

# GROUND GAME

THE ROAD TO NOVEMBER 6, 2012  
BY NANCY WEBBER

## Shout It!

Don't just whisper it

I took a detour on a dirt road off Highway 6 in the Castle Country of Utah to capture the sunrise just beginning to outline the spectacular rock formations in the distance. I stopped on the side of the road, grabbed my camera and stepped out of the car. Not more than 6 feet in front of me, the sage rustled on what was a windless morning. Most likely it's a pine chipmunk, I thought, and quickly adjusted my camera settings for the sunrise. The bushes rustled again and rather than a chipmunk, I was startled by a coyote jumping straight at me. In midair, he took a defensive position, landing with his weight on his haunches, front legs stiff, ready for my next move. We stared at each other just long enough to make a decision. I chose to stand my ground and take aim. I caught one blurry photo before he made his choice, bolted across the road and disappeared.

Dorothy Engelman thinks some Utah Democrats are that skittish. She lives in St. George, Utah, on the edge of the Mohave Desert, which is more than 350 miles to the southwest from where I am in 9-Mile Canyon. I met her when she was a first-time delegate on her way to the 2012 Democratic National Convention.

Dorothy is the chair of the Washington County Democrats, who grew up near Detroit, Mich., and taught school there for 20 years. After their retirement, she and her husband, Gary, traveled and lived on a boat for seven years. They settled in St. George three years ago.

St. George, population 72,897, was one of the first Mormon settlements after Salt Lake City. Church founder Brigham Young established the community during the American Civil War to grow cotton and supplement the limited supply coming from the east. Nicknamed "Utah's Dixie," it is now home to several high-end health spas and destination golf resorts.

Nearly 60 percent of Utah's residents are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and 80 percent of Mormons are Republicans. Even though he is a former member of the LDS church, living in Utah was a political adjustment for Dorothy and Gary.

She remembers being at an art fair shortly after moving to St. George. She said something of a liberal bent to one of the vendors, which prompted the vendor to ask, "You're a Democrat? I thought I was the only one."

Dorothy now knows many more progressives in her town, but she still feels that people are often afraid to express liberal views. They fear risking vandalism if they display an Obama bumper sticker on a car, for example. She isn't sure how to help them transcend that feeling, but she proudly displays her affiliation, hoping to start up a conversation.

"You get yourself a small donkey pin and wear it everywhere you go," Dorothy advises me. "It's like a silent handshake. It's amazing how many people comment on it."

Dorothy grew up in a union family and was herself a member of the teachers' union.

"In Michigan, I had Democrat in my blood," she says. "I was a contributor and a volunteer, put a sign in my lawn, but living here is a real challenge."

Nonetheless she is very hopeful about what's happening at the local and state level in Utah. In her new role as county chair, she has met many crossovers, people who see viable options in the candidates she has helped to recruit. People tell her that they want to restore balance in the Utah state Legislature and many are willing to vote for Democrats. Another indication of the Democrats growing strength in Washington County is that in the two most recent election cycles, the party recruited candidates for every position. "We have well-qualified, competitive candidates," says Dorothy, "and they offer a real choice."

Dorothy has some new voter contact tools, too. For the first time, volunteers working for local candidates are able to use the interactive calling programs that helped to make the Obama '08 campaign so successful. Her challenge in the retirement community of St. George is to find volunteers who are comfortable using the programs or willing to learn.

She doesn't claim credit for the Democrats' improved chances. "It should be a no brainer," Dorothy says. "If people voted in their own best interests, they would vote for Obama, but I think what's happened is that I've given people permission."

"That's one of my goals," she says. "To show people that they don't have to be afraid to say what they believe."

When I speak with her again by phone after her trip to Charlotte, she is still hoarse and tells me her hands are swollen from shouting and clapping for the speakers, but after experiencing the energy at her first convention, she feels much more positive about her chances. She is encouraging people not to whisper, but to shout out their hopes for the future and insists that she and her volunteers can see blue veins in the red rocks of southern Utah.

See an interactive map of religious affiliations at <http://religions.pewforum.org/maps>

*Nancy Webber of Eugene is a longtime Oregon political activist and author of Ground Game, a new book that chronicles her time in the field offices of the 2008 Obama campaign. The book is available at Amazon Kindle, iBook, Kobo and Inkwater Press.*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



### CIRCLE OF LIFE

In response to Lucas Spiegel's letter [9/13]: It is debatable whether humans can be nutritionally sound without meat, especially when you look at nutritional deficits across generations. Dr. Weston Price traveled the world in the 1920s seeking traditional cultures that thrived without any animal protein at all, and he found none. Not one.

I understand your arguments, Mr. Spiegel, because I was a vegetarian/vegan for 10 years. I am deeply committed to animal welfare and opposed to the torture of animals in factory farms. But when I became pregnant, and then nursed my daughter for almost four years, I found that nutritionally my body (and hers) required me to eat meat. One of my responses to criticism of vegetarianism had been "If I can kill it, I can eat it," so I decided that, ethically, I had to kill my own meat.

I have learned a lot in eight years of farming. My main complaint is how difficult it is to obtain GMO-free feed in an era of corporate control over every aspect of our food supply, including our farm animal's feed production. GMOs cause many health problems, which are exacerbated when the toxins are concentrated in the tissues of our meat animals.

I am allergic to GMO foods, and subsequently must avoid corn, soy, canola, beet sugar, sunflower seeds, conventionally grown produce, and animals fed on GMO feeds. I raise my own meat in order to be in control of my animal's feeds. I can drink milk from my cow, for example, but from no other cow in town — and I have tried the other pasture-based family dairies. They supplement with cow feed, which contains GMO corn and soy.

Back to the killing part: yes, I pray for my animals. I hold vigil while they die. I cry sometimes. And I find nothing smug about appreciating the ritual and respect that goes into those acts. If we "have to" eat meat, which some of us think we do, we'd better acknowledge that we are killing life to do it.

I like to see people cheering over locally raised pasture-farmed animals and

the attempts to disconnect from the factory and corporate methods of animal torture. Those of us who must eat animals must find an ethical way to do it. I am so inspired by my sense of well-being and spiritual connection with my food that I now teach others how to butcher humanely. I teach ritual of food-animal death. I teach circle-of-life. And I pray that when I die, I will become food for something else to live. Because I am part of that spiritual circle — just like my chickens.

*Kara Huntermoon  
Primitive skills instructor  
Eugene*

### NOTHING IS SACRED

In response to Jennifer Donovan [Letters, 9/6] when she wrote to complain about a white girl wearing a feather headdress — to put it simply? Shut. Up. For one, the girl in the picture has Native heritage. For another, who cares? People wear priest outfits on Halloween or nun outfits to fetish parties, so if your gripe is with how it offends spirituality, are you saying Native Americans are somehow immune? Moreover, perhaps this was simply for fashion. Great. Again — so what? Tell you what: White people can stop wearing headdresses when Native Americans stop wearing "white people" clothes. Offended? Well, so am I.

Racism is not solely created by angrily hating another group of people or committing a hate crime. It's created when one person draws a line in the sand between themselves and another person. The world has moved on. Nothing is sacred. And to be perfectly honest, we're probably better off.

*Jeff Holiday  
Eugene*

### TAKE BACK EPUD

On Sept. 11 I experienced a personal attack on our freedom of speech. I served on the Emerald People's Utility District Board from 1981 to 1994. This was during the start-up time for this people's owned electric utility. During the last two years I have become aware of some problems, one of which is limiting the "freedom of