

the Socialist

Magazine of the Socialist Party USA - 2012 Issue 5

A Socialist Elected in NJ!



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A Socialist in Office! Now What?

What a month. After nearly a year of campaigning at the grassroots level with less than a fraction of the budget and resources of the capitalist parties, SP candidates and the Party at large would finally be able to evaluate how our hard work would manifest in votes. The excitement of Election Day was dampened by Hurricane Sandy, which devastated the East Coast and left millions without power, including many of our own comrades in New York and New Jersey. The recent bombing of Gaza and subsequent deaths of innocent civilians made the elections seem almost moot. But they weren't. In fact, the tragedies of Sandy and Gaza are two real-world examples of why our fight for socialism must continue in a variety of forms. In a Socialist society, access to power, food and shelter following a natural disaster would not be determined by income or ZIP code. In a socialist society, we would not be funding, committing or supporting acts of terrorism. Participating in the theater of elections can be an effective way to spread those messages.

As Socialists, we harbor no illusions about what a tremendous challenge it is to get elected into any office. The obstacles are too many and the resources too few. Instead, elections give the Party an opportunity to promote our platform, to correct misinformation, to challenge the two-party system, to distinguish ourselves from other 3rd parties, and to provide the public with viable alternatives to capitalism and plutocracy. As Greg Pason says, although individuals run as candidates, these campaigns represent the Party and the collective working class -- the "we" rather than the "me."

Despite the seemingly insurmountable barriers that prevent a Socialist from winning an election in the U.S., in the words of Pat Noble, "We did it." Pat's election onto the Red Bank Board of Edu-

cation is a major victory for the Party. We must look to this victory -- and all of the campaigns -- as a foil for what is possible and how we might shape our future actions. As Pat mentions on his campaign website, we must not measure our successes solely on the number of votes a candidate receives; we must also evaluate whether our movement continues to grow stronger. This round of elections proved that it is -- even in the most unlikely of places.

So where do we go from here? As you will see from the interviews, social media played a critical role in each of the campaigns. No matter how much we might want to ignore corporate media outlets like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, there is no doubt that these tools are and will continue to be integral to the movement. No method will ever be as effective as face-to-face dialogue, but new media tools can help us draw likeminded individuals to the socialist cause at a rapid rate. It is our responsibility to follow through on these capabilities and make in-person connections.

On-the-ground efforts with other organizations is also essential. Nick Pehlman and Charlie Kerr's work with Occupy Sandy in the Rockaways is a wonderful example.

Recognizing our strengths and cultivating new abilities will continue to be the lifeblood of our work. For many, running for office and working on a political campaign was new territory. This takes an incredible amount of courage, dedication and commitment. But would we, as Socialists, have it any other way?

Finally, fundraising needs to be on every Party member's mind. We are fighting the -ists and -ism of capital, but the Party cannot sustain this struggle on passion alone. A concerted effort to raise the money we need to maintain the National Office is not the sole responsibility of one, but a shared responsibility among all of us.

In 2014, let's make sure we can say "We did it -- again."

Socialist Party USA Principles

The Socialist Party strives to establish a radical democracy that places people's lives under their own control -- a non-racist, classless, feminist socialist society ... where working people own and control the means of production and distribution through democratically-controlled public agencies; where full employment is realized for everyone who wants to work; where workers have the right to form unions freely, and to strike and engage in other forms of job actions; and where the production of society is used for the benefit of all humanity, not for the private profit of a few. We believe socialism and democracy are one and indivisible. The working class is in a key and central position to fight back against the ruling capitalist class and its power. The working class is the major force worldwide that can lead the way to a socialist future -- to a real radical democracy from below. The Socialist Party fights for progressive changes compatible with a socialist future. We support militant working class struggles and electoral action, independent of the capitalist controlled two-party system, to present socialist alternatives. We strive for democratic revolutions -- radical and fundamental changes in the structure and quality of economic, political, and personal relations -- to abolish the power now exercised by the few who control great wealth and the government. The Socialist Party is a democratic, multi-tendency organization, with structure and practices visible and accessible to all members.

2012 ELECTION RESULTS*



*As of November 26, 2012

UNITED STATES

President & Vice President
Stewart Alexander & Alex Mendoza -
4,168 votes

INDIANA

State House of Representatives
(District 39)
John Strinka - 2,862 votes

State House of Representatives
(District 94)
Ronald W. Haldeman - 762 votes

MICHIGAN

State Board of Education
Dwain Reynolds III - 66,123 votes

State House of Representatives
(District 106)
John Longhurst - 1,178 votes

NEW JERSEY

U.S. Senate
Greg Pason - 2,262 votes

Red Bank Regional High School Board of
Education
Patrick "Pat" Noble - 1,033 votes

NEW YORK

State Assembly (District 13)
Jeff Perres - 362 votes

TEXAS

State House of Representatives
(District 113)
Angela K. Sarlay - 6,739 votes

State House of Representatives (District
65)
Alex Mendoza - 1,213 votes

State Representative (District 131)
Alfred Molison, Jr. - 433 votes

Justice of the Peace Pct. 2 Place 1,
Bexar County
Joel Benavidez - 4,833 votes

VERMONT

U.S. Senate
Peter Diamondstone - 2,511 votes

Secretary of State
Mary Alice Herbert - 34,103 votes

State Auditor
Jerry Levy - 9,381 votes

State House of Representatives
Jane Newton - 4,065 votes

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The Socialist welcomes fresh material that highlights the struggles of the working class. This includes news, first person testimonials, all forms of the arts and letters from readers. Please limit letters to 500 words and articles to 1,250. Submit as .doc or .rtf file.

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Stop the Attack on Gaza - Stand in Solidarity with the Palestinian People

Official Statement of the National Action Committee

Palestinians have been subject to the escalating violence and oppression of Israel and the United States for decades. The recent Israeli bombings and threat of ground invasion of Gaza are just the latest examples of the brutality of the decades-long occupation of Palestine. While the bloodshed is carried out by Israel, the blood running through the streets of Gaza is paid for by the United States government.

The United States government has repeatedly stood up to support, defend and serve as cover for the crimes of the "political Zionism" of Israel, and Israel has been the largest recipient of US military aid since World War II, at an average of \$1.8 billion annually. The outcome of this funding is now being rained down upon the heads of Palestinian civilians in the form of a relentless bombing campaign and, possibly, a bloody land invasion.

Since its formation in 1948, Israel has consistently violated nearly every human rights convention regarding the rules of war. It is a nuclear power, which has refused to sign the United Nation's Non-Proliferation Treaty and while the US has threatened war and sanctions on Iran primarily because of the "threat" to Israel, no pressure has been placed on Israel to comply.

The shocking disproportion of an advanced militarized state armed to the teeth at attacking a basically defenseless civilian population is on clear display during this latest air war over Gaza. Despite this, all of the human rights violations that will occur will be endorsed by and given international political cover by the US government under the empty slogan of Israeli "self-defense."

Despite the recent cease-fire agreement, it is critical that international pressure is placed on the state of Israel in order to support the movement for justice in Palestine. American activists, especially those who espouse the values of democratic socialism, can contribute to this struggle in three ways:

1. In the event of a new round of attacks by Israel, we can build and support emergency actions to protest against the bombing and military aggression by Israel. Building the broadest possible demonstrations internationally can serve to place

popular pressure on the Israeli government and to undermine the support being provided by the Obama administration and other mainstream politicians. Solidarity with Palestine should be a call that unites all sectors of the left.

2. Get involved with the movement for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) against Israel.

The BDS movement aims to put some economic teeth into the movement of international solidarity with the Palestinian people. BDS proved to be an effective tool against the South African regime - it was built from the grassroots until it became policy at the level of the state -- and can galvanize resistance to apartheid in Israel.

3. Socialists in America should place a particular political focus on demanding an end to all US military funding to Israel. This is the primary contribution Americans can make to the Palestinian liberation struggle. Turning off the spigot of American military funding into the region can be part of the larger struggle to create a world based on international solidarity and peaceful co-existence. We aim to end the "heavy footprint" of the US in the region.

Today we stand in solidarity with the peace movement in Israel, we stand in solidarity with the Palestinian struggle for liberation, we stand in solidarity with the Israeli refuseniks and we stand with the people of Gaza -- in opposition to the violators of human rights, the militarists and the political fear mongers, whether they reside in Israel or the US.

Solidarity with the People of Gaza - Free Palestine!



SP-NYC Local Joins Occupy Sandy and Local Residents in Far Rockaway Relief Efforts

by Nick Pehlman & Charlie Kerr



Hurricane Sandy hit New York on October 29th, tragically ending at least 43 lives, leaving hundreds of thousands without power, and devastating working-class communities throughout the city. In the days following the storm, popular attention largely remained focused on the Lower East Side. Reports from some of the areas most affected, including Staten Island, Coney Island, and Far Rockaway were scant and sporadic at best. As the days stretched on, life in the Lower East Side largely returned to normal, with the vast majority of power and subway service finally be-

ing restored. However, while many of the Lower East Side's residents have the luxury of putting Sandy behind them, coastal neighborhoods throughout Brooklyn, Staten Island, and Queens remain in a state of emergency and destitution.

One of these areas is Far Rockaway, on Queens' Rockaway Peninsula at the farthest reaches of the A line. The majority of Far Rockaway's residents are working-class people, and they, unsurprisingly, have been among those hit hardest by the destruction wrought by Hurricane Sandy. In Breezy Point, a neighborhood in the

Rockaways, 111 homes were destroyed by out-of-control fire and flood water, while in nearby Far Rockaway, thousands remain without power, heat, and basic amenities. Relief efforts by the supposed authorities -- federal and state -- have been disorganized and woefully inadequate, creating a vacuum which has been filled by the courageous work of Occupy Sandy as well as allied organizations working alongside local community groups.

Members of the Socialist Party USA NYC Local have been traveling to Far Rockaway to assist relief efforts there and build relationships with local activists and community leaders. Coming from Bed-Stuy in central Brooklyn, which mercifully weathered the storm relatively unscathed, it became immediately apparent that, as we waited in the bumper-to-bumper traffic from Howard Beach to Far Rockaway, we were progressively entering a disaster area.

In the Rockaways, hordes of NGO volunteers and employees patrolled the streets alongside numerous military personnel and FEMA responders from around the country. The destruction was immediately apparent: crumbling houses and limitless sand lining the roads for as far as the eye could see.



We first stopped at YANA (You are Never Alone) Center in Rockaway Park, a community center that became an Occupy Sandy staging ground following the extensive damage wrought by the storm. Speaking with local residents and Occupy activists, it became immediately apparent that the situation in the Rockaways was still dire; volunteers reported still finding bodies while local residents shared stories with us of homes without power, FEMA and Red Cross incompetence, trapped relatives, and shortages. Sal, the proprietor of YANA, had spent years assembling the funds for the center only to lose the buildings to flood damage a week after its opening.

We assisted the Occupy Sandy volunteers with the demolition of the building's extensively damaged interior and then went to visit other contacts and centers on the Eastern portion of the Peninsula, home to the majority of Far Rockaways' many public housing projects. There, the damage was less immediately apparent but equally as insidious.

While the structural damage was much less severe and most buildings weathered the storm intact, many residents, especially the elderly and non-English speakers, were unable to receive necessary aid such as food and medications while trapped in the upper-floors of their buildings and a shortage of translators plagued the FEMA and NGO staff. Occupy Sandy was beginning to reach out to these communities, building connections to local people working on the ground.

After observing and participating in Occupy Sandy's mutual aid efforts in Far Rockaway, we remain confident that they are prepared to continue coordinating relief efforts with local community groups while also assisting them in advocating for their needs as this crisis continues into winter. The Socialist Party USA NYC Local is excited to continue working with Occupy Sandy in the coming weeks to provide aid to those workers most affected and least served in the wake of the storm.



Green Shoots of Red Electoralism

by Billy Wharton



Hidden beneath the public relations concocted roar and corporate funded thunder of the Obama and Romney campaigns were the little people. This election cycle, more than just a few voters decided to strike out and make a bold statement about what they want for their future. They decided to vote Socialist. A few thousand sought out our Presidential ticket of Stewart Alexander and Alex Mendoza, and many others focused their support on local efforts. This time, doing so wasn't just a way to register a vague protest against the system. It got someone elected.

The current batch of socialist electoral campaigns was built on other recent campaigning that brought a more serious edge to efforts to reach voters. The campaigns of Dan LaBotz for US Senate in Ohio and Brandon Collins for City Council in Charlottesville, Virginia, both garnered significant media attention and had features of full-fledged attempts at running for office. Both candidates effectively used their scarce resources in outreach efforts that included face-to-face campaigning and creative virtual efforts via free platforms such as YouTube. The pair has certainly paved a way for others.

What is most remarkable about the 2012 socialist candidates is the not the overall vote

total, but the sheer number of people willing to present themselves as candidates. In past years, our party has struggled to identify candidates. Being a socialist was a quiet thing – an identity you were proud of but only selectively revealed. A combination of the 2008 economic crisis, the previously mentioned electoral efforts and the political space created by both the radicalism of Occupy Wall Street and the drift of the Democratic Party far to the right have made being a socialist a very public position to promote.

Pat Noble, a member from New Jersey, was the most successful in doing so. Noble gained 1,033 votes and was elected to the Red Bank Regional High School Board of Education. He was joined on the Socialist ticket in the hurricane-ravaged state by Greg Pason, who contested for a seat in the US Senate. With the support of so many voters in the area, Noble will now have to take the next step in Socialist electoralism – moving from running an opposition campaign to creating concrete policies that exhibit socialist values.

This exciting development was paralleled by a plucky Michigan State Board of Education campaign waged by another Socialist, Dwain Reynolds. Reynolds has orchestrated a number of these campaigns in the past. He has created a

dynamic strategy that targets the youth vote and seeks out a coalition with the Green Party. This time, he received an impressive 66,021 votes. His efforts offer lessons about the need to build broader coalitions and tap into rising dissent among young voters.

Such tactical electoral coalitions continue to be a staple of Red Electoralism. In Texas, Angela Sarlay and the national Vice-Presidential candidate Alex Mendoza teamed with the Green Party of Texas to present their campaigns. Doing so allowed the pair to gain ballot access and present “watermelon” politics – green on the outside, red on the inside. This is a critical combination since the Socialist critique of the political economy needs the environmental critique of the Greens and vice-versa.

Sarlay’s campaign is of particular note, since it linked up with another waged by SP-USA member John Strinka in Indiana. Both contested elections as the only candidates running against a far-right Republican candidate. In both cases, the Democrats had totally abandoned local voters. Absent the socialists, the far-right agenda would have gone totally unopposed. Sarlay received 6,739 votes and Strinka 2,862.

There were others. People like Ron Haldeman who ran for State Senate in Indiana and received 750 votes. Troy Thompson who ran to become mayor of Floodwood, Minnesota. Mal Herbert, Jane Newton, Jerry Levy, and Peter Diamondstone in Vermont who ran on the Liberty Union Party line with Herbert picking up an impressive 25,749 votes. John Longhurst in Michigan and Jeff Peres in New York City also ran on the Green Party line as socialists. All told, Socialist Party USA candidates, including our presidential candidate Stewart Alexander, received 123,393 votes.

Local campaigning is no easy gig. Funds are scarce as are, often times, supporters. Candidates can often feel isolated – like a modern-day Don Quixote outgunned and running down capitalist windmills. Yet, it is through stepping back and looking at things through the lens of a national effort that people can see the vitally important impact that can be made through running electoral campaigns as socialists.

Red electoralism provides voters with choices – an essential component of any system that seeks to portray itself as democratic. Deeper than that, socialist candidates offer poor and working-class people a vision of themselves as candidates. We are not professional candidates. We have no handlers, no public relations consultants and no corporate funders who will pull our strings after the election. We offer independent fresh voices for equality for all through our demands of jobs, peace and freedom.

In the coming years, especially as the efforts by the Democrats and Republicans to impose austerity develop, electoral campaigns will offer fertile ground to present a fresh vision of democratic socialism for the 21st century. Independent electoral action can become one of the ways in which poor and working class people fight back and carve out new political possibilities for themselves and their communities.

Variation on Corinthians 1:13

by J. Richard Marra

You ask me how I’ll vote

(It’s a secret ballot, yet I’ll tell you)

I’ll vote to raise our glasses

Toasting solitary

And drink until we love the blindness.

That we look away from the looking glass
darkly

Into a pixel paradise

To dream of dreams dreaming

And let the ice in our cups caress the
body plastic

Isolated.

A whimper’s sound and fury

A symbol tinkling through the fog

That shrouds Reason’s prophesy

Beneath a Nation’s dreams

Vandalized.

Abandoned.

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Was an Obama Vote a Vote for or Against the 1%?

by David Keil

I asked a breakfast companion, "How did you vote?" He said, "Green." "How would you have voted in a swing state?" "Green," he said. "Why?" I asked. "I voted for Obama in 2008, and I regretted it almost immediately. And the Greens are on the ballot."

A dinner companion asked me, "Who did the Socialists run?" I told her about Stewart Alexander's campaign. She was glad to hear.

As a Socialist Party member, I feel big pride in the Alexander and Mendoza campaign. Our candidates spoke for us and for the part of the 99% that produces for everyone, including what the 1% consume wastefully. I was proud to write in the names, "Alexander and Mendoza." I voted for what I wanted, not against what I was afraid of.

If Romney had been elected, those who didn't vote for Obama would have heard complaints from some of those who did. Two days before the election, Michael Moore wrote: "Despite all the legitimate criticisms of Obama, he is nothing like the tsunami of hate and corporate thievery that will take place if Mitt Romney is president ... I can't promise you that your life will get better, easier under Barack Obama. I do think he cares and I know for sure that if the other guy is sitting in the Oval Office, I can guarantee you that not only will your life not get better, it will get much, much worse" (www.michaelmoore.com).

If life gets worse in Obama's second term, those who voted for him may reconsider their decision. If a deadly new U.S. war starts in the next four years, many people will begin a new thinking process. When I was a teen, LBJ's escalation of the Vietnam war started me on a new thinking process. Lots of people were as afraid of the Republican candidate, Goldwater, as Michael Moore was afraid of Mitt Romney. Their vote for LBJ against Goldwater helped bring the rest of the Vietnam war with all its horrors.

The Nation editorialized before the election that a Romney victory "would strike a devastating blow to progressive values and movements, locking us in rear-guard actions on a range of issues ..." I don't agree. I don't like that kind of pro-Democratic Party rhetoric, even if I'm happy to see the weight of women, African Americans, Latinos, and LGBTQ people weighing in to decide an election that followed a campaign that included some discussion about oppression -- even if I'm glad to see that the electorate was willing to consider returning to office the first Black president and not to bow before the four-year hate campaign directed against him.

I like the idea, expressed by a member of *The Socialist's* editorial group, of approaching the election from two angles at once: a common-sense approach and a theoretical approach, a blend of heart and mind. I was happy to vote for my ideas and not to vote for a candidate of a party that represents war for me.

I was happy to see what Scott Tucker wrote on *TruthDig.com*: "No one expects the Green and Socialist parties to sweep into the highest offices in the next election. But if we vote with courage and conscience only when we are assured that a majority will vote along with us, then what can we possibly mean by either courage or conscience? If a good cause is worth a fair fight, then we are obliged to act now in creating the future majority."

But there are times in my life when I choose between two evils, and I try to choose the lesser. Why not vote for Obama, then, as a lesser evil to an obvious big evil, the politics of the Republican ultra-right? Lots of people on the left in my state, Massachusetts, for example, would consider voting Green or Socialist for President only because the state is "safe" for Obama. But they would vote for Obama in a swing state, and they might vote for the Democrat in a close Congressional or Senate race.

Is it possible that an Alexander-Mendoza vote gave more support to progressive causes than an Obama vote; that an Obama vote was not a vote for a lesser evil? That a Democrat/Republican cannot be a lesser evil to another Democrat/Republican?

The following gives my thought process on why to write in my vote for the Socialist Party slate and not to support Obama as the lesser of two evils -- not even in a swing state in 2012 -- some reasons never to vote for Democrats or Republicans.

Let's look at Citizens United. The Democrats and Republicans are more dependent than ever on money from the 1%, most of which comes from the top 0.1%. This means that in office, they will do what the 1% want. What the 1% want is not decided in Congress or in the White House, but privately. The only power we in the 99% have over Obama or Romney as President will be exercised in the streets, not in the voting booth. The money wasted by the unions on candidates of either party of the right has no effect except to boost further their pro-1% policies.

That is why it took the Occupy movement to change the political conversation in the U.S. and why no number of left, or youth, or female, or

oppressed-minority votes for Obama could have the slightest effect on what the President will actually do in office.

It is because the two candidates were like two sides of the same coin. Neither answered to the 99%. A vote for Obama was thrown away. A vote for Alexander was a voice for socialism, democratic rights, and the interests of working families.

The interests of the 1% and those of the 99% are incompatible, so a President or a Congress member can only choose one or the other when making decisions in office. When we vote, we are voting to hand power to a class – either to the 1% or to the working people.

Those targeted openly by Romney will be targeted in a different way by Obama, because the wealth behind Romney and Obama is the same. I like the way the web articles at *Black Agenda Report* explain this.

Those in the 99% who produce what all consume are targeted not only by the decisions of the rich, but by the functioning of the system that benefits the rich. This system creates crisis after crisis for itself. The disasters of these crises fall on those with least resources to withstand disaster.

Those targeted by the rich began to give an answer when they responded so favorably to the Occupy movement. When they went into the streets in Chicago during Occupy. When they went into the streets in Wisconsin. These movements changed the political terrain of the U.S. and are likely to change it again. They are likely to give rise to new electoral alternatives based on the organizations of working people.

The Socialist campaign of Alexander and Mendoza pointed in that direction. It broke out of the multiple silos of issue-oriented strategies, bringing all the issues together. Socialists do not see and do not confront issues as independent battles. The battles are part of a broader struggle with big corporations and big capital.

Unemployment does not occur because Republicans are greedy. It is the result of the inherent chaotic and unstable system of capitalism. Attacks on women's and GLBTQ rights aren't only a problem of bigotry and religious extremism. Rather, they are a symptom of capitalist inequality, expressed through patriarchy and hatred for families that practice gender equality.

These are reasons why I not only felt good voting for Stewart Alexander and Alejandro Mendoza, but I also believe that no more net benefit would result from voting for a Democrat over a Republican than for a Republican over a Democrat.



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Stewart Alexander

Candidate for President

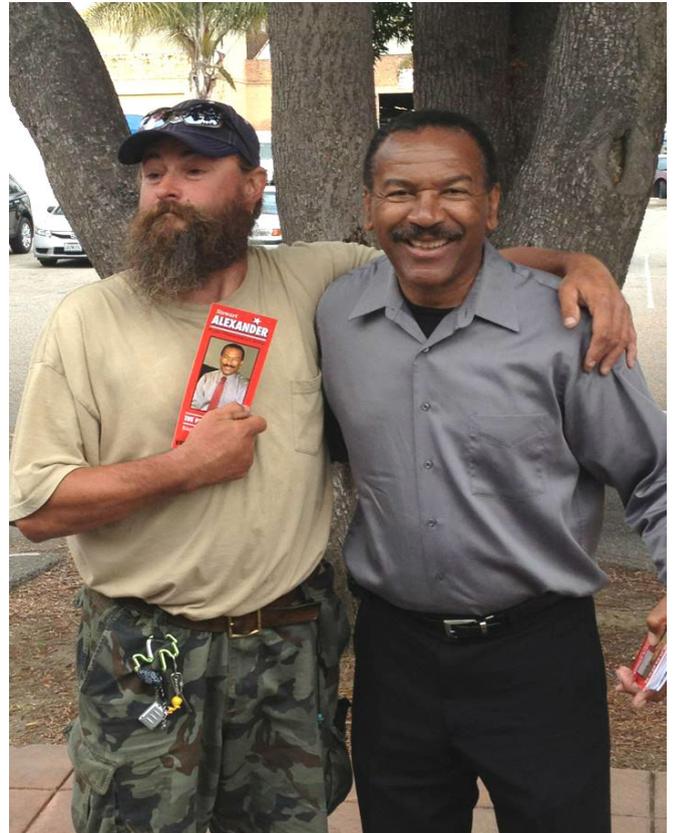
What motivated you to run for office?

First, I became a candidate for president of the U.S. because I believe in socialism and I have been a victim of capitalism for my entire life. What we as socialists are striving to achieve, the capitalists only seek to shun; a democratic socialist society based upon respect and goodwill toward other members within our society. As a presidential candidate, I shared my beliefs, which are the belief of other socialists that working people should control their own lives, their neighborhoods; their leaders should represent the people who elect them into office rather than the corporations that buy their office; and working people should manage and protect the resources of the earth, be responsible for the production and distribution of those resources to benefit the needs of our national and international community. This belief, as a socialist, distinguishes me from the candidates that represent the interests of the super rich and the candidates who believe that capitalism can be reformed.

Second, I entered the presidential contest because I considered myself well qualified to represent working people during these critical times. I understand what is on the line, it is our future well being as a nation, our freedoms, and we are running out of time to correct the course. I was not under any grand illusion that I would be elected president; however, as a presidential candidate, I had the opportunity to share a message with millions of working people that there is a better way that will provide opportunities for all members of society. My message was not about reforming capitalism, but a total transformation of society from capitalism to socialism and the development of new social structures.

What was your campaign budget?

Today, it is impossible for third party candidates and minor parties to compete with the big-money parties and in the 21st century, elections in the United States are bought and paid for by the financial titans on Wall Street; this guarantees that no contenders will be able to fairly compete. I was optimistic that my campaign would raise between \$25,000 to \$50,000; however, the Alexander/Mendoza campaign came far short of that goal. Unfortunately, the bar has been raised to manage a successful presidential campaign in the



U.S., the bar is now set at a half billion dollars to enter and \$1 billion for the top two. The candidates representing the two big-money parties will raise \$50,000 for two dinners at a campaign fundraiser.

Did you run openly as a socialist?

My presidential campaign was openly socialist; assured that my message was clear. I openly presented the platform of the Socialist Party USA because I believe it is a guide and a road map for working people to understand how socialism can work in today's society.

What kind of help did you get? Who were the key supporters of your campaign?

The campaign received help from working people and people who are committed and believe in socialism. First, I want to thank my wife, Vicki Alexander, who believed in the campaign and sacrificed our time together for four years, and my mother who believed in our mission and was the key player to assure that the Alexander/Mendoza campaign qualified for write-in votes for California. Mimi Soltysik and Lynn Lomibao made everything

come together during the campaign. The two of them worked tirelessly to coordinate all the activities of the campaign. I will never be able to thank them enough.

My vice-presidential running mate, Alex Mendoza committed time and energy to the campaign, sharing time with his family and running a full-time business. Billy Wharton and Veronica Nowakowski worked as the campaign strategist to make sure that our campaign message was maximizing its potential, with the greatest impact nationally. Angela Sarlay worked as the campaign treasurer and freely contributed her time and effort while raising a family and working two jobs. Greg Pason made sure that the campaign stayed connected within the national organization of the SPUSA and coordinated our efforts nationally. Zac Goldstein helped the campaign reach millions through social media, and Justin Kahm helped to coordinate information and helped our write-in efforts in Montana.

Others who proved to be invaluable to the campaign were John Strinka. Strinka coordinated our write-in efforts in Indiana and made our campaign visit to Indiana and Ohio a tremendous success. Maggie Phair, Art Kazar, John Quinn Brisben and others, helped fund our campaign through multiple financial contributions. Ruthann Amarteifio helped with communications on Facebook and also donated airtime on *Blog Talk* radio. Scott Tucker stood by the campaign and helped the campaign reach working people beyond the U.S. borders. Many others shared their homes, their food, their time and their transportation to make our visits across the nation possible.

What was your campaign strategy?

Knowing that raising campaign funds would be the most challenging, the campaign staff decided early on to utilize social media. It paid off. Through the Internet and Facebook, the campaign was invited to speak at high school and college campuses. Facebook, Twitter, independent media and the Internet helped the Alexander/Mendoza campaign to reach tens of millions of working people throughout the U.S. and internationally. We tackled working-class issues through TV, radio, Facebook, the Internet, print media and mobile phones. The campaign committee understood that door-to-door work is expensive; fortunately, the Internet and networking helped us save millions of campaign dollars.

What was the most effective approach?

The campaign staff understood the benefit of social media, and we understood that we needed to reach people on issues that working people share daily with their family and friends: jobs, education, health care, housing, energy -- and the needs of the communities in which we live. The Alexander/Mendoza campaign presented solutions from a socialist perspective.

What was your messaging and which messages were most effective?

During these difficult times, as during the Great Depression, millions of working people are now open to socialist ideas. The Alexander/Mendoza campaign was always clear when delivering the message that we are committed to the transformation of capitalism through the creation of a democratic socialist society. Our campaign made it clear to all that capitalism is a complete failure and will never work for working people.

People are struggling nationwide. Therefore, messages about jobs and earnings were most effective. This message reached all age groups, including seniors, high school students, college students, and working families. More than half the nation is struggling to make ends meet. Therefore, addressing economics was key to our campaign. With the youth, we discussed education. With working families and seniors, we discussed health care and household earnings. The Alexander/Mendoza campaign presented socialist solutions that were well-received by all groups.

What were some of the challenges to your position?

As a presidential candidate, you can expect that there will be challenges. However, the challenges were few. When someone challenged me regarding homeless issues, I could respond that I was homeless in Los Angeles for months. When I was challenged regarding poverty issues, I could say that I lived in poverty as a child. When I was challenged on labor issues, I spoke to them based upon my experience as a retail clerk, as a truck driver, and as a general contractor. I have worn suits and I have worn blue-collar shirts. I have been a warehouseman, and I have worked on assembly lines. I have worked as a political lobbyist and knocked on tens of thousands of doors addressing issues that concern working people. I could always draw on my life experiences as a working person to address any challenge to my position.

Describe the political climate in California.

California is predominately Democrat. However, during this election, we found more working people were open to socialist ideas. Whether Democrats or Republicans, working people are beginning to realize that there is little difference between the two political parties -- and that, by voting Democrat or Republic, they are limiting themselves to choosing between the twin parties of evil.

What are some issues specific to your community that you could relate to?

The conditions in my neighborhood are common in many communities across America. I see vacant homes in my neighborhood because families cannot afford to pay their mortgage or rent. I see homeless people every day as I travel to work. I see families struggling to pay for food and the high cost of gasoline. As a presidential candidate, I was able to fully relate to the people that shared my concerns. They knew I could relate to their hardships; they knew I had walked in their shoes.

What kind of coverage did you get with local, national or international media outlets?

Scott Tucker wrote an excellent article on the campaign for *TruthDig.com*, and there was an article about the campaign on the *TheRoot.com*. Both gave the campaign wide exposure. *TheExaminer.com*, an online publication, provided ongoing updates on the campaign. Fox News and Fox Business News provided coverage prior to the



SPUSA National Convention. However, there was little interest from the corporate media until a few weeks prior to the General Election. Several media outlets in Europe also showed a special interest in

the campaign.

What were some of the greatest challenges or obstacles, and how did you overcome them?

The greatest challenge to the campaign was the lack of funding. The campaign was managed on small donations that were received from working families. For every dollar that we received, President Obama and Mitt Romney received \$250,000 each. However, I've always believed that you can accomplish anything with enough money, time or effort. The Alexander/Mendoza campaign effectively maximized the latter two; we collectively donated time and effort.

Anything surprising happen during your campaign?

The greatest surprise during the campaign was during the state convention of the Peace and Freedom Party. I had been a member of the Peace and Freedom Party since 1998 and learned about socialism from the members in this California-based socialist organization. I had done voter registration to help PFP maintain California ballot status; I had run for statewide office on the party's ballot line; I worked on building membership within the party; and I represented the party as a strong supporter for 14 years.

The Peace and Freedom Party had four individuals seeking their ballot line for the 2012 General Election: three socialists, one reformist, and one comedian, Roseanne Barr. The PFP delegates chose to have a comedian as their presidential nominee. If we wish to collectively build the socialist movement, we must choose our representatives well. We need Socialists who understand that only socialism will provide for the future needs of working people, and that the challenges of working people will not be resolved by reforms or comic relief.

What are some things you would have liked to do, if you had more time and resources?

It was my desire to visit more schools and colleges throughout the nation. With better organization on a national level and more Socialists supporting the campaign in other states, the campaign should have been on a minimum of 10 state ballots and had write-in status in a dozen more states. However, the greatest future resource for building the Socialist movement is the reality that capitalism is in free-fall and will not survive. The system is built upon a lie that is only being sustained by multiple lies. The Alexander/Mendoza



campaign was not about winning a presidential campaign; it was about building the SPUSA membership, sharing the principles and platform of the SPUSA, and informing the public what socialism has to offer working people.

How do you think the results of your campaign reflected the political consciousness of people in your community specifically and the American public in general?

The results of the Alexander/Mendoza campaign can be measured by the way our message was received. The campaign was very well-received and had a strong impact on the social consciousness of the nation. The campaign caused many to pause and think -- and rethink -- socialism and capitalism. In many ways, public perception was in our favor. We were able to reach the young, the old, and people of all ethnic backgrounds. We were able to do this by instilling a sense of hope through the understanding of their challenges and needs. The SPUSA needs to build upon our successes and take a greater leadership role in the Socialist movement. The Time is NOW!

Do you plan to run for office again? If so, for what position? If not, why?

I do not intend to run for public office in the future. I have worked as a political activist for most of my life, and my wife has supported my activism throughout our entire marriage. It is time for me to give a little back and spend more time with the

one I love. I will always be a part of the Socialist movement, and I will always be there for working people -- but not as a candidate for public office.

Any final thoughts, observations, anecdotes?

I believe the U.S. political system is completely corrupt. We must continue to lead. However, it will not be in Congress or the White House. As Socialists, we must lead in the streets, in town halls, and in our neighborhoods. The Occupy movement is the face of a revolution that is crossing the nation. I believe we will win because capitalism is destined to fail. We only need to continue our work together, to continue supporting each other, and to continue building toward a Socialist future.

Mary Alice Herbert

Candidate for Secretary of State (Vermont)

I'm a 77-year-old retired public school teacher with four middle-aged children. I'm part of the last "American Dream" generation and see the difference between my comfortable retirement and that which they are likely to face. My family moved from North Carolina to Chelsea, VT, where my late husband, Fred, and I each taught one of Republican Governor Ray Keyser's children. We moved to Putney in 1963.

I became a regular Liberty Union candidate for Secretary of State in the 1980s, but in 1996, the year I retired from teaching in Brattleboro, I "ran" against Howard Dean instead as "The Kindergarten Teacher Who Wants to Teach the Governor a Lesson." Big issues then were that Dean refused to support the single-payer health care plan the VT Democratic party had proposed and that the state teachers retirement was being consistently underfunded.

The Liberty Union Party Platform, which defines my political philosophy, says that "Government ought to move in the direction of assuring that the wealth and resources of the world will be used to provide a materially secure life for all, simultaneously preserving the planet and its resources for future generations."

As a Liberty Union candidate I'm also endorsed by the Socialist Party-USA, which chose me as their candidate for Vice President of the United States in 2004. (Convention delegates were impressed that I had come in 3rd in a field of 8 candidates for governor of VT and Howard Dean was a presidential candidate in 2004.)

This was a wonderful opportunity to travel around the country and see how SP members ran their chapters and participated in local issues. I went by Amtrak to South Carolina, Texas, and Ohio and flew to Wisconsin and California. Everywhere I went, I was surprised by how interested people are in Vermont. I was asked about our ban on billboards and if we really do have the only state capitol without a McDonalds. I was impressed by all the Vermont products, especially our cheese and maple syrup, which were on sale everywhere. This brought home to me how important branding, trademarks and regulation of companies exporting our products are and that this is the purview of the VT Secretary of State.

I believe this office should use its leverage over new businesses and corporations to help build the green energy network which will employ many of

the young people we need to keep in Vermont. Electricity produced by wood or wind power provides five full time jobs per megawatt. Efficiency Vermont, which could be expanded, provides three, while nuclear power plants employ only one worker per megawatt. We could also employ many of the 211 Vermonters presently employed at the VT-Yankee Nuclear Plant. This office should also use its leverage to help close VT-Yankee and send its owner, the duplicitous Entergy Corporation, back to Louisiana.

As Vermont's single-payer health system begins to take effect, it's important that we license health care workers of all kinds -- another good job possibility for young Vermonters. And, as my fellow retirees, who are committed to living here year-round, age and increase in number other job possibilities will grow. We'll need all kinds of services in order to stay in our homes and will be able to pay for them.



It is important that the businesses licensed by this office fit into the need to lessen our carbon footprint and protect our rural productive environment. Cooperatives, non-profits, and community-based businesses that support local food production and consumption, provide public transportation and low-income housing should be given preference.

Pat Noble

Candidate for Board of Education - Red Bank, New Jersey



“ ... Let’s use this election as a building block towards a stronger movement for a better education system. Consider joining the Socialist Party USA, a multi-tendency, democratic socialist organization that is committed to building a free, liberated society. Additionally, consider joining Revolutionary Unity, a new and energetic organization that seeks to unite anti-capitalists of various stripes under one banner.” -- Pat Noble, 11/16/12

What motivated you to run for office?

I wanted to use the platform of a candidate as an opportunity to spread socialist ideals to receptive individuals. The vast majority of electoral campaigns in the United States involve capitalist candidates that ignore, or are at least oblivious to, working-class issues. Running against these politicians gives a window of time to directly attack their politics, while at the same time providing and promoting a left-wing alternative. Understanding this is what motivated me to run.

What was your campaign budget?

In the Board of Education campaign, I did not accept campaign donations, nor did I have a campaign bank account. I had a bank account of \$200 for my 2011 Monmouth County Freeholder campaign, which was the combination of my own money and \$50 from a friend. I found that my campaigns were not financially demanding, so active fundraising was not necessary. Seeing as how we won the Board of Education election without fundraising, this turned out to be true! Anyone who wanted to donate to my campaign was directed to the Socialist National Committee electoral fund.

Did you run openly as a socialist?

The Board of Education elections are non-partisan, so no party designation appeared by my name on the ballot. In partisan races in New Jersey, we are able to put the title “Socialist Party USA” next to our candidates’ names, despite the state giving us no recognition as an organization. Despite this, I made it as clear as possible that I am a Socialist. My campaign website, as well as all campaign literature, stated that I am a Socialist, as well as a Socialist Party-endorsed candidate.

What kind of help did you get? Who were the key supporters of your campaign?

Socialist Party members in the area were very helpful in promoting the campaign, particularly by helping to distribute campaign literature. I know of at least three Red Bank residents that went so far as to talk with their neighbors about voting for me. My comrades in Revolutionary Unity, another group I’m involved in, were helpful in using social media to promote the campaign. Greg Pason deserves a specific mention for working to promote a Socialist Party ticket in New Jersey, rather than three, separate campaigns (presidential, US Senate, Board of Education).

What was your campaign strategy/approach?

In this campaign, strategy manifested itself in two forms: social media and literature. Social media is a powerful tool to reach out to a large number of people quickly, especially to the youth. Putting technology aside, simply talking one-on-one with literature in-hand can be a very effective way

to win someone over, not to mention the human face it puts on the politics being put forward.

What was your messaging and what were the responses you received?

This was a socialist campaign, and its message was promoted as such. With a local campaign, the key is to adapt a socialist message to local issues. For example, promoting an anti-imperialist position came out in the campaign platform in the form of opposing military recruiters in the high school. While there are always the right-wingers that will criticize no matter what, I believe the overall response to this campaign was positive.

Describe the political climate in Red Bank.

Red Bank is a very Democrat-populated town. The borough council is presently all-Democrat, and the Mayor position has been held by the Democrats for decades. Republicans occasionally run, though with a low level of funding and support.

What are some of the main issues affecting your community? How did you address those concerns within a socialist framework?

Education across the United States is facing an onslaught from the right-wing, and the Red Bank Regional High School is no different. Between budget cuts and an ineffective teachers union, as well as heavy military recruitment, there are a ton of issues involved. When addressing any issue, it's important to take a step back and look at it through a socialist perspective. Doing this is what creates the difference between simply disagreeing with the status quo, and presenting a viable alternative to the status quo.

Did people challenge your position? What did they say, and how did you respond?

As with any radical ideas, there will be people to challenge you. The key is to stay calm, cool, and collected. I've found that most right-wingers that challenge you are doing so on partial information and distorted realities, so they can be easily refuted. At a youth event in Princeton, NJ, an individual tried to make the all-too-common argument that all socialists are simply promoting the Soviet-era politics of Lenin and Trotsky. We discussed the "third camp" approach that the Socialist Party USA took towards the United States and Soviet Union, as well as the differences between democratic socialism and Leninism. By the end of the conversation, he still didn't agree with left-wing politics, but at least understood the differences in

various left-wing thought.

What kind of media coverage did your campaign receive?

Outside of a news article that announced all of the area Board of Education candidates, which simply listed races, names, and addresses, there was no pre-election media coverage of this election that I know of. I had hoped for more coverage, but given how low-key the Board of Education elections are in Red Bank, it is a continuation of an unfortunate trend.



What were some of the greatest challenges or obstacles? How did you overcome them?

Being a socialist candidate is always challenging, especially considering how little most people know about socialism. In the short term, the only way to overcome this is to present a consistent message, and to spread this message to as many people as possible.

Anything surprising happen during your campaign?

I'd say the fact that we won was the most surprising. I expected that we would do well in the vote tally, and I hoped for a win, but I did not expect a win or loss. I'm still a little bit in shock that a socialist was elected in this area; the fact that it was me just adds to it. I'm sure I'll shake it off by the time I'm sworn in.

What are some things you would have liked to do, if you had more time and resources?

I wish we were able to have more media coverage, but I am not sure if more time or resources could have helped that. I also would have liked to campaign more in the last weeks before election day, but Hurricane Sandy effectively suspended physical campaigning for the last week.

How do you think the results of your campaign reflected the political consciousness of people in your community specifically and the American public in general?

By electing a socialist and a young person, as well as ousting the incumbent, I believe that winning this election proves that the majority of people in the community are ready for radical change to the regional school board. Since the Red Bank voters also gave a majority of votes to every Democrat on the ballot, there is obviously a long way to go in terms of political consciousness. We also have to remember that consciousness extends far beyond the voting booth, and vote tallies are not the correct way to measure it. Instead, our measurement should be based on how many people are organizing and protesting for social justice and economic democracy.

Do you plan to run for office again? If so, for what position? If not, why?

I hope to run for office again in the future, though when and what for remains to be decided. I've legally been able to vote in two elections now, and in both elections, I have been on the ballot. For now, I look forward to the challenges of being an elected socialist, rather than a socialist candidate. That being said, I also look forward to promoting the same message of democracy, solidarity, and freedom that I promoted in my campaign.

What are the responsibilities of your elected position?

The purpose of the Board of Education is to establish policy and oversight for the school district. As a board member, I will participate in this, while at the same time bringing a socialist and youth perspective to the table.

Who will you be working with?

There are eight other Board of Education members. Additionally, I hope to work with both students and teachers to increase their role in deciding how the school should function.

How long is your term?

Three years.

In what capacity do you think you will be able to promote socialism in your new position?

I obviously cannot say how far my message will go on the Board of Education, but I can say that I will promote a socialist position as much as possible.



Greg Pason

Candidate for U.S. Senate



What motivated you to run for office?

Senator Robert Menendez was the incumbent and a traditional liberal who is a hawk on international issues. He is especially aggressive on intervention in Iran, is hostile toward Cuba and Venezuela and has given blind support to Israel. I felt this was an opportunity for the Party to focus on these issues while promoting democratic socialist ideas.

I was the Party's candidate for US Senate in the past and have a long history in anti-war and social movement work, so I hoped to use this opportunity to promote the Party and our ideas.

What kind of budget were you working with?

We had very little cash. The campaign raised approximately \$2,000, which went to promotional items, a website, transit and photocopied literature.

Did you run openly as a socialist?

I ran under the slogan "Socialist Party USA" on the ballot, and every palm card, bumper sticker and press release listed the Party. The entire campaign

was primarily focused on building the Socialist Party and providing a democratic socialist program, so Party promotion was even more important than promoting my name. It was important not only to run as an open "socialist" but also to run clearly as the candidate of the Socialist Party USA, to differentiate us from the various Leninist "socialist" parties as well as the openly (ideologically) anti-socialist Green Party. This worked well since we had the opportunity to debate the Green Party and put forward democratic socialist ideas.

What kind of help did you get? Who were the key supporters of your campaign?

We had a handful of volunteers. Members helped petition and table, and our allies were also very helpful. This was a DIY campaign with lots of tabling at street fairs, web and radio work, school appearances and face-to-face discussions. We also had support from members in NYC and non-member allies in NJ while petitioning, and members from across the state helped promote us.

What was your primary campaign strategy, and what was most effective?

I used social media, street fairs, school appearances, local forums, and any media we could get. I spoke at "Occupy" events, schools, "tent cities," and at lots of peace vigils and organizational fundraisers. Street fairs and forums were the best way to get ideas out to larger groups. Social networking worked in getting statements out.

What was your messaging and what were the responses you received?

The campaign was solely about building the party and prompting democratic socialism, and that message was received well or respected by most people. I was open and honest and didn't try to hide our message. We had some great debates with Greens in the state, and I think those debates highlighted the strong differences we have with them, but we also supported each other by sharing info on campaigning opportunities.

I'd say the most negative responses came from Democrats and liberal activists who either didn't like to acknowledge that they were supporting a candidate (Menendez) who represented many of the things they have protested in the past (attacks on civil liberties, expansion of the military

budget, US imperialism), or didn't like that a Party to their "left" was allowed to exist. At one 4th of July parade, a local Democratic Party group tried to get us removed. But all in all, people were respectful and interested in democratic socialism.

Please describe the political climate in New Jersey.

This campaign was a statewide Federal campaign. New Jersey tends to be what they call a "blue state," although it has elected reactionaries (i.e. Chris Christie).

What are some of the main issues affecting your specific community? How did you address those concerns within a socialist framework?

Since this was a statewide Federal campaign, our message related to national issues. We were able to frame socialist alternatives to problems and compared them to the current Democratic administration and Senator Menendez.

We had some key issues that specifically fit this race: slashing the military budget by 50% and opposing US imperialism, a socialist alternative to "Obamacare," a true progressive tax system, and a national employment plan, which focused on local cooperatives and collectives as opposed to bailing out big business, etc.

I promoted these ideas at every event and had a few opportunities to contrast a democratic socialist position to ideas of the right and that of the Greens.

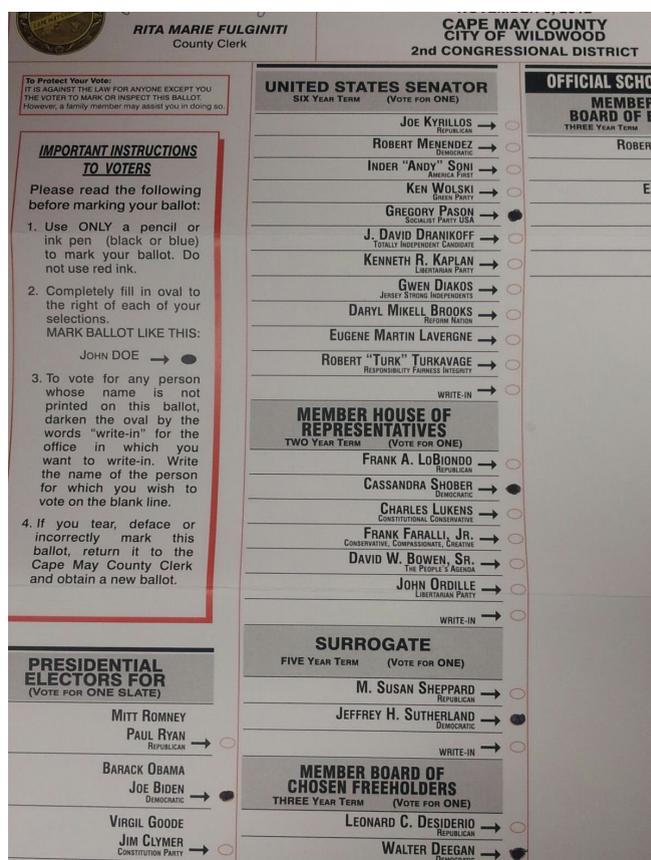
I believe my role in the anti-war movement and many past and present community coalitions and projects helped garner support. But the campaign was primarily about promoting the Socialist Party and democratic socialism -- not me as an individual. Having a long history of activism and coalition work does help, though. The key problem is that many activists who belong to trade unions and some movement organizations ended up having to campaign for a pro-war Democrat as part of their jobs (union work, LGBTQ, etc.). This is a serious issue any alternative party campaign will face. It also points out a clear reason for a break with liberal reformist ideologies. We had anti-war labor activists who were paid to organize workers to campaign for a candidate who represented ideas and issues they spent so much of their "free time" protesting.

Did people challenge your position? What did they say, and how did you respond?

I had many opportunities to interact with individuals who disagreed. Sometimes it was on principle, but many times I had the opportunity to dialogue. I think the best debates we had were those that included Libertarian Party and Green Party reps. Clear ideological positions were laid out, which contrasted to each other.

Please describe the kind of media outreach you did.

We did as much as possible. Press releases were sent to various media outlets, e-mails were sent and we had a handful of interviews (including the NY Times, although it was published on Election Day).



What were some of the greatest obstacles, and how did you overcome them?

The greatest challenge in the campaign was getting attention. There were 10 candidates on the ballot. This gave the major media an excuse to ignore all of us. We responded by focusing on local events, using social media and working with other candidates to set up our own events (debates and forums). This problem also carried over to Election Day. The ballot was crowded and

placement differed in each county. Voters had to hunt for us and find us (sometimes lined up with other candidates that did not match our ideology).

Another problem was that Hurricane Sandy struck during the last 10 days of the campaign and caused the cancellation of events and a general end of campaigning. Residents across the state were in crisis and many lost homes and were without power or access to any media. The focus needed to be on post-Sandy relief, so our campaign stopped a bit early.

Anything surprising happen during your campaign?

We got an endorsement from New Jersey NOW. This was overridden by the National NOW-PAC (which endorsed Menendez and didn't even interview me), but it was a great sign. Another surprise was the election of Pat Noble to the Red Bank Board of Education. I promoted this campaign everywhere I went, and Pat's election was a major victory for the Party. It will help us organize for the state election next year.

What are some things you would have liked to do, if you had more time and resources?

There was so much more we could have done with more resources. We would've attended many more events, advertised and sent out mass mailings. It's frustrating to not be able to respond to every situation and, worse, not be able to attend many events. I also wish we would have had the people power required to get the Alexander/Mendoza slate on the ballot.

How do you think the results of your campaign reflected the political consciousness of people in your community specifically and the American public in general?

It's tough getting through the lesser-evil mindset and disappointing to see so many "radicals" working directly or indirectly for pro-war Democrats. We run campaigns to promote ideas and our organization, but part of the campaign is to promote ideas like proportional representation, free media for candidates, and a break from capitalist parties. I was inspired by the interest in socialism and the rejection of capitalism from a growing group of people.

Do you plan to run for office again? If so, for what position? If not, why?

I hope to take a few elections off and re-focus on movement work. We hope to reorganize the "Take Back Trenton" coalition and hope for more local victories like Pat Noble's successful campaign for the Board of Education. The Party will most likely also be suing the state of New Jersey for a registration status so that voters can identify themselves with the SPUSA.



Any final thoughts, observations or anecdotes?

The campaign had clear goals such as promoting democratic socialist ideas and differentiating our ideas from traditional "left" liberal reformism and Leninist authoritarianism. We had the opportunity to put these ideas up against Green Party "small-scale capitalism" and the Libertarian Party's free-market utopianism, as well as the capitalist ideologies promoted by the Democrats and Republicans. Although we had very limited access to the rest of the public, the most important part of this campaign was to run an open Socialist Party USA member and to provide an alternative. The struggle to win people over may be easier than convincing voters to break from "lesser evilism," but we'll continue to campaign and grow in New Jersey.

John Strinka

Candidate for State Representative (Indiana)

What motivated you to run for office?

I felt I had to. The sponsor and prime mover of Indiana's Right to Work law was going to be unopposed, which is very common in Indiana. After spending months at the Statehouse opposing this bill very specifically, and the rest of the Republican legislative agenda (think Wisconsin in slow motion), and receiving very little respect from our elected representatives, I decided it was necessary to give the people of my district a way to disapprove of this odious law in a public election. Basically, I did this because I believed it was necessary and there really was no one else willing to do it. So I did.

What kind of budget were you working with?

Initially very small, but once it became clear I was going to spend the time to publicize it, support came. The local SP gave me and our other candidates \$500 each, which pretty much emptied our campaign treasury. Many people, some in the party and many not, came forward with individual contributions in the \$25 to \$100 range. Finally, my family members contributed generously, and heartened by all this, I spent around \$7,000 from my retirement funds for a total war chest of about \$10,000.

Did you run openly as a socialist?

Emphatically, yes! I knew I would be very unlikely to be elected. One of my primary objectives was to destigmatize "socialism" and to put it out clearly in the public square where people could openly examine our beliefs. In large part, it was a massive consciousness-raising effort.

What kind of help did you get? Who were the key supporters of your campaign?

I must thank SP member Gilbert Kuhn for giving freely of his time whenever it was needed, especially for canvassing and many time consuming activities. Brad Lorton, a good friend and local DSA head contributed both funds and his considerable expertise with political literature. National Secretary, Greg Pason, was tremendous with general advice and indispensable in setting up the website. Mimi Soltysik and Lynn Lomibao were unfailingly supportive over the net, especially in arranging "the Stewart Alexander Midwest Tour," as was Michigan SPer Adam Adriansson. Jerry



Levy gave a fantastic performance of Marx in Soho without charge for our biggest fundraiser. SP member Michael Murphy helped with canvassing, Jeremy Townsley provided invaluable demographic analysis, and many, many people encouraged me with the assurance of their votes and encouraging comments. Nick Selm and especially Steve Vladiou provided graphic design. My sister, Marlene McCrillis, my daughter Katya Strinka, and SP member Pete Behrendt were incredibly generous with their financial support. Most of all, my younger daughter, Kristina Frey served as my campaign Treasurer, and served to remind me when I was "acting like a codger," and personally helped me get going when I was feeling overwhelmed. Finally, my wife Mary was cheerfully supportive and always gracious, especially when my insecurities got the better of me, which was way too often.

What was your campaign strategy?

The beginning was determined by Indiana's ballot access requirements, which meant gathering signatures equivalent to 2% of the total vote for Secretary of State in the last election. That meant I had to acquire 636 signatures to generate the necessary 444 for my district (they are scrutinized

carefully by the county clerk, and 25% rejection is actually a very low rejection rate for petition signatures). My campaign "staff" and I easily spoke to over 2,000 people door-to-door, at the public library and other public places. Social Media, Facebook as well as the website, is simply assumed -- you cannot get the word out without some kind of electronic presence. Most schools were not receptive to requests to speak; neither were civic organizations or churches. The League of Women Voters even turned me down! Most of my speaking gigs were at union halls (not in my district), and very few advocacy organizations.

What, in your opinion, was the most effective approach for your campaign?

Hard to say. The biggest disappointment was the lack of public forums and opportunities to address politically aware audiences. Talking to people individually was a favorite, because most noticed I lacked horns and a tail, and were, thereby, encouraged to engage in political discussion. Print ads and billboards were essential in generating awareness and reached far more people than I could have otherwise. I was also proud of my issue-oriented, non-sound bite website, which provided solid info for those wanting to check out socialism.

What was your messaging and what were the responses you received?

The attention-getter was Right to Work, and the offer of an option if people were not happy about the radical right agenda forced through the Indiana General Assembly. Many people who would not have entertained socialism were upset enough about this to give me a hearing. I emphasized a 5-point program, attacking Right to Work as the headliner. I took advantage of the campaign to promote true Socialist programs, specifically direct government employment (like the old CCC or WPA on a state level), a livable minimum wage of \$16.00/hr, K through graduate education provided without cost to the individual by the state, and single payer health care that would protect women's health and reproductive rights. Most of the reaction was to the protest nature of the campaign. There wasn't a lot of direct reaction to the rest, except that a lot of it was genuinely new to people -- they'd never considered you could even think about such things in public policy.

Which messages were the most effective?

By far, the reaction to the far-right legislation by

the last General Assembly.

Please describe the political climate in your district.

76% Republican. Of five elections for State Rep in Hamilton County (comfortable north suburban Indianapolis), my race was the ONLY one where the Republican candidate had any opponent at all.

What are some of the main issues affecting your specific community? How did you address those concerns within a socialist framework?

I campaigned on state-level issues: collective bargaining, education, and jobs affect all communities in the state.

What are some issues specific to your community that were integral to garnering public support?

The education level is much higher than surrounding areas. Many of these people are fully aware the current system is deeply flawed and open-minded enough to consider a challenge to it.

Did people challenge your position? What did they say, and how did you respond?

Most were not terribly responsive to socialism per se, as these were primarily small "winners" in the capitalist system. However, many people understood that the current political system does nothing to support the common good, and responded favorably to the social-justice approach. There was less of the "godless Communist" and "Baby-killer" accusations than I expected, except they did become more pronounced as election day approached. That's never pleasant.



Please describe the kind of media outreach you did.

Press releases, billboards, print and TV interviews (not all aired), webcasts and web radio, paid dis-

play ads, plain and glossy literature, direct mail, and innumerable calls and e-mail follow-ups to make any of it happen at all. This is a full job by itself.

What kind of coverage did you get with local, national or international media outlets?

Not bad, considering -- all local, but I also got articles in the major newspaper as well as alternative press and some local TV. Most of this was played as a "novelty item" by the media, but, hey, any publicity is good if you're small and maligned.

What were some of the greatest obstacles, and how did you overcome them?

Indifference. Most people can't conceive of anything different, and the suggestion that it could be better produces a lot of dissonance. People are totally wrapped up in the everyday struggle of making a living and don't really want to engage in or think about politics in any kind of meaningful way. People actually expect to buy candidates the same way they buy breakfast cereal, and it is enormously difficult to get them to engage. There is a disturbing undercurrent, roughly 25% of the people who simply do not respond to any facts that conflict with their worldview. Don't know about "overcoming" them, just keep on truckin'. I will say when the people who most vehemently attack you are ignorant, it's a pretty good sign you're on the right side of things.

Anything surprising happen during your campaign?

Lots and lots of people told me that they thought they were the only ones in the neighborhood who had left leanings. Many were pleasantly surprised that a candidate would openly embrace a left position at all, let alone socialism. After it was all over, it was these folks, and being able to give them heart, that made the thing worthwhile.

What are some things you would have liked to do, if you had more time and resources?

Win.

How do you think the results of your campaign reflected the political consciousness of people in your community specifically and the American public in general.

One small step forward. 10% was not enough to get a lot of attention, but those who were engaged were amazed an open Socialist could get 2,862 votes for State Rep in the heartland of conservative

America.

Do you plan to run for office again? If so, for what position? If not, why?

Probably not. Being a candidate for public office took me way outside my comfort zone, and I found it psychologically and financially difficult. However, I did this out of a certain feeling that it was something necessary to do, and there was no one else to do it. A similar sense of obligation could persuade me again, but I don't think anytime soon.



Any final thoughts, observations, anecdotes?

I want to thank all the people who helped along the way -- this was a true Socialist campaign in the sense that the people must do it themselves if they want to make things better. Heartfelt thanks to all 2,862 citizens of Hamilton County who had the courage and integrity to actually cast their vote for socialism in a public election.

And finally, I could write a book -- with a little help from my friends, perhaps I will.

Keep Red in the Black

This is OUR Party. Let's Keep it Alive!

2012 was an outstanding year. Members convened in Memphis for the National Organizing Conference; we were successful in promoting socialist ideals and the Party through General Election campaigns; one of our members was elected into office; and our Locals kept various action campaigns alive across the country.

But fundraising fell short, and **the Party urgently needs your support.**

The Party is only as strong as our members. With monthly donations, you can help ensure that we:

- **Cover operating costs** (telephone, copier, office supplies and equipment, bulk mailings, website costs, etc.)
- **Support outreach activities** (print and tabling materials)
- **Pay our Secretary a fair salary with benefits**
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Support for the Party and socialism is getting stronger. **We must seize this moment and continue to grow the movement.**

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