



This promotional image is from "Paving the Way: The National Park to Park Highway," a documentary by Davenport native Brandon Wade that airs nationally in May on PBS.



**Froma Harrop**  
Viewpoint

## Give the Blue Dogs a bone

There's trouble around the Democratic campfire. The party has the White House and solid congressional majorities. But what it doesn't have is everyone on the same page, strumming the same chords, singing the same tune.

Liberals who kept the fires burning during the long Republican reign now fear that moderate Blue Dog Democrats will thwart their much-delayed dreams. Elected from purplish parts of America, the Blue Dogs are fiscal conservatives who regard expensive new programs with a wary eye.

What's a liberal to do? First, recognize that the Blue Dogs are the reason Democrats have such nice majorities. They are why the dreams are even on the menu. Second, concede that the Reluctant Ones have a point.

Good advice not taken. Activist groups have launched a "Dog the Blue Dogs" campaign to pressure moderate Democrats to back President Barack Obama's program with a more open heart. Singled out for special attention is U.S. Sen. Evan Bayh of Indiana. Bayh recently organized a group of 15 centrists queasy over the big numbers in Obama's budget plans.

The campaign's sponsors chided the centrist Democrats last week for airing doubts about the Obama agenda. William McNary of USAction hinted in a pleasing heartland voice that Bayh could be beholden to "powerful special interests."

Other Blue Dogs, he added, "could become the unwitting accomplices of those who don't want change."

A reporter asked what options the activists had if the Blue Dogs don't come around. Robert Borosage, of the Campaign for America's Future, responded that the groups assume "that if you hear from constituents, you'll get with the program."

This is a curious strategy: Forty-nine House Democrats come from districts that backed John McCain in 2008. They have no reason to relax. As a reality check, the special election in upstate New York to replace Blue Dog Kirsten Gillibrand (now in Hillary Clinton's Senate seat) remains too close to call.

And Republicans totally understand the Blue Dogs' vulnerability. House Minority Leader John Boehner called them "lap dogs" for Obama.

These Democrats are dogged if they do and dogged if they don't. But let's set aside the politics and look at the policies. Are they right?

This year and next, big deficits are needed to pull the economy out of the ditch. But in the longer term, deficits must come down. The "pay-go" rule, a Blue Dog obsession, is the way to impose discipline. It requires lawmakers to offset the costs of legislation with tax increases or spending cuts.

By the way, these centrists are not Lite Republicans. When U.S. Rep. Paul Ryan, a Wisconsin Republican, said, "I want to ask my friends, the Blue Dog Democrats, do you really want all this government?" he truly asked the wrong question.

The Blue Dogs have no ideological objection to government. They support such Obama priorities as health-care reform. They just want them paid for.

And Blue Dogs hold undisguised contempt for recent Republican conversions to fiscal rectitude. Ryan's appeal "to help us defeat this unprecedented taxing, borrowing and spending spree" drew a tart response from Louisiana U.S. Rep. Charlie Melancon.

"These statements come from the same individuals who wrote the president a blank check for eight years, driving spending to the highest levels in our country's history," said Melancon, a co-chair of the Democratic Blue Dog Coalition.

What's a liberal to do? Be very nice to the Blue Dogs.

# America's 1st road trip



Tour driver Gus Holms gets stuck while driving, an obstacle that many encountered on the trek.

## West grad's film brings 1920 National Park tour to television

By Brandon Wade

I've always loved road trips. Growing up in West Davenport within earshot of Interstate 280 traffic, I had travel engraved into my soul and my character.

Because we live in the middle of the country, packing up the family car and heading west, mostly, was what we did during my childhood summers of 1988-1998. No doubt that's why I wanted to take the most epic road trip adventure of my life and produce a historical documentary.

My history in filmmaking, or storytelling visually, began when I was asked to be the school photographer at H.M. Perry Elementary School in Davenport when I was in fifth

grade. From there I enjoyed art classes at Walcott Junior High and West High, with drawing, painting and photography classes packed around my core class schedule. I also had a tech theater background, as I developed into the sound engineer during my sophomore, junior and senior years at West. This really shaped my understanding of how to take a craft such as audio or images and use that to aid in storytelling. I went on to graduate from the Art Institute of Colorado in photography and have been working on films ever since.

While I was on my honeymoon in the fall of 2006 in Rocky Mountain National Park, I came across a book at the visitors center titled: "The Playground Trail" by Lee and Jane Whiteley. Naturally, I wanted to retrace this epic 1920 inaugural tour of the National Park-to-Park Highway, a 5,000-mile expedition that took 76 days, over 11 states.

Twelve pioneering motorists set out to what the Denver Post called, "the world's most wondrous wonderlands." The part of the story that stuck with me was traveling so far by car with no gas stations, no convenience stores, road signs, or even paved roads.

I just knew that if I could film it and create something that was relevant and interesting, I might be able to show it on PBS or the History Channel one day.

We made the trip, assembled a crew, filmed in high-definition, found an RV dealer who would sponsor our tour and donate an RV to use, researched, secured permits, composed original music, wrote a script, recorded narration, edited 200 hours of footage into a

### Q-C IMAX PREMIERE APRIL 19

Brandon Wade's "Paving the Way: The National Park-to-Park Highway" will be shown 7 p.m., Sunday, April 19, at the Putnam IMAX. \$8 tickets are available at the door or online at [pavingtheway.tv](http://pavingtheway.tv).



Brandon Wade

### Previews

Watch a trailer of the film at [vimeo.com/1536178](http://vimeo.com/1536178)

two-part series which ended up becoming one of the top three headliners at American Public Television's Fall Marketplace, the "Sundance" of Public Television broadcast-ing.

In May 2009, my completed film: "Paving the way: The National Park-to-Park Highway," will air on public television stations around the United States, including New York, Los Angeles, Boston, WQPT in Moline and IPTV in Iowa!

I thank my road trip heritage, my education and my family's willingness to set out on my own career adventure. Along with my tight knit and talented crew who was willing to capture this American experience, may we enjoy the ride.



Twelve motorists covered the 5,000-mile route over 11 states in 76 days.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### Friendly House isn't Edgerton

We would like to respond to the letter mentioning billboards in our community advertising services offered by Edgerton Women's Health. ("Billboards sending wrong message," March 30) While Edgerton Women's Health has a satellite office at our facility and is a tenant at Friendly House, their services, including free birth control options, are not administered or provided by Friendly House.

Edgerton has had a relationship with Friendly House since 1993. While we offer different types of services and have separate avenues to support our missions, both agencies are extremely committed to supporting families.

After 113 years of service in our community, Friendly House continues to provide quality, affordable and accessible programming to more than 400 children and their families.

Whether it is through our day care, after school, preschool or teen center, we strongly feel that our services are needed. We are proud to offer a positive environment where children are educated, cared for, and nurtured.

Lorelei Pfautz,  
Friendly House  
Davenport

#### Why did court approve visitation?

Michael Connolly and his two young sons are dead, likely victims of murder/suicide. How could a judge have allowed him unsupervised visits? How could a psychiatrist have issued a report that Connolly did not present a danger to himself or others? Was there any agency involved, and was it underfunded/under staffed? Why did those with power choose to ignore the pleas of Connolly's ex-wife, mother of their sons, when she verbalized her fear that he might harm the boys?

Why was the fact ignored that he had abused her and violated orders of protection?

According to a Times article, ("Father, boys found dead," March 31), someone felt sorry for him and thought he was "just depressed due to the loss of his family." Never mind the reasons he had lost his family. Why were the children not protected? We must insist on adequate funding for agencies that protect children, and ensure that those in charge of making child-welfare decisions do so with intelligence and above all, compassion for children who have done nothing wrong and deserve much better.

Susan Pence  
Davenport

#### Obama gave queen made-in-China gift

I'm ashamed that President Barack Obama has insulted legal American workers by giving an iPod (made in China) to the Queen of England. His lack of

respect for the average American worker is a slap in the face to all of us that work hard for a living, especially during these hard economic times. Gifts given from our president to any foreign leader or dignitary should represent the U.S.

During these difficult economic times, gifts should be affordable items made in the U.S. by legal American workers and be items unique to this great nation and not things from a communist country known for its inhuman treatment of workers.

Items that come to mind are Isabel Bloom, Jack Daniels, handmade jewelry, blankets or bead work from an American Indian craftsman or something made by union workers at John Deere.

Our president didn't take the opportunity to represent our skilled work force nor unions. Actions speak much louder than words. Is Obama working for us or against us?

Terri Olson  
Moline

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### LETTERS

We welcome letters of up to 250 words. E-mail them to [opinions@qctimes.com](mailto:opinions@qctimes.com).