



Off to the races: DFL and GOP endorsements for the midterms

By Max Sparber | Monday, April 12, 2010

The midterm elections are ramping up, and the Republicans are already treating this as though wins on their part will demonstrate a mass amaritude for the policies of President Obama. An example: As the [Washington Post points out](#), it was a big talking point at the Southern Republican Leadership Conference this past weekend. Now, **the truth is, Democrats are probably going to lose some seats** — as [Wikipedia puts it](#), "over the past 17 midterm elections, the president's party has lost an average 28 seats in the House, and an average 4 seats in the Senate." And sometimes there is an even bigger shift — you may remember that midway through Bill Clinton's first term, the Democrats lost 54 seats, prompting the Republican Party to declare that they now had a "Contract with America," which included a number of proposals to limit government spending, which is probably worth mentioning as we are likely to hear similar proposals as we move toward these next elections. It may also be worth remembering that, according to [Edward H. Crane of the Libertarian CATO Institute](#), "the combined budgets of the 95 major programs that the Contract with America promised to eliminate have increased by 13%."

So, **as of this weekend, we have local endorsements for the midterm election**, and the Associated Press tells us who got what. [On the DFL side](#), Jim Meffert (his [web page](#)) was endorsed in the 3rd District, which is currently represented by Republican Erik Paulsen (his [web page](#)), who is completing his freshman term. The DFL also endorsed [Dan Powers](#) in the 2nd District, currently represented by Republican [John Kline](#), who has represented the district for four terms.



The GOP, in the meanwhile, endorsed [Chip Cravaack](#) for the 8th District, currently represented by Democrat [Jim Oberstar](#), who's a hard man to unseat, having been re-elected 16 times. The GOP also endorsed [Lee Byberg](#) in the 7th District, where Democrat [Collin Peterson](#) has been in office since 1991.

Finally, they endorsed a **Pentecostal minster** named [Joel Demos](#) (**this seems to be an example of his preaching**) in the 5th District, which Democrat [Keith Ellison](#) has represented since 2007, and

where a Republican hasn't been elected since 1963; should the Republicans take any of these seats, they might be able to make a case that the votes represent dissatisfaction with Obama, rather than the typical shifting of seats that occurs in these elections. Daily Glean's prediction: The GOP will not take any of these seats but will nonetheless claim voter dissatisfaction with Obama. We just have a hunch.

The fight for these seats should be interesting but, then, elections are always interesting, in part because they're a pretty expensive undertaking. **For instance, look at the web pages of the various endorsed candidates — from the looks of them, they must have cost tens of dollars!** One can only imagine the photo booth money that Demos must have shelled out for his [website portrait](#), although he seemed to demonstrate his thriftiness by not wasting money on expensive hair-combing treatments. And Collin Peterson must be getting some sort of deal on his web page in which the more hyperlinks he includes on the front page, the less it costs him, which might explain why he has gone with the smallest font size visible to the naked eye — any smaller and we would need a jeweler's loupe to discover that, for instance, in general **Peterson liked the president's State of the Union address**, which we might not have guessed otherwise.

There's a line in HBO's "The Wire" in which a detective explains that during policework, if you follow drugs, you find drug dealers and users, but if you follow the money, you don't know where you'll go — in fact, a lot of it was going into the pockets of politicians. Tracking the money used to be the sort of thing that journalists excelled at, but tracking money costs money, because you have to pay a reporter to just sit in a room and go through page after page after page of public documents and chase down any names that looked interesting — a **Stringer Bell**, as an example. And it's worth knowing, because money given to politicians is rarely a gift, but more often a debt, and it's useful to know who owes what to whom and why. Alas, most newspapers don't have those sort of resources anymore, so all they can do is report, for instance, that **Gov. Tim Pawlenty's PAC has raised more than a half-million dollars since Jan. 1** — **this according to the AP**. This is not to pick on Pawlenty — his is just the latest fundraising story. We at the Glean would be curious to discover where every candidate, whatever stripe, gets his or her money. We don't expect to find a drug dealer at the other end, as in "The Wire," but it's useful to know who is asking what from whom. **At least the AP has a long enough memory to know what Pawlenty's PAC pulled in this time last year: \$1.3 million. It doesn't speculate on why he has raised less than half of what he did last year, and that also seems like a question worth exploring.**

Speaking of money, let's talk about Tom Petters. CBS News has a frankly ridiculous-looking (albeit probably expensive) web page called CRIMESIDER — we don't know if we're required to print that word in all caps, but we imagine somebody shouting it in a gruff voice, so it doesn't look right lowercased. **It offers up the news** about Petter that broke last Thursday — that **the disgraced former Polaroid and Sun Country Airlines owner has been sentenced to 50 years for his part in a \$3.7 billion Ponzi scheme** ("Can't Beat Bernie Madoff," they note with what sounds like disappointment).

CRIMESIDER's story is from the AP — we merely picked it because its presentation tickled us — but for the local color, we recommend the report filed on her blog by **WCCO's Esme Murphy**, who provides a sort of literary descriptive quality uncommon on television news: **"The weird**

thing was that Tom Petters looked the same," Murphy tells us. "He was wearing an expensive suit, certainly one of those ones he owned in his prior life ... I could see him at the sentencing yesterday as the lawyers were talking, closing his eyes slightly for a few seconds. Was he transporting himself to the world that was once his?"

Murphy has also been following the case of Denny Hecker — [he hugged her](#) when he got out of jail, which may be one of the few moments of joy the deposed auto magnate has expressed in the past six months. And his case has more twists and turns than a year's worth of CRIMESIDER stories. As an example, **Hecker's girlfriend, Christi Rowan, was charged with fraud Friday in connection with Hecker's bankruptcy case**, as [MaryJo Webster of the Pioneer Press reports](#) — Rowan allegedly lied about her income on an application to buy a Land Rover.

In sports: It's Target Field mania in the local press. [Martin Moylan of Minnesota Public Radio](#) looks into the finances of the stadium, pointing out that the Twin stand to make a lot more money, but it's also going to cost them a lot more money. [FOX9 reports](#) that Minneapolis Mayor R.T Rybak is encouraging locals to wear Twins outfits to work to support the team's home opener at the stadium. And Downtown Journal offers a comprehensive timeline of the development of the stadium, titled [HOW WE GOT HERE](#).

Come to think of it, that title doesn't look right in all caps.

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