



## ***DECIDING WHAT IS RIGHT!***

**Ray Buschmann - Alderman, Fourth Ward**

What I am witnessing in our Lake Forest contested mayoral race is completely contrary to my life-guiding values. I share my thoughts with the hope of **righting what is wrong**.

I offer these thoughts as someone who has volunteered with the City for some 18 years, has been vetted by the Caucus on 9 occasions (always endorsed as the best candidate) and has proudly served the City and its residents. I am fully committed to the highest ethical standards and the mission of promoting trust, respect and civic involvement in our city government. With this background in mind, I must say that the tone and conduct of the current mayoral race gravely concern me.

### WHAT THE CAUCUS DID WAS WRONG

Let's start with the Caucus, which officially is a political action committee (aka a PAC) managed by the 43 person Caucus Committee. Along with the Committee, all registered voters of Lake Forest compose the Caucus membership. The Committee's long standing process has been to identify and vet the many mayoral candidates. It did that and selected, in its opinion, the two most qualified individuals, Prue Beidler and Randy Tack, as mayoral candidates. The Caucus then choose just one and as required, submitted its recommendation to us for approval. This process is something we all want and expect from a caucus system.

We, the Caucus membership, spoke with our vote. We rejected Randy Tack as the Caucus candidate for mayor with a resounding NO. Several hundred voters, an unprecedented, overwhelming majority, told the Committee that Randy should not be slated as our candidate. The Committee unjustifiably decided to ignore its members, treat the required vote as without meaning, and disenfranchise its members. Its actions taint the Caucus process and Randy's candidacy. Its action is contrary to its 88-year history. Mistakes can be made and no system, not even the Caucus Committee system, is perfect. However, if the Caucus Committee erred and tendered the wrong candidate, it needs to admit its mistake and right the wrong.

The Caucus should not have compounded the error by inferring that Prue somehow rigged the election. We know that is not true. It shouldn't claim that a contested election will destroy the caucus system. That is also false. Prue's participation in the race should help the Caucus realize the need to return to its roots of being responsive to and acting on behalf of all of its members, not just a select few. It achieves the very essence of democratic ideals.

### WHAT TACK'S CAMPAIGN HAS BECOME IS WRONG

The messaging from Tack's campaign includes nasty personal attacks against Prue. Such vitriol is extremely adverse to our history, our character and our expectations of civil behavior here in Lake Forest. We should expect our candidates to take the high road and avoid negative campaigning. If someone takes the low road, we should express our outrage at the ballot box to discourage such conduct.

In addition, the existing Mayor and some Aldermen have become actively involved in the PAC's campaign for Randy Tack. Their involvement defeats the goal of keeping political activities outside of city government. It shatters our historic treatment of the Caucus as a PAC, totally and legally separate from our City government and City officials. Using political power to shape a campaign sets a bad precedent. It fosters a political machine that feeds upon itself. It stifles democratic choice. We should reject any candidate who embraces this type of activity.

Partisan politics also have no place in Lake Forest. Why not? Because partisans are committed members of a political party, who simply act on their party's mandates, even when those mandates have no merit. For example, we're told that because the Caucus system has existed for 88 years and "served us well", we must vote for Randy; if we don't, we threaten the survival of the Caucus as a political institution. Using scare tactics, being accusatory, pouring unusually large sums into an election so as to inundate voters with materials and messaging (way beyond what is needed) all exemplify partisan politics that Lake Foresters should repudiate. It puts a chilling effect on candidates being willing to come forward, to offer a choice to the voter. We the voters should expect and be entitled to having a contested election conducted with grace and respect. We should look to the candidates, their personal qualities, their character, their commitment and their positions on the issues our City faces. We should not feel bullied by partisan players or by a political party.

**WHAT PRUE BIDLER DID IS RIGHT!**

Prue's decision to run as an independent candidate was absolutely justified in light of the membership vote and Caucus' corresponding response. Her decision gave residents what they clearly wanted, a different candidate for mayor. Let the voter decide who and what is right.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ray Buschmann