

Nov. 18, 2009

## Cape May County Page

### THE POST-PARTISAN TRAP

There are Republicans and there are Democrats. Are there Republicrats? Democats?

Having now twice lost legislative races that should have been won by Republicans, many of us are asking, "Why? How?" These are, obviously, two different questions. The answer to the first is more complicated. The answer to the second is simple. The "how" of it is Republicans voting for Democrats. Now this is not unheard of. Most R's have sometimes voted for a D and vice versa. But this is supposed to be a rare exception. If there is a good Republican candidate, Republicans are expected to vote for that candidate. Here's why: Republicans work to get Republicans elected. So one can assume that when there is a Republican candidate on the ticket, other Republicans of all stripes are working hard to get that candidate elected. Young Republicans are working the phones along side old timers. Republicans are donating money thanks to the efforts of other Republicans who are working hard to raise money. Republican families are spending time apart from each other as one member or another gives his or her heart and soul to the campaign. And, at the end of Election Day, if the Republicans have voted for their own in our area, the Republican candidate wins. When this doesn't happen, and Republicans jump off the line to vote for Democrats, we don't win. Very simple. So that is the "how" part. Now to the "why" part.

In 2009 Chris Christie got 2156 votes more than me in Cape May County. The district-wide margin of victory for my closest opponent was 2045. If we hold the Christie votes in Cape May County, we win. (Add in the votes we should have held in Atlantic and Cumberland and the margin only increases). So, "Why?" The reason why is that Jeff Van Drew has become the political boss of the First Legislative District.

Now pay attention. This is not sour grapes. I point out this fact with some level of admiration. It is not an easy thing to become a political boss anywhere, let alone as a Democrat in a Republican district. Yet, there it is. At this point in time, Van Drew is in control of both the Democratic and Republican parties.

But let me digress for one moment. We Republicans have let this happen. Some of us by what we have done. Others but what we have failed to do. But, nevertheless, without the support of Republicans, the Van Drew phenomenon never happens. The path to this point has been an exquisite political dance. We hear talk of "post-partisan" politics. In this impossible utopia, we have put aside our party differences and we dance in circles with each other while rose petals fall from the sky. If you pay very close attention, you will notice that it is the party that wants power that pushes the "post-partisan" drug. "This isn't about Republicans or Democrats. This is about helping people." How many times have you heard that? But here's the problem. In our setting, Republicans have ceded power to the "post-partisan" Democrats and gotten beaten in return. What do our "post-partisan" Democratic friends do once we hand them the election? Do they help us build the Republican grassroots? NO. Do they help us raise money to support Republican candidates in local, county, state and federal elections? NO. Do they conform to the G.O.P's conservative principles of smaller government, lower taxes and greater personal and economic freedom. Hardly. In fact, its just the opposite. The Democrats that we help elect become part of the liberal Democratic establishment. They have to if they want to chair a committee, or get their bills to the floor. And especially if they want all that Camden County cash come election time. "Post-partisan" politics is sounding real good, huh?!

Like I said, I am a student of politics, not a brooding loser. This situation fascinates me. It is a case study in collective denial. Only a master politician could have so thoroughly manipulated this situation to the advantage Van Drew has. He has adeptly coupled his growing political influence with the financial backing of unions and the Camden County Democratic machine, to consolidate power within himself to the point where he controls critical portions of the Republican electorate from his spot within the Democratic party. This is classical machine politics and the machine is nearly complete. You have to give credit where credit is due. Once it is complete, and power is consolidated into the Boss, the machine can chew away for

decades.

Aye here's the rub for the Republicans who have embraced the "post-partisan" kumbaya (there is always a rub): the Democratic machine will not be interested in the "post-partisan" utopia once it has consolidated its power. It will consume Republicans. It will say, "Well, we need this town guys. Gotta have control of this town so that we can all stay in power and keep the money flowing. Just this town." Then next year it says, "Gotta have this town too. Just this town. No big deal. We're all working together, remember?" Until finally, the machine turns on the ones who helped it sell the "post-partisan" idea the hardest. After that it is too late to turn back the tide. The Republicans will put out the call-to-arms only to find its once proud army retired, disenchanted, disengaged and unfamiliar with the wrinkled and dusty banner of the Grand Old Party desperately pulled from its hiding place.

## *The New Jersey Page*



### **CHRIS CHRISTIE WILL BE THE STATE'S MOST UNPOPULAR GOVERNOR - IN THE LEGISLATURE**

Remember those scrubbing bubbles commercials? I picture Chris Christie standing on the Golden Dome at the statehouse in Trenton spraying scrubbing bubbles all over the place. And the little smiling scrubbing bubbles penetrating the corridors of legislative power as the soap scum of government goes swirling down the drain. Too much? Maybe. (Perhaps the lumberjack metaphor is better. Wade into Trenton with a big axe and cut down the waste.) But Christie has said that he will go into the job of Governor without concern for a second term. I believe him.

I don't say I believe him just because I'm a partisan, but because I have had the opportunity to make an assessment of the man. As an Assembly candidate in '09 I was fortunate to get to spend a fair amount of face time with Chris Christie. That has changed of course since, I lost and he won and he is now the Governor and I'm sitting in my kitchen writing this blog. Nevertheless, based on what I saw and heard in private moments with the Governor-Elect, I think Christie really is going to Trenton to clean house. He announced shortly after Election Day that he will veto ANY tax increase. Huevos! Especially in the face of a projected \$8 Billion budget gap. What that means, however, is that Change Gonna Come to Trenton. Maybe.

In order to keep his no-tax promise, Christie will have to be prepared to shut down state government. The Democrats in the legislature will NEVER vote for a budget that has hard choices and shared pain. And most Republicans won't either. Because, unlike Chris Christie, all they are concerned about is winning the next election. Christie has to be prepared to shut down the state government in order to win the battle. Most citizens will find this a good idea, as long as the casinos and park recreation areas aren't shut down in

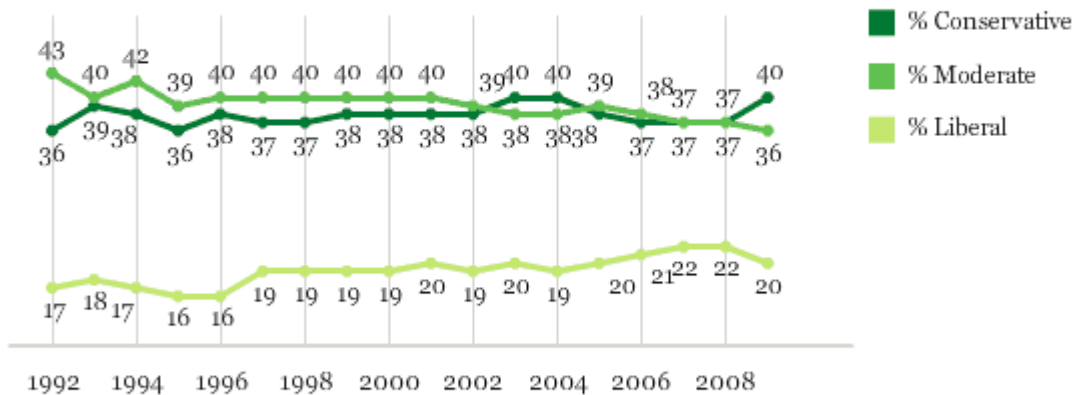
July. So this sets up Christie to become the least popular Governor in the Legislature, ever. A Governor who is prepared to use the power of his office to cut back the size of the state government that is consuming our paychecks like pistachios. A Governor who is apt to tell both the Republican and Democratic leadership in the statehouse that the party is over and the pain has arrived.

I have been thinking about sending the Christies a small gift in congratulations of their winning the election. I've got it. A big Blue Ox. Named Babe.

## National Page

### Political Ideology -- Annual Trends

How would you describe your political views -- [very conservative, conservative, (or) moderate, liberal, (or) very liberal]?



Annual averages, 1992-2009; 2009 data based on January-September surveys

GALLUP®

The Conservative Majority - Gallup October 2009

### TIME TO BE LOUD AND PROUD AGAIN

For a brief period of time we had to speak in hushed tones when we talked about being Conservatives. The state run media made great progress in moving the term "Conservative" toward a negative connotation. Sort of like the term "Liberal." With the election of Barak Obama in 2008, the same media proclaimed the death of Conservatism. Some even went so far as to say that Reagan's maxim, "Government is not the solution to the problem. Government is the problem," had been proven wrong. They opined that the entire movement was dead and that, in fact, government was the solution to every problem. And Obama, Reid and Pelosi set out to prove it.

But a funny thing happened on the way to the Animal Farm. Less than 10 months into Obama's first year, the country once again declared itself a center-right, if not outright Conservative, union. As you can see from the chart above, liberalism is pretty much smoldering on the ash heap of history. Most Americans describe themselves as

**"Conservative." Most of the rest describe themselves as "moderates." Moderates are a fairly conservative bunch who like low taxes and small government, but don't get too worked up about social issues. They tend to want a little more in terms of social programs, but also believe these programs should be a means to the end of moving people back to work, rather than a permanent enslavement of a dependent lower class.**

**And we are experiencing a very interesting phenomenon nationwide: Liberals cannot win unless they package themselves as Conservatives. We saw this in 2006 when they took back Congress by capturing traditionally Conservative districts. We saw this in 2008, when Obama campaigned as a person who would "cut taxes for 95% of Americans." (Still waiting).**

**Well, Liberals have a serious long-term problem. They want to run as Conservatives but govern as Liberals. Unless they find a way to have no more elections (which I am certain they have considered) eventually the electorate will realize they've been hoodwinked.**

**It is entirely possible that 2006-2008 was the last gasp, the death rattle of Liberalism in the United States.**