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Opinion

Jeff Ward: GOP Party Chair Pat Brady Has No Business Chairing a GOP Primary Campaign

This one doesn't pass the laugh test.

By [Jeff Ward](#) | [Email the author](#) | November 2, 2011

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About this column: Jeff Ward is a Beacon-News columnist, a Geneva resident and a guy with a point of view. Jeff, Kurt Wehrmeister, Beth Bales, Kim Kosar, Rick Nagel and other Genevans team up to give you a daily look Inside Geneva.

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Just when I'm convinced that Springfield Democrats have cornered the market on political folderol, our illustrious Illinois GOP just has to go ahead and prove me wrong. Call me crazy, but I believe our political parties should actually aspire to something greater than a downward-spiraling contest to see who can sink to new lows in the name of the political process.

But as difficult as you think it might be to top Mike Madigan and his crew of cronies, the Illinois GOP did just that when state Republican Party Chairman [Pat Brady signed on as Kevin Burns' campaign chair](#) in his primary race against [Chris Lauzen for the Kane County Board](#) chairmanship.

If party integrity were at stake, I can see a GOP chairman endorsing one candidate over another.

For example, if you really want to win the presidency, you might want to disown Sarah Palin, Herman Cain or Michelle Bachmann. When the LaRouchies managed to sneak onto the 1986 Illinois Democratic ticket, the powers that be rightfully disowned them.

But that's certainly not the case here because, for once, we have two eminently reasonable Republican candidates. But the problem is, we're not talking about Brady simply taking sides. We're talking about the state party chair choosing to actively work on behalf of one GOP candidate to the detriment of the other.

And that, my friends, doesn't even pass the smell test.

It's like Kate Gosselin telling her reality-TV audience which of her ill-mannered brood of eight she prefers. C'mon! You can't choose your favorite Hendrix album, because then the rest of them will get mad at you.

Dispensing with the above narrow caveat, party chairmen don't have the luxury of conspicuously choosing their favorite home-team candidate. And the fact that Brady did just that means he clearly doesn't understand his role.

I tried calling Brady only to encounter an overflowing voicemail box, but this is what he told the [Kane County Chronicle](#): "I think it's the job of a party chairman to get behind the candidate who would be the strongest candidate in the General Election. I think it's clearly Kevin."

First, Brady has got the job description wrong. And second, without even considering the candidates involved, on what planet is a small-town mayor stronger than a 20-year state senator who often wins elections by two-thirds of the vote?

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I'll admit that Lauzen has an amazing capacity to put his best foot forward and then put a bullet through his big toe, but in the battle of contentious candidates, he comes in a distant second to Burns.

I asked Burns for his thoughts on choosing Brady as his campaign chairman.

"This job is an executive position that requires executive experience," he said. "I wouldn't argue that he's picking favorites, I'd argue that he's picking the best man for the job. I'm humbled that Pat Brady has signed on to my campaign."

But I ain't buyin' it. The bottom line is, this unholy partnership looks like the worst kind of insider baseball.

Given a disenchanting and disenfranchised electorate who's been displaying a keen anti-insider sentiment, I think this silly move actually hurts Burns' chances.

Isn't Pat Brady the man who oversaw the Democrats' Springfield-mansion takeover despite their promise to raise taxes? Isn't he the man who, during a Republican tsunami, let Democratic state Sen. Mike Noland (Elgin) beat a fiscally conservative Steve Rauschenberger?

With friends like that ...

Because I like and respect both Lauzen and Burns, I've been circumspect about maintaining my Kane County chairman race neutrality. But I'm so incensed by this blatant GOP politics-as-usual maneuver, I've made my choice.

I'm not telling you how to cast your ballot, I'm just letting you know how I'm casting mine.

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6:45am on Wednesday, November 2, 2011

Jeff, you again hit it out of the park. Mr. Brady as the GOP leader has run the party into ruin. The check book is in the negative and Springfield is still ran like a frat house. One of the GOP biggest money guy got convicted (Cellini) and Mr. Quinn sits in the Governors chair. Now that is a record to be proud of. Mr. Brady should be working overtime to fix the state GOP and not working in Kane County on keeping status quo.

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