

dropped speed

Jefferson/Jackson Celebration – Hampton, N, H

Saturday, March 7, 2009

Thank you for that fine introduction. I would like to introduce my ~~two~~ friends who drove me here, Carol and ~~John Windham~~ of

Peterborough, N. H. Carol has been one of my most valuable helpers, working as a volunteer for the past five years, ~~while her husband, John~~ has become ~~one of the strongest, most~~

~~knowledgable volunteer advocates in the state~~

~~for the 9/11 issue.~~ Many thanks to Chris Muns *Kels*

who did the work of getting me here and Susan ~~Muns~~ who answered many e-mails.

Repper
How extraordinary for us to be alive at this remarkable moment in history, when

everything is changing. I consider myself one of the luckiest woman in the state, in charge of the gold-headed cane representing the oldest

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woman in Dublin, N. H. It is my understanding that they wrung their hands in horror when they realized I was next in line to get this precious relic. "She will leave it behind somewhere on one of her galvantings out of the state," they wailed. Many e-mails, went flying back and forth, telephone calls, & conferences were held. "She will never know the difference, " the selectmen agreed, deciding to get me a new cane, putting the precious old one in a glasss case until the next oldest person is to get it, when I kick the bucket.

When I finished my 3,200 mile walk **across the United States to speak out for the campaign finance reform movement**, I was often asked to share what I learned from all those miles and all those many many towns and people.

What I learned, and I hope you will not take this too personally, is that it is never too late to get in shape.

It is never too late to dust off the dreams you may have had for yourself and for your community and your country—and to do something about them.

It is never too late to have another great adventure, make a few thousands new friends, and, well, if you like—it worked for me—to march on the Capitol and get arrested.

Not all of my new friends cared to get arrested—many marched to the Capitol and then treated themselves to a gin and tonic and a pedicure. This is a wonderful country and there is something for everyone.

My advice these days to the people I meet is, that they should not think their age has

anything to do with what they decide to yet do, with the dreams that define their best and highest instincts Follow your heart and, you know it is true: the force will be with you. You will be given the energy you need, if the project is worthy. I traveled as a Pilgrim, walked until given shelter, fasted until given food. I was never without either.

Now that I am back home, though I do still travel around and make trouble, I am looking at the more local aspects of political reform.

I am wondering what it means for a community to be responsible. Surely we responsible people ought to live in responsible communities, too.

Let's imagine that a big city has an opportunity to use solar or other renewable energy for its houses and offices and transit system, and

that, by so doing, the community will stop spewing toxins from its smokestacks, which pollute the communities down wind. Or take it a step further, and realize that the city has been spewing out carbon dioxide which has been a contribution to the warming of the planet. What is a responsible community to do? Take the new path, if it is economically possible to do so, or stay with the old way, which not only pollutes, but drives our nation's foreign policy toward the acquisition of oil at the expense of our higher ideals. What is a responsible community to do? When you ask the question, the answer seems obvious. What should a responsible community do to assure that its citizens grow up with enough civic education to be proper guardians and participants of a free society? What should a responsible community do to

provide a healthy and expanding middle class, which has always been the strong footing of our republic?

We have given our children over to the values of television, and we have given our main streets and our family businesses over to a new-colonialism that saves us a few dollars, but at a monstrous expense to our culture and its future.

Getting special interest influence out of our politics is therefore an important precondition to becoming a responsible community. I have been working in that particular area, for the last five years, and the work, being done by many thousands of dedicated people, is far from completed.

But it is time for all of us, I think, to assume that we are a free people, free to elect people

who will feel free to serve the interests of the people who elected them, and from whom they came. Let us assume that we will perfect these reforms, and let us look ahead to the question: once we again have representation at every level of government, what are we to do with it? We do have a responsibility, after all to those who sacrificed everything, who gave their lives to give us a free society. Those people who died did not die for a Corporate World, but for Lincoln's democracy: a government of the people, by the people, and for the people We ignore their sacrifice if we do not turn our country back to that government

Some of us care for the rights of individual action. Some of us care more for the improvements that are possible through common action. The balance and stress

between these ideas of individualism and group action energize our political parties and the arguments within each of our minds. We try to maturely sort out a reasonable middle course that respects the group and embraces diversity, while at the same time it celebrates individual achievement and success and opportunity. This is no easy balancing act. Knowing how to preserve and nurture both of these sides—most certainly requires responsible maturity.

Who of us—who of you—can set aside your own political views and look to the needs of a free society and all its people with all of their views? Who among us is responsible enough to be able to serve the interests of far right and far left and all the shoppers in the middle? Well, it is a big question of cultural leadership, and some of you must rise to it. You must

take your instincts of service and help fill the big gaps in cultural leadership that now characterize much of our country.

I am here to offer a word of advice. I am not offering it because I think any of you will outlive me. Because, as things are going it looks as if we are going to have to convince our good Republican brothers to think of joining us under the guidance of our new president who is trying very hard to be president to all of us.

We, and our new president are going to have to wrestle democracy away from the growing imperialism and from a corporate-military-industrial complex the like of which our dear old Ike only half imagined.

We must replace winner-take-all elections with proportional representational elections,

so that all parties including Greens and Reforms, can sit at the table of power in this country and in the world.

We must take down the prisons and build up the schools.; dismantle a health care system that lets only the rich live and replace it with a system worthy of a civilized society.

As reformers, we seldom win by making a frontal attack. No, we work and we work as a reformer and never get too far with it. And while we are hitting our heads against the wall, we tinker with the idea and it gets better and better and more and more people understand what we are getting at. But we never win. The other side loses. Just when we are about to pack up our signs and our banners. Along comes an Enron or a Watergate or a governor is replaced by a

lieutenant governor. one with an easier name to pronounce. In states and in the nation, we only win by being ready, by being on the spot with a good, workable alternative, when the unsustainable systems fail.

In a bipartisan national poll last month, conducted by Lake Research Partners (the Tarrance Group) 79% of voters across party lines saw large contributions as a roadblock to solving America's most pressing economic problems. Voters believe that the influence of campaign contributions to members of Congress led to lax oversight that was a major cause of our financial crisis - 76% of Democrats and 74% of Republicans believe this. The American public is ready for campaign finance reforms: 67% of voters, across party lines, support providing qualified congressional candidates a limited amount of

public funding if they agree to take no large contributions—69% of Democrats 66% of Independents, and 64% of Republicans. When the American people are this ready for change, the Democratic Party must get out in front and lead the way.

The American people are ready for publicly funded elections, and across the country, experts are expecting New Hampshire to help lead the way., People are looking to New Hampshire, because they know what strong leaders we have on this issue in Senator Maratha Fuller Clark and Maggie Hassan, who are here with us today. Senator Clark is sponsoring a bill this session called the Citizen Funded Elections Task Force and I understand Senator Hassan may be co-sponsoring it. The bill takes three important steps closer to Citizen Funded Elections in our state. In this

**new campaign finance system, candidates
replce large contributios with small ones from
constituents and limited public matching
funds. Once elected, they are accountable
only to voters, free to do the people's business
without the endless distractions of fund
raising. Public office opens up to a greater
diversity of talent not just the best fund
raisers. And voters regain confidence in their
government when they believe policy
decisions are made in their interests, not the
interests of the largest contributors. Across
the country, and here in New Hampshire,
people are ready for this, and Senators Clark
and Hassan are leading the way. Please join
me in thanking them for their leadershp on
this vitally important issue.**

Find a loving community of friends who support your continued flowering. Which is a lifetime proposition. Take seriously your role as a American. Our revolution against oppression and unfairness is never concluded. It is a joyful revolution, if you will put yourself fearlessly into it, keeping always an open and tolerant heart. ~~Thank~~ you.

So don 't worry if our state is not quite ready for this reform or that reform. Do not worry if you think the federal government is not ready for public financing or propostional representation or instant runoff voting or single payer health care or God forbid, simple human justice and a mature concern for the global environment. You go do your reform work. Represent the good issues, regardless of their chances of victory by today's measures. The measures will change tomorrow.

The rivers are drying up. The seas are rising. The poles are melting. Unsustainably corrupt politics on a global scale has reaped the whirlwind for all of us. We can only save this earth and this democracy by working hard and developing our skills and our courage to act with great leadership and with great wisdom and expertise when opportunities present themselves.

We elected the right man for President but he can not do it alone. He needs our help.

Republicans, Democrats, Greens, Reformers, all of us. Become an expert; work hard as a reformer and I promise that you will have your day on the field, matched more evenly for the fight than you ever imagined possible.

What a wonderful challenging time in which we live. A time when so much is at stake and when we all have so much important work to do in taking back our freedom, taking back our elections from the Corporate World that has been created. To be able to establish in every state a clean money elections system. Think how wonderful it would be if all our state officers and our Congress could be elected because of their honesty, vision and character, instead of being elected because he or she was able to raise the most money.

A government of, by and for the people, means you and me. Understand what it means to be an American. It means to take responsibility for mature self-governance. In a world where the divide between the very

wealthy and the literally starving is growing rapidly, where one child in five goes to bed hungry; two out of five if they are Afro-Americans, we must assume responsibility. We must take our place at the table of power.

It may make no sense to you to have an old woman stand here and tell you to get involved to tell you that you may be the answer to a troubled world, but believe it can be true that you are more a part of each other than you can imagine I do not know what is in store for you but I know that courage is freedom and freedom is joy Be fully who you are, letting the world get used to you—it will.

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oppression and unfairness is never concluded.
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Thank you.