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Special US Congress Election for 7th District May 12th

Considering that Wisconsin held the April general election despite the COVID-19 emergency, northwestern Wisconsin's voters can expect the Tuesday, May 12th, special election for US Congress to go ahead with in-person voting at open polls.

Pitting Democratic candidate Tricia Zunker versus Republican Tom Tiffany, to fill the seat vacated by Rep. Sean Duffy (R), in Wisconsin's 7th Congressional District (7CD), the race has some national importance. Possibly as a litmus test of the national mood, a voters barometer if you will, heading into the fall Presidential election, this May special election will not necessarily affect Democratic control of the United States House of Representatives. Yet, with Tiffany, currently a Wisconsin state senator, taking a strong position as a supporter for President Trump, a Zunker victory in the district held for the past ten years by the Republican Duffy could indicate general voter backlash against President Trump and his policies, as he begins his re-election campaign this year.

In the special election, several factors have wide play in what will happen. For example, with no other races or issues up for voting on May 12th, keeping voter attention focused on turnout will remain a

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Notes From Above the Ground

The Garden Plot Anthology

I never considered myself much of a gardening man. My whole life, my parents gardened, raising food we ate fresh in summer and fall, and stored for the winter and spring. For 49 years, I would participate as the free labor, pushing the rotor-tiller, hauling boxes and crates of food, into the house, and after canned or bagged, into the basement for the jars, and into the garage for the freezer. I paid some attention but not

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Lately in County and Municipal Elections

Concerning the Ubet-"urbia"

In the news for the greater Ubet megalopolis and urbiaplex, the April 7th spring general election involved voting for the entire Polk County, Wisconsin, Board of Supervisors. For District 11, including parts of the towns of Garfield and Lincoln, Jay Luke—a long-time public servant from the Amery, WI, area—received the full-confidence of the electorate, with no opposition, 692 votes to zero against. In District 14, John Bonnephrise, who also

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ran unopposed, won with 589 votes to zilch against, in the area for parts of Garfield, Black Brook, and Alden towns. For District 8, parts of Dresser and Centuria villages, and portions of the city of St. Croix Falls and the town of St. Croix Falls, James S. Edgell won against no opposing candidate 534 to nada. In the most highly contested race for the greater Ubet community, Amy Middleton largely squeaked by with 482 votes in District 10's Town of Osceola, to opponent Tom Magnifici's 402. (Source: "Board of Canvassers Statement," "2020 Polk County Spring Election and Presidential Preference Vote 4/7/2020"—Polk County Government website, <https://www.co.polk.wi.us/>).

With no municipal elections for either the Towns of Osceola or Garfield, Dresser Village of the Ubet neighborhood returned all three candidates on the ballot to office, with no declared opposition. Elina Kuusisto with 153 votes, Darren Peterson with 160 votes, and Jeff Gutzmer with 171. Dresser recorded a scattering of 10 votes, meaning write-in votes.

On a more sober note, with so few contested elections for county and municipal positions all over Polk County, can citizens really say that democracy functions, or functions well enough to serve the interests of democracy? Aside from the Middleton-Magnifici race in Supervisor District 10 and a few other races outside of Ubet, BUT with no contest in less than 50% of all the races in-county, we continue to face a long-term symptom of a disease that will kill democracy, and our country, in the end. Civics in society and the participation in the process of elections, as candidates as well as voters, ultimately benefits good government by offering choices and the assumption of accountability for ideas. It works like having wide consumer choices between companies and their products, which help regulate all markets and create standards for the consumer and the general public alike.

In economics, offering multiple options holds companies more accountable for what they do and offer. Truly free choices in ideas and candidates also

work in elections. Yet, since we DO NOT have truly free markets in economics today (a huge error in thinking if anyone believes we do), a lack of choices in political elections—one reflecting truly fewer options—could stifle dissent and reasonable options, those pure essences of a functioning democracy. Without multiple options, politics at the important level, in the county and municipal realms, will continue to go the way Big Corporate favoritism by Big Government assaults the property of all consumers. Fewer choices in politics assaults the voters' property of decision and consent/dissent the same way: It takes it all away.

Far from a multi-choice system, even in a non-partisan election like Wisconsin's county and municipal elections, having so many uncontested races builds a type of Soviet-era list system of the "Nomenklatura"—those few approved to hold or trade posts in government in one- or NO-party states. The danger lurks. Ubet Gazette will explore this matter in future issues. Stay tuned.

Having said this, and with all due respect for those who ran, and won or lost, the Ubet Gazette offers congratulations to the winners and a thank you to everyone who tried for election. And thank you, public elected servants, for taking on hard jobs, at some cost, to do jobs for which few will truly thank you! We wish you and the public interest a good term, well-served. Good luck.



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question mark. Also, if voters fear becoming infected with COVID-19 while polling that day, they will have to go through a hassling process and extra effort to obtain and return absentee ballots (see below for more on absentee ballots). And as stated, although Rep. Duffy won five straight elections (2010 to 2018), and pundits normally consider the 7 Congressional District a “safe” Republican seat, for the previous almost forty years, 1969 to 2008, voters in the 7CD returned a Democrat representative, David Obey, every two years. Does that pendulum remain in shift, or will it swing backlash this year?

While the May 12th election will immediately place the winner into the current Congress, the winner would immediately have to run again to win re-election this November to retain the seat and enter the next Congress that starts January 2021. And finally, all other factors aside, Tiffany has by far better campaign financing. As reported by the Federal Elections Commission for the period ending March 31st, Tiffany has raised \$1.2 million, spent \$957,313, and had a balance of cash on hand of \$251,295. By contrast, Tricia Zunker had raised only \$298,131, spent \$188,980, with cash on hand amounting to \$109,150. (Source FEC, found on ballotpedia.org , key word search “Wisconsin special election 7th CD”).

Tiffany, a business man with a degree in agricultural economics from UW-River Falls, served in the state assembly in 2011-2013, and in the Wisconsin state senate since 2013. Zunker, a member of the Wausau school board, also serves on the Ho Chunk Nation Supreme Court. She graduated with a B.A., from UW-Madison, and from UC-Los Angeles, earning her J.D. To find out more about the candidates, visit their websites: Triciaforwisconsin.com and Tiffany4Wisconsin.com . To find out more about getting and using absentee ballots to vote for this special election, visit,

<https://myvote.wi.gov/en-us/SpecialElectionInformation>

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too much. My parents, in their late eighties in age, I always considered expert gardeners.

Two years ago, I realized I would not have much time to learn anything more from them, let alone about gardening, or how my mom makes the best dill pickles in the country. While I observed over my life the practical science of raising food at the two houses where my parents lived, I figured like everything else, gardening, etc., has a secret art to it. All these matters considered, this year I have become more piqued in my interest. This year, I committed to learn the white arts of gardening, dirt in my hands and muddy shoes and all.

In early March, while my parents traveled, as I shopped for the COVID-19 emergency shutdown, I bought seeds at the store. Some organic, some not, I did not really read the labels, but I looked at the pretty pictures on the packets. Well and good, I put them in a bag when I got home. I had little idea of the cost of the seeds, but I supposed I spent \$35. I got a lot of seeds. Different seeds. Root veggies, hanging fruits, and things for summer and fall harvest. I knew that much, anyway. In early April, I pulled the fabric sheets off the south garden, where we left them covering the ground over winter. I rolled them up, sloppily, and set them behind the garage. A few days later, the neighbor, my dad's good friend, had a load of manure dumped on the grass by the north garden. The neighbor brought his front loader to spread it out either side of the center isle of raspberry bushes in that plot. Later, all that same day, he brought his tractor with the grater, and worked the shit into the soil. When my parents arrived home from vacation ten days later, I figured we would start the gardening in earnest.

Last week, after my mom put tomato seeds in a pan of dirt to sit in the sun porch for a few weeks, my parents and I rotor-tilled a piece of the south garden, after my dad mowed the tall grass not covered over by the fabric. I made a run to the big store and I bought a bag of white potato seed and red potato seed. That afternoon, we put up stakes with twine running to them to make long rows about a yard apart, and I dug 170 holes with a sand shovel for all the potato seed, what I bought and what we had already. If even only a third or a half of them grow, I wonder what we will do with 175 or 250 pounds of potatoes? I do know I will have to carry whatever we dig up this fall. Heavy shit.



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The next day, I made more rows after rotor-tilling more soil. Thank goodness for a rebuilt gas-operated tiller, with a new Briggs & Stratton motor. Although a bit temperamental at its age, it works just fine. I put down the stakes and string, and made two more rows next to the potato rows, again about a yard apart between the strings. With a hoe, I furrowed and scratched rows. To my surprise, some of those packs of seed I bought had the seeds in tape—long, narrow, thin and flat bands of tissue paper, with the seeds between them. I stretch the tape into the bottom of the rows and covered them with dirt. How much dirt? Well, I hope not too much for what I planted—radishes, carrots, onions, and beets (but the carrots came in loose seeds,

not tape). I filled one and a half rows of these seeds. I don't know the length of the rows. I should find out.

It may not seem like much, but gardening will serve many purposes for me this year. Now, to help the garden grow. . .



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FOUR BY FOUR PUZZLE

Rules for the "Four-by-Four" Puzzle

- Objective: Fill in the empty spaces for complete four-letter words, spelled correctly left-to-right, and top-to-bottom ONLY. Palindromes allowed.
- Each of the eight four-letter words (4 top-to-bottom, 4 left-to-right), must have a match in the interlocking letters. One line provided top-to-bottom and one line provided left-to-right to start the puzzle.
- Yes to proper names, NO words with punctuation, and NO abbreviations, nor miscellaneous contractions. Slang words allowed if found in a certified dictionary.
- If the puzzle has a solution, cut out completed puzzle, include name and mailing address, and send postal mail to The Cepia Club address (see publication info) for an undisclosed prize.

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