rights Reserved.