

Voice of the People, Jun. 20

BY STAFF WRITER

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Giffords' smile

It was wonderful seeing the smile on U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords' face in "Thousands 'like' photos of a smiling Giffords" (News, June 13). I was one of the thousands who "like" photos of a smiling Giffords! Thank you for sharing the good news. She's a beautiful person who is loved by many.

— *Ljubinka Milenkovic-Valesh, Riverside*

Venting feelings

Once upon a time, there was a large group of people called the middle class. They had good-paying jobs with great benefits and faithfully paid their taxes. Life was good for them. But lo and behold, along came a monster called Mr. Greed. The first thing he did was persuade large corporations to close their plants and move them overseas to increase their profits.

He then rounded up some buddies of his called lobbyists, and directed them to persuade Congress to pass laws that would favor the wealthy and large corporations. He told them that Congress had one weakness — campaign money. The middle class was shrinking and its members were about to lose their American dreams. Something had to be done.

Along came a savior called Mr. Solution. He directed the middle class to go to a website called congress.org. From there members of the middle class can email all 535 members of Congress and vent their feelings.

It's like having a million-man march without having to go to Washington. And it doesn't cost a penny. And besides, we all know that pushing the lever in the voting booth does not work!

— *Richard Rockstraw, Chesterton, Ind.*

Hoping for one term

This is in response to "Freshmen reflect on 1st 6 months in Congress; Illinois' Republican lawmakers share thoughts on their votes, priorities, impressions, successes and frustrations" (News, June 16). As all five of the Illinois freshmen GOP congressmen not only voted to support a budget that transfers yet more wealth into the hands of the rich from the middle class, grows the national debt and devastates Medicare, but also agree to play chicken with the global economy over raising the debt ceiling, all five need to be sent packing by the voters in 2012.

— *Michael E. Gaughan, Homewood*

GOP flip-floppers

I've long thought of the far right of the Republican Party not as conservatives but as preservatives, the stuff that extends the shelf life of packaged goods — and politicians — but really isn't good for you. After reading your piece on flip-floppers like Tim Pawlenty, Mitt Romney and Jon Huntsman ("For GOP hopefuls, back, forth, right; Conservative views key for '12 contenders," News, June 13), it looks like the GOP is also the party of artificial preservatives.

— *Joseph Flynn, Springfield*

It's about jobs

It has been nearly three years since the economy collapsed and there are more than 16 million unemployed people who will not be voting for Barack Obama. Many of the unemployed are too young for Medicare or to file for Social Security and did not work their entire lives to lose their jobs and their homes. These same people and their children saved or went into debt to provide an education and training for jobs they may never hold.

The unemployed include people from their 20s to the 60s who cannot wait years more for there to be an intensive job creation and penalties on companies that send jobs overseas. Obama was wrong to set health care as a higher priority than jobs. Foreclosures, little job increase and unemployment show that Obama has not served the American people. Had millions more returned to work, there would have been fewer foreclosures and the housing sector would have revived.

Unless the unemployment rate dives by next year, Obama will be a one-term president.

— *Judith Arkes, Chicago*

Enforce phone law

If Mayor Rahm Emanuel wants to help fix the budget and make us all safer, he should hire a special force in unmarked vehicles to drive the city and write tickets to drivers who use their cell phones to talk and text while threatening all of our lives each and every day. This practice has become an epidemic. There is no shortage of abusers. They are literally in every other car on the road. Each officer would be able to cover his or her own expense for the year within the first month. Let's enforce this law and raise some money for our very fine city,

which is not very safe anymore. It will be sure to save lives.

— *Marc Brown, Chicago*

Climate concerns

Apparently Tribune columnist Steve Chapman doesn't appreciate the incalculable difference between objectively measuring air and water cleanliness and objectively measuring climate change ("Republicans vs. the environment; Ignoring science and forgetting their history," Commentary, June 16). The former is very, very precise whereas the latter is very anecdotal.

Assuming you agree with the above, is there evidence of global warming? Yes. Is that evidence objectively attributable to human activity and does it warrant spending trillions to try to stop it? (Emphasis on the word "try," as there is absolutely no evidence global-warming believers know how to control Earth's climate.)

Also, at the risk of pointing out the obvious, it has been proven scientifically that Earth's geological past has many, many more years of cold periods than warm periods and from a technology standpoint, it is far easier to manage encroaching water than it is to manage encroaching ice. Just ask the folks who were stranded on Lake Shore Drive for hours and hours during last year's major winter storm.

If I were a climatologist, I'd worry a lot more about ice than water.

— *Phil Adams, Lincolnshire*

GOP denial

Steve Chapman's column "Republicans vs. the environment" is a whisper of hope. Cracks are beginning to appear in the great wall of Republican denial. Mitt Romney has taken his stand on the side of science; he thinks that's safe now. The Cato Institute is coming around; the Vatican has issued a lengthy scientific report warning of "serious and potentially irreversible impacts of global warming."

Let's not be panicked by the message but thankful for the messengers. The times are changing; people are waking; heads are emerging from sand.

As Chapman says, "... at some point, voters will conclude that global warming and other environmental problems demand solutions. And Republicans will be left wondering why they didn't come up with any."

— *Jay Mulberry, Chicago*

Midwest forecast

Please, Chicagoans, stop complaining about the weather! We do not have tsunamis, earthquakes, hurricanes or forest fires in our beautiful Midwest. No more whining!

— *Carole Bogaard, Oak Lawn*

Glamorous memories

The June 13 obituary "Vonda Urban: 1918-2011; A teacher of mambo, spirituality" caught my eye because she instantly made me think of a next-door neighbor from my childhood on the North Side of Chicago. As I continued to read, I was more and more convinced that it could be the same glamorous creature who enthralled my little girlfriends and me when we were around 6 or 7 years old. Then the maracas, the musician husband, the chic chignon ... but the clincher was her husband's name, Galen Williams.

How could I ever forget Vonda and Galen?

They moved into the second floor of the two-flat next to our house and intrigued the neighborhood with their marimba and maraca practice sessions, with notes wafting down the block. Somehow Vonda befriended the next-door kids and I have vivid memories of inspecting their xylophone-like contraption and watching her put on her makeup one afternoon, painting on her eyebrows and applying red lipstick and, of course, perfecting the chic chignon. Inexplicably she one day gave me a pound of ground beef to take to my grandmother, who pronounced it "too finely ground."

She was every bit the glamorous and lovely person portrayed in the obit and I'm so happy to have come across it. That's why I love newspapers.

You are truly the glue that binds the community together, not just in the present but through the decades.

— *Renee Munro, Chicago*

Improved Tribune

I love, love your new Tribune. I have read this paper since the age of 13, when I got my own subscription at my home in Michigan. I am a Chicago resident now, and I enjoy having the newspaper in my hand along with my morning coffee and the "Today" show. Reading it online is just not as satisfying. Thank you for the new, improved Tribune. I love it.

— *Edwyn Jae Jenkins, Chicago*

Better Tribune

For a moment there I was considering canceling my Chicago Tribune subscription because the paper had minimal content and substance.

Then on Wednesday, I flipped the redesigned pages with a big grin. Thank you.

— *Marianna Wagner, Hinsdale*

New format

The new format is amazing. Thanks for appealing to those of us who love the newspaper. I have been a reader for almost 30 years (and I am only 43!).

— *Laura Landers, Morris, Ill.*