

Opinion



**Free Press
Viewpoint**

The heat is on

By Janet Redman

Former Vice President Al Gore, who brought us the 2006 blockbuster "An Inconvenient Truth," has made waves again by issuing a challenge to the United States to source all of its electricity from clean, renewable energy within a decade.

Gore's call, made to a crowd assembled in the Constitution Hall of the Daughters of the American Revolution in Washington, D.C., is indeed revolutionary. It goes beyond the most aggressive proposals on the table from members of Congress – or even most environmental groups.

And nothing short of an energy revolution is needed if we are to stave off the worst effects of a climate crisis. Whether you think Gore's challenge is a pie-in-the-sky daydream or a long overdue wake-up call, it certainly has succeeded in igniting heated discussion. Across the country, around the "blogosphere," in the hallways of environmental organizations, people are poring over the possibility of getting to "zero-carbon" electricity in 10 years.

Gore's speech didn't lay out a roadmap for getting to 100 percent clean and renewable energy, but it did point to two of the most important ingredients of any viable plan – energy independence and energy security.

Energy independence means getting out from under the thumb of those forces working to wrest control of America's future from the hands of the American people. Energy security comes with knowing we can take care of ourselves as a nation, without the added risk of more Hurricane Katrinas or more wars over oil.

The media is quick to blame the usual suspects as energy prices soar – oil-producing governments that are putting the squeeze on supply or emerging superpowers that are snatching up energy wherever they can get their hands on it. But few contemplate our own responsibility in getting ourselves into this mess and how we now have the golden opportunity to break free.

The disconnect between how much ordinary citizens are dishing out at the pump and how much oil executives are raking in was alarming enough to warrant a congressional hearing in April – and should have each of us questioning how we unwittingly lend our support to their enrichment.

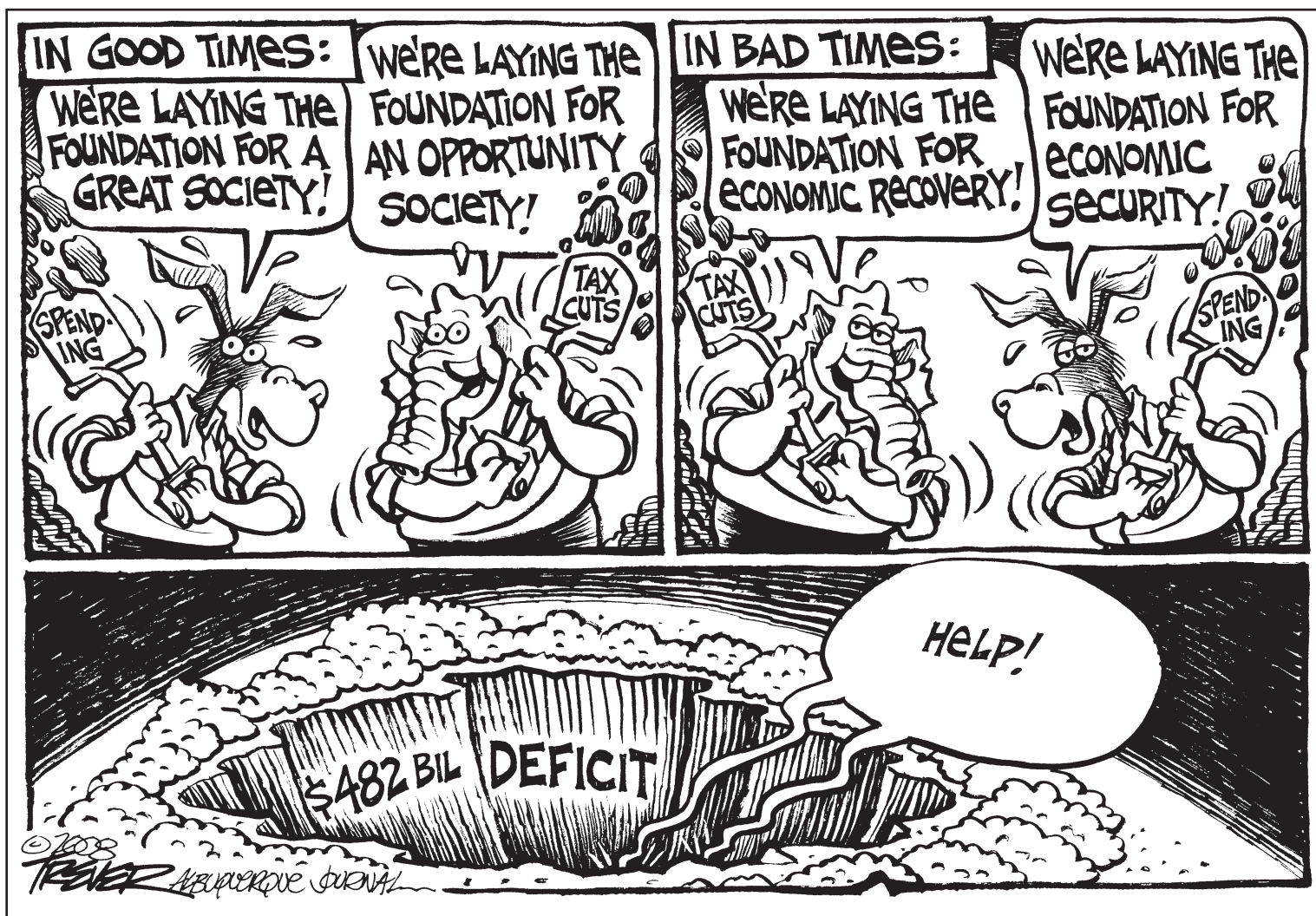
It would be easy to react to a call for energy independence by turning to more domestic drilling, as some have done, but that does little to provide climate and economic security for people and the environment at home and abroad. An energy revolution, like any battle, has to be fought on a number of fronts at once.

At home, we need a New Energy Deal that mirrors the success and scale of job creation that the Works Progress Administration undertook in the Great Depression. We need comprehensive legislation that shifts subsidies from dirty energy to clean alternatives, builds the scaffolding for a renewable energy workforce, and sets the standard for protecting those hit hardest by climate and economic change. And our domestic policy must build the international goodwill needed to get to a global climate deal that is fair for all countries.

Gore has done the work of carving out a space for those with the political will, and the creative drive, to move courageously forward in the fight against climate change. Now the important work for the rest of us is to step into that space with our boldest ideas.

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Unexpected journey

This is the last installment in my three-part series about my tour with the Continental Singers in 2007.

My journey is an ironic story. What I mean is that it's kind of funny that I toured with the Continentals.

Let me explain. In college, I tried out for the Bryan Chorale, which accepted about 100 students. The college only has several hundred students, so surely I would make it, I figured.

But I didn't. After that, I thought, "Maybe I really can't sing. Maybe everyone is just being nice when they ask me to sing. And they must have been lying when they said I did a good job."

But I doubt it. It was more perplexing than disappointing that I didn't make it.

I will say that in all honesty, singing is not my strongest talent. I love doing it, but my idea of singing harmony is singing any note that is not the melody. However, tell me to sing the melody, and it doesn't matter what note the other person is singing.

As for dancing, I enjoy it very much, but due to an absence of any formal training (besides ballet in first grade, which doesn't really count anymore), my body does not naturally adapt to choreographed moves.

Therefore, there is absolutely no reason why I would be qualified to tour with the Continentals. But for some reason that is still unknown to me, I wasn't supposed to sing in the Chorale. Instead, I was supposed to sing with the Continentals and travel the continent and



Michelle Myers

• A Moment with Michelle

overseas.

The other aspect of the tour that is ironic is the fact that I was business manager.

See, the numbering system and I are not the best of friends. In fact, this last semester in college, I was in a remedial math class.

But there I was on tour, handling the incoming and outgoing of money, tracking what we earned and what was spent and filling out business reports that required adding and subtracting.

All of those stressful days of counting money and mailing business reports was worth it, though. By the time Dec. 3 rolled around, which marked the end of the tour, we had performed in 23 states, several cities in Canada (including the biggest mall in the world) and every country in Great Britain.

Also, to give an idea of what our schedule was like, we were overseas for 23 days and did 28 performances. The loaded schedule was very similar back in the states as well as Canada. We occasionally had days off, and when we did, we savored them since they were few and far between.

I also got to know some incredible people through the tour, including a few that I have come to know as my best friends, and several of whom I have been able to visit since the end of tour.

As expected, our last night together was a bittersweet moment since in the back of our minds we knew that we all would never be together again like we were in that moment. When the bus dropped the few of us off at our departing terminal, my heart overflowed with tears. I did not know how I was going to go back to life without these people who laughed, cried, sang and danced with me.

Since then, I have adjusted back to the life of a college student, who is just trying to prove that she is no longer a teenager, but a young woman with a desire to make her mark somewhere in this big world.

While I've been writing this series, I looked back at one of my journal entries from Sept. 1, 2007, just a few days before leaving for rehearsal camp. I simply wrote, "I think we'd be surprised what we are able to accomplish if we dared to push our limits."

Maybe that was the point of this unexpected journey, to accomplish something I didn't think I had the capability of doing. As I have been reminiscing about all the memories that were created on tour, a quote resonates in my mind: "We should always remember - and never forget - that those who will commit to nothing, who stand for nothing, and who risk for nothing, in the end, rarely accomplish anything."

Your turn

Apology for endorsement

Rep. Jim Morrison Colby

I apologize to my friends Scott Showalter and Kevin Berens for having chosen to endorse a Republican candidate in the recently completed Republican primary of August 5th. The party has a rule that we elected officials in the Republican party do not endorse anyone in a contested primary race. I chose to ignore that and deeply regret the stress it created to Scott, Kevin and the citizens of the District. I

apologize for doing so. I look forward to working with everyone in the District and with the Judicial Branch of our Government and again apologize for my behavior. I behaved badly and deeply regret doing so. I did not mean to offend anyone.

On a side note, we will be undergoing an important new census in 2010 that will create a redrawing of political districts in 2010 by the Kansas Legislature. That is one time in which seniority really counts in politics. My current term expires at the end of 2010 (there

will be another election in 2010 for State Representative and some other offices). Unless I hear strong support for me to continue as your elected Representative this term (2009-2010) will be my last term in office.

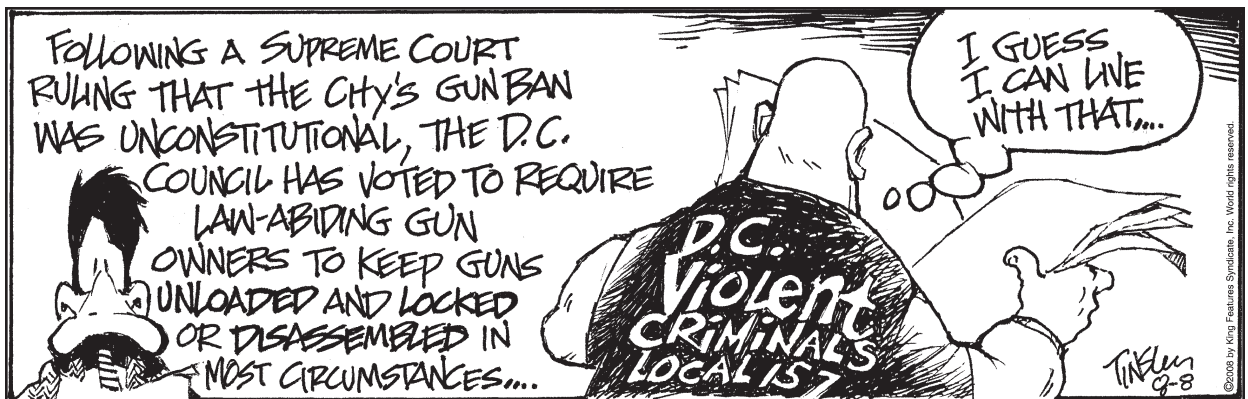
Again I apologize for my bad behavior in breaking the rule "do not endorse" and offending my friends. Thank you, My phone number is (785) 462-3264 and e-mail jmorrison@ink.org. Any other email address is a "hit and miss" as to my receiving it or not.

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Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley



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