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Where is the Outrage?

by Jane Goldenberg

Too bad the debate on torture being waged in the media and throughout the world's Western democracies does not seem able to penetrate the news-proof bubble in which President Bush resides. It is incumbent upon all Americans, however, to reflect on this slippery path our nation has started down in its furor to combat terrorism.

Just look at the crescendo of attention American policies on torture has attracted. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice served most effectively during her Grand Tour of Europe as a lightning rod for criticism. Rice told Germany's new chancellor, Angela Merkel, "It is against U.S. law to be involved in torture or conspiracy to commit torture." (So just forget about all that photographic and documentary evidence to the contrary.) Maybe that's why the U.S. government had to operate secret U.S. prisons in some Eastern European countries (according to a Washington Post report): plausible deniability.

Then we had Britain's highest court, the Law Lords, rule that evidence obtained through torture was not admissible in British courts. Wrote Lord Bingham: "The principles of the common law, standing alone, in my opinion compel the exclusion of third party torture evidence as unreliable, unfair, offensive to ordinary standards of humanity and decency and incompatible with the principles

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THE 2006 PRIMARY RACE HAS BEGUN Two Democrats Running for Congress

by John Hmurovic

The 2006 election year has begun. Will this be the year that Democrats regain control of Congress from the ultra-conservative Bush Republican Party? If that happens, two Democrats from the 10th District of Illinois hope to be a part of it. Dan Seals of Wilmette and Zane Smith of Winnetka have both entered the race for the Democratic nomination for Congress. They will face off in the March 21 primary for the chance to run against Republican Mark Kirk, a strong backer of Bush policies in Congress.

But Smith and Seals won't be the only contest on the Democratic ballot this March. On the state level, Governor Rod Blagojevich is being challenged by Edwin Eisendrath and Philip Sitkowski. And there's a race for State Treasurer between Alexi Giannoulias and Paul Mangieri to take the job currently held by Judy Baar Topinka, who is seeking the GOP nomination for Governor.

There are two state legislative contests on the Democratic side in 10th District precincts. Michael MacDonald and Rob Sherman are running against each other in state Representative District 53 (Arlington Heights, Buffalo Grove, Wheeling) for a seat now held by Republican Sid Mathias, and in state Senate District 33 (portions of Arlington Heights and Mount Prospect) Dan Kotowski and Jim Morici are vying for the seat now held by Republican Dave Sullivan.

Cook County Democrats will have to decide between incumbent County Board President John Stroger and challenger Forrest

Claypool, while also choosing a candidate in a three-way race for Sheriff between Tom Dart, Sylvester Baker, and Richard Remus. If that's not enough to keep Cook County's political yard-sign-makers busy, there's also a 12-person race for three seats on the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District Board, as well as numerous judicial races.

In Lake County, there is one countywide race on the Democratic side. Mark Curran and Lawrence Oliver are vying for a chance to oppose incumbent Republican Sheriff Gary Del Re. There are also four county board races in 10th District precincts in March. Three Democratic incumbents are being challenged in the primary: Robert Sabonjian in District 8 (Waukegan) by Bill Durkin; Angelo Kyle in District 12 (Waukegan) by Michael Rodriguez; and Carol Spielman in District 22 (Deerfield, Highland Park) by Arnie Silberman. In District 2 (which includes 10th District portions of Beach Park and Waukegan), Democrats Diane Hewitt and Brandon Rohrdanz hope to win the nomination for the seat now held by Republican Randall Whitmore.



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Kirk's Gift to Big Oil

by George Rosenblit

I was surprised to discover that Congressman Mark Kirk was directly responsible for giving \$14 billion of our tax dollars to giant oil corporations such as ExxonMobil, Chevron, ConocoPhillips, BP America, and Shell Oil. Kirk could have used his swing vote on bill H.R. 3893, "Gasoline for America's Security Act" (Roll Call No. 519) to kill this massive giveaway, but he did not.

The money in this bill was supposed to pay for rebuilding refineries damaged by hurricanes along the Gulf Coast. I watched a Senate hearing on TV in which the CEOs of these same corporations defended their profits from high gasoline prices saying they needed the money to rebuild these refineries! Since our taxpayer money was earmarked for the same purpose in the bill, Kirk's vote was responsible for giving an outright gift to these oil giants. Meanwhile, these companies are making historic profits — look at ExxonMobil with a \$25 billion profit in 2004 and a \$7.6 billion best ever second quarter result.

Will these corporations get to keep their enormous profits? If so, shame on Congress. Kirk's vote is an example of "Corporate Welfare" which appears to be an objective of the Republican Party.

Initially, there were not enough votes to pass this bill. So, there was a lot of arm twisting in about 45 minutes of overtime. Certainly, such coercion was not needed on Kirk. After all, he is a loyal Republican who can be counted on to aid and abet the party objectives. His voting record is 87 percent along the Republican line. You can check his voting record on any bill by using the internet — just check the website: <http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2005/index.asp> for roll call votes on any bill in 2005.

The balance of Kirk's votes, 13 percent, is to placate and lull the voters in the 10th District into thinking he's a great guy in their corner. Kirk's reports in his newsletter and his grandstanding for news items in the local newspapers do not disclose the real Kirk. Why doesn't he discuss the reasoning for his votes on Congressional bills in the 87 percent category in an open public forum or a Town Hall meeting with an open mike for the audience to ask questions? Is he afraid to find out what his constituents really think about him and his votes?

Will the real Mark Kirk stand up!?

Kirk Votes to Drill for Oil in Alaska Wilderness Before He Votes Against It

by John Hmurovic

In the wee hours of Nov. 19, the Republican leadership in the House of Representatives brought up the \$453-billion Defense Appropriations Bill (H.R. 2863) to fund U.S. troops. Inserted in that bill was something that had nothing to do with funding our troops. Alaska Senator Ted Stevens inserted a provision that would allow drilling for oil in ANWR.

Every environmental group in America opposes ANWR drilling, and as a congressman who professes to be a friend of the environment Republican Mark Kirk says he also opposes it. When the final vote came up on H.R. 2863, Kirk took to the floor of the House to voice his opposition to inserting the ANWR provision in the defense spending bill and then joined 15 other

Republicans to vote against the Defense Appropriations Bill. Democrats who feared being attacked as voting "against our brave soldiers" supported the bill, even with ANWR drilling in it. It easily passed by a vote of 308-106.

"No vote on oil drilling in the Alaskan Wildlife Refuge," is how Mark Kirk described his vote on his website. Mark Kirk, a self-described "Green Republican," who knows his district is very pro-environment, wants you to believe that he is a friend of the environment.

But instead of blindly accepting political marketing images, let's return to the facts:

Just a short time earlier that morning, H. Res. 639 was introduced. "Though the

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A Letter to My Congressman

by Ron Weiner

Last month, in answer to an e-mail communication from my wife, Congressman Mark Kirk sent what I suspect was a form e-letter that was probably also sent to others who commented to him about the continuing U.S. presence in Iraq. It was, in a word, ludicrous.

His simple-minded and wrong-headed answer regarding our presence in Iraq was astounding. Laying down the same disastrous theme used by President Bush when he said, as he had so often in the past, that in order to honor the more than 2,000 who have already died there "we must finish the job in Iraq," Mr. Kirk, not at all to my surprise, toed the party line.

Had he not noticed the futility of continuing to attempt to "finish the job" in the face of successful efforts on the part of the dissident Iraqi factions to kill more and more of our troops with each passing day? Had it at all occurred to him that while engaging in this ongoing futility we are losing ever more lives to a total going well beyond 2,000, and causing more and more mothers and fathers the pain and suffering of losing their children? How long does he expect this go on, and does he really believe that we will ever "finish the job?" Then, in further support of Mr. Bush, he stated "that we are going to make this the last war in Iraq by forging a lasting peace." Surely he must realize that such will never happen as long as even a single armed American in battle dress remains there.

Throughout his rambling letter our congressman attempted to compare the actions and policies of President Truman some 60 years ago in trying to manage the cold war, with the actions and policies of the Bush administration today. He anachronistically pointed out that Truman, in the face of general disapproval on the part of most Americans "supported the creation of NATO [and] wrote the Marshall Plan" (gee, if he did, why wasn't it instead called the Truman Plan?). Kirk failed to note that Truman was seeking *diplomatic* solutions to the quandary the world was in at that time (that's diplomatic solutions, Congressman, not *dangerous and deadly* ones). Kirk failed to note that Truman took these steps to avoid a war, not prosecute one.

This is no cold war we find ourselves fighting today. It is a hot war, a very hot war indeed, one with dreadful consequences to more than 15,000 wounded young Americans, many of whom will lack proper health care in the years ahead as they attempt to face life while coping with injuries in body and mind sustained while fighting in good faith in a war based on lies, a lack of health care due in large part to the failure of the Congress who voted as Mark Kirk did *with the deciding vote* to deny them that care.

Ron is a retired Naval Reserve Officer with 33 years combined active and inactive service.

Top Ten Reasons Republicans Gave Us in 2005 To Vote Against Them in 2006

by Ben Struhl

10. George Bush ended his first term with at least 34 well-documented scandals, all egregious and insidious. Salon.com did an article about these scandals: "The Scandal Sheet," which can be found at www.salon.com/news/feature/2005/01/18/scandal/index.html.
9. The GOP continues efforts to roll back environmental protections. The Republicans' signature effort has been to allow oil drilling in the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). Republicans are still pushing hard for ANWR drilling to become reality.
8. Republicans passed a draconian bankruptcy reform bill, making it overly difficult for individual citizens to declare bankruptcy and making it harder for people to get out of bankruptcy. This measure, like so many others, is punitive toward working-class Americans, and only benefits large corporations and credit card companies.
7. Republicans have been supporting efforts to teach creationism in schools, thinly disguised by the new term "intelligent design." Like so many other Republican policies, support of intelligent design completely disregards science, and asks that personal beliefs be taught in biology classrooms.
6. Bush pushed strongly to "reform" Social Security early in the year, but by reform he obviously meant "destroy." Although Bush's plans were so unpopular that they were eventually no longer mentioned, some say it is likely Republicans will revisit this issue.



5. Republicans have refused to give our troops pay raises or expanded medical coverage and disability benefits. On top of this, nearly 800 troops died last year in Iraq.
4. The neocons who run foreign policy, Vice President Dick Cheney in particular, have



3. Dick Cheney's Chief of Staff, Scooter Libby, was indicted for obstruction of justice by special council Patrick Fitzgerald. Libby was the first sitting executive branch staff member ever indicted of a crime. Such criminal behavior is systemic in the Republican-run government, with House Majority leader Tom Delay also facing criminal charges, and Senate Majority leader Bill Frist being investigated for insider trading.
2. The Terri Schiavo case was another example of Republicans showing poor priorities. Contradicting dozens of judges who had already heard the case, the Republican Congress flew back from recess in an emergency session to meddle in one family's tragedy. Bush flew in late at night to sign a bill that forced yet another judge to hear the case, further drawing out the tragedy.
1. While Republicans responded quickly to intercede in the Schiavo case, they did nothing to address the tragedy of the families who battled the effects of Hurricane Katrina until days after it happened. Bush refused to come back from vacation for several days, Cheney likewise. Meanwhile, Bush appointee Michael Brown, head of FEMA, did almost nothing to provide disaster relief in New Orleans. Republicans, advocating "a government so small you could drown it in a bathtub," got exactly what they wanted in New Orleans and all along the Gulf Coast.

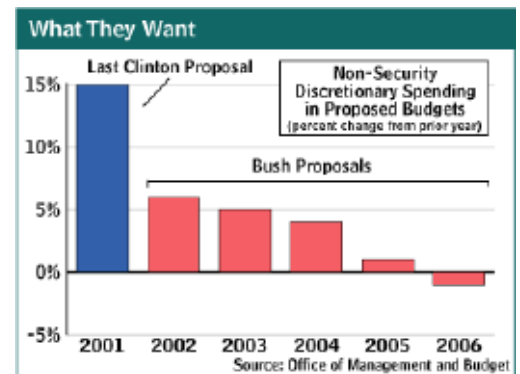
Seventh-Grade Economics Eludes Republican Majority in U.S. House

by Ellen Gill

A couple of years ago, I taught a personal economics class to 7th graders at Twin Groves Jr. High School in Buffalo Grove. In the class, we went through modules about earning and spending money and saving up for something special. In one hour, the children created a family budget and learned to allocate limited resources. All of the children figured out that they had to house, feed and cloth everyone in their family before they could go to the mall and buy those extra CDs or that \$500 pair of gym shoes. They learned about being prepared for emergencies and investing in their families' future through education. Too bad no members of our Congress took that class. Rather, the U.S. House chose to ignore basic needs, leave our safety and welfare to chance, ignore our future and lavish tax cuts on the wealthy. Tenth District Congressman Mark Kirk cast the deciding vote changing his "No" vote to "Yes" in the wee hours of November 18 to make the result 217 to 215.

Among the most noteworthy cuts made by the House so we could afford permanent tax cuts for the wealthiest one-percent of taxpayers were in Medicaid, student loans, child-support enforcement, food stamps and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. There were also cuts in family farm subsidies and rural business investment programs.

According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the House cuts in Medicaid will total nearly \$30 billion over the next 10 years by charging more out-of-pocket health care costs and reducing covered health care services. However the CBO claims that the charges themselves will not create the savings. They expect that most of the savings will come from rejection of needed medical care and prescriptions by those in need unable to pay their newly required share.



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DEMOCRATIC RESOLUTIONS FOR 2006

by Ross Nickow

*The object of a new year
is not that we should have
a new year.
It is that we should have
a new soul.
~G.K. Chesterton*

New Year's resolutions can be fleeting and trite—an annual fad rehashed every January 1st. They're often forgotten faster than Ohio's 2004 voting irregularities. But 2006 is shaping up as a turning point after five years of a Republican rampage trampling on our lives, our nation and our future. Our dedication combined with perseverance can reverse this disastrous trend and make 2006 a year of great promise and progress—a year when the Democratic Party creates sweeping inroads in government, along with honesty, accountability and compassion. Some 10th District elected officials, candidates and activists shared their resolutions, hopes and dreams for the New Year with Tenth News:

Michael Bond (Candidate, State Senate, District 31): ...the issues facing our community have a direct impact on my children. The challenges we face in northern Lake County require new leadership....



Michael Bond

Pat Botterman (Chair, Wheeling Township Democrats): We resolve to defeat Mark Kirk, re-elect state Senator Terry Link, state Representatives Kathy Ryg & Elaine Nekritz and elect Democratic candidates Peter Gutzmer for state Senate and Michael MacDonald for state Representative. In pursuit of that goal, we will work to recruit and train 142 precinct representatives within Wheeling Township.

Bill Crowley (10th District Democratic State Central Committeeman and Chair, New Trier Township Democrats): My wish for 2006—That our country will wake up to the mortal damage that has been done to its people and people around the world these last five years and begin the arduous task of repairing the harm and restoring our good name.

Sharyn Elman (Candidate, State Representative, District 62): My wish for 2006 (besides winning my election for State Rep. in the 62nd district!) is that more citizens will get involved in the process. It is CITIZEN ACTION that makes a difference in every election, in every issue, and in every decision that is made not only in our state, but in the country and in the world.



Sharyn Elman

Jim Gagne (Blogger, DeeplyBlue.blogspot.com): I resolve to talk MORE about the criminal, incompetent, unfeeling, evil cabal that inhabits our White House. It is so easy to assume that everyone is paying attention to details and knows what these fascists are doing, but the fact that almost half of the people voted for them make clear that most people just don't know what's going on. So, we have to take a page out of the Republicans' very successful technique of telling the same lie over and over again by telling the truth about what they are doing over and over again. We can't let up if we are going to turn things around starting in 2006.

Susan Garrett (State Senator, District 29): I hope that 2006 finds peace here in the United States and across the world.



Susan Garrett

Lauren Beth Gash (10th District Democratic State Central Committeewoman; Chair, Moraine Township Democratic Organization; and Chair, Tenth Congressional District Democrats): I do love proverbs, as those who are close to me can attest (ask my kids — they just LOVE my daily reading of wise words and sayings...). One of my all-time favorites comes from Ralph Waldo Emerson—"To laugh often and much, to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children, to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends, to appreciate beauty, to find the best in others, to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded!" These are my goals. To succeed in the ways that really matter. To be grateful for what I have been lucky enough to have been given. To spend the kind of meaningful quality time with my husband and children that strengthens us, as we have these last few years. To continue the political fight to elect more Democrats to offices at all levels of government, including the "pipeline" local offices that matter so much more than people realize. To bring more people into the political process, recognizing that "the most important job in government is that of citizen." To work in the greater non-profit community for the causes that matter to me. And to tend my gardens (one of my greatest joys) and keep sharing my plant divisions.

Ellen Gill (Blogger, EllenoftheTenth.blogspot.com): OK, what I really want to do in 2006 is write a book, a thriller of epic proportions that will make me a ton of money and get me on Oprah. My book will be about a country where folks have a say in their government and worship as they wish. The country is respected throughout the world. There is money for education and there are good jobs with benefits. There are exciting places to live and fun places to visit. In fact, the country is so great

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that a small group of people decide they don't want to share the wealth. They steal an election and quiet the press. They begin to dismantle the structure that ensured justice and opportunity. They change foreign policy and start an illegal war to isolate the country from the rest of the world and suck all the prosperity out, leaving people insecure, ignorant and scared. They create rules for regular folk to live by, enforced by a false god, but consider themselves an elite group to which no rules apply. Then, through carelessness and malfeasance they poison the country's environment, allow an attack on a major city and total destruction of a historical jewel. Oh....that really happened.... How about I write a story no one will believe....the people of that country take it back.

Mike Kreloff (Chair, Northfield Township Democrats): Elections with good voting equipment and great voting weather.



Mike Kreloff

Matt Lowry (Lake County DFA Organizer): My hope is that, on the local & state level, we continue to foster a grass-roots progressive movement that will serve to ensure that all the residents of Lake County and Illinois are represented. I would like to see our state become a progressive beacon to other states on issues that affect us all, such as health care. On the national level, it is my hope that we can elect more principled progressives to Congress in the mold of Barack Obama, Russ Feingold and the late Paul Wellstone. It is my hope that we are also able to elect more women to Congress, such as Melissa Bean and Christine Cegelis. Only by working together on issues that unite everyone can we bring balance and sanity back to our government.



Karen May

Karen May (State Representative, District 58): Here are my resolutions for 2006—1. Form an environmental caucus in the Illinois General Assembly. 2. Visit Diane Peranich, my adopted legislator from Mississippi, to seek information on further ways we can help the Gulf Coast recover from the hurricanes. 3. Make the time to work out at least four times a week to stay healthy and strong enough to fight all the battles in Springfield. Have dinner with my husband/family at least as often to keep balance in my life. 4. Ring 3,000 doorbells to stay in touch with constituents. 5. Remember to say thank you to staffers and volunteers who help constituents and me.

Mitch Miller (Co-chair, West Deerfield Township Democratic Organization): Our New Year's resolution is to fill all of our precincts with energized Committee People to insure a successful election. Have a very Democratic New Year!!!

Sharon Narrod (Candidate, Lake County Clerk): Spend more time listening to what other people have to say and less time waiting for my turn to speak. My hope/dream/goal is to be given the opportunity to serve the people of Lake County as their Clerk, and fulfill a dream of being a good public servant in the truest sense of the word.

Elaine Nekritz (State Representative, District 57): I have two resolutions. The first (as it is every year) is to be a stronger voice in speaking out against injustice and intolerance whenever and wherever I see it. Second, I am going to find a way to take on the producers of toxic chemicals who continue to deny that their products have any effect on human health and our environment. Since the current White House won't do anything at the federal level, we have to do something more local.

Alan Prochaska (Candidate, 10th District Democratic State Central Committeeman): Dream and Resolution for 2006—Our Democratic Party's values prevail in our District, State and Nation through a unified party.

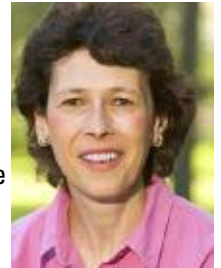
James Rosen (Blogger, TheDailyCurmudgeon.blogspot.com): New Year's Resolutions—To be less cranky. To be more generous with my billions. Hopes for 2006—Subpoena power for Democrats; Peace on Earth or at least peace and quiet in my house; to find a really good piece of whitefish.

Kathy Ryg (State Representative, District 59): I hope that I and everyone around me can find the balance in our busy lives, remember our priorities and then work like crazy on the important things always remembering we will never catch up and it's people who really count!

Dan Seals (Candidate, U.S. Congress, 10th District): My hope for 2006 is that our nation be a force for peace and prosperity at home and abroad. In good times and bad, we remain one of the greatest sources of stability and prosperity for the world, and we should be proud of that. I hope we can continue in that tradition in 2006, so that both our nation and all nations can move closer to realizing their full potential.

Zane Smith (Candidate, U.S. Congress, 10th District): My resolution is to try to bring our nation back to higher ground.

Debra Shore (Candidate, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago): My hopes and dreams for 2006? That humility begins to outstrip hubris in public life. That we revive the notion of the common good, restore a sense of common purpose, and seek to live in right relationship with the land. For our waters and woods to be healthy in this broad metropolitan region, for rare nature to survive in our midst, we will all be asked to help out. We are the village it takes to raise this child, to nurture it, and to make wise choices on its behalf. How well we can make a healthy home for ourselves and the creatures around us—this month, this year and in the years ahead—will determine the legacy we leave for our children and their children. I believe we have a chance here, a rare moment in time, when we can set the course for generations—toward a sustainable, harmonious, healthy relationship with nearby nature—or not. In a very real sense, it is what we do in our lifetimes that will determine whether we have succeeded. This is a solemn task—and a joyous opportunity. It is my hope, finally, to be able to promote stewardship of our precious freshwater resources from a position on the board of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District with your support on March 21!



Debra Shore

Mary Ellen Vanderventer (Lake County Recorder): My steadfast resolution for 2006 is to spend more time with my friends! Saying "no" is so hard for me. But I'm going to try to politely say "no" to more committees & responsibilities; and "yes" to more time with my friends—especially my girlfriends! Peace and Happiness in 2006!



Sue Walton

Sue Walton (Alderman, Rolling Meadows 1st Ward and Chair, Palatine Township Democrats): Hope for 2006—Unity, and to set aside personal agendas and seek the greater good.



The photos of American soldiers mistreating prisoners at Abu Ghraib outraged many around the world, but apparently not many in the Bush administration.

the average citizen against the abuses of a king. Note these other unequivocal positions from the Law Lords: "Torture is an unqualified evil. It can never be justified" – Lord Brown. "(Torture's) admission would shock the conscience, abuse or degrade the proceedings and involve the state in moral defilement." – Lord Carswell. "Once torture has become acclimatized in a legal system it spreads like an infectious disease, hardening and brutalizing those who have become accustomed to its use." – Lord Hope.

This is Britain, source of our own common-law tradition. So what's changed here? We're not the only country that's suffered terrorist attacks. In fact, despite the dramatic horror of the destruction of the World Trade Center and so many thousands of lives lost, terrorism is a relatively new phenomenon on these shores, compared to countries in Europe and the Middle East.

While the Bush Administration continues to deny it commits torture – of course Attorney General Alberto Gonzales' famous memorandum defined torture so narrowly that what we might consider a cruel and inhuman treatment would practically have to cause death to be considered torture – we've got Sen. John McCain putting his significant moral authority behind a no-torture-ever policy in a bill that passed the Senate 90 to 9. The House of Representatives just followed suit with an overwhelming, though non-binding, vote against torture.

These votes show us that torture is not a partisan issue. It's about power. As Lord Acton once famously said, "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Doesn't the power to commit torture get us closer to absolute power, at least over life and limb, since these so-called enemy combatants don't have the recourse of the courts?

In his essay in Newsweek (11/21/05), McCain explains, "Prisoner abuses exact a terrible toll on us in this war of ideas. They inevitably become public, and when they do, they threaten our moral standing, and expose us to false but widely disseminated charges that democracies are no more inherently idealistic and moral than other regimes."

Meanwhile, we also have Charles Krauthammer, considered a conservative heavyweight pundit, writing a 4,000-word argument in The Weekly Standard for the necessity of torture in limited circumstances, such as the "ticking time bomb" scenario, in which information could help us prevent an imminent terrorist attack. He proposes that a detailed set of rules administered by officials at the highest levels would prevent abuses a la Abu Ghraib. Apparently the information supposedly in the offing would be the ends to justify the means.

which should animate a tribunal seeking to administer justice." The seven Law Lords had unanimously overturned an appeal court judgment that such evidence could be used if it was obtained abroad from third parties (sound familiar?) if Britain had not participated in the torture, according to The Guardian newspaper.

All this, ironically, from a country against which we once fought a war over principles enshrined in our Constitution that protect

But how could we ever really be sure that the information was indeed buried inside the detainee's mind? Don't we have enough experience with unreliable sources? Anybody remember Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction?

And then we have The Nation magazine, that stalwart bastion of liberalism that has devoted its end-of-year issue to "The Torture Complex" in the United States. That this current U.S. topic can fill an entire magazine should make us all gag. In its opening editorial, the editors of the Nation write: "The acceptance of torture amounts to a crisis of democratic culture, requiring patient cultivation of outrage on the part of the antiwar movement and human rights campaigners."

So how about it? This is about all Americans standing up and taking back our country from the ideologues who will do anything to achieve a set of ends (unclear though they may be). As McCain notes, our adherence to the Geneva Conventions honors all of us, most importantly our troops who need to believe they're risking life and limb for a set of honorable ideals, "that we (are) different from our enemies, that we (are) better than them."

Where is the outrage? Among Republicans? Among Democrats? If we of different political stripes can't at least stand shoulder to shoulder against committing these depraved acts we associate with only the most notorious dictators – Idi Amin, Josef Stalin, Adolph Hitler, Saddam Hussein – what does that say about what we've become?

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Go to the "Events" link at www.tenthdems.org for more details on these events (possible cost, RSVP, etc.), as well as information on other events.

Capitol Steps

Comedy Troupe

Sunday, January 22, 2006 • 3:00 pm

Centre East

9501 Skokie Boulevard, Skokie

Join us for dinner afterwards at Ruby Tuesday, 5203 Old Orchard Road, Skokie, Illinois

For info please call:
847.266.VOTE (8683)

or, write to events@tenthdems.org

FREE TOWN HALL FORUM ON JANUARY 7

Moving Forward On Iraq: How Do We Leave and When

How do we leave Iraq, and when? That's the question that will be discussed during a 10th District town hall meeting: *Moving Forward on Iraq*. The event is co-sponsored by Tenth Dems, along with the North Suburban Peace Initiative and the Democracy Cell Project. It is open to all 10th District residents, and will be held on Saturday, January 7, from 1:30–3:30 p.m. at The Northbrook Public Library.

Panelists will include **David Cortright**, an author and foreign policy consultant to a number of governments around the world on issues of war and peace; **Ron Miller**, chair of the Lake Forest College Religion Department, author, and leader in the effort to create a better understanding between people of different faiths; and **Robert Gard**, Lt. Gen. U.S. Army (ret), a combat veteran of Korea and Vietnam, a high-ranking official in various posts in the Defense Department, and currently a Senior Military Fellow at the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation. The forum will be moderated by radio personality **Aaron Freeman**.

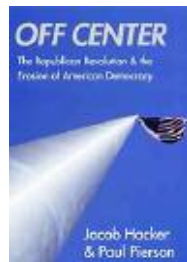
Space will be limited, so please arrive early.

For more information call 847-266-8683, or write events@tenthdems.org.

Book Club to Revive!

by David Robin

The Tenth Dems book discussion group has been on hiatus over the summer and fall, but it will start up again in January, beginning with an extremely important book, *"Off Center: The Republican Revolution and the Erosion of American Democracy,"* by political scientists Jacob Hacker and Paul Pierson.



The conventional wisdom about our system is that politicians can never afford to stray too far from the center, because, if they do, the voters will turn them out of office. The thesis of this book, and the meaning of the phrase "off center," is that the Republican Party has managed to do the seemingly impossible: move the governance of the country to the extreme right, even though our society has not moved in that direction. The authors document (in upsetting detail) just what the Republicans have done and how they have managed to do it. At the end of the book, they attempt to suggest what can be done to turn things around. This is obviously a question of vital importance as we approach the 2006 elections.

In addition to reading the book, you may want to listen to Terry Gross's December 1 interview with the authors on "Fresh Air." (Go to www.npr.org, select Fresh Air from the Programs and Schedules dropdown, click on Past Shows on the right navigational space, and choose Dec. 1.) The authors also have a website devoted to the book at www.hackerpierson.com/. For more background on one of the real villains of the piece, listen to Terry's October 2, 2003, interview with Grover Norquist.

Dates and locations for the book discussions haven't been set yet, but we will meet on two evenings in mid-January, once in Lake County and once in Cook County. Details will be posted on www.tenthdems.org/ and sent out via email when they are available. Please let me know if you think you'll be interested in attending (DRobinLL10@aol.com or 847-433-5230).

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House voted 308-106 for the defense bill," the Hartford (Connecticut) Courant reported the next day, "drilling opponents pointed to an earlier, procedural vote ... as reflective of the true sentiment toward the refuge." They were referring to the vote on H. Res. 639.

The Republican leadership introduced H. Res. 639 because they knew that environmental-friendly congressmen wanted to strip ANWR out of the defense spending bill. H. Res. 639 was a procedural rule that would keep them from doing that.

Every Congressman knew what was at stake with their vote on H. Res. 639. And if they didn't, Congressman Edward Markey (D-Massachusetts) took to the House floor in those early morning hours to make it clear: "Every Member of the House should understand that they are about to cast the most important environmental vote of the decade. (This) vote... is a vote to drill in ANWR."

So how did Mark Kirk vote? Instead of voting as his constituents wanted, he voted how the Republican leadership in the House wanted him to vote. He voted to block any attempt to strip ANWR from the defense spending bill. He voted against the environmental position.

Congressman Dave Reichert (R-Washington) was one of 21 Republicans who voted pro-ANWR in the procedural vote. He said in

The Seattle Times that the votes by the 21 Republicans "infuriated some House chiefs." Reichert said that Congressman Don Young (R-Alaska), an ardent supporter of drilling in ANWR, was even taking names "of GOP members who voted to remove ANWR from the defense bill." Young didn't have to write down Kirk's name, because Kirk voted just as Young and the pro-drilling crowd wanted. Thanks in part to Kirk, the attempt to strip ANWR from the funding bill failed, 214-201.

"Each and every Member should be warned," Markey said before the vote on H. Res. 639 was taken, "that this will be the number one environmental vote not just of this year but of the decade."

On that vote, Mark Kirk voted against the environment and for drilling in ANWR. You won't hear about that from him. Instead, his political marketing machine will kick into gear and say that he wants to protect ANWR and it will point to his vote against the defense spending bill as proof. When the vote was 308-106 and the Republican leadership didn't care how he voted, Mark Kirk acted like a brave guardian of the environment. But when it was a close 214-201 and the Republican leadership demanded his vote, Mark Kirk caved in. If Kirk is a friend of the environment, those Alaskan caribou are in serious trouble.

Primary, continued from page 1

Finally, there are two contests for Democratic Party leadership posts. In Elk Grove Township, Democratic Committeeman Joan Brennan is being challenged by Kent Kirkwood. And 10th District Democratic Committeeman Bill Crowley of New Trier Township is being challenged by Alan Prochaska of Palatine Township.

Although the filing deadline has passed, this list may not be final. Candidates can be kept off the ballot if their petitions are ruled to be not properly completed, and candidates have until January 19 to change their minds about running.

Economics, continued from page 3

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant and the child care block grant were structured during the Clinton Administration to help families with young children get off of welfare. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (www.cbpp.org), the changes take away the flexibility needed by these families to move into full employment by increasing work participation requirements while under-funding child care; limiting programs designed to address barriers to employment, such as disability, substance abuse, or mental health problems; and providing incentives for states to make it harder for families to participate. Again, savings are to be created by decreasing the ability of people to participate in the program. Families with young children will be left with no welfare and no ability to earn for themselves.

College students also fare worse under the new budget. Revised student loan provisions mandate a one percent insurance fee on guaranteed loans,

charge a new one percent origination fee on consolidated loans, and double the direct loan origination fee. ConsumerAffairs.com reports that the change would lead to "loan cost increases of as much as \$5,800." Additionally, the interest cap was increased from 6.8 percent to 8.25 percent. Pell Grants are frozen for the fourth straight year forcing more students into the more expensive loan programs for a higher percentage of their education costs. It is clear that the goals of the budget cutters are to push people out of assistance programs so they can eventually be eliminated completely.

The only really good idea in the budget that I saw was the increase in bankruptcy judges. We are going to need them. I did not see funding for a personal economics class for congressmen, which is too bad because 217 of them, including 10th District Congressman Mark Kirk, need one.

"(Our) goal is to cut government in half in 25 years, to get it down to the size where we can drown it in the bathtub." -- Grover Norquist, Conservative

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