



Notes from the High Chair

Fellow Summit County Republicans:

I want to start a Summit County GOP newsletter to keep all our wonderful delegates, precinct officials, committee members and interested parties apprised of what your Executive Committee is thinking and doing. I struggled with what to call it, and my lovely, talented and long-suffering wife suggested combining my position as Chairman with my personality of a two-year-old and call it "Notes from the High Chair" (pun and double entendre intended, of course).

I thought it appropriate for me to share my observations of, and deductions drawn from, the 2021 Organizing Convention held on May 1, 2021 at the Maverick Center. Sort of a "hot wash" or "after action report".

Here are my biggest takeaways:

1. The May 1 Convention likely marked a tipping point in the lifecycle of our State Party. The torch was passed to a much younger group of new leaders. Our new Chair, Carson Jorgensen, is 32, Jordan Hess, Vice-Chair, and Mike Bird, Treasurer, are both 33, while Olivia Horlacher, Secretary, is 29. One of the most frequent discussions we have had as an Executive Committee is the need to reach younger voters. One of our first acts after our election was to create an Outreach Committee to formulate and execute strategies for reaching out to younger people through events, the schools, and social media. I agree with Chairman Jorgensen when he says the youth of our state leadership will help us as they seek to connect with younger voters.
2. The Utah Establishment GOP was handed a setback. I do not think it can be understated that while Donald J. Trump is no longer our president, his brand of "Anti-Swamp" populism lives on in our Party. In my opinion that is much to our benefit. Stuart Peay, Austin Cox and sitting Secretary, Kendra Seeley were all endorsed by Spencer Cox and the GOP "Good Ole Boys". This might just be a break from the old "who's next" process by which state level influencers, candidate and elected officials are produced in our state, but it needs our support if it is to be a real change and not just a temporary deviation.
3. We are not a divided Party. Many messages from the stage focused on the message of unity and how we cannot survive as a house divided. We were told that we should be the party of principle, not personality.

Of course, the media will make out the booing of Mitt Romney and the close loss of Proposition #1 to censure him (798-711) as evidence of a fracture, but my witness of the reactions of the over 2100 delegates to both situations tells me a different story. Senator Romney was soundly booed by the entire hall, so I must assume the censure vote outcome means that while most there had problems with the Senator's actions on some level Romney's actions at least half of

the delegates bought into the "unity" message put forward by leaders in Party and the state Government. Senator Romney was clear in his speech that while he agreed with many of Trump's policies, he just did not like the guy (that is not a direct quote, but it is the essence of Romney's excuse). Personally, I cannot reconcile the principle over personality rhetoric in Senator Romney's case. It would seem if the Senator honestly believed in principle over personality, he would disregard his personal dislikes and not supported bogus and politically motivated impeachments – as he did TWICE.

I am all for unity - it is a necessity, but do not shove someone in front of me who decided to go against the wishes of his constituents and then tell us we are the ones who must suck it up to keep the peace. Perhaps, if our state leadership and our DC legislative team wanted more party unity, members of those teams should stop doing divisive things. It occurs to me there is a confusion in terms. What the old guard wants is subservience, not unity. Subservience and unity are markedly different concepts, the former is one way, the latter a two-way street. The former enslaves people, the latter bestows power upon them.

4. While we may not be a divided party, we still have large variations in approaches and definitions of the word "principle". In my view, the presentation from Congressman John Curtis was prima facie evidence of this.

Curtis, representing the people of the Third Congressional District could not be with us, he was at a "legislative retreat", but he sent two of his minions to brag about how he is a consensus builder and gets 97% support for his bills from Democrats in the House. Curtis' presentation was met with groans from the crowd, clearly there is a large number of people who are not happy with Congressman Curtis' tendency to play the "Republican In Name Only" role when he wants to "get things done". In my opinion, just getting things done is a false goal, getting the RIGHT things done is not. If Congressman Curtis is truly getting 97% support from Democrats, he is giving up waaaaay too much to reach agreement. I have negotiated business deals for the better part of a quarter century, I can tell you one thing – if agreement is your primary goal and winning for your side is secondary, the fastest way to agreement is to give your opponent everything he wants. It is a way to win and lose at the same time. I learned a long time ago that to win a negotiation, you must be prepared to lose, to get up and walk away.

5. What a great Convention it was! Our county was strongly represented by our delegates and there was a huge amount of energy across the entire venue. Thanks go to Karen Ballash, our cat-herding Vice Chair, the Regional Chairs, and the other dedicated members of the Committee, past and present. Tal, Jennifer, Kristen, Sue, Dawn and Carlos provided tremendous amounts of help, without them, we would not have done as well as we did.

If I may take a Point of Personal Privilege (something heard often at the Convention yesterday), I want to share a bit of personal growth coming from a conversation I had at the Convention, one that led to a bit of epiphany. I will not identify the person with whom I had the conversation because I do not have her permission and I want to respect her confidentiality, but when she reads this, she will know who she is.

As several of us were chatting before the proceedings began, the conversation turned to helping people and a story was related about how there was a mental health patient who seldom, if ever, got out of

bed or left his room. My partner in the conversation related how she had asked him to lunch to get him reengaged in life and he continually deferred until she asked him this simple question – “What do you need? What is it you need to get up and go to lunch with me?”

As it turned out, the gentleman did not own a pair of shoes.

That was it. He was embarrassed to tell people that he did not have shoes and as a result, he had isolated himself to his room and his bed.

The heroine of our story brought him a pair of her husband’s old military boots. Upon her arrival at the facility, the staff asked her what she had said to the patient because for the first time since he arrived, he had awoken on his own, showered and shaved without assistance, gotten dressed without help and was sitting on his bed, fully dressed and ready to go.

The miracle of that simple question changed a man’s life. My conversation partner went on to tell that soon afterward, he left the facility, moved to another state, got a job to support himself and returned to a life in the world.

It would seem remarkable that no one ever noticed the fact that the single missing variable in this life’s equation was a pair of shoes, but that oversight is emblematic of how we tend to look for complicated answers to simple questions. The more complicated we assume the answers to be, the less we feel compelled to find the answers.

But isn’t “What do you need?” the question we should be asking of people who are not Republicans? Shouldn’t we be asking them what is it they need to get up and come join us?

The answer is likely to be a whole lot less complicated than we think.

We, as a Party and an ideology, are in a struggle for survival. Utah is the fastest growing state in the USA, and as we continue to receive refugees from blue states who bring with them the beliefs which caused the environments from which they are fleeing, conservatives and Republicans are headed toward the Endangered Species list if we do not get to work. From new neighbors, teens approaching adulthood, minority groups trapped in the statist machine thinking of inferiority, we need to ask, “What do you need?”

We need to communicate to them that when they are told government can give them what they need, that is a false promise because that “gift” always comes with strings.

Political demographics predict our future and as the old, “Each one, teach one” adage goes, it is each of our jobs to talk to our new neighbors and friends about what being a Republican truly means, that we are not the “selfish” Party or the Party of racism, bigotry, and any other “isms”.

What do you need?

Simple and powerful, it is an interesting question, don’t you think?

Until the next time, may God continue to bless the people of Summit County, the Great State of Utah, and these United States of America!

Mike

