



Are you creative? Then you should run for public office, group says

By Michael Burke - February 22, 2005

RACINE - A new organization devoted to drumming up creative people to run for public office figured Young Professionals of Racine was a logical place to make its case.

Tom Tresser, lead organizer for the Creative America Project, brought his plea to a small group of young professionals at the Corner House restaurant Monday evening.

"You're all creative; let's agree on that," Tresser said. "So we need people like you in public office."

The nonprofit Creative America's Web site (<http://www.CreativeAmerica.us>) states, "Creativity is one the key characteristics of the American spirit, economy and promise. Creative people need to stand up for their values and vision for a better America. We need to apply our talents and passions to re-creating American politics and policies. Let's start with electing a president that values, celebrates and plans to nourish American creativity!" Its four-word message is: "Create. Act. Vote. Run."

Tresser argued, "Creativity is our heritage," and said the Declaration of Independence was a great act of creativity.

Before that proclamation, America was merely a collection of colonies, he reminded the audience and said, "The declaration that there was a United States of America made it so."

"So that was a creative act and creative courage."

By one estimate, \$581 billion is generated in creative industries, Tresser said, and by another estimate - including athletics and research and development - it's \$960 billion. In Wisconsin, 27 percent of full-time workers make their living in creative endeavors. So there is more creativity to be tapped for public office than many people recognize or give themselves credit for, he said.

Tresser said artists and creative professionals can offer numerous contributions to public life including: * Resourcefulness.

* Tolerance and the ability to see others' points of view.

* Ability to build ensembles.

* The ability to challenge old assumptions.

One maxim about creativity, Tresser said, is, "Imagination precedes implementation." That is, one cannot change the course of events unless one can imagine the desired change.

The Creative America Project spent most of last year organizing and this year is out beginning its training programs, Tresser said. It hopes to convince creative people to run for public office beginning in 2006 and continuing well into the future.

"Our long-term goal," he said, "is to elevate creativity to a national value that we hold and cherish."

Mahatma Gandhi said, "Be the change you want to see in the world," Tresser said. The Creative America project amends that to, "Be the candidate you want to see in the world."