



# FACTS & OPINIONS

*On Public Interest Issues*

## Quotes

“I’m not sure we even know what we mean by ordinary anymore. In the best sense, we mean people who go to work every day, marry and raise families, pay their bills and taxes, serve their communities and country and respect the difference between God and Caesar.”

— Kathleen Parker,  
*The Washington Post*,  
June 13, 2012

“This honor comes to me unsought. I have never had the Presidential fever; not even for a day.”

— James A. Garfield,  
U.S. President, 1881

“Let each citizen remember at the moment he is offering his vote that he is not making a present or a compliment to please an individual - or at least that he ought not so to do; but that he is executing one of the most solemn trusts in human society for which he is accountable to God and his country.”

— Samuel Adams,  
*Boston Gazette*, 1781

## Garfield — The President Who Didn’t Want the Honor By Deborah D. Thornton

James A. Garfield, the 20<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, served only 200 days (March - September 1881) before dying of infection from a gunshot wound. He didn’t want the honor, didn’t campaign for election, and would rather have been home with his children.

Yet, as a new book on Garfield, *Destiny of the Republic* by Candice Millard, makes clear, his Presidency had significant impact. His reasoned approach offers good advice for political activists today.

I have so long and so often seen the evil effects of the presidential fever upon my associates and friends that I am determined it shall not seize me. In almost every case it impairs if it does not destroy the usefulness of its victim.

— James A. Garfield,  
U.S. President, 1881

Garfield kept a daily diary and wrote frequent letters. As a result, Millard provides us with many interesting quotations and facts about Garfield’s life and times.

When running for Congress he said,

I so much despise a man who blows his own horn that I go to the other extreme.

He did not make a pledge to “any man or measures,” and did not campaign for his own nomination – either to Congress or the Presidency. Contrast that to today’s 24/7/365 political campaigns.

Garfield was nominated to represent the Republican Party on the 36<sup>th</sup> vote of the 1880 convention, held in Chicago. He was not even a candidate at the beginning, and originally gave the nomination speech for

*continued on page 6*

## FACTS & OPINIONS

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Dr. Don Racheter  
Editor  
Deborah D. Thornton

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## Focus on Iowa Wesleyan College

### Adopt-A-Student

The Religious Life Office, Alumni Office, and Student Alumni Association of Iowa Wesleyan College are working to ease the transition of students into the college and Mount Pleasant. This program matches first-year students with local alumni, IWC staff, and friends of the college who serve as hosts.

Students will be matched with hosts based on common interests. Ideally, the relationships will continue until the student graduates. IWC students come from across the United States, as well as abroad. We want to help them make the transition to college life smoothly.

The committee will begin the matching process mid-summer. Hosts will be sent information about the student and have a chance to contact them before they arrive. The first opportunity to meet will be during orientation in mid-August. We will also have activities during the semester – but would like the hosts to plan other interactions, as simple as meeting for coffee or attending a local event.

### Alumni Honored

**Dr. Thomas Eyler** '65 of Tucson, Arizona, and Kurt Swaim '72 of Bloomfield,

Iowa, were awarded Distinguished Alumni Awards from Iowa Wesleyan College during the Alumni Banquet on May 4.

Dr. Eyler graduated from Iowa Wesleyan with a Bachelor of Science degree. He earned his Doctor of Osteopathy at Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine in 1968, and opened a solo family practice in Tucson in 1969.

For over 25 years, Tom has provided free medical care to teens through the non-profit organization, Youth on Their Own (YOTO). He was a founding board member of YOTO. In 2004, Tom received the Humanitarian of the Year Award for his contributions to YOTO.

**Kurt Swaim**, a native of Drakesville, Iowa, majored in economics at Iowa Wesleyan. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree. He attended the University of Iowa Law School, and was a member of the Order of Coif. He opened Swaim Law Office in 1983, and served as Davis County Attorney for 13 years. Today he practices with his sons, Justin and Joshua.

Swaim was elected as an Iowa State Representative for District 94 (Democrat) in 2002. He is retiring this spring after five terms. He is ranking member of the Judiciary Committee. Kurt is an active member of the Bloomfield United Methodist Church and has been active in the Lions Club and the Masons.

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## What's New at Public Interest Institute?

The quarterly publication IOWA ECONOMIC SCORE-CRD came out in May, with the lead article, "What about Water Power?" by Deborah Thornton, generating significant discussion about hydro-energy in Iowa.

New POLICY STUDIES: "The Idea of 'the West' and the Revolt Against It," by Donald Paul Byron "Chip" Racheter, was released in February, and "Tax Increment Financing: Magical Tool or Moral Hazard?" by Deborah Thornton, was released in March.

June LIMITS featured an article by Curtis Dubay, "Stop Taxmageddon Before it Hits." All publications are available online at <http://www.LimitedGovernment.org>.

Teachers and parents are reminded that THE IOWA CIVICS PROJECT, a thirteen-unit curriculum on Iowa state and local government, is available free from PII. Request your copies at 319-385-3462.

### **Racheter and Stanley Attend World Taxpayers Association Conference**

In May, Dr. Donald Racheter, President, represented PII at the 2012 World Taxpayers Association (WTA) Members Conference in Kiev, Ukraine.

At the conference, "Message, Members, and Money: How the Worldwide Taxpay-

ers' Movement Can Become Stronger," he gave a very well received presentation on "Pro-Taxpayer Projects to Get Your Think Tank Noticed." Dr. Racheter is also a member of the WTA Advisory Board.

Representatives of 60 countries, as diverse as Armenia, Canada, France, Germany, Thailand, Hong Kong, and Korea, attended the conference. Mr. David Stanley of Muscatine, the Chairman of PII, is also the Chairman of the WTA, and he and his wife, Jeanie, also attended.

The WTA was founded in 1988 to work for lower taxes, less waste, accountable government, and taxpayers' rights worldwide. Since then over 20 countries have adopted flat-rate income taxes instead of "progressive" systems. Today the WTA advocates for replacing income taxes with consumption-based alternatives and working for reforms to unsustainable social programs.

Currently, there are over 50 taxpayer associations, worldwide, associated with WTA. The work of the WTA is considered part of the "greatest

human rights movement of our time" — the struggle for limited, accountable government that respects the economic freedom of the citizens it serves, instead of making the citizens serve the government.

Activities included a welcome reception and dinner at the Ukraine International Center of Culture and Art, Zhovtnevy Palace. The next day was fully booked with sessions on how to best use the Internet, staying ahead of government and cultural trends, media relations, and grassroots campaigning. Workshops on fundraising, effective research, and government lobbying techniques were well attended. Most interesting was a session on retaining members and re-energizing efforts. Small group meetings were held to discuss specific country and regional taxpayer topics in detail.

The Ukrainian hosts presented a well-crafted opportunity to experience the sights and sounds of their country. Kiev, the capital, has about three million people and is an exciting emerging market for international business and production.

## *Facts & Opinions*

### **Question of the Quarter:**

**What books do you recommend for late summer/fall reading? Books for new college students?**

Send your thoughts on this issue to us on our Website at <http://www.LimitedGovernment.org/FOJul2012.html> or e-mail to [Public.Interest.Institute@LimitedGovernment.org](mailto:Public.Interest.Institute@LimitedGovernment.org).

We may publish some of your ideas in the next issue of *Facts & Opinions* in October 2012 and on our Website at: [www.LimitedGovernment.org](http://www.LimitedGovernment.org).

To continue our publications, Public Interest Institute relies on the support of our readers. Your contributions to today's public-policy challenges. Please use the enclosed postage-paid envelope.

## Now, the Union Pushback

By Steven Greenhut

Vice President of Journalism

The Franklin Center for Government and Public Integrity

The nation's public-sector unions have become so emboldened by years of political victories, and so insulated from voter concerns, that they apparently never considered the possibility that voters, given a clear choice, would turn against them. June's vote was as close as the nation gets to a clarifying election, the result of union overreach in Wisconsin and union intransigence in California.

"Election results in California and Wisconsin this week are being viewed as a turning point for organized labor—to its detriment," reported the *Los Angeles Times*, echoing a story line repeated nationwide.

The biggest news, of course, came from Wisconsin, where angry and increasingly militant public-sector unions tried to recall the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and three state Senators. Governor Scott Walker pulled out a strong seven-point victory, and the unions appear likely to gain only one senate seat by the slimmest of margins.

The California results were almost as impressive, as San Jose voters approved a

pension-reform measure with 70 percent of the vote.

Immediately after San Jose's Measure B passed, the unions filed a court challenge against the initiative. Measure B reduces benefits for current public employees; they will have a choice between a new, lower-benefit retirement package or keeping their current benefit plan but contributing more to pay for it. In the private sector, employers can reduce employee-pension benefits going forward, but in California, anyway, the courts have prohibited benefit reductions for public employees.

San Jose officials argue that they're legally in the right because of specific city ordinances and because of the municipality's status in California as a "charter city."

Mayor Chuck Reed explained in response to the union lawsuit: "Measure B was carefully crafted to follow California law. San Jose is a charter city and the California Constitution gives charter cities 'plenary authority' to provide in their charters for the compensation of their employees. San Jose's City Charter reserves the right of the City Council and

the voters to make changes to employees' retirement benefits: '... the Council may at any time, or from time to time, amend or otherwise change any retirement plan or plans or adopt or establish a new or different plan or plans for all or any officers or employees.'"

"San Jose's Municipal Code," Reed added, "allows the city to require employees to pay more for retirement benefits. In fact, two years ago, a number of city-employee unions agreed that the city could make employees pay more for retirement benefits." Reed explained that "more than 200 other California cities have required employees to pay for a larger share of their retirement costs."

Finally, the mayor argues, "the courts have upheld the rights of local government to determine compensation, and according to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, 'it is well established that public employees have no vested rights to particular levels of compensation and salaries may be modified or reduced by the proper statutory authority.'"

Meantime, San Diego voters also overwhelmingly approved serious pension

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reform, as well as a measure banning union-exclusive “project-labor agreements” that inflate public-sector contracting costs by keeping out non-union competition.

The top vote-winner in the city’s mayoral primary was pension-reform advocate Carl DeMaio. His prospects for winning the mayoralty in November seem promising, given that he will face off against union Democrat Bob Filner.

Up the road in Orange County, voters approved a modest pension-limitation measure. A pension-hiking, police-union ally, Todd Spitzer, won back a seat on the board of supervisors — but only after promising that he was a born-again pension reformer.

So the results in deep-blue California are clear. Even in Democratic Party bastions, such as San Jose, voters said “yes” to pension reform and “no” to union priorities by an overwhelming majority.

As I wrote previously for *City Journal*, San Jose’s Reed made the progressive case for pension reform: he argued that the government programs liberal Democrats care about are endangered by a pension burden that now consumes 20 percent of the city’s general fund budget.

He distinguished between union Democrats and progressives, a distinction that will

serve pension reformers well as proposals go forward in blue states.

The unions essentially gave up on San Diego’s Proposition B and San Jose’s Measure B long before the election, offering little more than token opposition. They knew they would lose, so they concentrated on a legal and regulatory approach to derail reform.

In San Diego, the unions appealed to the Public Employment Relations Board — a state board of appointed union sympathizers — to invalidate the pension-reform measure preemptively. The unions asked the board to evaluate whether even asking voters about reforming the system constituted an “unfair labor practice.” When that failed, and the voters rendered their verdict, the unions shifted to litigation.

In San Diego, city attorneys “asked the state’s 4th District Court of Appeal to hear all five pending court cases involving Proposition B, the pension-system-overhaul measure overwhelmingly passed by voters this week,” according to *San Diego News Room*. The city wants to resolve quickly the many ongoing and expected legal challenges to a measure written specifically to conform to existing legal precedent.

Given the state supreme court’s recent decision declaring that some “non-

vested rights,” such as medical care, may actually be “vested rights” if a county board of supervisors or a city council “implies” as much in an ordinance of resolution, it’s easy to be pessimistic.

But this much is certain: the unions can no longer count on winning in the court of public opinion.

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**“Great ideas travel slowly, and for a time noiselessly, as the gods whose feet were shod with wool.”**

**“Light itself is a great corrective. A thousand wrongs and abuses that are grown in darkness disappear like owls and bats before the light of day.”**

**— James A. Garfield,  
U.S. President, 1881**

*continued from page 1*

John Sherman, also of Ohio – who many expected to win. The other contenders were Ulysses S. Grant and James G. Blaine. One wonders what the impact of such an outcome would be on the 2012 campaign?

Because of the short and traumatic nature of Garfield's presidency, he is often overlooked. However, the lessons for us today are important.

Born in Ohio in 1831, Garfield's family was dirt poor. His father died when he was a toddler and his older brother and mother supported the family. They were determined that he not go immediately to work, but stay in school and receive an education. Their instincts were right, as Garfield was very bright. For example, while a Congressman he wrote an original proof of the Pythagorean theorem. He was also fluent in both Greek and Latin.

For those long out of Algebra class, the Pythagorean theorem says that in a right angled triangle: the square of the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares of the other two sides.<sup>1</sup> Or  $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$ . Remember now?

Today's students whine, protest, and "Occupy Wall Street" — complaining about fairness, student loans, their debt, and a lack of jobs. Garfield didn't have shoes until he was four. The family was proud that they did not receive any "aid," that they were able to "look any man in the face."<sup>2</sup>

At 16 Garfield worked as a canal boatman, then returned to college after a bout with malaria.

Not only was he bright, but he was a hard worker. While in college he got up at 5 a.m. and worked as a school janitor, bell-ringer, and carpenter in addition to studying. As janitor he was responsible for getting and keeping the fires in the classrooms going, shoveling snow, and other maintenance tasks. These were not easy chores, as in northeastern Ohio — then as today — the winters were long and difficult.

On the issue of education, poverty, and working, Garfield said,

If I ever get through a course of study I don't expect any one will ask me what kind of a coat I wore when studying, and if they do I shall not be ashamed to tell them it was a ragged one.<sup>3</sup>

He followed that up with:

I never meet a ragged boy in the street without feeling that I may owe him a salute, for I know not what possibilities may be buttoned up under this coat.<sup>4</sup>

Students at Hiram College (Western Reserve Electric Institute when Garfield attended)<sup>5</sup> and other schools might adopt his approach to studying, with good results,

If at any time I began to flag in my effort to master

a subject, I was stimulated to further effort by the thought, 'Some other fellow in the class will probably master it.'<sup>6</sup>

Garfield finished his college degree at Williams College in Massachusetts. The competition was tougher there, eliciting the following comment,

I have been endeavoring to calculate their dimensions and power and, between you and me, I have determined that out of the forty-two members of my class thirty-seven shall stand behind me within two months.<sup>7</sup>

Garfield succeeded, and after earning his degree returned to Western Reserve to teach, becoming college president at only 26. He made additional money as a circuit preacher and was known as a good debater — an important skill during the time. One debate, on the issue of evolution, lasted a full week. Garfield won.

As an officer in the Union army during the Civil War, Garfield won fame at the Battle of Middle Creek (Kentucky), where his out-numbered and out-gunned force defeated the Confederates. After viewing the dead and dying soldiers on the battlefield he noted the carnage of war, lamenting on "the sense of the sacredness of life and the impossibility of destroying it."<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, he was an aggressive officer and

instrumental in several Civil War battles.

Garfield was a leader in race relations and civil rights of the time, appointing several African Americans to leadership positions when President. One of his major acts while a Congressman was to introduce legislation allowing “blacks to walk freely through the streets of Washington, DC.”<sup>9</sup> He was a supporter of the “Radical Republicans,” those who fought for the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Amendments to the Constitution, providing full civil rights to the former slaves.

On civil rights Garfield said,

Is freedom the bare privilege of not being chained? If this is all, then freedom is a bitter mockery, a cruel delusion, and it may well be questioned whether slavery were not better. Let us not commit ourselves to the absurd and senseless dogma that the color of the skin shall be the basis of suffrage, the talisman of liberty.<sup>10</sup>

He advocated for full voting rights for the freed slaves, arguing that by denying them the right to vote, the country was basically returning the slave owners to power.

Garfield was also instrumental in investigating the “rifle clubs” of the south – Democrats who intimidated black voters – and overturning corrupt election results in Louisiana, Florida, South Carolina,

and Oregon.<sup>11</sup> This led to the establishment of the electoral commission to assure fair and honest elections. These organizations later morphed into the activities of the KKK.

In his inaugural address, Garfield advocated strongly for civil rights for African Americans, saying,

Freedom can never yield its fullness of blessing so long as the law or its administration places the smallest obstacle in the pathway of any virtuous citizen.<sup>12</sup>

He was concerned about the potential for a permanent underclass of black citizens, not wanting a “peasantry.” He strongly supported literacy, and the idea that voters must be able to read, so as to understand what and whom they were voting for.

Garfield appointed Frederick Douglass as Recorder of Deeds, and several other African Americans to leading positions. Those who continue to denigrate the role of the Republican Party in working for equal opportunity for all citizens would do well to more fully study the history of Republican leaders such as Garfield.

In response to the corruption of the presidential appointment system of the time, Garfield supported civil service reform, which was eventually passed during the Arthur administration. In sad irony, it was a deranged appointment seeker, Charles Giteau, who

shot Garfield. Mr. Giteau believed he should be appointed ambassador.

In even sadder irony, because of his support for education and the latest modern inventions, it was the medical practices of the time that killed him. American doctors had not yet adopted the procedures of Charles Lister. As a result they put their dirty fingers and various implements into the gunshot wounds, causing a severe infection.

Today the issue of free-market capitalism and economic growth is much in the news. Here, Garfield also had strong opinions, saying, “the chief duty of the government is to keep the peace and stand out of the way of the people.”<sup>13</sup> He was opposed to railroad land grants, monopolies, and labor unions, and was instrumental in several corruption investigations.<sup>14</sup>

He would probably have been comfortable in the company of Governor Scott Walker and the effort to stop mandatory union membership. Garfield was an internationalist, supporting closer relations and trade with the nations of the Southern Hemisphere and the building of the Panama Canal, as well as

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the modernization of the U.S. Navy.

Garfield voted against increasing congressional salaries (the Salary Grab issue) and refused his increase.<sup>15</sup> Because of his efforts to establish a credible civil-service appointment process, the establishment of executive branch “czars” today and their effect of allowing presidential appointments to avoid Senate oversight would probably not be an action he would support.

Garfield was only able to actively govern for about four months, until the day of his shooting on July 2, 1881 — just over 131 years ago. Garfield didn’t want to be President, yet was well prepared by both temperament and experience for the position. It’s unfortunate that he didn’t have the

chance. Nevertheless, many of the issues of his time are still relevant today. And, as with other tragedies and actions of our past, who can say how the outcome would differ? What decisions would have been made?

Candice Millard’s book is well worth reading and considering as we move into the 2012 Presidential election season.

(Endnotes)

<sup>1</sup> “Pythagora’s Theorem,” Math is Fun, <<http://www.mathsisfun.com/pythagoras.html>> accessed on June 13, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Candice Millard, “Destiny of the Republic,” Doubleday, 2011, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>5</sup> “History of the College,” Hiram College, <<http://www.hiram.edu/about/history>> accessed on June 14, 2012.

<sup>6</sup> Millard, p. 23.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>11</sup> Allan Peskin, “Garfield: A Biography,” Kent State University Press, 1978, p. 408.

<sup>12</sup> James A. Garfield, Inaugural Address, Friday, March 4, 1881, <<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=25823#axzz1xtCVX916>> accessed on June 15, 2012.

<sup>13</sup> Peskin, p. 263.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 331.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., pp. 365-66.

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