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Tazewell County Board

Continuing a Family Tradition of Community Service

September 1st, 2011

September ASO Magazine Column **2012 is an Opportunity for** **Action for Those Willing to Step Forward**

One thing I love about professional sports is how many subject matter experts are willing at a moment's notice to speak up concerning what went wrong with their team. Just sit down on a coach and listen to any gathering of men go at it while watching a sports game on TV. Every single one of them would have made a better decision than the team manager or sports player. From the comfort of their armchair, they are more than willing to let everyone know what should have happened or what they would have done.

For those that are looking at this objectively they wonder why these great sports managers are sitting at home in their armchairs rather than on the world wide stage of the sports arena. Obviously we all know the answer; hindsight is easier than actually making the decision when it needs to be made. Also, it is easier to sit back and criticize than step forward and take action yourself. These people are commonly referred to as, "Monday Morning Quarterbacks".

Politics also has its share of "Monday Morning Quarterbacks".

Anyone watching the developments in politics today quickly can see the knee-jerk reaction being pressed to throw out all incumbents and replace them. We hear the calls to throw the bums out. According to those pressing this agenda, they will be replaced by more qualified individuals. Well, here is your chance.

The 2012 elections start this month as candidates will begin passing petitions for the February 2012 Primary and November 2012 General Elections. These candidates must obtain signatures from fellow citizens to get their names on the ballots. And unlike other elections in which only a portion of the legislators are elected, in 2012 a once a decade election will take place in which all legislative positions are available. What better opportunity to put all of this talk into action.

If these outcries are true, if we are going to indeed "through the bums out", then each of these positions should be challenged. This will not happen. Just like the armchair sports fans, talk and debate is the most to come from many individuals. Only a rare chosen few will be willing to step forward to actually take action. And of those that do step forward, many will find a sea of mundane work, long hours, and thankless actions that must be taken.

I do not write this to discourage individuals from running for election. Here in Tazewell County, I have let it be known I would be happy to talk and assist any individual interested in running for election. I feel it is important to let these individuals know what to expect if they get elected. I am happy to work with them to answer their questions concerning the time commitment.

Here in Tazewell County, an individual elected to the County Board will at minimum be appointed to two committees. At a minimum, these meetings will last around an hour. Add in the monthly County Board Meeting and an individual is at minimum looking at a 3 hours a month commitment. These 3 hours is in theory the minimum.

In actuality, each month my two committee assignments take around 3 hours total, 1.5 hours each. In addition, I usually attend two other committees so I can more thoroughly understand the issues coming forward. Add another 2 to 3 hours each month on average. Then the County Board Meeting adds another hour a month. Now finally add the behind the scenes, at home pre-meeting research and preparation. While it widely varies from individual to individual, let's just add another hour minimum and we find an actual minimum monthly commitment of around 7 to 8 hours a month.

Do we need change? Yes. Is it wrong for these armchair politicians to call for throwing the bums out? No, they have every right to call for action. At some point though the talk must end and these same individuals need to step forward, put in the time commitment and take action. What they will find will be a job that may be more than they first intended it to be and a countless supply of armchair politicians calling for their removal.

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