

The Inside Scoop

An Inside Look at National,
State and Local Politics

July 13, 2005 Vol. 1 #22



SPECIAL FEATURE -- AN INSIDERS LOOK AT THE ROLE OF 3 LEGISLATIVE STAFFERS -- SEE PAGES 9-14



London-Shaken Not Stirred

by Rick Sense

“You ask, What is our policy? I will say; It is to wage war, by sea, land and air, with all our might and with all the strength that God can give us. . . .

That is our policy. You ask, What is our aim? I can answer with one word: Victory--victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory, however long and hard the road may be; for without victory there is no survival.”

Winston Churchill, first speech as prime minister to the House of Commons May 13, 1940

The recent bombings by the terrorist cowards in London demonstrate once again how al-Qaeda continues to under-estimate the British-American alliance that was forged in the fight against “Der Führer” and strengthened in the Cold War. Like Hitler and Stalin, al-Qaeda has misjudged good old fashioned Anglo-Saxon resolve. Despite British politeness and American kindness, we British and Americans are resolute in our defense of freedom and liberty. We believe that our God given freedom is worth defending and preserving at any cost.

These cowards will not succeed in changing British policy in Iraq. If anything, the attack will only increase the determination of the British government to complete its mission. Prime Minister Tony Blair and the British government are the antithesis of Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero and the Spanish Left.

Our unified response to this latest attack in this war can be no different than it was when European Fascism, not Middle Eastern Fascism was the threat to our existence. We are at war - there must be quick and decisive response to this latest offensive. These cowards and their supporters, friends and benefactors must be sought out and held accountable. This much is crystal clear; we are engaged in a struggle no different than the one faced by Churchill and Roosevelt. This is a struggle between civilization and barbarism.

In our ally’s hour of need, we in the United States need to stand tall with our British friends. The British are shaken, but far from stirred from the task at hand. This war may last for generations, but I am confident that with God’s help, it will be won by the two greatest nations of our time doing the right thing - leading the way in defense of freedom and liberty.

“Our ultimate weapon is not our guns but our beliefs ... Ours are not Western values. They are the universal values of the human spirit and anywhere, any time, ordinary people are given the chance to choose, the choice is the same. Freedom not tyranny. Democracy not dictatorship. The rule of law not the rule of the secret police. The spread of freedom is the best security for the free. It is our last line of defense and our first line of attack.”

Tony Blair, Speech to Congress July 18, 2003

“We will show through our spirit and dignity that our values will long outlast theirs. The purpose of terrorism is just that--to terrorize people, and we will not be terrorized.”

Tony Blair, July 7, 2005



President Bush and Prime Minister Blair in happier times. (White House photo by Eric Draper)

President Bush's Radio Address from July 9, 2005



Good morning. Thursday morning, terrorists struck at the heart of one of the world's great cities in a series of bombings that hit London's subway and bus system as thousands of commuters headed to work. We in America know the sense of loss that our British friends feel at this moment. We extend our sympathies to those who suffered terrible injuries, and we pray for the families mourning the loss of loved ones. In this dark hour, the people of Great Britain can know that the American people stand with them.

These barbaric attacks occurred as world leaders gathered in Scotland for the G8 summit. While terrorists were killing innocent men and women in London, leaders at the G8 were discussing how free nations can combat poverty and HIV/AIDS, create a cleaner environment, and improve the lives of people everywhere. The contrast could not be more vivid between the intentions and the hearts of those who care deeply about human rights and human liberty, and the evil intentions and acts of those who rejoice in the death and suffering of the innocent.

We experienced this evil in our own country on a clear September morning in 2001. Since that day, terrorists have continued to kill and maim -- in Bali, and Casablanca, Riyadh, Jakarta, Istanbul, Madrid, Baghdad, London, and elsewhere. The terrorists believe that free societies are essentially corrupt and decadent. They believe that with a few hard blows, and the televised repetition of horrific images of violence, they can force us to retreat. They are mistaken.

On the day of the London attacks, every world leader at the G8 summit stood with Prime Minister Blair as he said: "Our determination to defend our values and our way of life is greater than their determination to cause death and destruction to innocent people."

The free world is united in its resolve: We will never yield to terrorists and murderers. In the face of such adversaries, there is only one course of action: We will continue to take the fight to the enemy, and we will fight until the enemy is defeated.

We are now waging a global war on terror -- from the mountains of Afghanistan to the border regions of Pakistan, to the Horn of Africa, to the islands of the Philippines, to the plains of Iraq. We will stay on the offense, fighting the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them at home. We will continue to deny the terrorists safe haven and the support of rogue states. And at the same time, we will spread the universal values of hope and freedom that will overwhelm their ideology of tyranny and hate. The free world did not seek this conflict, yet we will win it.

Here at home, federal, state, and local officials are doing everything possible to protect us from another terrorist attack in America. While we have no specific credible information suggesting an imminent attack in the United States, in light of the bombings in London, we have raised the threat level from elevated to high for our passenger rail, subway, and bus systems. I urge all Americans to remain alert, and to report any suspicious activity to your local authorities.

This week, there is great suffering in the city of London. Yet the British people are resilient, and they have faced brutal enemies before. The nation that survived the Nazi Blitz will not be intimidated by terrorists. And just as America and Great Britain stood together to defeat the murderous ideologies of the 20th century, we again stand together to defeat the hateful ideologies of the 21st century.

The terrorists cannot shake our will. America and its allies will act decisively, because we know that the future of civilization is at stake in this struggle, and we know that the cause of freedom will prevail.

May God bless the people of Great Britain, and may He continue to bless America.

Thank you for listening.

Constitution Corner 1st Amendment: The Separation of Church and State?

by Rick Sense

(editor's note-with the recent resignation of Justice O'Connor and the debate over how a new justice might interpret the Constitution a series of articles reviewing the US Constitution will be appearing in The Inside Scoop.)

First Amendment To The Constitution of The United States

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

The phrase "separation of church and state" has never been included in the 1st Amendment of the US Constitution. But oddly enough when it comes to the debate of the role of religion in the state, the 1st Amendment of the United States Constitution is cited. If you asked the majority of Americans today they would tell you that this phrase is part of our Constitution. However it is a phrase that has been "added" to what the Founders originally adopted.

Used in 1802 by Thomas Jefferson, (author of the Declaration of Independence, but absent in Europe during the drafting of the 1st Amendment and ratification of the US Constitution) to assure Baptist parishioners that they didn't need to fear that the federal government would intrude on their religion, the phrase "the separation of church and state" was actually penned by Roger Williams, the founder of the Baptist Church of America. The context of this phrase used by Jefferson has been changed to fit an argument used by many today-that churches or religious beliefs and government can not mix.

If Jefferson truly believed this would he have:

- included the word God in our national motto,
- established official days of fasting and prayer,
- punished Sabbath breakers,
- required that oaths be phrased by the words "so help me God" and sworn on a Bible,

- granted land to Christian schools,
- allowed government property and facilities to be used for worship,
- funded religious books for public libraries,
- used the Bible and nondenominational religious instruction in the public schools?*

Now, I am not trying to place words in Jefferson's mouth, but I am asking people to look beyond what they hear or are led to believe when presented with the concept of "the separation of church and state." The 1st Amendment of the US Constitution also guarantees your right to the freedom of speech-exercise it regularly and challenge those who present "facts" that aren't completely accurate.

*source: Mark A. Beliles' Introduction to an updated version of Thomas Jefferson's *Abridgement of the Words of Jesus of Nazareth*, pg 11.



Green Team-First Calling Nights of Campaign Held in Outagamie County

by Rick Sense

On Monday night July 4th, the second phone calling event of the Green for Governor campaign was held at Electroline in Greenville. In all six Green Team members participated in the fun. The July 4th calling night followed on the heels of the first phone event that was held in June.

Two calling nights have been scheduled for August. The first is scheduled for Monday, August 1st, at Electroline in Greenville from 6 to 8 PM. The second is scheduled for Monday, August 15th, from 6-8pm at Electroline as well. Pizza and sodas will be served at both events. Please contact me at rdsense@aol.com or at 920-730-2926 if you can attend.

To date 9 people have volunteered to make calls for the August 1st event. Please consider joining in on the fun!



Green Breaks Fundraising Record for Challenger in Governor's Race
Green has already amassed nearly \$2 million for run against Jim Doyle

With support coming from every part of Wisconsin, Republican candidate for governor Congressman Mark Green will file a record-breaking report with the State Elections Board next week. His July Continuing Report will show he has raised more money and has a larger cash balance than any challenger for governor has ever had at this point in an election cycle.

Green, who only announced his candidacy on May 1, will report total receipts of \$678,886.26 and a cash balance of nearly \$1.74 million. The new funds coupled with Green's existing campaign account show he has already amassed nearly \$2 million to take on Governor Jim Doyle.

Green received 3,357 contributions, almost all from Wisconsin (96%), with only 2% of his receipts from political action committees. Green said he was most proud of the fact that he has contributors in each of Wisconsin's 72 counties, and that nearly two-thirds of his contributors (64%) made donations of less than \$100.

"This report reflects both the strength of our statewide organization and the excitement generated by our message that Wisconsin can be great again. As I travel the state, I'm finding that most folks agree with me that Governor Jim Doyle does not share our values and has us headed in the wrong direction," said Green. "I am both humbled and motivated that people from every part of Wisconsin have put their trust in me to chart a new course for our state."

At this same point in the 2002 election cycle, then-Attorney General Jim Doyle had just over \$1 million in the bank for his challenge to Governor Scott McCallum – and that was after Doyle had been campaigning for governor for over a year. No other challengers for governor have ever had over \$1 million in the bank this far from election day.

"Governor Doyle may have the special interest groups and the Madison liberal elite on his side," said Green. "But I have the farmers, factory workers, foresters, fishermen and working families that make up the fabric of Wisconsin on my side. These folks are fed up with high taxes, angry at government waste and tired of having their values belittled and dismissed. We've only just started, but we're building a team that won't settle for anything less than a great Wisconsin."

In addition to Green's fundraising success, he also won the straw poll held at the Republican Party of Wisconsin State Convention and was chosen the Republican Democrats don't want to face in a straw poll held at the Democratic Party of Wisconsin State Convention.

Walker Raises Quarter Million Dollars in June

(press release from Walker campaign)

Scott Walker's gubernatorial campaign had a ferocious fundraising month in June, bringing in more than three hundred thousand dollars in thirty days. With more than a half million dollars raised in the first few months of the campaign, Walker is well on his way to having the necessary funds to beat the first term Democratic Governor.

"Winning elections is all about positive momentum, and that's what Scott Walker has, big time," said Walker campaign treasurer John Hiller. "Few thought Scott would be able to raise this kind of money so quickly and no one, not even me, expected the campaign to bring in more than three hundred thousand dollars in June alone."

Preliminary data indicates:

Amount raised in June 2005: \$300,994
 Amount raised in 2005: \$603,403
 Number of contributors in 2005: 3486
 Average Contribution for 2005: \$173.09
 (see Walker page 5)

(Walker Continued from page 4)

Contributions from Wisconsin individuals: 98.7%
(From 63 of Wisconsin's 72 Counties)
Number of Contributions less than \$100: 66.2%

By comparison, in 2001, Jim Doyle, who as attorney general had held statewide office for a dozen years, raised \$537,322 during the first half of the year.

The Walker campaign will report more than a half million dollars on hand going into the second half of 2005. Of the \$604,403 raised in 2005, more than \$84,325 came from the sophisticated Internet based contribution program found at ScottWalker.org.

"Our base of support is impressive, and raising \$84,000 from the Internet shows we have the innovation, organization and sophistication to support Walker, the candidate with the best chance at defeating Jim Doyle in 2006," said Hiller. "It will cost a Republican challenger two million dollars to match Scott Walker's name ID in the media market with nearly half of all Primary voters. We like where we're positioned."



Veterans' Legislator of the Year: Steve Wieckert

The Wisconsin American Legion has announced that Representative Steve Wieckert will be the American Legion's 2005 *Legislator of the Year*. State Commander Al Richards made the announcement and indicated that Wieckert will be honored at the annual state convention in Wausau later this month.

Don Bauer, Ninth District American Legion Commander, whose base is American Legion Post

38 in Appleton, has known Wieckert for years. Don reports that, "Steve has done an awful lot to help veterans. He participates in our programs. He supports important veterans' legislation, and he is always there when we need him. It's an important award, and I'm glad Steve got it."

"Veterans are some of the most patriotic, honorable and courageous people I know," Wieckert said. "It is a pleasure to work with them, to support their activities, and to advocate legislation on their behalf. We are all appreciative of what they have done for our country."

Wieckert has been involved in veterans' activities over the past ten years, and has been a spokesman for honoring veterans and all they have done for America at the State Capitol. Wieckert has also been the principal sponsor of a legislative initiative establishing a week honoring the Mighty Eighth Air Force of World War II. He has also worked on dozens of cases, helping disabled veterans determine what programs they may qualify for. Wieckert has also marched with the veterans in many Flag Day and Memorial Day parades, and has been the principal speaker at over a dozen veterans' events.

"Especially with the military challenges our soldiers face in Iraq, and considering the war on terrorism, it is more appropriate than ever to recognize the sacrifices veterans have made so that we may live free in a democracy. This is especially fitting that we pay them this tribute over this Fourth of July weekend," Wieckert said.





Gard Congressional Committee Raises Nearly Quarter Million in First 70 Days

Assembly Speaker John Gard's Congressional Committee for the 8th strict Congressional race raised \$225,279 in the 70 days since its creation, according to information filed with the Federal Election Commission. Records showed that over 70 percent of Gard's individual contributors were residents of the 8th District.

"I have been overwhelmed by the support residents of the 8th District have given me since I first announced the creation of my exploratory committee," Gard said. "To be at this level with more than a year to go until the Election is a tremendous encouragement."

According to campaign finance reports, Gard's exploratory committee raised \$225,279 since its creation just over two months ago. Gard's record-setting pace dwarfs previous records reported for races in the 8th District. Of the over 600 individual contributors donating to Gard's committee, more than 70 percent were residents of the 8th District and 99 percent were Wisconsin residents, with an average contribution of \$288 for all individual contributions, with over \$177,620 cash-on-hand.

Gard said that he was especially proud of the level of support he has received from within the 8th District. "My focus since the day I formed my committee was to listen to the concerns and gauge the support of the people of northeastern Wisconsin. I am pleased that so many of them have responded so enthusiastically by sharing their views, their encouragement, and their financial support with me."

Gard said that despite the record-setting start to his exploratory committee, he did not intend to rest on his laurels. "This is a great start, but it's only a start," said Gard. "There is a long way to go until election day 2006 and a lot of good people in the 8th District who I still need to meet, introduce myself, and learn from if I intend to represent their interests in Washington, D.C."



Hundertmark Comments on Senator Harsdorf's Decision Not to Run for Lieutenant Governor

"I greatly admire Senator Harsdorf as a talented legislator with an impressive record of accomplishment. There is no doubt she would have been a strong candidate.

Sheila is a friend and I appreciated the fact that she took the time to notify me personally of her decision. I wish her the absolute best. "As the only declared Republican candidate for the office of Lieutenant Governor, I will be traveling across Wisconsin in the months ahead, to make my case for why the Badger State needs a change in direction. I look forward to meeting as many people as possible.

"In 2006, we have an opportunity to make sure we have an administration that pays attention to the will of the people. The Doyle administration has vetoed property tax relief, common-sense election reform, and legislation that reflects the values of Wisconsin citizens, along with proposing massive fee increases and tax hikes in its most recent budget. We can do much better. I know the people of Wisconsin want bold, decisive leadership, and I will be part of the team that makes it happen."

Wall Identified as Darling of Madison Liberals

press release from the
Eighth Congressional District,
Republican Party of Wisconsin

If you're known by the company you keep, 8th District Democrat candidate for Congress Jaime Wall is quickly exposing himself as a radical liberal, more comfortable with Madison liberal values than Northeastern Wisconsin values, according to Bill Ross, 8th District Republican Chairman. Ross' remarks came in the wake of a campaign mailing and fundraiser on Wall's behalf by Madison Mayor Dave Cieslewicz.

"While Republican candidates for Congress are working hard in Northeast Wisconsin listening to the concerns of our constituents, Jaime Wall is spending his time listening to the concerns of the liberal elite in Madison," said Ross. "He's clearly the darling of the white wine and quiche crowd in that left wing Mecca."

In June, liberal Madison Mayor Dave Cieslewicz sent a letter urging liberal donors to come to a fundraiser on Wall's behalf at a Madison bar on June 22nd. Mayor Cieslewicz writes, "I have known Jaime for a long time... He will fight for the environment and support a women's right to choose.

Ross said that if Wall does indeed share the views of his patron Cieslewicz, 8th District workers and taxpayers are in big trouble.

In a profile in the Isthmus Magazine, Dave Cieslewicz articulated his view toward business and job growth stating: *"In a healthy situation, I think you want business to really hate government, because then government is really doing its job... As I see it, rapid growth doesn't benefit anybody except a handful of developers, the Glenn Hovdes of the world. Everybody loses.... To me, (economic development) is this code word for, at the state level, destroying the progressive tradition, and at the county level, being wildly pro-growth, without any idea of what it's doing to the natural environment or to the people who live here."*

"At a time when our region and our state need to do everything we can to remain competitive and create jobs, Jaime Wall has chosen to cast his lot with the kind of unreconstructed Madison radicals who actually believe government should be fighting the

job creators in the private sector," said Ross. "If he is so desperate for campaign cash that he feels the need to grovel before these extremists, it's pathetic. If he actually agrees with their radical views it's downright scary."

Fact Check! Democrat Wall Claims \$240,000 in Campaign War Chest (But, Neglects to Mention He Loaned His Own Campaign \$100,000 in Press Release)

(editor's note-Wall's press release appears below with no mention of the loan of \$100,000 he made to his own campaign as reported in July 12, 2005's Green Bay Press Gazette)

Jamie Wall, the Democratic candidate for U.S. Congress in Wisconsin's 8th District announced today that he will report nearly \$65,000 more cash on hand than his Republican opponent as of June 30.

Wall, the state's former economic development chief and an independent businessman from Green Bay, will report more than \$240,000 cash on hand. Republican Assembly Speaker John Gard reported \$177,620 in the bank on Monday.

"I continue to be energized by the incredible response to my candidacy," said Wall. "The totals at the end of this financial reporting period show that I am the candidate with momentum in this race."



The Outagamie County Republican Party's booth at the recent Outagamie County Fair was once again a huge success.



McCormick Statement on Florence School District

State Representative Terri McCormick issued the following statement regarding the Florence County School Board's vote to dissolve the district.

"I am truly saddened that the Florence School Board was forced to take such a drastic action. As a former teacher, my deepest sympathies go out to the 644 students and their families who now face the prospect of losing their school.

"It is no secret that a primary factor forcing the vote for dissolution is the skyrocketing cost of health care. This unfortunate event highlights why it is so critical to adopt real solutions to the health insurance problem before it is too late.

"The McCormick Model for Health Insurance Cost Controls has the potential to save school districts and local governments across the state hundreds of millions of dollars by allowing them to choose their health insurance plans on a competitive bid basis. School boards would be able to opt out of the collective bargaining process if they find a cheaper plan with substantially similar benefits. The savings would be split between teachers for salary increases and the schools for administrative costs.

"Assembly Bills 515-519 are the result of considerable input from local government leaders from across the state of Wisconsin over the last 3 years. These five bills will give school boards the tools they need to lower their health insurance costs. It is vital that we take action to enact these reforms before more school districts are faced with the same choice as Florence."

Baseball and the Presidency

America's Presidents have long enjoyed playing or watching a good game of baseball. A soldier's diary reveals that George Washington and his men played an early version of baseball called "rounders" on the fields of Valley Forge. History records that John Adams played *bat and ball* and Andrew Jackson played a similar game of baseball called *one old cat*. Abraham Lincoln's love of the game was so well known that an 1860 political cartoon showed Lincoln and his opponents on a baseball diamond.

Andrew Johnson, Lincoln's successor, was so thrilled to be invited to see the first game played among teams from different states that he gave his White House staff time off from work to go to the game. Johnson set up chairs for his staff along the first base line of the White Lot, an area located between the South Lawn of The White House and an incomplete Washington Monument that stood only 152 feet tall. Today, the area is called the *Ellipse*, and energetic federal staffers play softball games on the grounds each spring in the shadows of the towering, 555-foot Washington Monument.

Ulysses S. Grant was President when the National League was formed in 1876, but Benjamin Harrison became the first President to attend a major league game when he saw Cincinnati beat Washington 7-4 on June 6, 1892.

The 20th Century ushered in a Presidential and baseball tradition: throwing out the first pitch. William Howard Taft was the first President to do the honors when he threw a ball from his seat in the stands to the Washington Senator's opening day pitcher, Walter Johnson, on April 14, 1910. Nearly all Presidents since Taft have followed this pitching tradition.

Franklin Roosevelt made a significant decision when he encouraged Major League Baseball to continue playing ball during World War II. Roosevelt knew that continuing this popular past-time during wartime would boost the spirits of the American people.

Ronald Reagan so loved the game that he worked as a radio announcer for the Chicago Cubs. And we all know of George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush's fondness of baseball.

The Three Staffers: An Insiders Look at the Role of Three Legislative Staffers in Madison

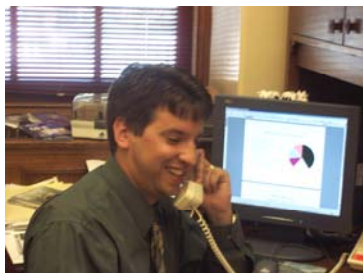
by Rick Sense

One of the most overlooked and most important roles in a representative democracy is that of the legislative staffer. Staffers are who keep our elected officials organized, prepared and responsive to constituent needs. I have had the opportunity over the years to work with staff members of many of our elected officials, both in Madison and Washington, D.C. learning first-hand the vital role they play in our great American experiment of democracy.

In this article I want to introduce Scoop readers to three of the champions of democracy that I have had the great opportunity to work with over the years. I will be highlighting a different aspect of a staffer's job through each.



**Scott Becher from
Representative Steve Wieckert's
office**



**Jason Rostan from
Representative Jean Hundertmark's
office**



**Nathan Berken from
Representative Gabe Loeffelholz's
office**

Scott Becher Representative Steve Wieckert's Policy Advisor: Media Relations Work

Working with the media is familiar to those who run for public office. A candidate understands that he or she will be under intense media scrutiny during a campaign and if elected, the spotlight only grows brighter. Legislators who have had to endure the rigors of a campaign are generally prepared for media pressure.

The demands on a legislative staffer are in many ways much different from those placed on elected officials. Many staffers have never had to endure a campaign or the constant probing of reporters trying to develop a story. Additionally, legislative staffers do not implement their own proposals or agenda because they work under the direction of an elected official and often times must deal with negative reaction and tough questioning for positions and policies they did not formulate.

Scott Becher has been working in Madison since 1992 and has been with Representative Wieckert's staff since 1997. He graduated from UW Oshkosh with a degree in Journalism and American History. In that time, Scott has worked at helping formulate the 'voice of the office' and turned what can be an adversarial relationship with the media into a mutually beneficial one.

"I talk with a lot of different media players, both local and nation-wide. In fact today I had a chance to talk with a producer with Fox News. My role is to provide as much background information as I can to members of the media, so when they interview the Representative they are asking the right questions and getting quotes for their stories from Steve, the true voice of the office."

An example of Scott's work can be traced back to the landmark legislation authored by Representative Wieckert that has come to be known as Cody's Law. Cody Monroe is a Menasha, Wisconsin boy who needed a kidney transplant and his father Marty was able to donate one of his own to his son. The Monroe family, like many other families with a family member undergoing transplant surgery, suffered thousands of dollars in lost wages over the three months Marty recovered from surgery.

Representative Wieckert took action with the Monroe family in mind, introducing Assembly Bill (AB) 477 to the Assembly. It was Scott's job to build momentum for this legislation in the media and to work with the media in identifying "allies to the cause". He created media packets and distributed them to people in different media outlets that would be beneficial to the legislation being crafted. He helped create an atmosphere of 'becoming one of the members of the team' in passing this legislation. During the committee hearings of AB477, renowned University of Wisconsin transplant surgeon Hans Sollinger and actor Larry Hagman of "Dallas" and "I Dream of Jeannie" fame testified committing their support of the bill.

Additionally, the Monroe family appeared before the Legislature many times to emphasize the importance of this bill. AB 477 allows a tax credit up to \$10,000 for travel expenses, lodging, and lost wages. It passed nearly unanimously in the Assembly and the Senate and was ultimately signed into law on January 30, 2004.

In all, Scott worked closely with reporters from all over the United States. AB 477 was the first bill of its kind and received national media coverage. The bill caught the attention of the Washington Post, New York Times, Chicago Tribune, USA Today, and was covered by MSNBC and CNN. (Currently, over 20 states have versions of it on the books or in process.) Scott's efforts on this bill have not only benefited people in Wisconsin but have touched others beyond our borders.

Scott loves his job and is a key player in the office of one of Wisconsin's most respected and successful legislators. However there are times when the job can be more problematic than others. "The pressure of the job can be too much at times-the expectation of having to have a lot done in a short window of time. Sometimes I literally only have 10 minutes to get something done-that can be difficult," stated Becher.

As for the future, Scott is looking forward to continuing to work with Steve. "I hope to be able to work with Representative Wieckert to get more bills introduced and more legislation enacted."

Jason Rostan
Representative Jean Hundertmark's Research Assistant:
Legislative Committee Work

In Madison, committees do much of the heavy lifting. It is where legislators introduce legislation, debate it, amend it in markup sessions, hear the opinions of outside experts and the public, and issue committee reports describing their intent and reasoning to fellow members and to the executive agencies and courts that will have to interpret their handiwork.

Working the committee process for Representative Jean Hundertmark is Jason Rostan. Jason started out as one of those Political Science majors that had no idea what to do after graduation. "I luckily became friends, ironically, with a Democrat that worked up at the Capitol as a page for the Assembly Sergeant-at-Arms. I was able to get a job as a page during my junior year at UW-Madison and then interned for a representative near the end of my senior year. I spent some time out of state after graduation, but really missed the fast paced atmosphere of the Capitol. I returned to Madison, got a job with the Assembly Republican Caucus for a couple months and then interviewed with Representative Jean Hundertmark. The rest is history," noted Rostan.

Jason is a Madison veteran having served in almost every capacity as a staffer. “I currently hold the position of Research Assistant (RA) for Jean. I’ve been with Jean for 6 ½ years, starting out as her Legislative Assistant (LA). The difference in the two positions is that the LA focuses more on constituent relations, while an RA focuses more on policy development and clerking the committee. When Jean served in leadership last session, I was the Administrative Assistant, which is reserved for the highest ranking staff in leadership offices. I believe the fact that I’ve served in almost every level of staffing, ranging from page to Administrative Assistant, has given me a better understanding of every aspect of Capitol life.”

In working the committee process much needs to be done. Jason explains, “there are currently 50 Assembly committees, with Jean chairing the Assembly Financial Institutions committee. When a legislator introduces a bill that deals with topics ranging from banking regulations to consumer protection, the legislation is brought to our office by the Assembly Chief Clerk.

“At the chair’s discretion, we will plan public hearings on these pieces of legislation. I will have to submit a public notice for all hearings that we have. Usually this just entails sending out the notice over the email system to other offices and the press and having them posted on bulletin boards outside the Assembly and Senate parlors. During the hearing, individuals will fill out slips showing their support or opposition to an individual bill and whether or not they want to publicly speak on this bill. I will usually organize the speakers so that we rotate speakers for and against.

“During the hearing, my main job is listening to each speaker and taking notes on their testimony. After the hearing, Jean and I will discuss whether there is support on the committee to pass this legislation and if there needs to be any changes to the bill. If Jean believes there should be a committee vote on the bill, I will then schedule an executive session, very similar to the process of a public hearing.

“During an executive session, I have a more visible role to play as I call for every committee member’s vote on each bill. After the hearing, I primarily have paper work to fill -out as I record everyone that registered on a bill during the public hearing and then the votes of the individual legislators.

“Once the bill passes, it then travels to the Assembly Rules committee where it waits until it is scheduled for action on the Assembly floor. Committee chairs are under no obligation to hold a public hearing or executive session on any bill.”

Jason adds, “work on legislation can happen at any point in the process before we have the formal committee vote. Many times an author of a bill will know their bill needs to be amended at the beginning of the process. Other times, it isn’t until the public hearing that an author will find out there is significant opposition to a bill and changes need to be made. Most of the work fixing a bill should be done in committee. Sometimes you miss something minor and it may need to be fixed on the floor.”

Jason enjoys his job and finds it most rewarding when helping a constituent and seeing the governor signing legislation he has had a role in developing. “I think there are really two rewarding parts of this job. One would be when you talk with a constituent that is really at the end of his or her rope. He or she has dealt with the government in some way and gotten nowhere. When you can get a positive resolution for that kind of a case, it makes you feel like you are on top of the world. I really enjoy making those kinds of calls to a constituent. The other rewarding aspect of my job is when the governor signs a piece of legislation that you have personally worked on. You’ve worked on this bill from its drafting stage, through the committee process, through both houses and then to the governor’s desk. It is one of the proudest moments for any staffer.”

When asked about the frustrations he works through, Jason sees little that concerns him. “The only thing that sometimes frustrates me is getting some time to sit down with Jean to discuss long term goals for our committee. Legislators have to juggle their time between a number of different commitments, leaving little time to sit down with their staff and do long range planning.”

In conclusion, Jason points out that there is no such thing as a typical day in the Capitol. “There are days when the Legislature is in session, or committee hearings, or the phone doesn’t ring once. A lot of my time

is taken up reading. I will constantly read articles or studies done on policy issues ranging from education funding to Medicaid. I will spend time researching bills that come to the Assembly Financial Institutions committee that I clerk. I will also spend time on a number of websites that cover Wisconsin state government. It is important to stay up to date on all the scuttlebutt at the capitol, and these sites do a great job. On session or committee days, I will have to prepare Jean for bills that will be dealt with. Throw on top of that some constituent cases or meetings with interest groups. No two days are alike. It is one of the reasons I enjoy my job as much as I do.”

Nathan Berken
Representative Gabe Loeffelholz’s Legislative Assistant:
Serving Constituents

The survival of any elected official is dependent on the proper care and attention to his or her constituents. In Representative Loeffelholz’s office this falls to Nathan Berken. “I’m responsible for constituent work, maintaining office organization, managing our constituent database, answering phones, greeting visitors, and staying abreast of current events on the local, state and federal levels,” notes Berken.

Nathan may be familiar to many Bush/Cheney 2004 volunteers, as he participated in many campaign activities here in Outagamie County during last year’s presidential race. Nathan is also a graduate of Xavier High School.

After graduating from Northwestern University in 2002, Nathan attended the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, receiving a Masters Degree in music in percussion performance. “I had many memorable experiences there—playing at Carnegie Hall twice, regularly performing in the Boston area, and attending two summer music festivals in Breckenridge, Colorado and in Santa Barbara, California.”

Working on constituent matters is an interesting opportunity according to Berken. “Constituent requests come through email, the mail, via telephone, and in-person. We usually respond to constituents in the same medium they contact us. If they email, we respond with email.”

“When a written request comes in, I draft a response. If it’s a new subject, I run the letter and response by my boss to make sure it’s ok, which allows him to make any modifications. If the letter is similar to previous letters, I send out our established response. I add personalization to each letter if possible.

“With phone calls, sometimes I tell the constituent the Representative’s position over the phone. If I don’t know, I find out, or refer them to my co-worker if she happens to know the answer. When someone calls regarding legislation our office has authored, I refer them to my co-worker since she drafted the legislation.

“Because my boss doesn’t see every constituent letter, we keep him up to date with what goes on. For example, I might tell him we received “X” number of letters in support, “Y” number in opposition to a given issue.

“We also get casework. Casework is when an individual has a very specific problem that is complex and may take some time to resolve. Many times the individual may not know where to go for help, or may have exhausted several avenues, so they turn to us. In these situations, I may call several people as resources. They could be state agency liaisons, Legislative Council attorneys, other staffers, or even lobbyists. There’s also a great deal of information online that makes tracking down information easier. Sometimes the situation may be out of our control, but other times we can be of enormous help. Each case is different.

“In certain situations my boss becomes directly involved and will even go out to meet constituents at their homes or businesses. It seems like he knows everyone in Grant County and Platteville and he really looks forward to meeting with them!

“In terms of organizing our constituent data, I created and maintain a constituent database within Microsoft Outlook under the Contacts folder. A few offices use Outlook, but most use a database called Forward, or else Microsoft Access. I used Forward for a while, but didn’t feel it was fast or simple enough, especially when I was in a hurry. With Outlook, it’s handy to have the constituent data available in the email program. I can literally drag and drop emails into my Constituent Contact folder and it will create a new contact and populate certain fields such as name, email address, etc.

“I scan in constituent letters and save them directly in the contact. I also save a copy of my MS Word responses in the contact. All of my incoming/outgoing email correspondence is saved there as well, and I type in dates/times and detailed notes for each action that is taken.

“Another bonus is the Categories feature. I can assign several categories to each constituent, such as “Budget,” “Education,” “DOT Issues,” etc. Each person can have as many categories as I want, so it makes looking up constituents by name or issue quick and easy. I’ve literally had my boss call me about a particular constituent, and seconds later emailed him that constituent’s entire detailed history in one easy step. Because it takes so little time to enter the information, I maintain the database as I’m working on a case, or immediately thereafter, so it is almost always up to date.”

When asked if constituents make a difference in a representative’s voting, Nathan had an interesting response. “On the big issues, my boss has firm convictions. For example, he’s going to always vote pro-life, no matter how many emails come in to the contrary. That’s a principal he ran on and the people put him into office knowing that stance. On more peripheral issues, however, I think he’s more flexible – if a constituent contacts us with an insightful perspective, he’s going to listen to that and take it into account.”

Nathan enjoys the work he is doing and finds working with Representative Loeffelholz and other staff enjoyable. “They are great people and they want me to learn as much as possible. Though my co-worker deals with most of the bill drafting, she lets me work on legislation to become familiar with the process.

“Representative Loeffelholz allows me to draft legislation if I run the idea by him first. I had one bill drafted that we didn’t introduce because it was obsolete by the time it was ready to go. I currently have a couple ideas I’m gathering information on, but haven’t put anything into drafting yet. I get really excited about making a difference through policy.”

Berken’s biggest frustration with the role of staffer is when politics becomes too political. “During the budget process, the legislature increased funding in a certain area of the budget by a tremendous amount. We were inundated with angry emails, letters, and phone calls saying that it just wasn’t enough, saying it was partisan, etc.

“I read biased editorials and articles that misrepresented the true fiscal situation and omitted important details. It was frustrating to see the legislature give so much, especially in a difficult budgetary situation, and have it be met with contempt, and in some cases, outright misrepresentation by the media and certain groups – all for political purposes.

“Contrast that with the leadership my boss and Speaker Gard showed by co-authoring the Wisconsin GI Bill, which provides certain benefits to disabled veterans in Wisconsin. They were successfully able to have this legislation placed into the budget. Other than a couple veterans who wanted slightly more benefits, we received nothing but overwhelmingly appreciative and supportive responses from veterans all over the state.

“When I am frustrated by politics, I look at these two examples. Both are examples of leaders doing their best, and both constituencies genuinely want the best for our state and our people. In one case, however, one of the constituencies may have put their interests forward in a way that was not balanced or appreciative of our overall situation.

“Federalism works because you have to advocate on behalf of your own interests, but you also look at the larger picture to ensure that your priorities are the right priorities. When this doesn’t happen, I sometimes get frustrated.”

My thanks to Scott, Jason and Nathan for their insights on the important work that they do for us in Madison, their work is greatly appreciated.

**The Inside Scoop enters its second year
with the next issue appearing in mid-August**