

Below are two separate email exchanges between the author of this piece and Brent Regan.

Hello Anne,

Please find my responses below in bold.

Regards
Brent

1.) First, a very general question. When did you first get involved in politics, generally speaking, and when did you get involved in politics in Kootenai County?

April 15th 2009. I was the keynote speaker at the first Tea Party Rally. It was the first time I gave a speech in a public forum.

Were you a member of the Rally Right or Reagan Republicans?

No.

2) When did you first become directly involved with the KCRCC?

May 2016. I was elected precinct committeeman and then chairman.

3) If someone asks you to describe your personal politics, how do you respond?

People have used “conservative” although the concise meaning of that term is ephemeral. My political views are a product of my life experience as an entrepreneur. I am interested in policies that promote prosperity and freedom.

4) Many point to you as the leader of the current political movement in Kootenai County. Of course, your position as chairman suggests as much. But do you see yourself as a political leader?

The premise of your question is faulty. I try to listen and set a good example.

5) After you finished your term on the school board and lost the election, you haven't sought political office again — even when so many have told me that you are much-needed in office, and would be a strong and unwavering voice for conservative politics. I've also been told that you realized that you could operate more effectively behind the scenes. How would you respond?

I am largely satisfied with the legislators we have elected. I find I am more effective at helping make improvements while viewing the big picture.

6) This piece includes some former members of the KCRCC claiming that there's a very narrow and restrictive idea of what a Conservative or Republican can be — that even being friends with someone who's a Democrat makes you a RINO. Others currently on the committee are quoted in the piece arguing that you can be friends with a liberal and still be a conservative. What are your thoughts on this point?

If you change your political views by talking to someone for a few minutes then those views were probably not the result of strong empirical experience. How would we continue to grow the conservative cause without talking to disenchanted Democrats and liberals? I Remember visiting my sister many years ago when she lived in New Orleans. We were walking down Bourbon Street on the way to dinner and passed a nightclub featuring a female impersonator show. The barker turned to my brother in-law and said “Come inside and have a look. Don't be shy, You saw Jaws (the movie) and you didn't turn into a shark!”

7) Last year, you told Bob Nonini “You better control your wife” because she had publicly endorsed Luke Malek. He then handed you the phone and said “You call her.” Do you dispute this account?

Yes, that is NOT what I said, although I can appreciate that it may be what he wanted to hear.

Mrs. Nonini has, on occasion, spoken on behalf of the senator and caused some problems for him. <http://www.cdapress.com/archive/article-c3c81feb-2ef0-5a63-aeaa-5577d0cac879.html> I publicly defended Bob on this matter and wrote a letter for him, at his wife's request, to send the Commander of the Post Falls American Legion, Steve Hanson. My conversation with Bob was catalyzed by Mrs. Nonini's posting in Facebook (May 13th 2016) that she and Bob (we) were endorsing a slate of Republicans at the liberal end of the spectrum. This angered many conservatives. As a courtesy I asked Bob about this said he had no control over who his wife endorses. My response was words to the effect of 'That's fine but when she is speaking for YOU then you need to control what she says.' Apparently he did talk to her because three days later she reposted her (I) endorsements, this time including her husband, to emphasize the point. She took the time to take a dig at me and, in the fullness of time this has morphed in to the slanderous and sexist story you now relate. (screen shots below)



8) There is extensive discussion of the ways in which Reagan's "big tent" has been made smaller — it's harder for people to participate in politics if their conservative politics don't match the KCRCC's. Does it feel that way to you?

No, currently quite the opposite. The committee has a wide variety of members and as chairman I encourage all to participate. You have attended a couple of meetings. Have you seen anyone be marginalized? People are encouraged to participate but if they chose not to they may use "others don't agree with me" as an excuse. If you you need to be in a room were everyone agrees with you then the KCRCC is probably not the best option, because politics.

9) I've been told that one of the reasons that politics have become so ugly within the Idaho GOP is that the Democratic opposition is so slight. In other words: with no one to fight, the GOP turns on itself.

Again, I reject the premise of your argument. You use the word "ugly" to describe the political process. Ask yourself, "What would beautiful politics look like?" Would it even be politics? To paraphrase Clausewitz 'Politics is war by other means.' If I were to pick a word it would be 'dynamic'.

10) What is your ideal endpoint for Idaho and Kootenai County, politically speaking? Ending Obamacare, but what other aims are highest up on your list? This can be specific or broad, policy-oriented or ideological.

Politics is a process and therefore does not have an endpoint. It is like saying 'The science is settled.' Science is a process and is never 'settled'. My overarching goal is prosperity through the personal achievement of the citizens of Idaho. When you understand what motivates people, what makes them happy, you gain a perspective about the proper roll of government.

11) What do you love the most about Kootenai County, and what prompted your move?

The people. The natural beauty of the area and the weather. The election of Gray Davis.

12) To those who would call you the "Godfather" of North Idaho politics: how would you respond?

LOL!

13) Finally, on a more philosophical question: It's proven very difficult for legislators and those in office to uphold their conservative principles when faced with the actualities of governing. How can conservative politicians be effective, and not obstructionist, while also not compromising their positions?

You are positing that it is a mutually exclusive proposition between conservative principles and effective governing. This is false. Your question is a common misstatement of the problem. Intrinsicly, government (or any organization) tends to grow and this creates a social proof force for that growth. Invariably, over time, legislators will bend to this pressure. This allows government growth to outpace economic growth resulting in a smaller economy and a bloated government.

Fact Checking Questions

1.) When did you move to Kootenai County? (I've heard that it was the late '90s, and that you moved from California — I don't need to be more specific than that, but please correct me if I'm wrong).

March 23rd 1999. I'm an Idahoan who's mother was in California when I was born.

2) Your wife is named Moura. (She is not involved in the story other than to say that the two of you moved together to Kootenai County)

Yes.

3) Your mother lives in Strawberry Hills, where she hosted a benefit for Mitt Romney in 2012 (one that you attended as well).

No. She lives in Hillsborough Ca. and she let the Romney campaign use her home for an evening event. I did attend at her request.

4) You are a traditionalist Catholic (I defer to you on how you would describe your church).

Yes.

5) You did not attend college. You are a member of MENSA.

2 years of community college. Associate degree in electrical engineering. Yes, I joined Mensa (proctored IQ test) in '93 because of the bias against people without advanced degrees.

6) Your father was also an inventor, and designed a heart shunt used in bypass surgery, special tiles used on space aircraft, and dozens of additional inventions. (again, correct me if this is at all inaccurate!)

My father invented the first coronary Stent used in a human in the US. Before that he made specialized components for the aerospace industry including the heat shield for the S-Band Antenna on the Apollo Lunar Lander (LEM). In the '70s he also invented key enabling technology for the semiconductor industry. Not bad for a guy who started with nothing, had to quit High School to help feed the family and had to change his name to get work.

7) Before your current role as chairman of the KCRCC, you had voiced your intention to run for senate and for Idaho to secede from the union.

No to both. Although in one of my lectures I may have used secession to illustrate a point but I never advocated for it.

8) Your children were homeschooled.

Public, private and home schooled.

9) You provided seed funding for Reach America, a Christian leadership organization that advocates pulling Christian kids from public schools.

No. I sponsored one of their students to attend a leadership training seminar. This was morphed into the fake news you cite during the School Board election.

10) I try, at one point, to characterize some of the beliefs of a “true,” liberty-minded conservative. Included in this list:

You use the word “belief” which causes me to infer that you are under the impression that these are decisions. You are missing the overarching fact that there are immutable truths. There is right and wrong, good and evil, and beneficial and detrimental. Society cannot thrive under Cartesian Relativism because it devolves into a muddle of conflicting “truths”. The truths are that American Exceptionalism is the product of Judeo-Christian morality (10 commandments) and of Logos (try to speak Truth), Greco-Roman philosophy (democracy and that nature can be understood) and Anglo-Saxon law (Magna Carta, the laws apply to all, even the king). The result is articulated in the most powerful political statement in history, the second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence. The Constitution is a covenant between the states to create a federal government. The Bill of Rights does not grant rights, it forbids the government from infringing on those rights which “are endowed by their Creator”. The people created the states and the states created the federal government. While the federal government does have supremacy of law, this only applies to the laws created pursuant to the Constitution. You can summarize “liberty-minded conservative” as in short hand for “libertarian-leaning conservative.” This includes support for traditional Judeo-Christian values, Western Civilization and Individual Liberty.

- You don't necessarily have to be Christian, but you should believe in Christian values, and the ability for Christians to practice their beliefs without restriction, which includes school choice

No. (see above) You are conflating government and religion. Government has no power to regulate religion. You need to recognize the fact that our system of government is based on our rights which “are endowed by their Creator”, not government. Government can create a policy but not a right.

- You are against increases in spending and expensive public works, such the pricey renovation of McEuen Park or the transit center

No. Government can and should spend taxed dollars on NECESSARY projects that cannot otherwise be accomplished by the private sector (e.g. municipal water and sewer) or provide for the establishment and regulation of monopolies (e.g. garbage collection & electric and gas utilities). McEuen Park should have had a public vote on a bond. Imagine that if instead of spending \$30M turning a park into a park that money was spent on bringing broadband fiber-optic Internet to the entire city. The transit center is a county boondoggle to expand government.

- You are against Obamacare, and believe that conservatives must work to dismantle it

No. Liberty-minded conservative better describes a philosophy not any single position on any particular issue. I and many likeminded liberty-minded conservatives are against the growth of government and the perverse incentives and waste that Obamacare creates.

- You believe that churches should be able to participate in the political process, and may rescind their non-profit status to do so

False premise. The government has no power to regulate either speech or religion. The Johnson Amendment is unconstitutional on its face. The government has no power to tax religion in any way. The first Amendment enumerates this exemption from taxation (Congress shall make no law)

Again: please correct me if any of this feels wrong. These are the cumulation of talking with many people/reading many different statements, so I want to make sure I'm synthesizing them correctly.

Your conclusions about conservatism remind me of the Indian fable about the blind men trying to describe an elephant <https://youtu.be/iBqgr5xZLz0> Here is PBS (seen as liberal) doing a fair job of explaining the difference between liberal and conservative philosophies. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j_k_k-bHigM

You can't understand how a thing works by observing effects any more than you can learn how to cook by eating food. True understanding can only come from a study of first principles.

11) You are the current head — and provide much of the funding — for the IFF.

No. I am Chairman of the Board of IFF. Wayne Hoffman is the President and a founder. I make a modest annual financial donation which is much less than 1% of the IFF budget.

Anne,

Please see my responses in bold below.

1) Just a few things I wasn't entirely clear on. For a section where I describe your background, I use your quote ("an Idahoan whose mother was in California when I was born"), list your fathers' accomplishments, and then include your quote "Not bad for a guy who started with nothing, had to quit high school to help feed his family, and had to change his name to get work." Can you clarify that last part? I'm guessing it had something to do with discrimination against people with type of last name, but need to clarify for readers.

My father had an ethnic last name (Italian) and he and his father owned a machine shop (western Canada in the early '40s) but couldn't get work until my father changed his last name to Regan and the business operated with him as the owner. I was born on July 4th and I was the first natural born American in the family. At the time there was a 5 year waiting period for immigrants from the time they declared they intent to become citizens to when they could apply. My parents were very proud of the fact that they applied for full citizenship 5 years to the day.

2) I also quote your description of conservative politics in full — in part to give a better understanding of your understanding of the politics, and also to show to breadth of your thought process.

3) Re: your children's homeschooling/public schooling: did they attend Coeur d'Alene public high schools?

No.

4) Part of my reporting led me to the suggestion that you or another member of the KCRCC membership arranged or encouraged someone to run against Gary Ingram for his precinct position. How would you respond?

I did not encourage anyone to run against Gary. I did hear a rumor of someone else doing that but I have no first hand knowledge.

Finally, as much as I would like to include the totality of your responses to all of my questions, the constricts of feature journalism make it impossible. At the same time, I would like readers to be able to see both of our full questions and responses — but only if you would as well. My plan would be to attach both exchanges as a linkable PDF within the piece where I had to summarize instead of quote in full. Again, the decision is up to you, but I wanted to put it out there.

I have no fear of the truth. You are welcome to share my responses.

Brent