

Red or blue or Senator Brown?

By Don Lein

There was what some have characterized as a pivotal election that took place in Massachusetts to fill the seat of the legendary Ted Kennedy. The scion of that magical name was a liberal icon who had come a long way from the night of July 18, 1969 when a frightened young Senator left a companion to drown in a sinking car while he made a hurried call to the family attorney, Burke Marshall, to give him advice how to handle this situation. Burke's words must have been magical, because, not only did he escape punishment most drivers would have suffered and the political Elba that the crime deserved, he arose like the proverbial phoenix to originate health and education bills that would change America. Initially the plan that would later be dubbed "Obamacare" was attributed to Kennedy or, at least his name was used by others championing the bill.

Up until a few weeks before the election the outcome of the Massachusetts election was assured. Martha Coakley was safely ahead in the polls and even though she said a few weird things, in a local election those comments are largely overlooked. Unfortunately, she became a surrogate over the last few weeks for actions in Washington over which she had no control. Earlier the one-party

rule in Washington had dismissed with condescension the tea parties and town halls of earlier the previous year as redneck excesses. Since Republicans were largely against Obamacare, the Democrats decided they didn't need/want bipartisanship and rushed through, almost literally overnight, bills in excess of a thousand pages that no one had read or analyzed.

It was not until the Senate began to develop their bill that the excesses became publicly evident. Mary Landrieux of Louisiana indicated she had some problems with the bill and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid executed what has been characterized as the second Louisiana Purchase in allowing certain exceptions to the bill in Louisiana in exchange for her vote of support. This was to be followed by a similar capitulation to Ben Nelson of Nebraska. The final straw in this obeisance to special interests came when the labor bosses walked out of the White House with a 5 year exemption from the "Cadillac" health insurance tax which was being imposed on 92 percent of the private-

sector workers who are not unionized. Scott Brown, being no idiot, made killing Obamacare the keystone of his campaign. He also had on his agenda to stop Mirandizing terrorists; cut, not

their vote was intended to stop Obamacare.

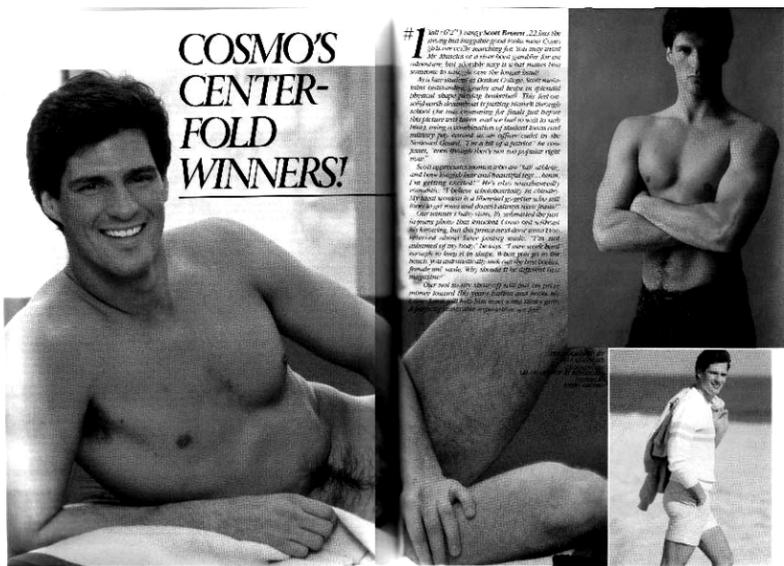
As Senator Birch Bayh (Dem, IN) indicated "If you lose Massachusetts and that's not a wake up call – there's no hope of waking up."

What is the message for state and local politicians? The state with one party in power since the Civil War has so many dysfunctional departments with political cronies/contributors, one hardly knows where to begin. Perhaps, just a move toward transparency and accountability, maybe in Departments such as Transportation would be a step in the right direction. Locally, if ideology is to trump what most voters

want or if the elected officials are perceived as being arrogant or out of touch, then the signs that proliferated in Cary during the last election will be best sellers here – "Re-Elect No One"

Don Lein is a regular contributor to Chatham County Line. A Chatham resident, he is involved in a variety of civic organizations.

OPINION



The wacky world of politics takes an odd turn with the election of Scott Brown, Massachusetts's new Republican senator.

raise taxes and no more back room deals with special interests (see no tort reform to pay off the Lawyers lobby, sweetheart deals for unions, taxpayer money for community groups, such as ACORN, etc., etc.). He was right on target – a Rasmussen poll indicated 56 percent of Massachusetts voters called health care their top issue. Another poll had 78 percent of Brown voters saying

SAM'S

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Then I got lucky. The last time I went to Sam's in Cary it was gone! I wrote down the directions to the "new and improved" store and managed to find it buried in some massive new development in Cary, or

Morrisville, I'm still not sure where I was. To get home I followed the sun, heading West and South until I found something familiar. It took me over an hour. I don't want to know how to get back.

But it did the trick. The new mega-Sam's was behind a mega-Walmart! To some a dream come true, to me a nightmare I can't seem to wake up from.

Inside the cavernous store it hit me, that same smell of plastic, melted petroleum, new things, more new things, residual odors from the inside of cargo planes shuttling back and forth from the Third World to Sam's World. And then, the same empty, impersonal shopping experience. And the size of everything! Can we really consume all this, and more, more, more?

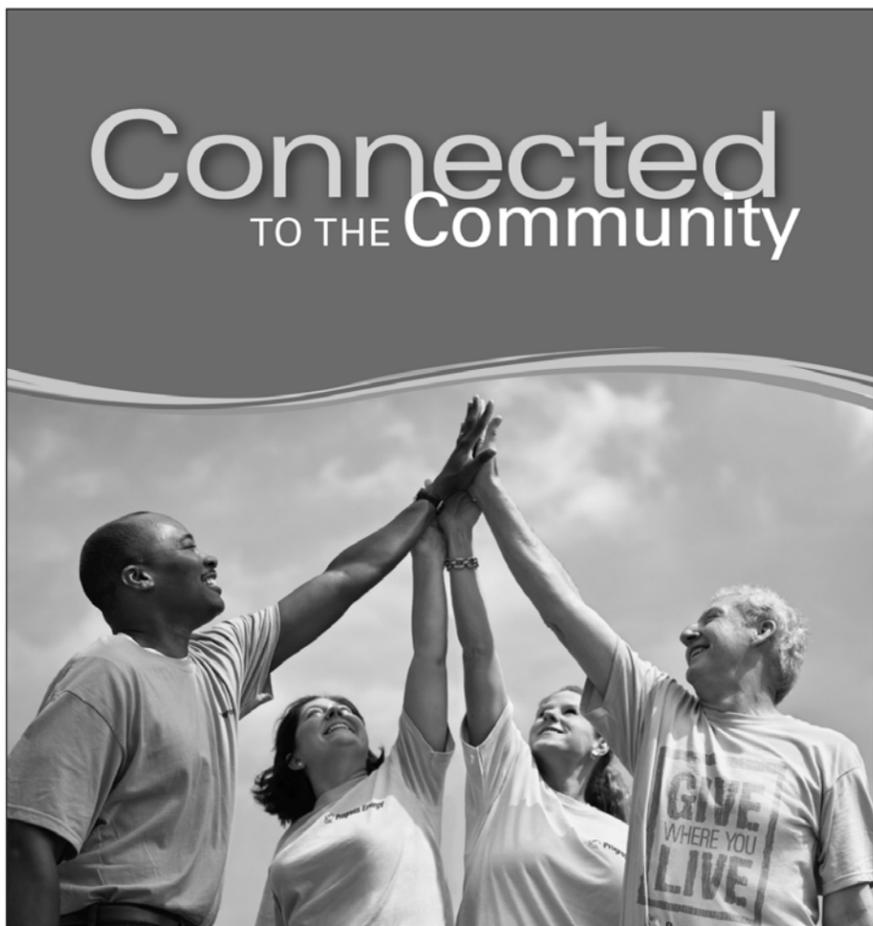
I was done.

So, no, I won't be sending back my membership renewal. I'm never going back. And maybe in time the memories of that smell, that smell of a decaying society, will stop haunting me.

I still need a source of large paper cups. Maybe my supplier for compostable hot cups could fix me up with some cold cups at a reasonable price, and I'm over my addiction to stockpiling razor blades.

The cord is cut, and I feel almost reborn.

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