

Upbeat New Jersey: How a Republican faces February



I am one Republican, a 75-year-old GrandMama and political junkie, having worked for the GOP since 1944, who finds facing this February unusually challenging. But why, you say, should a Republican face the shortest month of the year any differently than a Democrat?

Certainly Groundhog Day, like Valentine's Day, is a nonpartisan event. Inclement weather wreaks havoc on people irrespective of party. First, significant Republican birthdays occur in February: Ronald Reagan's centennial on Feb. 4 and Abe Lincoln's on the 12th.

Assemblyman Jay Webber, R-Morris, of Morris Plains, hosted the sold-out eighth New Jersey Reagan Day 2011, attended by Michael Reagan, on Feb. 4 at the Sheraton Hotel in Parsippany.

Republicans of the Chathams gathered at Café Beethoven to toast Old Abe, while the Morris County Women's Republican Club will party at George and Martha's in Morristown on Friday. Some counties hold traditional Lincoln Day dinners.

Second, is the approach to hot-button items like health care and the Middle East.

February is American Heart Month. According to the American Heart Association, "cardiovascular diseases, including stroke, are our nation's number-one killer." In 1963, Congress passed a resolution requiring the President to so proclaim February each year. Laura Bush made one of her main objectives the combating of heart disease in women.

A major difference between Republicans and Democrats on health care issues is individual responsibility versus the Nanny State. As a Republican, I believe that basically I am responsible for my health. Last week I had a required mammogram even though no one reminded me.

It is up to me to do daily the exercises required after breaking my arm more than a year ago. I applaud the advice available on the Internet, like the Mental Health Minute offered by **NewBridge Services**, based in Pequannock Township, advocating the value of exercising.

Under the existing health care system, our area has some of the best heart disease treatment centers - St. Barnabas Medical Center and Morristown Memorial and Overlook hospitals. My entrepreneurial pharmacy, Liberty Drug in Chatham, is sponsoring a seminar on Heart Disease Prevention Awareness.

The biggest example of the Nanny State is ObamaCare, requiring all Americans to have health insurance. Hopefully the Supreme Court will eventually negate this provision. People should have the right to self-insure or not insure. Many Democratic health care plans not only infringe on personal freedom, but also cost tons of taxpayer dollars.

Finally, this February the winds of change are sweeping through the Middle East, affecting everyone. I have been glued to CNN and Fox as the extremely troubling situation in Egypt unfolds. John Bolton, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations under President George Bush, cautions us against pontificating about unfamiliar conditions.

Republicans fear that President Obama is clueless about the Middle East and Egypt in particular. He was elected because of the financial crisis in the U.S., not for his foreign policy prowess.

In contrast, Bush made his vision for democracy in the Middle East crystal-clear. As the greatest democracy in the world, the U.S. should lead the clarion call and not become, like Obama, mired in the mush of Middle East politics or send mixed signals.

Some Republicans believe Obama paid as much attention to the Super Bowl and preparing for his re-election as he did to rioting in Cairo. February is not over. Presidents' Weekend and school vacations provide opportunities to escape. Although Republicans and Democrats worry differently about the big problems, we agree on the desirability of a February thaw.

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