

Bluegrass Beacon

Looking for a backbone stronger than butter?

I grew up in a home where politics dominated many dinner conversations. I find it amusing that Election Day still holds a rush for me.

But politics has changed since I walked into the small fire station around the corner from my small-town Indiana home 26 years ago and voted for the first time. The interest and competition for the races in my town made the ballot look like a Chinese buffet menu.

I was proud and excited. And for an 18-year-old, I was informed. I significantly followed the campaigns for local, state and national races via the Wabash Plain Dealer.

Fast forward to 2008. I can best describe that eagerness and sense of anticipation I carried as a younger voter—



and the belief that the choices made my vote matter—as diminished.

On May 20, I prudently headed to the polls, knowing I faced sparse and less-attractive choices than ever. Youth's idealism beat a hasty retreat under the aegis of understanding how politics really work. And the facts about this year's primary races don't lie.

In seven of the 13 primary races for Kentucky's U.S. House and Senate seats, voters faced a single choice.

My count shows 110 of the 122 Kentucky House seats went uncontested.

Only seven of 30 Ken-

tucky Senate primary races offered more than one candidate. Among those seven, voters went to a felon who spent time in prison and another who pleaded guilty to voter fraud in eastern Kentucky.

Nearly 70 percent of the state's electorate didn't take this election seriously enough to vote.

What's happening to our country and commonwealth? For one, candidates have sacrificed principles for political expediency. Instantly-challenge-state lawmakers to stop looking for red herrings and start looking for a backbone.

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ted to go by a kite.

"Quit voting for debt-ridden, pork-laden budgets. Stop allowing entrenched political leaders," who are status-quo defenders extraordinaire, to intimidate you to the point that you forget who your constituents back home."

Astonishingly, several responded with this twisted retort: "You have the luxury of just opining on the issues, but I must worry about the politics."

What these uninspiring politicians mean is that they cannot focus on issues for fear they might lose.

It's easier to make stump speeches and litter yards and roadways with meaningless signs than to address the developing disasters in our gate—such as the state worker pension-fund crisis. The veto tag for failing to

change the structure of benefits packages for new state hires continues to soar and now stands at \$26 billion.

Worrying about "politics" as Election Day approaches ignores the growing worry of taxpayers who face the continued extortion of their hard-earned money to support full-time pensions for part-time political horse-traders.

Ironically, many of those politicians who complain about my "luxury" of addressing issues are Republicans, the former party of President Ronald Reagan—a leader who chose the right path and worried about the "politics" later.

Reagan showed that good politics has the best politics of all. When the air-traffic controllers defied federal law and went on strike, he fired them—and won re-election by a landslide. He called the Soviet Union an "Evil Empire," and then negotiated its end into defeat without firing a single shot.

Yet, some still called him "naive."

I suspect some can call me the same for hoping enough of Kentucky's political leaders stumble on some course, are willing to "lay down on the tracks" and sacrifice reelection in order to do the right thing for the people.

If they don't, our state's growing problems will only get worse.

— Jim Waters is the director of policy and communications for the Bluegrass Institute, Kentucky's free-market think tank. You can reach him at jwaters@bippp.org. You can read previously published columns at www.bippp.org.

GREER
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Media Research Center whose slanderous actions have been compared to the evil McCarthyism of the 1950s.

My friend also accepts anonymous E-mails as the gospel. I have had to face the reality that there is no reasoning with him. He wants to believe what he wants to believe. The facts be damned.

He's not alone. Many Americans, because of their fears and prejudices, want to accept as fact the radical tripe spouted by the likes of Eyebait, Media Research Center, Rush Limbaugh and Ann Coulter.

Such extremism has brought down nations. The Italian and German people were convinced through propaganda that Fascism and Nazism were good. Honest, religious people in Germany followed Hitler almost to destruction of the earth.

Nice people in other nations have closed their eyes to preemptive attacks on their countries, secret prisons, concentration camps, torture—but their eyes to many evil acts of their governments. Acts that were condemned by the world.

Today the United States has a President who advocates and defends preemptive attacks on other nations, torture of fellow human beings and imprisonment of American citizens without a trial.

And now our nation is condemned and considered a rogue nation by many across the earth. How sad, especially for the millions of us who served in the military willing to fight for our democracy and high ideals.

Bush and a rubber stamp Republican Congress assaulted our constitution, took away individual rights—subverted our democracy and made many Americans think they were patriots for doing it.

Many still back Bush and the Necons. Even more

frightening is the number of elected officials, many here in Kentucky, who still back this incompetent and radical President.

Vice President Cheney was informed recently during an interview that two-thirds of Americans believe the Iraq war is not worth fighting. Cheney's response was "so?"

So, Matt, the Vice President, the majority is supposed to rule in a free nation. You were elected Vice President not Vice-Dictator.

Much of the anger and hate stems from 9/11. Unethical leaders have exploited the terrorist attacks and played on racism and bigotry to scare the American people into extremist behavior and actions.

Is there a terrorist threat? Yes, there is. However, but there is little our government is doing to stop it and we absolutely don't have to give up our morality or freedom to protect ourselves.

Benjamin Franklin said "I am not a philosopher, but I am a practical man." He is right. We will always have more and more adventures for me to share with you.

I hope you all enjoyed your Memorial Day and took a little time to remember those who couldn't be home with their families because they are fighting to keep us safe. You are in my family's thoughts and prayers daily. Thank you for all you do!

Until next week, make it a great one!

Any

Editor's note: Papaw says it's really never too cold to swim in Nevada. Especially if you're 1.

VELOZ
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Analise was having a good time playing Queen of the Mountain. Whenever he would go around to climb up to the top so he could go down the slide she would try to hit him or push him off. It was kind of funny to watch. We finally went inside in the early evening, had a bath and then ate some more pizza. Analise went to bed at 8:30 and Antonio followed soon after at 9. I fell asleep on the couch around 8:45 and then fell asleep putting Antonio to bed at 9.

So, we all got quite a bit of sleep on Sunday night. Making us ready to face the fun we had ahead of us on Monday. Monday, like Sunday, was a day filled with a variety of adventures. I'm sure as the summer arrives, we will have more and more adventures for me to share with you.

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Ruddles Mills Days June 13-15

"Ruddles Mills Days" will be held on June 13 thru 15. The event will spotlight our terrific little town established in 1775 with activities surrounding its historically and uniquely preserved homes. In particular, we will focus on the "Stephen Home," built in 1766, as well as the "James Trabue Home," a restored and rebuilt home from the 18th century. All are invited to come and join for food, fun, fellowship, and a tour of the homes.

The celebration is also proud to include the return of the national award-winning Reynolds Ritchie to Ruddles Mills. Reverend Reynolds Ritchie was born in Ruddles Mills in 1825 to Edna and B.C. "Cotton" Ritchie. Since that time Rev. Ritchie has ministered in many places and has helped to build several churches in California as well as a church in Ohio. Rev. Ritchie is currently ordained as a minister with the "Church of God" denomination. The retired Millwright and Minister, Rev. Ritchie currently resides in the central coast of California with Faye, his wife of 68 years. He has three children, seven grandchildren, and 3 great-grandchildren.

Beginning Friday, June 13th thru Sunday, June 15th, you are invited to come down and meet us at the revival tent on the grounds of the United Methodist Church of Ruddles Mills each evening starting at 7pm. Music, fellowship, testimony, spoken word, and lots of good times are sure to be there too. After having served in ministry for 30 years and 8 church pastorates, Rev. Reynolds Ritchie is looking forward to ministering with you in this time of revival and restoration. Also, tune into WPTZ-TV, Channel 3. Can't wait to see you there!

Hosted by United Methodist Church, Ruddles Mills, Kentucky.
Pastor: Mrs. John Smith 907 WPTZ

Thoughts from... the Pastor's Study

By Donald Riggs

God Loves You Because He Wants To. Not because we deserve it. Romans 8:35-39, 1 John 4:14, 19:21, and St. John 13:34-35; Ephesians 4:1-32, and III John 2.

I would like to start with a verse of song, "The Love of God":

"The love of God is greater far Than tongue or pen can ever tell. It goes beyond the highest star, And reaches to the lowest hell; The guilty pair, bowed down with care, God gave His Son to win; His erasing child He reconciled, And pardoned from his sin. Oh love of God, how rich and pure! How measureless and strong! It shall forever endure.

Romans 8:35-39. What can separate us from this love? Paul writes; Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation,

or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come. Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(When these things come our way we must be able to say, I am persuaded that I am more than a conqueror through Jesus who Loves me!)

You may save I have missed up so many times what Paul said. You may say, "Yeah, but I just don't understand how God could still love me after all I've done and done." Listen, the agape Love of God isn't affected by what you do or don't do.

It is an unconditional act of His will. God loves you because He wants to love you. He loves you because you are not a conqueror through the pure covenant of blood of Jesus and there's nothing you can do to change that. That's what agape Love is. If you have asked forgiveness from God and received Jesus as your Lord and savior, you're a child of God, and are loved by Him!

11 John wrote, We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God dwelleth in him, and he in God, and we have known and believed that the love that God hath to us is God's love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him, 19 & 21 - We love him, because he first loved us. And this commandment have we from him, That

who loveth God love his Brother also.

11 - Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. John 13:34-35, Jesus said: A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. I love them, Read 4:13-32. Paul said this, Until we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; And be renewed in the spirit of our mind; And that we put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. And be ye kind one to another, with lowliness and meekness, forgiving one another, even as God forgives you, and me

John wrote in III John 2. Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as they well prosper. (And I also wish the same for all that read this.)

In Christ Jesus, Don Riggs

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