
COMMON SENSE II

Capitalizing on the familiarity and influence of Thomas Paine's "Common Sense" pamphlets that provided American colonists with exposure to the conversation of great thinkers in the pre-Revolutionary period, this paper assumes the name COMMON SENSE II. Similarly, today's series of pamphlets strives to give a direct response to great political events and ideas of our time.

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Holiday Issue

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An American Tantrum

By Bob Passi

We find ourselves asking again and again, "What has happened to our sense of unity and civility as a nation?" The short answer is that we find ourselves in the midst of a full-blown American tantrum. We had a President who did not want to relinquish his office after losing an election. He chose to have a tantrum, to lie down, kicking and screaming, hoping to get his way or—if nothing else—to create such a spectacle that everything else would have to stop until the tantrum stopped.

The discouraging thing is that seeing how effective his tantrum was, others began to join in, creating a more widespread American tantrum and causing massive disruptions, as they hoped to get their way.

We all understand the dynamics of tantrums, probably from experiences with our own kids. Usually, the adults step in or the child simply tires. The kids, however, learn that tantrums



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are effective if the adults give in to them. They learn that tantrums are a great way of manipulating adults to get whatever the child wants. It is a game of bluff: Will you be threatened enough to give them what they want or do you call their bluff and

stop them?

But the decision is also about optics. The public tantrum demands attention and often makes everything stop for the duration. It makes the parent look bad. Can't he or she control the kid? Sometimes the parent must decide to give the child whatever he or she wants or to become very strict and look like a bad parent. Not much of a choice.

Eventually, we must rely on the child becoming more grown up and to stop relying on such childish behavior. However, we know from some societal experience that some adults retain that spoiled child behavior into adulthood, and that presents an entirely different problem. Hopefully, others simply ignore and/or reject such behavior, but if the individual has enough power or influence, he or she will be hard—if not impossible—to ignore. Tie this to a hungry media looking for just that kind of sensationalism to sell their products. They feed the process to create news.

When tantrums begin to get the headlines, others begin to feel empowered to express themselves with their own tantrums, sometimes including violence and with disregard for the civilizing structures that keep a society functional. But

those throwing the tantrums do not care about civility; in fact they want to replace civility with a tantrum society in which those with the most effective tantrums get to define society. Eventually, the situation devolves into a kind of might-makes-right system in which the loudest, the most violent, the most disruptive get to decide the direction of the society, allowing them to indulge in their personal whims and desires with everyone required to submit and show allegiance to the new narrative.

How do we avoid a spoiled child society? Probably the only solution is to be the adults in the room and refuse to attend to or give credibility to the tantrums. Whatever the risk and possible price might be, we cannot abdicate our role as adults if we want to restore civility. Tantrums cannot be accepted as a negotiating tactic; they must be rejected out of hand. Meaningful negotiations can only be effective between adults acting in good faith.

The missing element of any effective negotiations is the real needs of the adult population, discussed and decided between adults. It is nearly as irresponsible as the tantrum to limit solutions to preserving the control of special interests by relying on the old systems of economic or of social inclusion.

On one hand, we have real existential threats to the planet and to the human population, and on the other hand, we have the dual threats of tantrum politics and special interest politics—no adults in either of those rooms.

Perhaps it is time for the ordinary adults in the room to reject both of those positions and renegotiate a mature and sustainable future that can save the planet, the human race, and provide an adult democracy.

Immature people always want to WIN an argument, even at the COST of a relationship. Mature people understand that it's always better to LOSE an argument and WIN a relationship.

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The Need for Progressive Governance

By Valerie Conner

In my adult lifetime I have witnessed and participated in a great many societal advances from voting rights for minorities to more equal education opportunities for minorities and women to a more forgiving live-and-let-live attitude for those previously considered “deviant” to increased rights in the workplace to an extended safety net for those cast aside by society. All of that has made for a better world for all—even those who used to have all the advantages, although they won’t admit it.

Sadly, frustratingly, the past decade or so has seen much of that reversed. What the Republicans and other conservatives haven’t reversed is under assault. I certainly benefited from many of those advances, but I also worked hard to establish and maintain them. It’s disheartening to see a lifetime of effort destroyed and with it the destruction of the hopes and dreams of so many young people striving to make it in this harsh world.

As progressives we must not give up. We need to put conservatism back in the true meaning of the word: to preserve what has been done. We who want to preserve and expand progress must not despair. We must continue to fight the good fight.

I hope that these pages have given hope and talking points to fellow progressives, so we can indeed continue the good fight. With concerted effort, we shall prevail!

The End Run

By Valerie Conner

*This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
Not with a bang but a whimper.*

--T. S. Eliot

It’s been more than a decade since I took over editing these

pages. In that time the Itasca Progressive Caucus has evolved from a collection of subcommittees, interested in promoting forward-looking causes that often brought in speakers, to a group of good people, enjoying tossing around ideas, to primarily ten issues of *Common Sense II* a year.

These pages have evolved with the times as well. From reports of the various subcommittees to thoughts on the issues of the day, *CSII* has continued to espouse progressive ideas and philosophies.

During these past few years, this country—indeed the world—has seen many challenges along with a stubborn refusal to address many of them and a stubborn insistence on exacerbating some of them. It isn’t only Trump’s doing, although he has capitalized on the mood of the society. He saw people floundering, casting about for answers to their woes, and took advantage to exploit them. Then came the pandemic with its demands for a changed society. Overlay that with the steady drumbeat of climate change, and you have a recipe for dispirited exhaustion on a national level. In addition, many of the writers and caucus members are feeling the toll of time. Some have died; others have succumbed to the frailty of age. In short, things in general and *CSII* in particular are not what they used to be—for better or worse.

As a society we will get through these trying times, but we won’t be the same. So it goes with the Itasca Progressive Caucus and *Common Sense II*. The caucus itself may wither as we continue to isolate and age. *CSII* may be another story.

I enjoy doing *CSII* and am proud of the product. I know full well that it is the various writers who contribute their ideas who make these pages compelling. For that I am sincerely grateful. I am particularly proud of the ideas of ordinary people from various backgrounds who can make such significant contributions without relying on professional punditry. You may have noticed that the cadre of contributors has dwindled these last few months. The contributors, too, have been victims of the general exhaustion and malaise. Believe me, I understand.

At this point, *CSII* will continue, albeit less frequently. As contributors send in articles, I’ll put together an issue. Together we can get through this and continue to think and write. For now, the contributors and I need a bit of a break. Until the next issue, thank you for your readership, keep up the good fight, and Happy Holidays. I hope to be back soon..

CALENDAR OF EVENTS: GET INVOLVED AND GET IT DONE!

Event	Date /Time	Location
DFL Headquarters Open (326-6296)	Thursdays 2:00-5:00	DFL Headquarters
Itasca Progressive Caucus (259-4490)	3rd Tuesday 6:30	Suspended
DFL Central Committee Meets	4th Monday 6:30	via Zoom
DFL Social Club & Lunch	1st Wednesday Noon	DFL Headquarters
DFL Pot Luck (Open to the Public)	3rd Wednesday 5:30	DFL Headquarters
Working Families Alliance	Suspended	Dutchroom
Earth Circle	Suspended	GR Public Library
Circles of Support	Suspended	811 NE 4th St. GR
Haven: A Place for All	Mondays 5:30 Zoom	218-328-4450
Deadline for <i>Common Sense II</i>	TBA	conray@arvig.net