

the Rites and Lefts of Spring



The weeks surrounding the vernal equinox are traditionally a time for cultures around the world to celebrate the the turn of the season, survival, regeneration, and the continuity of their beliefs and values. Nowhere this year are these rites of spring more gloriously on parade than across New York's 20th Congressional District.

The fervor of our nation's political culture was unleashed upon Eastern Upstate New York at the end of February when Governor Paterson called a Special Election to fill the House seat vacated by Senator Kirsten Gillibrand. Today—surely as Winter melts into Spring—the election has given way to the recount, a phase which could easily make history surpassing in duration and cost the entire campaign. With the pace and intensity of political activity reaching levels thought to be reserved for the Rapture, this may be a good time to examine and explain some of the rituals and traditions we have witnessed.

Bye-Bye Black Sheep. Nothing says springtime ritual quite like a blood sacrifice; the shedding of innocent blood is a cornerstone of a variety of religions world-wide. And nothing says “innocent” like a little lamb—the sacrifice of choice on altar's world-wide. This year, however, New York's Conservative Party brought some innovation to the same-old same-old. With the help of the Board of Elections they did-in Eric Sundwall and the Libertarian Party.

Scrambled Ballots. Of course you cannot discuss springtime ritual without the pagan-inspired fertility rite of hunting for eggs deposited by bunny rabbits around the back yard. Rules changes in the 20th CD this year: 1. Absentee ballots are the new eggs; 2. briefcases are the new baskets; 3. lawyers are the new kids; and 4. overseas military personnel are the new bunny rabbits. Same deal with the Easter egg roll.

Miracle on Thrice. For devout Republicans the watchword of the season is resurrection. Specifically this year, the resurrection of their party after two election cycles on life-support and no discernible brain activity. Throughout this faith-based community, hope still abounds that a miracle will occur and restore the vitality and fortunes of the GOP. Perhaps it was with this in mind that James Tedisco pledged to Lake Placid (site of a 1980 miracle) that he would bring the Winter Olympics back for a third time.

Passover. In late January the High Priests of the Republican Party passed over Senator Betty Little, Sandy Treadwell, and other candidates who actually live in the district in favor of Mr. Tedisco, who—the logic ran—could run both as an insider and an outsider at the same time.

Food Fight. Another essential tradition of the season is the family gathering. Scott Murphy's advertising campaign boasted a tradition of Sunday meals with the extended family. Murphy's in-laws include Senator Betty Little who endorsed and campaigned for James Tedisco.

Abstinence & Penance. Finding it insufficiently stimulating, James Tedisco gave up federal pork for the election season. It is also highly likely that former Congressman John Sweeney will be giving up driving and/or drinking.

Spring Cleaning. So many traditions at this time of year call for getting rid of all the old moldy stuff that's lying about the house. Republicans finally got around to throwing out their heirloom adoration of millionaire entrepreneur candidates as well as their mismatched fear and dread of candidates who have spent their entire career on the public payroll. Vice versa with the Democrats.

The Devil. Last but not least, what celebration of any ritual of faith would be complete without a bona fide Devil. As luck would have it, Republican Rabble Rouser, the Duke of Disenfranchisement, Roger Stone, black berry and spreadsheets in hand, showed up for the party.