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This Candidate *Doesn't* Wear Prada

by Sharon Narrod

If you divide the number of parades by the number of carnivals and multiply that by the pounds of popcorn and cotton candy, what do you get? Summer in Lake County!

That of course does not include the antique car shows, rodeos, art fairs and craft expositions. The last several weeks have been a haze of shaking hands, handing out my "giveaways," trying to find time to eat, and driving home with thoughts of non-sweaty clothing and air conditioning dancing in my head.

At this point, I can't imagine why anyone would take a vacation outside of Lake County in the summertime. There is so much to do and so little time to do it. What is it I like best? That would be hard to say. Parades are terrific, when it's not too warm and it isn't raining.

As I was walking the Waukegan parade, I chatted with a parade-goer about how awful my hair must have looked.

Continued on page 3

A Candidate's Diary

Lake County Clerk candidate Sharon Narrod is making her first run for public office. Between now and election day she will give us a regular account of what it's like to be a candidate. This is Part 4 in that series of articles.



U.S. Senator Richard Durbin joins Sharon Narrod on the campaign trail.



Tenth News

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By the Bayh, Tenth Dems Event Draws About 150

by Danny Solarz

Evan Bayh, U.S. Senator and potential presidential candidate, keyed the third annual fundraiser for the Tenth Congressional District Democrats on June 30. Hosted by Councilman Jim Kirsch and his wife Heidi, of Highland Park, the event drew about 150 attendees who heard Bayh discuss the current state of the United States, and his specific plans to get America back on the right track.

The presidential prospect said he believes that energy independence can help transform America. Besides the obvious benefits of freeing ourselves from foreign oil, energy independence would create numerous jobs in industries that deal with alternative energy sources. Bayh has some expertise with job creation. About 375,000 jobs were created in Indiana during his eight-year tenure as Governor.

The event was attended by several of the area's top Democrats, including state Senator Terry Link, state Representative Karen May, Lake County Board Members Carol Spielman and Anne Bassi, several Highland Park City Council members, state Representative candidate Amanda Howland, and Lake County Clerk candidate Sharon Narrod. The money raised will help all Democrats in the area.

"The money is used to elect competent and qualified Democrats to every level of office in every part of the 10th District," Tenth Dems



(right) were among the crowd at the Tenth Dems fundraiser. Anne Wedner (above, on left) receives Tenth Dems Volunteer of the Year award from Karen McCormick, as U.S. Sen. Evan Bayh looks on.



State Rep. Karen May (left) and candidate Dan Seals (right) were among the crowd at the Tenth Dems fundraiser. Anne Wedner (above, on left) receives Tenth Dems Volunteer of the Year award from Karen McCormick, as U.S. Sen. Evan Bayh looks on.



Administrative Chair John Hmurovic said. "We do that by reaching out to the volunteers, trying to get more people involved in the process."

Dan Seals, the Democratic nominee for Congress, spoke to the attendees and stressed the importance of volunteerism, donations and the grassroots campaign.

"Having volunteers matters," Seals said. "Volunteers are the lifeblood of any democratic organization."

Continued on page 3

Kirk: A Bad Choice on Choice

by Harriet S. Meyer

Mark Kirk looked me in the eye and said, "I am pro-choice." It was in May 2004, and he was speaking with three of us constituents in his Deerfield office. He seemed sincere. He even has 100 percent ratings from Planned Parenthood and NARAL Pro-Choice America (because of select "key votes").

But during Republican Kirk's three terms in Congress, women's health rights have been seriously infringed (see also Women's Bill of Health sidebar). Getting a safe, legal abortion is prohibitively difficult. Women can't get contraceptive prescriptions filled without being second-guessed and humiliated. Violence at clinics and doctors' offices continues. President Bush directs a government agency to lie about abortion and STDs.

Yes, Kirk voted the right way on key votes – against the Partial Birth Abortion Act, the Abortion Non-Discrimination Act, the Child Interstate Abortion Notification Act, the Unborn Victims of Violence Act, and the Child Custody Protection Act – but they all passed anyway!

What's more, he even voted to bring the first three of those terrible bills to the floor of the House (procedural votes). Why? So he could then vote against them to get his 100 percent rating? So he could help Tom DeLay and cronies milk a political wedge issue for all it's worth?

Kirk could have voted to make these bills less harsh. He could have voted against turning adult siblings, grandparents and clergy who try to help pregnant girls into criminals (against the motion to recommit the Child Custody Protection Act with instructions). He could have voted for providing "all medically appropriate information [and] services" in the Abortion Non-Discrimination Act. He could have voted for adding language to the Partial-Birth Abortion Act to protect the health of the mother (against the motion to recommit) – but he didn't!

In May, the U.S. Supreme Court, by declining to hear an appeal, upheld a ruling requiring anti-abortion extremists to pay damages to providers whom they have harmed. But Kirk has helped those extremists: He voted twice for bankruptcy bills that let them skip paying damages by filing for bankruptcy – and that's exactly what some have done.

Women's health groups are urging Congress to cosponsor important new legislation. But, unlike dozens of Kirk's colleagues, as of this writing he is not yet co-sponsoring the Equity in Prescription Insurance Contraceptive Coverage Act, the Freedom of Choice Act (the legislative equivalent to Roe v. Wade), several sex education acts, the Plan B for Plan B Act (to make emergency contraception available), the Prevention First Act, the Quality of Life for Women Act, or the Stop Deceptive Advertising for Women's Services Act.

Kirk belongs to 40 House caucuses, including the Boating Caucus, but not the Bipartisan Pro-Choice Caucus or the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues.

Kirk sits on the Appropriations Committee, where he has the opportunity to cut funding for abstinence-only sex education. Instead, taxpayers are spending more than \$200 million a year on these Bush-mandated programs. Studies have shown that these sexist, misleading and unproven programs may increase early sexual activity and sexually transmitted disease rates, and decrease young people's use of condoms or other contraceptives.

Kirk turned over money that 10th District residents donated to his campaigns to support anti-choice Congressmen Kevin Brady and Pete Sessions of Texas and Ernest Istook of Oklahoma – each of whom received a zero percent rating from NARAL Pro-Choice America.

And, if Mark Kirk is speaking out about women's reproductive freedoms, I haven't heard him.

Inconsistent votes, bad votes, bad donations, no leadership, and a Republican Congress that has sent women's rights down the tubes, make Republican Mark Kirk a bad choice on choice. We need a Democratic House and Dan Seals – a candidate who will stand up for choice – to preserve the health rights that the majority of 10th District voters and Americans support.



Tenth Dems has produced a brochure which shows how women's rights to quality reproductive health care have been severely eroded during the Bush years, and how Mark Kirk has refused to use his power as Assistant House Majority Whip to fight against the erosion.

Women's Bill of Health Rights

"I have the right to health."

I have the right to be trusted.

In El Salvador, because of medical symptoms like those of miscarriage, women are reported by their doctors to the police and are investigated by "forensic vagina inspectors" and the prosecutor's office. Mothers of young children are imprisoned.

I have the right to respectful and empathetic treatment and support from my caregiver.

In some states, like Virginia, doctors can – and do – refuse to provide emergency contraception – without even telling their patients why or where they may obtain it.

I have the right to safe, effective, appropriate treatment.

Because of so-called "partial-birth abortion" bans and lack of physician training, women who experience miscarriages or fetal demise may be denied a safer procedure, such as dilatation and evacuation.

Complications of late pregnancy, such as incomplete or septic miscarriages, are dangerous without timely treatment. Bans of this vague entity prohibit medical procedures during pregnancy as early as 13 weeks.

I have the right to preventive care.

The Bush administration spends more than \$200 million per year on abstinence-only sex education, which, studies show, leads to teens having earlier sex and more infections.

It's been two and a half years since the FDA's expert panel recommended that over-the-counter emergency oral contraception be approved – but the FDA still won't approve it, even though it would prevent hundreds of thousands of abortions each year.

The religious Right and the Bush administration threatened to block approval of a vaccine against human papillomavirus (HPV), which could prevent thousands of deaths from cervical cancer annually, as well as infertility and prematurity, which may be side effects of treatment of cervical cancer.

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Tenth Dems Thanks Host Committee

Tenth Dems would like to thank the host committee for our recent fundraiser with Indiana Senator Evan Bayh.

Special thanks, of course, go to the hosts Jim and Heidi Kirsch.

The contributions made by all will go a long way toward helping the Democratic Party's candidates throughout the 10th District this November. This is the list as of press time, with more donations expected to be coming in.

GOLD LEVEL

Stephanie & Tom Anderson-Formolo
Joan & Julian Berman
Nancie Blatt
George Rosenblit
Gregg Steinberg
Jim & Wendy Terman
Anne Wedner
Mary Stowell

SILVER LEVEL

Sidney Robbins
Trude & James Roselle
Dottie Palombo
New Trier Democratic Organization

BRONZE LEVEL

David Borris	Ellen Beth Gill	Keevan Morgan
David & Mari Campbell	Carol & David Golder	Rick & Lea Murray
David Creason	John Hmurovic	Sharon Narrod
Christine & Chris Donnelly	Carol Jones	Hon. Elaine Nekritz
Abbie & Jack Fassnacht	Gerri Kahnweiler	Ross Nickow
Kimberly & Michael Feld	Mark Kraemer	Mary Reynolds
Jim Gagne	Hon. Terry Link	Mary Ritter
Hon. Susan Garrett	Marcy Maller	Kathy & David Robin
Hon. Lauren Beth Gash	Karen McCormick	Hon. Kathy Ryg
	Edward & Marilyn Melia	Sharon Sanders
	Sara Mesriow	Isadora Sherman
	Harriet Meyer	Glenn Stier
	Mitch Miller	Suzanne & Robert Wieseneck

Bayh in Highland Park *continued from page 1*

Seals also addressed a sentiment deeply felt by the audience. "There's a huge disconnect between what people are fighting and worried about here, and what you see in Washington," Seals said. "The President isn't just incompetent; he's dangerous. We [Democrats] need to win back the Senate and, I quite selfishly say, win back the House."

Tenth Dems Chair Lauren Beth Gash presented the Volunteers of the Year awards to George Rosenblit, a researcher and writer who "gets things done," and Anne Wedner, who chaired the candidate search committee that initially interviewed Seals and who has worked on a number of other Tenth Dems projects.



Event hosts Jim and Heidi Kirsch with Senator Bayh

Bayh, however, was the main attraction. A former secretary of state, governor and a current senator from Indiana, Bayh is a Democrat who has won by large majorities in a state in which seven out of the nine congressional seats are held by Republicans, both chambers of the state Legislature are controlled by Republicans, and 60 percent of the state's citizens voted for President Bush in the 2004 election.

Bayh outlined his plan for a country that "Seventy percent of Americans believe is off track." He called America "the light of opportunity," but said "we are very much at risk. We need to act carefully and swiftly."

Bayh's outline included the importance of national security, his belief in fiscal responsibility, the significance of democratic values as the right values, and his desire to follow these values.

"We need to find the common space that Americans have found in times of crises," Bayh said. "We need to address the challenges they feel in their daily lives. We arrived on these shores in different ships, but we are all in the same boat now. We need to be a united people: 50 red, white, and blue states. We have what it takes to move this country forward."

her election. In the interest of full disclosure, it's been sort of fun justifying my shopping by saying I need it for the campaign, but it's really not something that is part of my nature. I am a great proponent of comfort at all costs.

During these dog days of summer, I have given up and gone the way of no stockings, wearing sandals and blue jean skirts. My reasoning leads me to believe that most people will appreciate my good sense and overlook my ponytail. At times I may not look very candidate-like, but I was a person long before I was a candidate.

There are less than 100 days to go. Saw some old friends who didn't realize I was running for office. That made my blood run cold. If I had an unlimited campaign account I would run ads in every newspaper telling people that I was a candidate...forget what I propose to bring to the office. I wake up during the night and think about the fundraising calls I need to make. It's always money. That's what moves a campaign. As I've said before, county races don't bring in much money. So, it's out in the morning, walk around a community fair, shake hands, move to the next one, attend a coffee in the evening, move on to a Democratic-sponsored event, go home, sleep, and start all over again.

In truth, I've never done anything like this before and other than the high heels, I'm enjoying every minute of it.

Sharon Narrod, *Continued from page 1*

There is no such thing as a good hair day when the humidity is 100 percent and it's drizzling. This is something that male candidates do not have to worry about.

Next in line would be carnivals. It really gives me a tremendous sense of well being to see large groups of people out enjoying themselves just by watching their kids, eating an ear of corn or having a cold beer on a very warm night. This really is America, but moreover, it is human nature at its most basic. For just a little while there are no worries, just the pleasure of being. I had a conversation with a group of total strangers and we all agreed that it's moments like these that define contentment. Too many hours are wasted waiting for the ultimate experience. These lovely, lazy summer nights, with nothing terrible happening, are the ultimate experience.

Another observation: Men, as a rule, have a campaign "uniform." If it's formal, wear a suit; if it's not, a sports jacket with no tie fit the bill. And if it's extremely informal, slacks and a short-sleeve shirt (nothing too loud) are very appropriate. But women candidates need the hair, makeup and clothing – never duplicated – for every occasion.

If they had a Candidate Barbie, parents would go broke trying to outfit her. I think the only Barbie they had like this had already won

2006 Democratic Candidate Profiles

Every month up to the November election, we will take a look at some of the Democrats on the ballot in 2006.

Alexi Giannoulas

Treasurer

**Residence: Chicago
District: Illinois**

Alexi Giannoulas is a community banker. As vice president and senior loan officer at Broadway Bank, Alexi was a vital part of the bank's management team that doubled the financial institution's asset size in recent years. *Crain's Chicago Business* has rated it the No. 1 bank in Illinois for the past four years based on return of assets. In addition, Broadway Bank's loan losses are consistently well below industry averages. Alexi's experience in asset liability management – handling the bank's deposits, purchasing bonds on behalf of the bank and managing its fixed assets – provides the necessary financial skills to take an active role in running the treasurer's office.



Dan Hynes

Comptroller

**Residence: Chicago
District: Illinois**

Daniel Hynes is serving his second term as State Comptroller. As the state's chief fiscal officer, Hynes has become the state's leading voice for fiscal responsibility. He has focused on consumer and taxpayer advocacy, government accountability and long-term budget reform. Hynes' efforts to secure state funding for stem cell research culminated in the creation of the Illinois Regenerative Medicine Institute in 2005. Hynes also proposed a legislative package of reforms that attacked "pay to play" politics by dramatically reducing the ability of campaign contributors to get state contracts. His bill protecting Illinois workers from punitive new federal overtime rules has also become law.



Michael MacDonald

**State Representative
District 53**

**Residence: Buffalo Grove
District: Arlington Heights, Buffalo Grove, Mount Prospect, Prospect Heights and Wheeling**

Mike MacDonald is a 49-year-old retired engineer seeking his first public office. He has worked in both the industrial and service sectors of the economy. Mike's career has given him business experience in 17 different foreign countries. He seeks to bring his life experiences and problem solving abilities to the state representative's office. He believes that education and a world-class infrastructure are the keys to job creation and economic opportunity. His scientific and business backgrounds have prepared him for successfully dealing with budget issues, energy regulation, the environment and the global marketplace.



Terrence O'Brien

**Metropolitan Water Reclamation District
Commissioner**

**Residence: Chicago
District: Cook County**

Terrence O'Brien has spent the last 27 years in the environmental field. That includes nearly 18 as a Water Reclamation District commissioner, the last nine as its president. O'Brien has been able to improve the operation of the District at the least cost to taxpayers. The District is one of the few governmental agencies in Illinois to have an AAA bond rating. O'Brien is interested in preventing pollution in Lake Michigan and other area waterways. He has led the effort to complete the deep tunnel system which has already captured over 800 billion gallons of sewer overflow that otherwise would have polluted the area waterways.

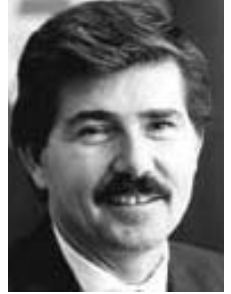


David Orr

County Clerk

**Residence: Chicago
District: Cook County**

As Cook County Clerk, David Orr serves as the chief election authority in the third largest election jurisdiction in the country, and has found innovative ways to reform how government works and to make his office run more efficiently. A progressive voice in Chicago politics for 27 years, Orr led the fight to implement the motor voter law in Illinois, which has made it easier and more convenient for people to sign up to vote. Since taking office in 1991, Orr has returned \$24 million in unspent budget appropriations to the county. Orr has also played pivotal roles in helping to shape federal and state election reforms.



Jesse White

Secretary of State

**Residence: Chicago
District: Illinois**

Jesse White brought integrity and innovation to the Illinois Secretary of State's office. During his first term, he created a strong, independent Inspector General's office, managed the largest distribution of new Illinois license plates in the state's history, successfully fought for tougher DUI laws, reformed the state's Commercial Driver's License program and created the office's first online services. The Illinois Secretary of State's office is the largest and most diverse office of its kind in the nation, providing more direct services to the people of Illinois than any other public agency.



Seals Calls for Leadership—Kirk Focuses on Protecting Pets

by John Hmurovic

We now know that Mark Kirk believes in protecting pets. We still don't know how he stands on protecting Social Security.

Congressman Kirk held a news conference recently, to announce his support for legislation regarding pet protection. By contrast, over a year ago, ever since President Bush suggested that our current Social Security system be significantly changed and partially privatized, Kirk has not held one public hearing nor clearly stated his position on one of the most important issues facing our country.

"My opponent is spending the day tackling the easy stuff - who doesn't want to protect our pets?" asked Dan Seals, the Democratic nominee for Congress in the 10th District. "This is another small-bore issue that everyone agrees with. Kirk would like to distract us from his votes with the Bush Administration and the other Bush Republicans - votes that fail to address the significant problems facing ordinary Americans," Seals said. "Given all of the challenges that our nation faces, I have trouble understanding why a member of the congressional leadership would focus on this issue right now."



Kirk has a history of avoiding tough issues; anything that might lose him some votes. He has, for example, refused frequent efforts by groups opposed to the American occupation of Iraq to discuss his support for our continued involvement. He has refused to meet with groups opposed to the cuts that he backed in funding for social service programs. Kirk has been actively campaigning on his "Suburban Agenda," a series of mostly non-controversial proposals that he introduced after taking a poll to find out what voters respond to.

While Kirk focuses on the easy issues, Seals says that's not the kind of leader we need in today's world. "We need a leader who will face up to the crisis in Iraq," Seals says. "We need a leader who will face the fact that we have four million more Americans below the poverty line since 2001. We need a leader who is committed to lowering prices at the gas pump. We need a leader who will face the fact that our federal deficit is approaching \$9 trillion." Seals continued, "This is a question of priorities - not whether or not we love our pets and want to care for them. Where are Mark Kirk's priorities?"

Women's Bill of Health Rights *continued from page 2*



I have the right to accurate, objective, and complete information from my caregiver about my treatment options.

Thirty-one states require doctors to give a woman seeking an abortion sensationalized, biased information – then they send her away for a day or more before she can have the procedure.

The Federal Refusal Clause and state gag rules mean that doctors and hospitals need not or cannot let a woman know when abortion is an option – even though a woman with a condition like heart disease or lupus may need an abortion to save her life.

If my caregiver is unable to provide optimal treatment, I have the right to receive proper referral.

Gag rules prevent referrals.

I have the right to physicians trained in optimal procedures.

Nonviable pregnancies, ectopic (tubal) pregnancies, and hydatidiform moles are obstetric conditions that require abortion procedures. Yet, many, if not most, obstetric trainees no longer are trained in dilation and evacuation or

dilation and extraction. Of the 40,000 obstetricians in the United States, few can perform abortions, and residencies are not providing proper training.

I have the right to timely treatment.

A woman with an obstetric complication may be sent away from her doctor's office to the emergency department and back again owing to lack of trained caregivers or unwillingness to provide care.

Prompt treatment of ectopic pregnancy can preserve a woman's future fertility and save her life. But in El Salvador, where the mother's life comes last, ectopic (tubal) pregnancy is not treated until there is a rupture or until the embryo or fetus is thought to be no longer viable. Will new U.S. laws that give the embryo and fetus separate status lead to a similar situation here?

I have the right to treatment within a reasonable geographic distance.

Women may have to travel hundreds of miles for proper procedures.

I have the right to prescribed medication.

Pharmacists are refusing to fill prescriptions for oral contraceptives, abortion-related antibiotics, and even pregnancy vitamins if prescribed by a women's health clinic that they think provides abortions.

Pharmacists are lecturing women and refusing to fill their prescriptions for emergency contraceptives. This even happened to a woman needing treatment after her fetus died in utero.

As detailed in a recent New York Times article ("Contra-Contraception"), the Religious Right is systematically trying to deny women contraceptives.

I have the right to the privacy of my medical records.

Treatment for an obstetric complication is part of the woman's private medical record under HIPAA, but public officials have repeatedly subpoenaed women's medical records. In June an Ohio judge ruled in a lawsuit that a Planned Parenthood clinic must release all girls' abortion records.

My caregiver has the right to provide health care without harassment, violence, or loss of professional standing.

Arsons and bomb threats at women's health clinics – even those that do not provide abortion – continue nationwide.

I have the right to complete, accurate and truthful information from my government.

The Bush administration forced the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to delete information from its Web site on the safety of abortion and the value of condoms in preventing sexually transmitted diseases.

In May, a panel at a CDC-sponsored conference on preventing STDs was stacked with abstinence-only advocates.

My government should protect me from false and harmful medical claims.

Thousands of "crisis pregnancy centers" with unlicensed, unprofessional staff use deceptive advertising, pregnancy tests, and ultrasounds to delay or deny women abortions – but, instead of being regulated, receive \$60 million in federal grants.



Kirk Votes (Again) to Promote One Religion Over Another

by John Hmurovic

Mark Kirk has voted again to chip away the beliefs of our Founding Fathers that the government has no right to promote one religion over others. Twice in July, he voted exactly as the radical religious right-wing of the Republican Party wanted him to vote.

First, Kirk voted to strip federal judges of the right to rule on cases involving the Pledge of Allegiance. The religious right pushed for this legislation in order to make sure that no federal judge could even consider a case that involved a challenge to the use of the words "under God" in the Pledge. Kirk's vote is troubling for another reason: It weakens the balance of power in our federal government. It attempts to take away the right of the Court to rule on a Congressional decision.

"If we strip federal courts of their judicial independence," Congressman Dennis Cardozo (D-California) said on the House floor, "nothing stops Congress from preventing courts to rule on other freedoms protected in our Bill of Rights, including freedom of speech, the right to bear arms, freedom of worship and freedom to assemble. Is that really the precedent we want to establish?"

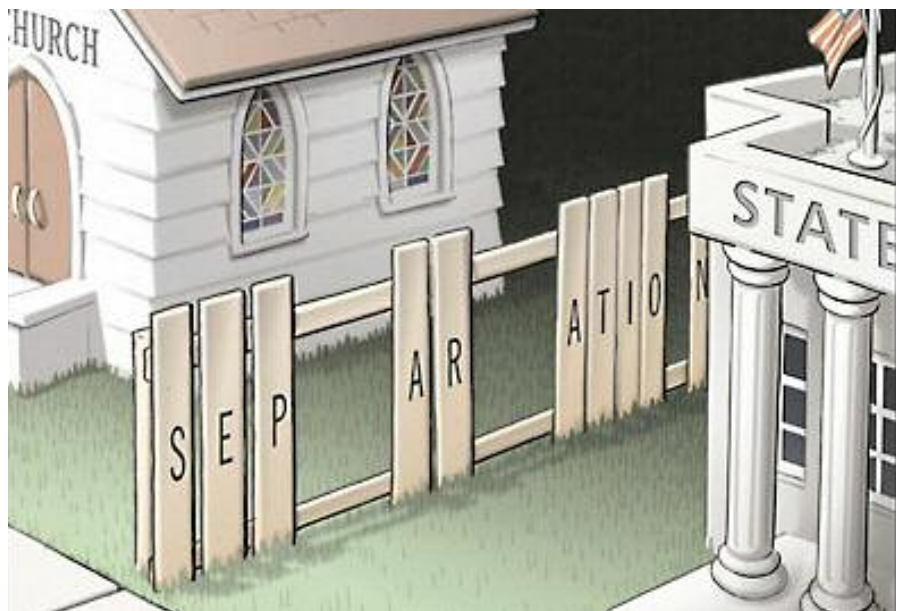
The second vote Kirk cast was to take away the power of a state court which told the city of San Diego that it had to take down a huge cross that stands on public property. Again, the religious right pushed for passage of this bill which allows public land to be used to promote one religion over another. Kirk voted to support the legislation, ignoring the fact that this is a nation of many religions...not just a land of Christians.

Congressman Gary Ackerman (D-New York) criticized supporters of this legislation, citing their statements that the crucifix is a symbol of our heritage.

"I beg to differ," Ackerman said. "It is not a collective symbol of our heritage because it is not the symbol of my heritage, though I respect it as a symbol of somebody else's heritage. And if, indeed, the only symbol up there was a statue of Buddha or a Muslim symbol or a Jewish Star of David, I would object as strenuously."

But Kirk didn't object. Just as he has before, he cast his vote on the side of the right-wing extremists who want to force their religious beliefs on the rest of us. He did it last year as well, when he voted in support of the right-wing's demand to have Congress interfere in the Terry Schiavo case because they felt their beliefs mattered more than those of her husband.

In a district that does not believe in extremism, Mark Kirk has now cast at least three votes to please the far-right wing of his Republican Party, and has shown in the process that he is not the moderate Republican that he claims to be, and that he doesn't represent our beliefs.



Why Won't Kirk Repudiate GOP Religious Intolerance?

by Mark Paul

By his silence, is Mark Kirk condoning anti-Semitism?

At the Texas Republican Party's 2004 convention, a plank in its platform declared that the U.S. is a "Christian nation" and pledged the party to "dispel the myth of the separation of Church and State."

Is it necessary to conjure the uproar that would follow a platform that declares the U.S. to be a "White Nation" or a "WASP Nation?" This is the state that's home to the president, and has the largest Republican delegation in Congress, one of whom was Mark Kirk's leader in the House, until distracted by multiple felony indictments

The platform language is alarming, even to a non-observant Jew who doesn't belong to any Jewish organizations. So I sent e-mails to the American Jewish Committee's offices in Houston and Dallas, as well as its Washington headquarters. The AJC is hardly a left-wing group; it subsidizes printing press access for Norman Podhoretz, granddaddy of the neo-cons. I also wrote Kirk, asking him to repudiate the plank.

Here's what the AJC president and executive director had to say in a letter addressed to the Texas GOP chair and then RNC chair Ed Gillespie:

"As with the country as a whole, Texas is a highly diverse state with citizens of every religion, ethnicity and race, and it thrives on both the complexity of its citizenry and the democratic values of its political structure. As such, platforms such as the one approved at your state convention are troublesome. Political conventions, whether they be Democratic or Republican, should represent the very best of our democratic tradition, which insists on inclusiveness and a respect for our Constitution.

"As the courts have made clear, even when they disagree as to what separation of church and state may entail, the First Amendment's twin guarantees of religious freedom and church-state separation ensure that Americans of all faiths and of no faith can live as their consciences dictate. We believe that

Continued on page 7

Proud to be a Good Witch?

by Gregory Mysko

"Are you a Good Witch or a Bad Witch?"

Glenda asked Dorothy after she arrived in the Land of Oz. That question has been asked many times by Republicans, albeit with a false Christian tone. Dorothy, like a Democrat, replied "Who me? Why, I'm not any kind of witch at all!" That was a bad response since it dodges the issues and by default implies that the Republicans are

Good Witches. And of course, Democrats are the evil ones.

There has been black magic emanating out of Washington since Cheney and Bush took over. So much of the goodness in America has been systematically destroyed by the Republican power structure that brought narrow-minded religion into government, with many toxic manifestations.

On Monday, I overheard two Christian men in the café at work talking about the Lebanon crisis in the Middle East. "I hope Israel sends over some nuclear bombers and drops them on Iran," one of them said. "Yes!" the other one said excitedly. "That should start bringing on the End Times, finally." These two were believers in the Rapture and were excited with the possibility of the apocalypse beginning soon. "I hope Bush doesn't stand in their way and lets Israel do what it has to do."

But reality sometimes sets in. "I just bought a new car," the one guy said. "Maybe it shouldn't go so fast." He explained that he started dating a woman he likes a lot. "But, she's not ready for Rapture," he said; "she smokes and drinks."

I was shocked and appalled, not at the woman's drinking and smoking, but at the fact that two grown men who are supporters of George Bush while professing to be following the Gospels of Jesus Christ, are cheerleaders

for increased bloodshed in the Middle East. Nuclear bombs for Iran to bring on the Rapture! What kind of perverted blend of politics and religion have these Republicans brought us?

Democrats should finally get on the ball when it comes to faith and spirituality. Senator Barack Obama's recent speech in Washington on faith in politics was a call to arms to Democrats. "Our own religious faith should not detract from the separation of church and state in the political work we do," he said. Respect should be given to all spiritual paths, not just Christian ones. Since Democrats have shied away from religious discourse, they have suffered.

Obama said, "But I am hopeful that we can bridge the gaps that exist and overcome the prejudices each of us brings to this debate. And I have faith that millions of believing Americans want that to happen. No matter how religious they may or may not be, people are tired of seeing faith used as a tool of attack."

And I think Obama's challenge should especially be pertinent to those who have a Christian background. It is time for progressive Christians who do not subscribe to the hateful, venomous interpretations manifested in the Republican Party to start speaking out on behalf of the higher qualities of their faith.

It has been done before. In 2006, it needs to be done again. This effort needs to be inclusive of all spiritual backgrounds, including Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and even Wiccans.



GOP Intolerance *continued from page 6*

respecting these constitutional mandates is the surest way to avoid division in our pluralistic society and to assure that the government favors no particular religion.

"It is our hope that the Texas Republican Party will retract this problematic language from its platform and strive to guarantee that Texas remains a welcome place for people of all religious backgrounds."

Neither Gillespie nor the Texas GOP chair bothered to reply to the AJC. I never heard from Kirk.

The Texas GOP met again a few weeks ago and renewed the "Christian nation" language, while it appears that the better tailored among them this year managed to cut the passage denying the Church and State clause. (to get the full flavor, see p. 8 at [<http://www.texasgop.org/site/DocServer/RPTPlatform2004.pdf?docID=121>] and p. 21 at [http://www.texasgop.org/site/DocServer/2006_Plat_with_TOC.final.pdf?docID=2042]

If this still seems too hypothetical, look at some of the reports of chronic religious harassment at the Air Force Academy. The religious bullies there have a very specific idea of what constitutes Christian faith, and it doesn't even extend across all Protestant denominations. The Lutheran chaplain blew the whistle at the AFA. A lawsuit has been filed by a Jewish cadet's father, himself an AFA alumnus. This isn't some backwater bureau tucked away in the Commerce Department. AFA graduates command one of the largest budgets in the federal government and control the most powerful weapons on the planet.

Kirk will undoubtedly speak before many Jewish groups in the months ahead. When the floor opens for questions, ask him whether he agrees we live in a Christian nation. Of course, if his staff is any good at all, someone is reading this (Hi there; hope you're looking at job opportunities for 2007), and he may have an answer prepared. Let's hear it.



The Leader of the Pack

Kirk leads in congressional travel, but escapes media focus

by Ron Weiner

Last month, you may have noticed a *Chicago Tribune* story detailing trips by legislators and/or their staffs that were paid for by "private interests." That called to mind another *Trib* story from March titled, "Lobbying scandal grounds jet set," detailing junkets made by "many of Illinois' congressional representatives and their staffs" at the expense of private interests.

That story had an editorial slant that revealed the *Tribune's* interpretation of what is fair-and-balanced reporting. Further, it is indicative of its latest editorial tactic which has become more blatantly evident now that the election season is here.

It is interesting to find, in the eight column inches of the page one portion of the March story, the names of three of our state's more prominent Democratic representatives, noting that they had been "heading off to exotic locations at no cost to themselves."

This was a not very veiled attempt to obfuscate fairness and balance, for it is only after the article is continued a full 20 pages into Section 1 that there is any mention that more than a few Republicans representatives have also used private interest money for their travels.

There on page 21, I found a half-page containing the remainder of the story, including five photos and an extremely informative table detailing the numbers of trips and the resultant costs in private interest dollars spent for those journeys. The table ranked in order of the total spent by each of 19 listed representatives of both parties in the Illinois delegation – 9 Republicans and 10 Democrats – all of whom combined to spend almost \$245,000 in private interest funds. Not surprisingly, six of the first seven listed back there on page 21 are, wonder of wonders, Republicans. It had cost those private interests \$140,000 so that they and their staffs could

make those trips.

At the head of the pack was Congressman Mark Kirk, who rang up over 30 percent of that total – \$42,443.02, if one counts the small change. Right behind him was Ray LaHood (R-Peoria) with more than \$23,000 listed as the travel costs of his junkets. Together, these two Republican congressmen accounted for nearly one-half of that \$140K spent by Republicans, and if one adds the travel bills of their leader, Speaker Dennis Hastert (fifth on the list), the three of them account for more than \$85,000 – fully one-third of all of the money spent by all of the representatives of both parties.

As for the photos placed on page 21, the largest was that of Democrat Jan Schakowsky (two columns wide, mind you), and beneath that, small "head shots" of four other congressmen: Costello, Gutierrez, Speaker Hastert and "the champ," Mark Kirk.

Fair and balanced reporting? Congresswoman Schakowsky is only 12th on the list, yet she was the first representative named in the leading paragraphs on page one (she spent about one-fifth of what Kirk spent), and yet hers was the featured photograph on the "jump" page.

Gutierrez and Costello – also Democrats and eighth and 11th on the list? Their names were close behind hers right up there on page 1. Republicans didn't show up until way back on page 21 (if any reader had gotten that far before pulling out the Sports section).

Fair and Balanced? The *Tribune* is showing itself to be about as "Fair and Balanced" as Fox News.



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