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May 8, 2013

The Write Stuff

Dear [[%1|Friend]],

If you're new to this newsletter, welcome. We're still smoothing out the transition to a new e-mail server, and I'm sorry if you missed some issues. To catch up on my candidacy for Colorado State Representative in House District 2, please visit www.owenperkins.org. To unsubscribe from my e-mails, [please click here](#).

Twelve years ago, I had the opportunity to interview **President Jimmy Carter** when he was in Colorado on a President's Day ski weekend with a bunch of inner-city children from Atlanta. I think we were supposed to have five minutes together, but it was such an enjoyable conversation, that we stretched it out to about 25 minutes.

Later that day, Jimmy and Rosalyn Carter hosted a Town Hall Meeting, and since it was February of 2001, the topic of the Florida recount in the 2000 election came up. Though the Carter Center had monitored six elections around the world in the previous year, most of us were surprised at President Carter's take on elections here at home.

"If the United States asked The Carter Center to come in and monitor the election, we would not come in, because the United States' laws do not contribute to an honest and unbiased election," Carter said.

[Click here to access my interview with President Carter](#)

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UPCOMING EVENTS

- ★ [Deadline to Guarantee "Book of Mormon" Tickets, Thursday, May 9th at 10 p.m.](#)
- ★ [Congresswoman Diana DeGette's Annual Labor Happy Hour - Tavern Uptown - 538 E. 17th Ave. Parkway in Denver, Monday, May 13th from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.](#)
- ★ [House District 2 Democrats Monthly Meeting - Friends Meeting House, 2280 S. Columbine in Denver, Saturday, May 18 at 9 a.m.](#)

[and associated stories from his trip to Colorado.](#)

Carter made three points that have stuck with me to this day and inform my approach to politics and elections. First, he said, The Carter Center would not accept elections in a foreign country where **so much of the outcome is dependent on the huge sums of money contributed to campaigns**, and the subsequent sense of *quid pro quo* left in the wake of elections.

American politics has been steadily devolving to the point that we saw just this sort of affront to American values that the recent votes in Washington on background checks for gun purchases highlighted, when special interest groups swayed our elected officials to vote against the will of 90% of the American public. Simply staggering.

State House races in Denver are obviously on another scale, but those of us who are passionate in our belief that **the public interest should supercede the special interests** are trying to do something about it. As a candidate, I've joined with seven sitting legislators among Colorado's 100 state representatives and senators to reject special interest money from Political Action Committees (PACs) and Small Donor Committees (SDCs).

Thanks to Senators Irene Aguilar, Pat Steadman, and Michael Johnston, Representatives Lois Court, Dan Pabon, Janak Joshi, and Jovan Melton, Colorado Congressmen Jared Polis and Congressional candidate Andrew Romanoff for standing strong in the belief that individuals are at the heart of the issues at play in a legislative session, that individual human voices should not be drowned out by big money when it comes to the focus of an elected official's concerns, and that as much as people try to convince voters and officials that money talks, it is not speech and it can and should be regulated in the context of elections and campaign finance.

It's not just for alliteration that my campaign committee is called "People for Perkins." I hope that name serves as a flashing neon sign - solar-powered, of course - to remind anyone who needs it that this campaign's priorities are rooted in people, and its ethics are shaped by grassroots democracy.

I didn't forget Carter's other two points. His Carter

★*How the West was Won: Rockies vs. D-backs Fundraiser - Coors Field, Monday, May 20th at 6:40 p.m.*

★*Owen's Birthday Bash at The Bonnet - Blue Bonnet Cafe, 457 S. Broadway in Denver, Wednesday, May 22nd from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.*

VIDEO OF PAST EVENTS

★*Colorado's First Civil Union Ceremony, May 1, 2013*

★*House District 2's Day at the Capitol, April 26, 2013*

★*Colorado Social Legislation Committee's Forum on Homelessness, April 22, 2013*

★*House District 2 Monthly Meeting, April 20, 2013*

★*Colorado Social Legislation Committee's Forum on Fracking, April 8, 2013*

★*President Obama's Remarks on Gun Safety at the Denver Policy Academy, April 3, 2013*

Thanks to My Birthday Bash at

The Bonnet Hosts

(host list in formation - add your name!)

*Frosty and Sam Frostman
Lisa Hartman*

Center sets a standard that any country whose elections they monitor must have a bipartisan or nonpartisan election commission establishing processes and procedures and resolving conflicts. Finally, they require that voters should have the same access to technology and election procedures so that all voters can count on the same minimal degree of error in the counting and tabulation of their votes.

In 2001, it was Carter's belief that the United States met none of those standards. I'm proud to say that Colorado took steps toward bridging that gap this month when it passed HB-1303, an elections bill that offers statewide consistency in voting procedures and eliminates some of the fuzzy distinctions that were at the heart of moves by Secretary of State Scott Gessler that aided in disenfranchising Colorado voters.

Among the bill's highlights, are a move to make all Colorado elections mail-in ballot elections; to open Voting Service Centers for 15 days before an election, allowing people to vote in person, drop off their ballots, or register to vote; to add more of the drop boxes introduced in 2012; to change residence requirements from 29 days in the precinct to 22 days in Colorado; to move from monthly data base updates to real-time updates; to make sure voting technology is up-to-speed and universally accessible; and to do away with the "inactive-failed-to-vote" category that our Secretary of State tried to use to prohibit county clerks from sending mail ballots to a significant portion of our population.

It was one of my great honors to work with Denver County Clerk Stephanie O'Malley at the Elections Division, and I'm proud of the work she and her successor Debra Johnson have done to protect the sanctity of the ballot box and to ensure that every voter has every opportunity to participate in our elections and to strive to make every vote count.

To see County Clerk Johnson explain the elections bill to House District 2 activists, [please click here](#).

I write this on the eve of my birthday, finishing it in the wee hours of my birthday morning, and I can think of few topics more appropriate to occupy my time on a night so suited to reflection. The role of the individual and the individual vote cannot be overstated in Colorado. It's step one. We should be proud of our elected leaders for bringing meaningful change to Colorado, and I continue to draw inspiration from them

Arnold Krupat
Nancy Larson
Karen Lucas and Bob Barrett
Wells Obrecht
Tom Parson
Mary and Peter Peterson
Rex Stephenson
Dianne Thiel
Debra Turner-Kelly
Anne Perkins
Mike Worford

Thanks to My Baseball Fundraiser

Hosts

***** (host
list in formation -
add your name!)

Kevin Brauer
Susan Sanders

Thanks to My "Book of Mormon"

Heavenly Hosts

***** (host
list in formation -
add your name!)

Kevin Brauer
Judith Burke
Peggy Burnette
Elizabeth Harris
Brendon Hayden
Kaye Siemers
Brian Stockmar

as I strive to maintain this kind of leadership in our district.

Last Call for *The Book of Mormon*



Thanks to so many of you for supporting my fundraiser through a **November 20th** night at the theater for the 9-time Tony Award winner, *The Book of Mormon*. I am finalizing the ticket purchase Friday, so if you're interested in joining us or upgrading your tickets, please let me know and make arrangements by **Thursday, May 9th**. You can make a secure payment by [clicking here for my Act Blue payment page](#), or you can contact me about writing a check. It's too late to mail a check, but I'd be happy to meet you if that works best. We've got excellent floor seats available, and two sections of the balcony reserved for a group of more than 80, with advance ticket prices starting at \$100. This should be a ton of fun!

Teacher Appreciation -- Thanks and Farewell to John Schmick

It's Teacher Appreciation Week across the nation, and I'd like to take the opportunity to thank one of a great number of wonderful teachers I had. I had four years of school under my belt when **John Schmick** started his first year of teaching the fifth grade at **Gilman School** in Baltimore. He helped nurture my creativity, my independence, my sense of humor, and my sense of responsibility. I wrote my first play in Mr. Schmick's class, and went on to later win a national contest and to

start a national festival for high school playwrights.

He also appointed me as the editorial writer for an elementary school paper, *Of Primary Importance*, and my first story as a journalist was a call to my schoolmates to rise to the challenge of being “first-class citizens,” using the metaphor of picking up trash on our campus to make the point that we are at our best when we not only steer clear of contributing to our community’s woes, but actively seek solutions to problems we didn’t cause. It’s an ethic that informs me to this day, and I think of John Schmick and the head of our school, Reddy Finney, when I answer the call to be a better citizen.

I had the privilege of coming back to work with Mr. Schmick and Mr. Finney when I started my teaching career in Gilman’s high school. Eventually, Mr. Schmick became the head of the school, and I’m thankful that I was able to work with the school indirectly through a charitable foundation established in memory of my good friend and classmate Rob Perkins. I never lost faith in the school’s ability to transform students by instilling a lifelong love of learning, by nurturing creativity, independent thinking, and character, and by filling its halls with faculty who were drawn to answer the highest of callings.

John Schmick is retiring this year, after nearly 40 years of service to his students and his community. I can’t thank you and your colleagues enough, Mr. Schmick. “Time will not dim the glory of your deeds.”

Climate Festival

I hope to host a Climate Change Planning session next week or in the near future, but until those details are in place, I’d encourage you to head down to Civic Center Park this Saturday, May 11th for the Colorado Climate Change Festival, sponsored by the Sierra Club and others.

As the Sierra Club writers in their invitation, “Over the last year, drought and wildfire have ravaged the state. But Coloradans aren’t sitting idly by -- they are taking action.

"Just last week, the community came together for a climate legacy roundtable to discuss what more we can do to stem the tide of climate change here in Colorado.

"Climate change is serious business but it doesn't always have to be that way. That is why you are invited to a fun-filled afternoon of live music, Colorado beer, and an eco-village of Colorado businesses uniting against climate change this Saturday."

Attend the Colorado Climate Change Festival, have fun, and learn more about what you can do to combat climate disruption. [RSVP now!](#)

WHAT: The Colorado Climate Festival -- Uniting Against Climate Change

WHEN: Noon to 3 p.m., Saturday, May 11, 2013

WHERE: Denver Civic Center Park -- Greek Amphitheater [[map](#)]

FEATURING:

- Live music from Zach Heckendorf and the Fox Street Allstars;
- Beer from Colorado microbrews Breckenridge Brewery and Boulder Brewing Company;
- Heroic smokejumpers who will be honored for their work on the frontlines of climate change in last year's Colorado wildfires;
- Jerry Tinianow, Chief Sustainability Officer of the City of Denver;
- Auden Schendler, Vice President for Sustainability at Aspen Skiing Company;
- With more to come!

NOTE: The event is free and open to the public.

RSVP: <http://action.sierraclub.org/coclimatefestival>

Birthday Bash at The Bonnet!

I guess I've buried the lead here, but by the time you get this, it will be my birthday. If you'd like to celebrate early with me, come on down to the DMV

where I'll be renewing my driver's license bright and early. If you'd like to celebrate late, your best bet might be to head to the Capitol, where they'll finally draw the session to a close, probably close to midnight. I'll be covering the Rockies and Yankees Wednesday night - **how 'bout that shutout to open the series?!?** - and I'm sure there will be no shortage of revelry from Coors Field to the Capitol.

I am eager to "observe" my birthday and to more formally kick-off my campaign with a **Birthday Bash at the Blue Bonnet on Wednesday, May 22nd from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.**, and I hope you can join me as we beat on, boats against the current, embracing the promise of the green light of a receding future, running faster, stretching our arms out further. "And one fine morning..." But I digress.

When I thought about how to celebrate my birthday this year, it seemed natural to celebrate the grassroots spirit that has made House District 2 a leading force in local politics in recent years.

The event is part fundraiser, but the biggest part of it is about participation. It's aimed at the folks who make the foundation of our democracy, people who put the public interest above the special interests. In that spirit, I'd be honored to have you make a contribution on my birthday - or for my birthday bash - but I am capping contributions for the event at \$100, and I'm starting at \$5, an investment that is nothing to sneeze at when coupled with an investment of your faith and time, perhaps the most valuable contribution you can make.

Here are some **suggested levels of giving** that I hope are relatively pain-free for those who'd like to celebrate my birthday and grassroots democracy:

Just Say Cinco: \$5 for the month of May

Baker's Dozen: \$13 for our 2013 launch

Forward to 14: \$14 for election year 2014

Visionary Vision: \$20.14 to set our sights on next year's goals and challenges

Let Co-Hosts Eat Cake: \$49 for my 49th birthday, co-host recognition

It Pays to Be Young: \$___, enter a dollar amount for your age and get co-host recognition. *Contributors over 100 years old are permitted to contribute over \$100, or to start over again at \$1 for 101, \$2 for 102, etc.*

Birthday Happy Hosts \$100 to honor an ultimate grassroots heroine, Rosa Parks, in the year marking the

100th anniversary of her birth, host recognition

The bash should be a good chance to talk about House District 2 and to share ideas and concerns that should be at the forefront of the campaign ahead to represent the district in the State House. It should also be a good practical opportunity to get engaged in outreach efforts in the district as we ramp up efforts to talk to neighbors and bring them together to strengthen our community. And not the least, it should be a great chance to meet and mingle with like-minded folks eager for action.

I hope you can find a level to chip in, whether with a financial contribution that fits your budget or some volunteer time that will help shape our efforts. To contribute, [please click here](#).

Thanks, and see you at the Bonnet!

Sincerely,

Owen Perkins
Candidate for Colorado State Representative
House District 2

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