

PUBLISHER'S MESSAGE BY DAN JACOBSON

RED BANK REACTIONARIES

It always happens when a revolutionary movement gains steam. The counterrevolution begins as reactionaries desperately look to maintain their status quo.

And so it is in Red Bank, where a triCityNews-inspired political revolution is gaining ground.

At the urging of this newspaper, two Republican Council members are boycotting this year's election and not running again. Instead, they'll move forward on a petition drive seeking a question on the ballot to change Red Bank's form of government to non-partisan.

The two young Republican Council members doing this — Mike Whelan and Mark Taylor — are a rarity in Red Bank. Democrats almost always win because this is a Democratic town. And Democratic Party Chairman Ed Zipprich decides who runs as a Democrat, thus controlling who runs the town. It's idiotic, and it's stagnating Red Bank. People from all political persuasions say it's ridiculous.

The non-partisan system proposed will switch the elections to May, allowing the town to focus only on local issues, while putting all the candidates in one column without party affiliation. The other triCities of Long Banch and Asbury Park have such a system, as does Ocean Township, Tinton Falls and more. It allows anyone to run with an equal shot at winning, and it would end the absurd system you now have in Red Bank.

There's plenty of Democrats and Independents who want this change. Republicans Whelan and Taylor want them to join the effort in a bipartisan push. If they can get this non-partisan question on the ballot, it will win. Only hard-core organization Democrats allied with Chairman Ed Zipprich would be against it, obviously because it ends their control of who runs the town. Zipprich himself is a councilman, and has installed some dunderhead allies on the governing body.

So here come the reactionaries determined to stop this democratizing movement in Red Bank — even if they have trouble keeping a straight face while doing it.

Take Democratic Red Bank Mayor Pasquale "Pat" Menna, with whom this Publisher has a 35 year friendship. We barged in on Menna last week to see how this always affable public official — who can never quite stray from the party line — would execute his reactionary opposition to a non-partisan system in Red Bank.

"I'm all for non-partisan..." the Mayor began, causing an initial shock to this Publisher that Menna may actually go for this, "...as long as everyone in Monmouth County has it!"

What? So you're admitting, Mayor, that this is the best system — but it should be uniformly applied?

Menna knows a uniform adoption of non-partisan will never happen, as each town decides their own form of government. Of course, we know where Menna was go-

continued on p.64



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ing with this. Organization Democrats in Monmouth County will say that Republican towns should also make the switch so Democrats can compete there. Democratic towns like Red Bank shouldn't have to do it themselves.

"It's a ploy to repress Democratic votes," said Menna about a non-partisan system, pointing to Democratic towns like Long Branch and Asbury Park who have it, suggesting it was a plot from long, long ago by Monmouth County Republicans. (Asbury Park, for example, has had this system since before World War II.)

Really? So would you be for it, we asked Pasquale, if the non-partisan elections were held during the November elections, as is allowed, rather than May as Whelan and Taylor propose? Then all the Democrats in Red Bank would be coming out for the big event.

At that, Menna's straight face was under enormous strain, as a chuckle began. He fought to hold off a full blown outburst of gut-busting, uncontrollable laughter. Menna knew that his position was ridiculous — if he's so concerned with depressing voter turnout with a May non-partisan election, then of course the problem is solved by holding the non-partisan local election in November.

Nope. Menna can't even go for that.

"It's got to have the partisan label, like having the union label," said Menna, as this Publisher burst into laughter.

Look, we told the mayor, a non-partisan system enfranchises more people. Why, for example, should a talented minority person have to go through Ed Zipprich to get on the ballot as a Democrat, which now is the only practical way to win? In a non-partisan system, no one holds anyone back from running. (This Publisher, in fact, won a council seat a long time ago in Ocean Township when he was 25 in a non-partisan system, beating a political machine that hadn't lost in 16 years. I was able to independently run as an independent voice in opposition. To no one's shock who knew me growing up in Ocean, that's exactly what I became. A non-partisan system allowed me to do that without asking anyone's permission.)

Menna, struggling to answer our point that non-partisan elections enfranchises because it allows everyone an equal shot at running (which a party organization, of course, doesn't like), came up with a great one.

"The Democratic Party in Red Bank has always been representative of diverse groups, including women," he said.

Alright, to hell with it. No way we're getting anywhere with this Red Bank reactionary.

So we switched to our perennial favorite debate: How best to serve the homemade orecchiette we both expertly make, with this Publisher arguing always for a broccoli rabe based approach, while Pasquale with equal passion argues for his own porcini inspired version.



SEEKING BALANCE, HOWEVER...

EXTRAORDINARILY ORDINARY

Congrats to Gabrielle Obre on her terrific piece in the March 29 issue. So many people constantly racing to do more, have more, and earn more without appreciating the everyday and ordinary magic around them. Thanks for the reminder Gabrielle!

Derek,

Fair Haven

First, I'd like to say that I am a fan of the paper and I am in full support of the paper's "end game... to transform the triCity region [into] a place where the creative, progressive and broad-minded are ascendent...", as stated in the Publisher's Message on 3/29/18. So in this regard, I ask why on the next page I am reading a column dedicated to division and exclusion in the Justified Right column?

We should all seek to balance our views with that of the other side of any argument; however, Mr. Cullari does not represent the Conservative view in contrast to the paper's Liberal ones. Rather, he takes the opportunity provided by this medium to go about what he himself is deriding - "dividing people up." He does nothing but point fingers at Liberals, blacks, David Hogg, and those who do not ascribe to "Biblically-based morals." Is there no room those of a different religion in Mr Cullari's dream for America? The column I am reading here is full of hate, seeking America that he and many others feel was ONCE great but is no longer... and it seems that what he thought was great is when the white Christians were running the show.

If the Justified Right column is included to create anger and/or head shaking from your readers, than Yes, you have succeeded! But please don't think for one minute that it offers a level-headed conservative balance to make your audience think.

Thanks!
Randy