

GROUND GAME

THE ROAD TO NOVEMBER 6, 2012
BY NANCY WEBBER

SOULS TO THE POLLS

The ground game is working in Florida

Last week I walked across the street to ask Miss Vienna if I could go to church with her. Churches all over Florida were organizing events to take faith voters to the polls on Sunday, Oct. 28. I wanted to see what a "Souls to the Polls" event looked like.

In 2008, more than one-third of African-Americans voted on the Sunday before Election Day, which helped President Obama carry Florida. It's a crucial day for working class voters who may not be able to stand in long lines during the week. This year Florida's Republican legislators targeted early voting and cut the number of days the polls would be open before Election Day from 14 to eight. The polls will be open on only one Sunday.

Many consider the new law to be blatant voter suppression, but Gov. Rick Scott justified the move as an effort to prevent voter fraud. According to several studies, including those done by the Carnegie-Knight Initiative on the Future of Journalism Education, the Brennan Center at NYU and even the Bush White House could find only a handful of voter fraud cases in Florida since 2000.

Vienna is a retired school administrator, a passionate Obama supporter, who recently went to see him at the University of Miami. When I asked her about Souls to the Polls, she hesitated then said that the Baptists and several other black churches organized events.

Vienna is a Jamaican-born immigrant who was one of more than 250,000 people left homeless by Hurricane Andrew in 1992.

"I couldn't tell where the house was," she says. "If I live to be a 1,000 years old, I will never forget the scene and the smell."

Now she lives in a racially diverse community with neighbors who have immigrated from Haiti and Cuba, or moved from elsewhere in the U.S. One family is the second generation to live in the same house.

During Hurricane Rita in 2005, the roof blew off the house next to Vienna's. A neighbor watched from his window. He worked against the wind to reach his car, then drove across the street and rescued the elderly couple from their home. After the storm, Vienna sheltered the couple until their roof could be repaired.

"We love each other. We take care of each other. We get along well," Vienna says. She admires Obama for the same characteristics. "He's here to help the needy, not the greedy."

I asked again about Souls to the Polls on Sunday and she politely told me, "I'm a Seventh Day Adventist. I go to church on Saturday."

I was disappointed, but decided to keep asking. The first volunteer to come in the office was Christina, an immigrant from Eastern Europe, and probably not a good candidate for my request to go to a black church. She works in a nail salon near the Obama office. She asked for a lawn sign while I was opening boxes of supplies and lawn sign wires.

When I gave her the sign, she looked at my hands and said, "Oh, honey! Paper?" "Yeah, and cardboard," I said.

She made me sit down, pulled a small bottle out of her pocket and filled several cuts with something that looked suspiciously like Super Glue. She looked carefully around the office as she worked and asked, "Are we doing OK?"

It's a tough question to answer, because the national media doesn't take the time to explain how the ground game works and, in my opinion, that is where an election is won or lost. I explain to Christina that, according to the Florida Division of Elections, the Obama campaign registered six new voters for every one new voter the Romney campaign registered before the Oct. 9 deadline. It's a good sign, but still leaves the final outcome in the hands of the more than two million independent voters.

Christina, who is upset that neither candidate is talking enough about education, interrupts my explanation. She's worried about Hurricane Sandy and the turnout both in Florida and up north. We all are, but even though the polls show Romney leading in several swing states, including Florida, no one is giving up.

When Sunday, Oct. 28, arrived, I was unable to go to church, but I checked in with volunteers in Liberty City and Miami Gardens, who told me that the lines were long and steady. Some voters boarded buses after church, while others marched to the polls. They carried banners, followed a band or drum corps.

As I write this, the storm warnings for Hurricane Sandy have been canceled for South Florida, but another storm is just beginning to rise as Election Day approaches. More than 1.1 million Floridians have already voted absentee. On Sunday, churches in Miami-Dade County helped to bring more than 22,000 people to the polls, people who know by heart the scripture passage that has gone before every march since the early days of the civil rights movement:

"Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream." ■

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

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

THE AMAZING MITT DRAKE THE MAGICIAN

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! FOR MY FIRST EXTRAORDINARY FEAT OF PRESTIDIGITATION--



AND YOU'LL GASP WITH INCREDULITY AS I CONJURE UP EVEN MORE ASTOUNDING ILLUSIONS! ENERGY INDEPENDENCE WITHOUT SACRIFICE! COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH CARE THAT IS NOT AT ALL LIKE OBAMACARE!

AND, MOST INCREDIBLY OF ALL-- A COMPLIANT MIDDLE EAST THAT DOES EXACTLY WHAT I WANT!



--I SHALL CUT TAXES AND INCREASE MILITARY SPENDING--WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY BALANCING THE BUDGET!

PREPARE TO BE ASTONISHED AS UNSPECIFIED LOOPHOLES AND DEDUCTIONS VANISH BEFORE YOUR VERY EYES!



ALL THINGS ARE MAGICALLY POSSIBLE--

--IF YOU VOTE FOR THE AMAZING MITT DRAKE!



AND THEN--YOU WON'T BELIEVE THE EVIDENCE OF YOUR OWN SENSES WHEN I WAVE MY MAGIC WAND AND--PRESTO, CHANGE--CREATE SIXTEEN MILLION NEW JOBS OUT OF THIN AIR!



WHAT? YOU WANT ME TO TELL YOU HOW I'M GOING TO DO IT ALL?

HAH! A GOOD MAGICIAN NEVER REVEALS HIS SECRETS!



LOOK AT MY RECORD! I'VE MADE ENTIRE COMPANIES DISAPPEAR!

NO, WAIT-- THAT WAS MY OLD ACT!

TOM TOMORROW @10-31-2012 www.thismodernworld.com...twitter.com/tomtomorrow

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

On behalf of the Human Rights Commission and the city of Eugene, we extend our deep sympathy and concern for acts of hate and violence that have occurred in our community.

The Human Rights Commission and the city of Eugene stand in solidarity with those who are impacted, and will speak out against acts of hate and violence. We do not condone either the acts themselves or the acceptance that silence implies.

Any public response on our part that might identify targeted individuals will not move forward without the explicit consent of those who were targeted. While we honor all requests for confidentiality, we do keep track of reported incidents and use them to help us assess problems or trends in our community that we want to address.

We are sorry that acts of hate and violence occur right here in our community. Please know that you are not alone in your anger, frustration and sadness that these incidents are happening.

Eugene must be a safe and welcoming community for everyone. Anything less diminishes us all. To report bias incidents contact the City of Eugene's Equity and Human Rights Office at 682-5177. To report bias crimes contact the Eugene Police Department at 682-5111 (non-emergency) or 911 (emergency).

Kitty Piercy, mayor of Eugene
Toni Giatso, chair,
Human Rights Commission

BETTER STREETS

Since the last street repair bond measure passed in 2008 we have all seen major improvements to the condition of the streets and paths we use to get around. Whether a commercial truck driver, a bus operator, a family biking to school or individuals driving their cars, things are in better shape because we voted to fund work that is not being paid for any other way.

Keeping up our transportation network is expensive, and until more people start moving around the city in different ways and we change how we pay for our transportation

modes, we simply don't have enough funds coming in through other means to keep that network running smoothly.

The previous ballot measure worked. More streets were repaired than originally projected (54 vs. 32) and miles of multi-use paths were improved. The citizen review committee reviewed the city's work and helped make improvements to the process. The bond measure was a success and now it's time to continue that work.

Measure 20-197 would continue to fix our potholes, work on preventative maintenance and improve our bicycle and pedestrian network. If it isn't passed the backlog of street and path repair work will just be pushed back and get more expensive. Vote "yes" on Measure 20-197 for better streets and paths for everyone.

Shane MacRhodes
Eugene

THE PUPPY VOTE

Thanks to your cover story [10/25] on the South Eugene Ward 2 council election, I was able to finally make up my mind. I want to compliment you on the title, "Fifty Shades of Betty," to clue us in to Taylor's "wink & kink" association with Eugene's outlaw sexual subcultures. The double entendre with the pop porno novel was a subtle hint indeed, letting some of us (nudge-nudge) know who to vote for.

After seeing the *Weekly* cover, while looking at the campaign literature, I realized that her opponent prominently displays his vanilla breeder credentials with a photo of his family at Crater Lake. In contrast, the mailing from Taylor had a photo of her with a cute little puppy, cleverly inferring that God will kill a puppy for every vote for her opponent. Clearly, if you love puppies you should vote for Betty.

Chuck Kleinhans
Eugene

RECYCLE RON DAVIS

For over 30 years we have lived across the road from Ron and MaryJo Davis. They have been great neighbors. He is always stopping to check on people on our road to make sure they are OK or need help. During this time we have watched