

Computer aficionados will recognize this as 2⁸, and they, along with most of the audience, will wonder what this has to do with a political campaign. It stems from an idea to secure and maintain local control of our lives, our neighborhoods and our quiet enjoyment of our residences. In parts of colonial America we borrowed from an old Roman system of local governance most commonly known as the Hundred.

The Hundred as then constituted would have generally meant men who owned property, with some rare exceptions where women would receive a voice. The Hundred administered the local environs: held court, met to consider disputes, met with representatives of other Hundreds to air and resolve claims against one another about adjoining lands, water and grazing rights, and kept the peace. In modern times we have moved beyond divisions on gender and race, but it is well-documented that all politics is local.

The Constitution of the United States of America along with its first Ten Amendments (the Bill of Rights, as it is commonly known), established *through a grant of the people* a strong central government with certain powers given to it and other powers retained by the states and the people. (See, Art. 1, §8 (Powers given to Congress); and Amendment X (Powers not granted to the Federal Government are retained by the States or the People (powers not given by the People to the States are retained by the People))). It was understood at its inception that there would always be a struggle for power in our new birth of freedom, and the ultimate watchdog over individual liberty was the People, the voices of individuals and groups. Cacophony is at the heart of any democracy, but when the voices have all been heard, reason prevails.

As we have grown from a nation with one ocean coastline and a landmass about the size of the province of Quebec to a nation with two coastlines and about five times more land, we have seen an interesting growth in Federal and State power along with a lessening of individual freedom. Self-governance and the responsibilities associated with it seem to be fading to insignificance in favor of letting someone else, whether a person or an entity, control the compass of our lives. We have drifted from the sound sense of the common law and slim books of statutory edicts to a vast regulatory system that begins with the distant dictates of Washington and continues with state statutes and local county and municipal ordinances. A person wanting to open a legitimate business must first check with a government official to seek permission to pursue a dream.

Law and governance seek balance: my right to swing my arms about me is unfettered in an open field, but is tempered by common sense when I am near other people, animals and plants. The cry of "there ought to be a law" has been answered time and again so that we are now surfeited by laws; each of us has little idea what the law is. We might be in compliance with all of our municipality's codes, but out of compliance with unknown, and perhaps unforeseen, county, state, regional or federal codes, statutes or court rulings. The vast majority of us are capable of abiding by the Golden Rule, yet we "must do something" to curb the invasions of those unfortunates who are permanently or momentarily incapable of self-governance. The majority of the laws, statutes, court rulings, administrative edicts and rule, and other legal matter is based upon the rule of reason, but we have gone well beyond Thomas Jefferson's reminder that "Government which governs least governs best."

A system like ours, founded upon individual liberty, is not as outwardly simple as the system from which we separated by force of arms. When the separation occurred, the King of England had ruling power which we strove to deny to our Executive Branch. England now has a Constitutional Monarchy in which the Crown has very limited power; the Queen is more figurehead than ruler. We designed a similar system but charged our Executive (the office of the President of the United States — POTUS) with the task of seeing that the laws made by Congress were faithfully executed. There is some similarity between a corporate board that investigates, explores options, then by vote decides policy which it gives to the Chief Executive Officer to execute.

We have sadly seen a drift back to power in one person. The Congress, which is to have the governing power, is deeply responsible as they have pushed the "tough" issues on the Presidency, and we, the people, as the result of a series of incidents (usurpations might be our best description) where the "hot potato" was cooled down by executive fiat have come to believe in the augmentation of power in that branch where little power was meant to lie. A phone and a pen are perfectly fine to run the City of Chicago (or so it goes if the "right person" has the implements), but we were meant to have limits up and down the federal line. The lines have blurred significantly, and it is our duty to set them aright. Expecting change in Congress and the regulatory bodies it creates for the Executive without change in the composition of Congress is folly.

Speaking of Aristocracy, the Clay family, like the Adams family at our founding, has held unmitigated sway over a fairly large geographic territory. Are we favoring a feudalist rite of passage, a perpetuation of power through birthright? Or was the design of the Adamases, Hamiltons and Douglasses a return to monarchy and royalty? Let us not fool ourselves that there was not a leaning to having elites scattered throughout the

system (e.g., The Senate, the Electoral Colleges), but great democracies thrive upon rotations in and out of power. Four Dozen Years of Clay family thinking, sound as it has been at times, is sufficient. The House of Representatives in the Congress of the United States was not designed as a sinecure, and we the people should not abet families that desire to make it one.

Let it not be said that the Clays lack wisdom, passion, intelligence and fortitude. William and Lacy Clay have done great service to the nation and the region in their half-century of leadership, but we should look to the best interests of the nation and the region as we face the challenges of a new century. Many great families have served our nation (Clay, Calhoun, Webster, Lincoln, Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy, to name a few) then moved to other pastures; so it is with this family, like all good soldiers, time to fade away.

Local Control

There are sections of the 1st Congressional District of the State of Missouri where it seems that the law-abiding live in fear of the drug dealers and hoodlums who run the area through intimidation, fear and random acts of senseless violence that resemble the gang activities under Prohibition [of alcohol]. I want to explore decriminalization of controlled substances further, but I will post that separately; let me here state that one possible step in returning control of our streets to the lawful is to let local citizens decide where the apothecary will be for those who choose to get high on substances. Better to have lawful control of dangerous material than to have the Crips and Bloods decide who is going to have to perish today?

My basic premise is that there are more good people than people gone astray in each and every "bad" neighborhood, but the good people will not, and at law cannot, take up arms against their oppressors. The 256 plan is a template to reverse these trends in neighborhoods that want to see real change, not just the HOPE for Change. The plan takes into account the need to expand and to contract, and it uses binary reasoning to help us get to the desired result. If you remember the early computers, like Atari, they had 256K processors, and that ability kept doubling until we now talk in terabytes for entry level computing. If we start small, and build it well, maybe we can build a revolutionary system that others can use or model as they build.

The basic concept is that distant, top-down management tends to desire one-size-fits-all solutions with demands for the same performance. But smaller groups, working within flexible confines, may by freedom of operation be able to achieve much more. If we can harness the power of two good people, it is not long until we have eight working together, and then we may have four groups of eight, followed by four groups of 32 which soon or slowly grow to four groups of 64 = 256. Each power of two can effect great change and affect a few lives at a time. Two people need only attract three more groups of two to get us to eight.

2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128, 256, 512, 1024. $2^1, 2^2, 2^3, 2^4, 2^5, 2^6, 2^7, 2^8, 2^9, 2^{10}$. I stop there because we begin to get too big for some of the informal structures about which we speak, but notice that $256 (2^8) * 4 (2^2)$ potentially gives us four neighborhood groups or associations that can meet and exchange ideas and thoughts in the great laboratory of the local communities.

Let us say that in an eight block square (roughly a square mile) we have challenges related to: 1) joblessness and underemployment; 2) the use of mood and

performance altering substances; 3) less than sixth grade literacy, communication and reading skills; 4) substandard mathematical and scientific knowledge and reasoning; 5) single parent households; 6) decaying infrastructure, both public and private; 7) criminal conduct; and 8) homelessness and vagrancy. Take it for granted that while one or more of these challenges might exist in any neighborhood in Clayton, Ladue, Jennings, Ferguson, Florissant, or Fairgrounds Park, there are places in the City and the North County of St. Louis where these are the norms of everyday life. Expecting to address or solve all of them simultaneously or rapidly, is likely a fool's errand, but looking for ways to solve small parts of them simultaneously may help us erode their seemingly cemented foundations in those affected 'hoods.

For instance, drug and alcohol dependency/experimentation/dabbling can lead to every other item: 1) drunks have trouble finding and keeping work; 3) and 4) early use of substances can lead to poor academic performance; 5) one substance addled person in a family can tear the family apart up and down five generations (two below and two above); 6) the home is not kept up, the neighborhood begins a slow decay; 7) stealing and theft to keep up a habit; and 8) so down on our luck no one will take us in. Conversely, doing poorly in school can lessen job prospects, which can lead to substance abuse to wash our ills away for a while, which may lead us to addiction, which just makes it all worse. And growing businesses are loath to locate where the prospects for employees sound of body, mind and spirit appear to be minimal.

But we know that people like Ben Carson have come from neighborhoods like these, and I know from having worked at the corner of Grand and West Florissant for a year after I finished college, that there are vastly more good people in these neighborhoods than there are wanton souls rife with evil and seeking destruction of

themselves and their brothers and sisters. An outsider might wonder how anyone lives here; an insider may struggle to see a way to make it better — they may just want out.

I don't know that I have a solution, or that my many ideas will work everywhere, but I wanted to share some thoughts with you as good people who strive for, receive and are happy with God's blessings. I think if we break each challenge into smaller components and improve each situation a little, we will see that these problems are interconnected so that helping smooth out the corner here will improve the foundation there.

Let us start with decay and joblessness. A building which is falling apart needs care and attention to keep it habitable; the problem may be that the owner cannot find the funds to pay for the repair. A student who is struggling in math and science, or with reading or speaking, may need to learn outside school, such as how to mix plaster or concrete to help the building owner repair the building. The work may be several stories in the air, and we need to make calculations about the angle for a ladder, and the weight necessary at the foot of the ladder to keep it stable.

For many children, troubles in school explode into futility in a classroom at or about the eighth grade, yet our leaders in the current Presidential race are talking about free college education for all. Let us be honest with ourselves, most college graduates can do ordinary problems in calculus, but there are a large number of students who cannot do elementary and middle school algebra. The world requires the latter skill and needs far less people who are calculus proficient. Let us focus our education [TAX] dollars on helping those who most need the help by giving them real world opportunities to learn the math, science, reading and speaking skills they will need all their lives. College costs have exploded because of the unchecked Federal Budget, where

the Washingtonians think throwing more money at programs without getting a tangible return will solve society's ills.

Rather than forcing students who would rather be somewhere else to sit in school and follow the rules of school, give students the option of learning by doing. For instance, many crime riddled neighborhoods would greatly benefit from the installation and monitoring of surveillance systems — London is one of the safest large cities in the world because there are cameras and microphones everywhere. Video evidence of malfeasance holds up in court, and knowing that you may be on Candid Camera as you boost a car stereo is generally a better deterrent than lectures on morality. While three hots and a cot might be appealing ("If I do a small crime, I get to do some time" is identified by some jail residents as preferable to the homelessness on the streets), the nastiness of our criminal hostelry is a formidable deterrent.

So let us imagine that we might want, as a neighborhood, to install a surveillance system. We will likely need to bury the cables underground: what better place than in or alongside our aging sewage and utility pipelines. Can we find a way to use local talent and local labor to accomplish several things well at once? The unions and their workers may cry foul as government contracts are their sole province, or so they think (or so they have engineered the federal, state and local bid acceptance processes), but if you ask most people on the street what one of the most effective federal agencies ever was they tend to respond the CCC, the Civilian Conservation Corps. I do not propose that we bring it back as a giant federal agency that inures to the remembrance of the greatness of a few federal leaders, but that we look at the infrastructure work it accomplished across this great land and that local communities be able to implement similar systems to work on local issues.

As I examine the history of the CCC, it had a few organizational flaws, not the least of which was the perpetuation of white (skin color, sort of) officers and black (skin color, sort of) laborers, with many of the skilled labor assignments going by primary default to segregated white units. That ain't gonna cut it! Fortunately Harry S. Truman ended the color barrier in the Armed Forces, which brings me to a key element of my thinking in the community based 256 plan, bring in the Marines, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, the Coast Guard and the National Guard as bulwarks of forward progress.

Imagine a troubled neighborhood where an abandoned home and some vacant lots are suddenly inhabited by 32 squared away Gyrines or Army Rangers or Air Force maintenance personnel whose job it is to assess the area, along with the nascent groups of eight, sixteen and thirty-two, and see what needs doing and how best to do it. Our soldiers and sailors are the pride of our nation, the heart and soul of the freedoms we cherish, and they have rescued more than one youth from poverty and despair. Let us incorporate their great people skills proactively. Perhaps we would even decide, as a community, to quarter these men and women in our homes as they get the ball rolling on the revitalization of this great and wonderful land. What better models of how hard work and self-sacrifice exist than those who serve? Note, too, that we might be able to augment these forces with service alumni, giving the soldiers and sailors who have given the great measures of devotion in the past new meaning and new purpose as they help others to help themselves. By association with these leaders, we may be able to guide and provide sound role models for at risk youth. I know I have retained since childhood a set of Lance Corporal insignia given to me by an Embassy Marine during my family's days in Brasilia. Dress Blues. *Semper Fidelis.*

Our military has become expert at local problem solutions in distant lands while improving infrastructure and government councils there. Let us utilize our cities as training, proving and renewal grounds for soldiers and sailors as they prepare for and return from their tours of duty. I see roles for veterans whose lives have been modified by their service to the nation and the world: rather than the isolation of the VA, let us welcome them into communities that are rebuilding their own lives. It is a primary principle of recovery systems that helping others first helps you more than you can imagine.

Bring in the police, the fire department and the city agencies in charge of beautification, preservation and renovation. Let us foster partnerships where the local people innovate and the government cooperates. If we take our groups of eight, sixteen and thirty-two (2², 2³, and 2⁴) and take block by block, or vacant lot by vacant lot, or crackhouse by crackhouse approach to our challenges, we need the input of the experts we already have in place. We need our public safety officers to have an open forum where they can speak freely without deep fear of recrimination or assault. We can either have civilization, or we can have mob rule (which reminds me, take Andy Jackson, the founder of mobocracy, off the \$20 and put Sojourner Truth on it: we will remove the living apotheosis of the author of the Trail of Tears and replace it with Liberty). I realize some will say that we are asking for the voices of our oppressors, but silencing the speech of another before we have listened, or walked two moons in their moccasins, sandals or work boots, will not move our city forward.

It takes a village for us to make a village. I am not describing some collectivist Xanadu, I am asking us to take the democratic bull by the horns, define our missions through thought, hope, prayer, conversation and efforts that may fail, falter, fether,

fester or fulfill, free, flower, and find. Working together, we can build a successful community that has businesses other than just liquor stores, drug stores and grocery stores. We can create our own franchise opportunities, our own start-ups, our own free enterprise system that will take a struggling 'hood and make of it a place of sanity and serenity where each child can walk home safe and free to the loving warmth of family.

If we take a young girl, age 13, pregnant, perhaps her second or third pregnancy, what life will we predict for this Juliet? A young child requires great attention and tremendous effort and expense. She cannot reasonably be expected to be able to find work that will pay for all those expenses because she has little experience and one would hazard she has substandard academic skills meaning her employability even in entry level jobs is likely very low. But she might be a wonderful caregiver for children, and she and a few other mothers similarly situated might be able to form a kibbutz or similar situation where they rotate child care responsibilities under the supervision of a qualified individual or team of individuals.

Perhaps there is an exchange of 12 hours of community service for child-care coverage for 24 hours so she can work and go to school. We need to take our people and help them lift themselves up. Programs like WIC should be supplementary and timed to disappear as each person gains greater life skills through experience and diligence. And let me share an idea that is likely to bring on howls of derision and dissent, but we need to do something about teen pregnancy that is not abortion or adoption. Is it rational to: limit the number of children women can bear and the ages at which women and men can be permitted to procreate? Can we have a civilized debate on this challenging issue?

Decriminalization

For around eighty years we have experimented with the prohibition of mind and mood altering substances; that prohibition started at or about the time the prohibition on alcohol was lifted due to its dismal failure including a large rise in violent and organized crime. We can see the same criminal problems associated with "recreational" drugs, yet we have retained the same prohibitive status for approximately five times as long as we retained the failed prohibition on alcohol. It is time to consider a different method of control.

Because the use of recreational drugs, I will here call them MAS, Mood Altering Substances, simply to save space and spare me from Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS), has a tremendous impact on public safety (impaired motor vehicle operators; enraged addicts; addled addicts, to name a few) I propose that we begin with a vote of public safety officers and first responders. They are the ones who deal with out of control users to attempt to protect the rest of us from those who struggle to control themselves. We might consider families that are adversely affected, too, but the education and training of first responders make them ideal candidates for the initial debate and formation of relatively uniform policies of control.

The great laboratories of the states, See:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laboratories_of_democracy,
may, if the states so choose, give us the power to experiment with various behavioral modification models whereby we begin to limit the adverse effects of drug and alcohol abuse on families, communities, local and state governments and the nation. Rather than our current top down administration (imposition?), when the great brains (as self-described and self-anointed) give us one-size-fits-all solutions, the People of the States,

perhaps through experimentation and study at a variety of local levels as deemed most appropriate by the [people of the] States themselves, might be able to fashion sound solutions for study within limited and limiting Federal guidelines.

Let me explain my thinking on the need for some overriding force to limit the ability of states to negatively impact the other states. Take a state which as essentially legalized marijuana, Colorado. This is not a popular law in the surrounding states according to the leaders of those states because there is now a quasi-legal pipeline for pot distributors in the adjoining states. The state of modern package shipment could turn the current recreational usage states into mass exporters of weed to the more highly regulated states. This is a good example of the law school model of the slippery slope: once we permit a slight alteration in policy, we may be stepping onto a slippery slope where we soon wind up at the bottom, in the dark morass of human ills.

Our nation has greatly benefited from the free and open transportation of goods, and we should remember the lessons of the Articles of Confederation where the balkanization of commerce deeply restricted the flow of goods and negatively impacted price competition. To borrow from modern advertising, everything that was consumed in Vegas generally would have to be made in Vegas and Nevada, because we would legislate methods of keeping non-Nevada producers out of Nevada. Conversely, assume Arkansas wants to be a Prohibition State on cocaine, methamphetamine and heroin, yet Missouri has public distribution centers for these, while Louisiana, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Kentucky, Mississippi and Kansas have permissive possession statutes (i.e., individuals can possess, but selling is illegal — effectively driving business to Missouri).

Hopefully you can see what an enforcement nightmare might be created. Missouri might be making itself a marketing and shipping haven. Will the other states

soon follow as they see a windfall in taxes, while they still have the same costs of enforcement, patrol and rehabilitation and education services? Will Arkansas be forced to alter its well-found policy because it cannot be reasonably enforced without substantial increases in funding? Are drive by shootings, the taking of innocent lives, and the maintenance of dangerous neighborhoods sufficient deterrents to alteration of existing policies with the hoped-for effect of getting a reasonable grasp on use and abuse of MAS?

Take a community based approach, perhaps coupled with a military presence in "apothecary" neighborhoods. Let us say that the City of St. Louis can be divided up into 256 (2^{10}) neighborhoods each with 256 involved citizens to debate and achieve neighborhood consensus and group conscience. Perhaps we get 32 to 64 neighborhoods that would prefer a licensed apothecary to crack houses and Glock 9s. The other neighborhoods get the benefit of no dealers, lower drive-by risk, but have the bane of MAS use and abuse because the MAS are readily available through a legitimate and regulated source. The drugs are currently available through unlicensed, unregulated groups generally known as gangs, so availability is relatively equivalent under both models (prohibition vs. regulation/licensing). The apothecary communities may desire, or might under state or city/county be required, to add a small group of soldiers (a 32), sailors or marines to help maintain order.

Decriminalization can hardly be described as a panacea. Decriminalization of alcohol use has not ended the many ills associated with it. But prohibition of other MAS has largely been a failure, and to the extent this has destroyed neighborhoods, created homelessness and loss, I would like to see the good people of each and every community have the chance to determine what might work for them.

