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Bernard Schoenburg: A look at the Quinn-Brady vote numbers

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A strong Republican Party and surely some unhappiness over furloughs of state workers and dysfunction in state government kept Gov. PAT QUINN to a mere 34 percent of the vote Tuesday in the seat of state government — Sangamon County.

Republican BILL BRADY got just under 58 percent, while Green Party candidate RICH WHITNEY got 4.24 percent, independent SCOTT LEE COHEN got less than 2 ½ percent, and Libertarian LEX GREEN got just under 1 percent.

Quinn can take heart that he outperformed former Gov. ROD BLAGOJEVICH's showing in 2006, when the not-yet-indicted Blagojevich got 21 percent in Sangamon County. The 2006 statewide loser, Republican JUDY BAAR TOPINKA, received 67 percent of the county's votes that year. She, of course, is now moving back into state government as the comptroller-elect.

Back in 2002, when Blagojevich wasn't yet badly tarnished, he won 43 percent of Sangamon County votes, to 55 percent for Republican JIM RYAN.

The statewide numbers show how Quinn ultimately beat Brady. Unofficial results tabulated as of Friday by The Associated Press showed that in Chicago, Quinn got 505,598 votes to 116,661 for Brady. In suburban Cook County, it was 372,072 for Quinn and 276,432 for Brady.

Brady won the collar counties around Cook, 491,693 to 364,904; and in downstate counties, including those in northern Illinois but away from Chicago, the total was 815,481 for Brady and 473,903 for Quinn.

In all, the statewide totals as of Wednesday night — which are still changing a bit as a smattering of late-arriving absentee ballots are counted — were 1,716,477 for Quinn, 1,700,267 for Brady, 99,365 for the Green Party's Whitney, 34,230 for Libertarian Green and 133,948 for independent Cohen.

Big on involvement

For at least a few years, anywhere Democratic Party activists happen to be in Sangamon County, DAVID FUCHS just might be around.

Turns out he is no novice at the game. Fuchs (pronounced like "books," he stresses) has quite a history of involvement.

The 52-year-old Cantrall native and Athens High School grad went on to Springfield College in Illinois and got a degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana, where he studied history and political science. While still in school, he worked for the Illinois Department of Transportation, in a radio room involved in things like coordination of snow control for a region. He also was in the Naval Reserves from 1982-88, where he was assigned to the intelligence program, and served a little more than a year of active duty.

Fuchs volunteered for the U.S. Senate campaign of then-incumbent Sen. ALAN DIXON, D-Ill., and later worked for Dixon in Washington, where he was, in his words, the "DC wheelman," meaning he was driver for the senator. But he also had responsibility for the mailroom, computers and the intern program in the office, he said.

When Dixon left the Senate in 1993, Fuchs joined the staff of the Senate Armed Services Committee. He later rejoined Dixon on staff of the Base Closure and Realignment Commission that Dixon chaired in the mid-1990s.

Fuchs then moved to Chicago, where he worked in the administration of Mayor RICHARD DALEY as a civilian field supervisor in the community policing program. He worked with community, religious and school groups as well as police. He recalls accompanying police in a hot area of the old Cabrini-Green public housing project where he saw officers "unholster their weapons 40 times one evening."

When funding was cut back for such programs, he said, he went back to the nation's capital city, where he spent three years as legislative director of The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

Fuchs returned to Illinois when he was asked by an old friend from the Dixon camp, TIM McANARNEY, to help with the 2006 campaign of Democratic state treasurer candidate PAUL MANGIERI of Galesburg. He had wanted to come back anyway to be close to his elderly parents, HARVEY and SHIRLEY FUCHS, and he still lives with them in Cantrall.

Fuchs said his familiarity with Chicago helped Mangieri, who ended up losing that primary to ALEXI GIANNOULIAS.

Shortly thereafter, then-Sangamon County Democratic Chairman TIM TIMONEY hired Fuchs to staff the party's office. He met Mayor TIM DAVLIN and then-Police Chief RALPH CALDWELL, who was seeking to expand neighborhood outreach. So Fuchs was hired as a civilian by the Springfield Police Department. He worked on crime prevention with neighborhood associations and police officers, but lost that job, which paid about \$44,000, in February due to budget cuts.

In June, he began working in the policy and programs department of Secretary of State JESSE WHITE. The \$40,000-a-year post includes work on various initiatives, such as researching programs in other states that could work in Illinois. He's also a Democratic precinct committeeman.

Davlin and GENE CALLAHAN, a former top aide to Dixon and now a Democratic elder statesman in Springfield, were among the people who recommended Fuchs for the job with White.

"I'm very proud to have recommended him," Callahan said. "He was an outstanding public servant with Senator Dixon in

Washington, D.C., and remained the same way in the city administrations in Chicago and Springfield."

Fuchs, who enjoys cigars, talked glowingly about the officials he has worked for. He clearly appreciated the number of recommendations made for him by the time he was interviewed for the job in the secretary of state's office.

"Any person in this world who has friends is wealthy," Fuchs said he was told by TOM BENIGNO, chief of staff to White. "You, sir, are a wealthy man.

"Secretary White has gone out of his way to make me feel part of his team," Fuchs said.

One of his activities for White was to participate in the Illinois State Fair Twilight Parade, holding a boom box on a golf cart to provide musical accompaniment for the Jesse White Tumblers.

"I was one of the big things they jumped over," Fuchs said.

Familiar folks

I'm looking forward to an upcoming ceremony in Springfield that's going to feel like a school reunion and will feature some very impressive folks — all with Springfield connections.

The BILL MILLER Public Affairs Reporting Hall of Fame is inducting three new members on Nov. 15. The hall honors graduates of the PAR graduate program at the University of Illinois at Springfield.

The honorees are SUSAN CORNWELL, 55; BARBARA HIPSMAN, 59; and JOHN O'CONNOR, 47.

Cornwell, now a Capitol Hill correspondent for Reuters, was raised in Metropolis and Edwardsville, and long ago worked with me at The Daily Illini in Champaign-Urbana. Her first full-time reporting job — when her name was still Susan Jay Smith — was with The State Journal-Register in 1977-78. She went on to report from several countries. In 1996, she won the Merriman Smith Award for presidential reporting on deadline, given to one journalist a year by the White House Correspondents' Association.

Hipsman has been an associate professor of journalism and mass communication at Kent State University in Ohio since 1987 and received the Distinguished Teaching Award there in 1994. She earlier taught at Bradley University in Peoria and for six years was Statehouse bureau chief for the Belleville News Democrat when that paper had a full-time Springfield presence. Her husband, BOB SPRINGER, is a former Associated Press reporter at the Statehouse.

O'Connor, an AP political writer stationed at the Statehouse since 1998, continues to give politicians fits. He's the guy who wrote stories about the secret prison early-release program and the staff pay raises in the Quinn administration. O'Connor, who won the AP's Oliver S. Gramling Journalism Achievement award this year, complete with \$10,000, is also an amateur actor and was featured in recent local productions of "Dirty Rotten Scoundrels" and "Annie."

KATHY BEST, managing editor, digital news and innovation for The Seattle Times, is the keynote speaker. In 2010, her newspaper won a Pulitzer Prize for breaking-news coverage of the shooting deaths of four police officers and the ensuing 40-hour manhunt for the suspect. She also worked in news management positions in St. Louis, Baltimore and Seattle, and worked at the Statehouse for The Quad-City Times and the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, and also worked in Washington, D.C., for the Post-Dispatch. She was inducted into the hall of fame in 2006.

The hall of fame is named for the late Bill Miller, who directed the PAR program at UIS for 19 years. The Nov. 15 event includes a 5:30 p.m. reception, with the induction at 6:30. It is at the Hoogland Center for the Arts, 420 S. Sixth St. Refreshments will be served.

Reservations for the \$35-per-person event, hosted by Illinois Issues magazine and WUIS-FM, should be made by Tuesday at 523-2787 or online at WUIS.org.

CHARLIE WHEELER, who was a longtime Chicago Sun-Times reporter at the Statehouse and continues to write a column for Illinois Issues, has been director of PAR since 1993. The master's degree program, which includes internships with the Statehouse press corps, has had more than 580 graduates since its inception in the early 1970s.

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