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Thursday, February 16, 2012

HQ Opens. Democrats are Main Street in West Bend.

And yet the [West Bend Daily News coughs up misleading headlines and ... well, lies:](#)

... I mean, misstatements.

Dave Rank, intrepid WBDN reporter, squeezed into a packed storefront on Main Street in West Bend last night to cover the opening of the new Democratic Party HQ. ***Democrats are Main Street.*** A scary thought for some Washington County residents, but a relief for the 30% of us who have never been represented in the legislature.

The event which included speeches from Sen. Kathleen Vinehout (DAI) [a dairy farmer with a PhD elected as a Democrat from a rural, largely Republican district... now that's the kind of Wisconsin I recognize] and Mike Tate [Chair of the Wisconsin Democratic Party].

Dave's article begins:

Just days after declaring she will challenge Gov. Scott Walker in the upcoming recall election, state Sen. Kathleen Vinehout (DAI) offered an enthusiastic stump speech in West Bend Wednesday night as county Democrats opened their local war office.

It's pretty clear that Sen Vinehout was in town "as county Democrats opened their local war office." But that's not what the headline says. The headline says:

**Walker's challenger opens Dems' office here
State Sen. Vinehout was in group that fled to Illinois**

This is typical West Bend Daily News-Skews; arguably accurate if you bend it around sufficiently. Someone on the editorial staff used to do this to my columns pretty regularly too -- and they were especially given to hyperbole and distortion during the Library Controversy when boring little meetings about where books should be shelved were unfurled into banners like "Porn in the Library!"

I'm paraphrasing -- but it's close.

Sen Vinehout did *not* open the office. She was only one of a handful of speakers who appeared at the office opening. No difference? Then why not headline the story with what actually took place? Why put Sen Vinehout front and center rather than the 90 plus enthusiastic volunteers who refurbished the new office?

Well, because happy Democrats are not a relevant detail to the publisher.

What makes this more ironic is that some of us amused ourselves last night making up probable headlines to Dave's report. My first choice was "Three Democrats meet for coffee" but apparently my cynicism meter wasn't calibrated properly.

From there the Daily News report slides into the toilet. I was struck by the article's conclusion:

The West Bend Daily News asserts of Sen. Vinehout that...

"She ran for governor in 2002 but lost in the primary to Jim Doyle. Vinehout was the Democratic nominee for attorney general in 2006 but lost to Republican J.B. Van Hollen."

By a strange coincidence, [Scott Bauer's piece at Real Clear Politics](#), dated Feb 8, is remarkably similar, except for a key detail:

"Falk announced last month that she was getting into the governor's race. She ran for governor in 2002 but lost in the primary to Jim Doyle who went on to serve two terms as governor. And she was the Democratic nominee for attorney general in 2006 but lost to Republican J.B. Van Hollen."

Oooh, wait, who?

The Daily News will have to check their conscience for an answer, since their ethics (and fact based reality meters) don't seem to be working.

In the meantime, here's a short, and accurate, version of the Main Street Democrats campaign opening in West Bend: over 90 jubilant and enthusiastic men, women, and children crowded into the new West Bend Democratic Party HQ to hear rousing speeches from Sen. Vinehout and Mike Tate. Friendships were renewed, plans were made.

General consensus? Fired up. Ready to go.

So, if you're politically moderate, tired of the loonies who've hijacked right of center politics in this country, or even a former Democrat tired of feeling alone here in Deepest Darkest Washington County, come on down to Main Street. It's your street. You're not alone.