

Fifth District Meeting: Orchestration worthy of Bach or Beethoven

This is my personal account of the Republican Congressional Fifth District meeting in Concord, VA. On Sunday, December 7th. As this is considered a public meeting, the names of the innocent, or in some cases the not so innocent, have not been changed. For my potential detractors, who were either observers or participants, and would potentially choose to challenge the veracity of my statements, I want you to know that I have an audio recording of the “symphony”.

The music began at 11:40 p.m., Sunday November 30th, when Chairman Jon Berkley issued a “Call” for a meeting of the Committee for Sunday, December 7th at 3:00 p.m. Included in the “Call” was the agenda which included, under the heading of old business, “10.a. - Consideration of issues in Fauquier County Unit Committee” and, “10.b. - Consideration of issues in Campbell County Unit Committee”. As these statements were pretty vague, various members of the Committee contacted Chairman Berkley for more information in order to know what we were to “consider”. These requests went unanswered all week, so many “non-musicians” went to the meeting clueless about what we were to experience.

The meeting began promptly and curiously, Chairman Berkley felt compelled to name the biggest ex-marine as the Sargent-at-Arms, Chairman Will Rodgers of Brunswick Co. Will gave a speech including remembering Pearl Harbor and then said “he would not put up with infighting by those who were in it for personal political gain, and assured the members, those would be dealt with aggressively. I was sitting next to him, so I quietly leaned over and asked, “How will you judge peoples intent?” He almost had to spring into action early as Diana Shores, Chair of Cumberland County, was thrown out of the building by Chairman Berkley and his complicit Parliamentarian for asking too many questions and requesting a point of order. Musical score- one vote down. Additionally, State Central Committee member, Peyton Knight’s proxy was disallowed, (and upheld by the Parliamentarian) by the Berkley appointed Credentials Committee because Knight was not listed by The Fauquier Unit as a member. As a reminder, Knight was slated off his Committee at their spring Canvas, the same Canvas which was nullified by the SCC in August. A side note, Berkley still recognizes that unit, contrary to the ruling of SCC, General Counsel and The RPV party plan. Musical score- two votes down.

The missing or lost sheets of the musical score, referenced in my second paragraph, miraculously appeared as Bill Harvill, Chair of Madison County, played a resounding second fiddle extolling the virtues of the nullified Fauquier Unit. The people behind this unit, non-sanctioned by the RPV, are still attempting to have their way in a suit against the RPV. By the way, the suit against Les Williams, former chair and SCC re-instated chair of Campbell County, was summarily dismissed with prejudice. Harvill’s solo was followed by a resounding crescendo, by Tom Warren, husband of Sandra Warren the District Secretary, as a proxy for Betsy Young, Chair of Danville. Tom was able to call forth rain and hail over the speechless Les Williams. I say speechless because he was not notified in advance that he was going to have his Committee dissolved by the actions of the Fifth District Committee. I say speechless because he was given maybe a grand total of 5 minutes to address the serious allegations, and was continually cut-off by either the Parliamentarian or Berkley. Frankly, he was barely allowed to string three sentences together. Right on cue, a saxophone was then handed to Josh Puccio, recent campaign manager for Robert Hurt, who skillfully read the score and blew soft notes of campaign disengagement toward Les Williams. The crowd was breathless with this performance as the vague notes wafted about, circled in

the air, and eventually became indiscernible as inquiries were summarily brushed aside, and the notes fell to the ground. And so did Les Williams' chances of prevailing.

Next came a familiar refrain to members who had previously experienced these Fifth District Meetings. Short solos were permitted by Berkley favored musicians, his esteemed John (Slater) Ferguson, Neal Vener and Gene Smith. Those accustomed to Berkley performances were surprised by the absence of his favorite wind-pipe, Jim White. However, when I questioned Berkley after the meeting, asking who wrote the scores on Fauquier and Campbell, he at first said the Executive Committee. I then queried who on the Executive Committee? Promptly, off key and off script, in a clear staccato, "well, Jim White". Hmm. As far as I know, Jim White does not serve in the choir, was not elected to serve in the choir, so why was he chosen to compose the score? Earlier, during a break, I walked over and asked the same question of fiddle player Harvill. His answer was not discernable. However, today Harvill emailed me a short phrase, "1st District Committee oversaw". I talked with an informed Republican Fauquier person today and he was sure that Chairman Herr had not done the report. It is too late in the evening to speak with Herr to confirm with him either way, but I will soon. So who composed the reports? And why have the Committee members not received written copies as promised by Berkley at yesterday's meeting?

Throughout "the performance", at various times, short soliloquies by the RPV General Counsel Pat McSweeney were attempted to be read by various non-musicians. Fearing a dilution to the overall theme of the music, Berkley and Parliamentarian co-conductor, immediately stopped these non-sanctioned artists. A motion to deem Campbell County **non-functional** was passed by a slim margin of 17 yeas to 15 nays. Williams was then removed as Chairman. Remember the two discarded voters above? Coincidence? Intentional?

Maestro Berkley then appointed Carl Weiser as temporary chairman and personally appointed 18 people to the Campbell unit, none of whom were present to experience this astounding performance. In case you are curious, Weiser who is not a member of CCRC, supported John (Slater) Ferguson at the nullified March mass meeting, and authored Facebook posts advocating defeat of three Republican candidates for Board of Supervisors in 2013. Berkley claimed to be establishing a neutral Chairman and Committee. Really? And the name Gene Smith? He was "elected", but really I should say selected (as no one ran to oppose him) to be a new vice chair of the Fifth, with voting rights. Smith has not been a member of CCRC for over a year. General Counsel ruling was that more vice chairs could only be accomplished through first changing the by-laws, which was not done. That did not stop Berkley, did it?

A question keeps nagging me: "who is the real Composer and Conductor of this music blaring over the Fifth?" This will be revealed as more of the "notes" see the light of day.....

Ed Yensho- Chairman

Greene County Republican Committee