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Why We Need a Change

by Sharon Narrod

1. THERE IS NO 'RIGHT WAY' TO DO A WRONG THING.
2. ASK FOR HELP, GIVE HELP.
3. TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR ACTIONS, BOTH GOOD AND BAD.

The above three statements pretty much sum up my feelings about why we need a new Lake County Clerk, and why I am the best possible person for the job. I have repeated these statements time and again, because they are diametrically opposed to the attitude and operational structure of the current office.



It is a shame that such basic principles of good management should be at issue here, but they are. This, along with numerous questionable expenditures, unwillingness to do anymore than what is absolutely necessary, and an office run on patronage, just reinforce my opinion that Willard Helander (the current clerk), must go.

Time out for a personal moment: I'm dreaming of Election Day. My mother has already told me that in

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Tenth News

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Illinois Tenth Congressional District Democrats Newsletter

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Kirk's Allegiance Is Not to His District

by George Rosenblit

“Just do what the Speaker tells you to do.”

President George W. Bush delivered that message to Mark Kirk in introductory remarks during his speech to the Economic Club of Chicago on January 6. That defining statement removes all doubt as to where Kirk's loyalty lies. It was televised for all to see and hear. Soon afterwards, Kirk was rewarded for his loyalty with his appointment as Assistant Majority Whip.

Aside from benign tasks like making sure party members show up on the floor to vote, at times the Majority Whip and his assistants have held a normal five-minute voting period open nearly 45 minutes, to twist arms to influence the voting outcome.

A case in point is the vote for the so-called "Gasoline for America's Security Act of 2005," which did nothing to provide reliable and affordable energy for America, but instead was intended to provide enormous subsidies to energy companies already enjoying record-breaking profits, while doing everything to roll back clean air safeguards. The outcome was a close 212-210 in favor of passage, and Kirk voted for this bill.

What's involved in "twisting arms" to make sure the vote count is what they want? Are congressmen promised more pork for their districts? Are they threatened with punishment such as blocking their bills from getting to the floor for discussion and consideration, or loss of advancement opportunities in the Republican hierarchy?



No caption necessary.

Kirk is now, once again, obligated to follow orders. It's his choice.

And it appears that Kirk is trying to distance himself from the Republican Administration by avoiding the use of the word "Republican" in his newsletter and other communications. But don't be fooled again. No matter what Kirk says or does at this late date in the election cycle, it must be suspect. Kirk is a solid Republican. He follows the party line and has voted for Republican agenda bills about 90 percent of the time. This leopard cannot change its spots.

Now, what does this all mean to us, the voters in the 10th District? Kirk cannot serve with undivided loyalty for the Republican Party and at the same time represent the views of the majority of his constituents! He is our representative in name only.

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Happy with the War? The Budget Deficit? Want More of the Same? Vote for Kirk.

by John Hmurovic

Make no mistake about it. Even though the name "George W. Bush" will not be on the ballot, this election is a referendum on his policies. When the TV pundits analyze the results on the night of November 7, that is how they will look at it.

And if the Republicans retain control over Congress, how do you think the Bush administration will react? In U.S. history, voters have given another term to a sitting president 21 times. Of those 21, none of them squeaked by with a smaller victory margin than did George W. Bush in 2004. Yet, after receiving just 50.73 percent of the total vote cast in 2004, Bush declared that he had been given a "mandate," and continued to push through his right-wing conservative agenda as if the opinions of nearly half the country didn't matter.

Should we have been surprised? He did the same thing in 2000 when he was declared the winner of the closest race in American history and immediately began implementing policies which ignored the fact that this country needed a uniter, not a divider.

So, let me ask you again, if the Republicans retain control of Congress next month, how do you think the Bush administration will react? Here's my prediction: There will be a major push to accomplish everything that the far right has dreamt about for years. They know they may not keep the White House in 2008, so either get it done now, or it may never happen. All that is standing in their way is for the Democrats to win enough seats to deny the Bush team its rubber-stamp Congress, which has given the White House everything it has asked for these past six years.

Six years ... isn't that how long Mark Kirk has been in Congress? There are still those who say Mark Kirk is not like Bush, that he is a "thoughtful, independent leader." Those are the people who are either so partisan that they will never be able to see the truth, or those who haven't had the time or interest in looking at the facts.

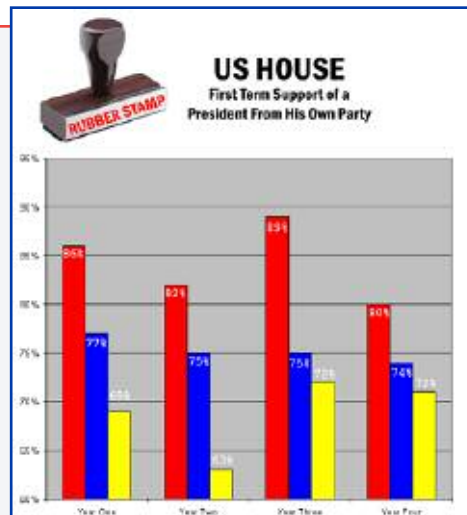
The facts are, in his votes in Congress, Mark Kirk has supported this administration around 90 percent of the time. And he has supported them on every big issue that has come before them. Mark Kirk has supported this administration's war in Iraq without question. Mark Kirk has supported the weakening of Medicare, and his silence on the issue indicates he supports plans to dismantle Social Security. Mark Kirk has voted for every tax cut

that helps the richest Americans, even if it means putting this nation into a huge financial debt, and even if it means cutting programs meant to help students, the elderly, children, mothers and the rest of us. Mark Kirk has backed the right wing religious extremists when they wanted Congress to impose their religious views in the Terri Schiavo case last year. And Mark Kirk, as Assistant Majority Whip in the House, has not only solidly backed the Bush administration, he has helped it line up the votes it needs to push its right-wing agenda through Congress. That's what an Assistant Majority Whip does.

And in that rare 10 percent of the time that Mark Kirk has voted differently than his Republican party, what impact has he had? Has he been able to convince his party to soften its stance on a woman's right to make her own medical decisions? Has he been able to make the Republicans more concerned about the environment? Has he been able to nudge them away from the control that the gun lobby and religious extremists hold over their political party in the Bush era?

The fact is, Mark Kirk has been extremely ineffective in wresting his party away from the right wing and bringing it back toward the middle ... assuming he has even tried, and there is no evidence that he has. By re-electing Mark Kirk we will bring the Republican right-wing one seat closer to retaining control over the House. If that happens, how do you think the Bush administration will react?

Do you like what the Bush administration has done for the past six years? If you do, the choice is clear ... vote for Mark Kirk, because he will get out his rubber stamp and give you more of the same.



Mark Kirk's tenure in the U.S. House can best be described as part of a "rubber-stamp Congress," as this graph shows. The bar on the left is how often the House has voted in complete agreement with President Bush. The one in the center shows how often Congress voted with President Clinton. The bar on the right shows how often it voted in agreement with the first President Bush.

Kirk *continued from page 1*

Kirk does not know what we think about important issues of the day – like the Iraq war, fighting wars without the consent of Congress, education, job loss, minimum wage, health care, Social Security, his votes in Congress, etc. So there are at least two reasons why he cannot vote the way we might like, to fulfill our hopes and aspirations for our country. One, Kirk is operating in a vacuum with respect to his constituents, and, two, he is more concerned with climbing his ladder of success and rewards within the Republican Party.

We need a Representative who will be our advocate in Congress – someone who listens to us as well as reports to us on what's happening and going to happen in Congress, on a continual basis. We have a fine Democratic candidate for Congress, Dan Seals. If you have attended one of his public or private meetings, you know that he has good and thoughtful comments on the important issues, and he listens carefully to what we have to say. If you want a true Representative, vote for Dan!



Mark Kirk is probably a welcome guest in Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's book, because he has been a 100-percent backer of the Bush administration's decision to go to war in Iraq, and has been a backer of every misstep the administration has made in the long occupation of that country.

Republicans' Plan B: Play Politics with Women's Health

by Zena Kaufman

The mission of the FDA Center for Drug Evaluation is to assure that safe and effective drugs are available to the American people.

This mission is hard to reconcile with the current debate surrounding the approval of the Plan B drug from a prescription medicine to an over-the-counter product. Somewhere in the approval process, it appears politics began to play a stronger role over the science.

Let's first understand Plan B as a medicine. Plan B is different than RU-486. RU-486 (mifepristone) is taken to terminate an early pregnancy within 49 or fewer days after a woman's last menstrual period. Plan B (0.75 mg levonorgestrel) is an emergency contraceptive used to prevent pregnancy. It will not terminate a pregnancy. The product was approved for sale by prescription in 1999.

Now, let's understand the current situation in the United States. A recent study by the Guttmacher Institute, a nonprofit corporation, noted that a poor woman is four times as likely to experience an unplanned pregnancy as a higher-income woman. The United States has one of the highest rates of unintended pregnancies in the industrialized world. There are six million pregnancies on an annual basis; half of these are unintended and half of those are terminated through abortion.

We can now see why the approval of Plan B as an over-the-counter medication could be such a benefit to improving the health of American woman as part of a comprehensive plan to remove obstacles in the way of affordable contraception. Plan B is not the solution, but part of the solution.

The key point in approving Plan B for non-prescription sales centered on the age at which a woman could purchase the product from a pharmacy.

Dr. Andrew C. von Eschenbach (the acting commissioner of the FDA, who has been nominated to be the permanent commissioner) defended his position that 18 years old should be the defining age, instead of 16. The first reason he cited was his understanding of 18 as the age of majority and that pharmacies are familiar with the restriction for the sale of certain products, such as tobacco, to those 18 and older. His logic was that registered pharmacists and technicians may become confused in distinguishing between the sale of tobacco and the sale of an emergency contraceptive.

Moreover, in order to gain approval, the New Drug Applicant for Plan B had to agree to extraordinary conditions for monitoring sales. Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton likened this requirement to requiring distillers to be responsible for bartenders selling to underage drinkers.

How much did politics play in this decision? The answer is not clear. However, since the approval of Plan B, the Democrats have relinquished their hold on Dr. von Eschenbach's nomination only to have two conservative Republicans place another hold on his promotion to permanent commissioner. They say they will not allow his nomination to go through until Dr. von Eschenbach suspends sales of RU-486.



Sharon Narrod, *Continued from page 1*

her eyes I have always been a winner and will remain one, no matter the outcome on November 7th. Thank you, Mom. I feel incredibly blessed that she is still around to deliver these statements of unconditional love. Believe me, her voice resonates in my brain when I'm having those moments of self-doubt.

Since I last wrote, I've met my opponent in formal situations where we both had an opportunity to make our case. When I talked about a lawsuit she had lost this year regarding absentee balloting, her retort was that the presiding judge was an "activist judge" and the person filing the suit was a North Shore attorney. Read that anyway you'd like, but it gave me an insight into the character of the person we rely upon for a fair non-partisan election. It was a little nightmarish to hear a publicly elected official, here in good old Lake County, use the term "activist judge". Up until then, the only mouth I recall that coming out of was Tom DeLay's. So much for non-partisan/bi-partisan representation.

When I mentioned the money she had spent on a stay at the Beverly Hills Hilton (airfare, limo and hotel courtesy of the Lake County taxpayers), her response was that she was attending an important conference and the Hilton had a good room rate. I have not seen any direct benefit of this conference to the taxpayers of Lake County, and saying you got a good room rate is like saying you spent \$5,000 shopping but you saved a lot because everything was on sale. Something does not add up. This was not the only trip at taxpayer expense.

It's so funny to me. When I first started looking at the clerk's office, my concentration was solely in the area of elections. However, the more I looked, the more questions I had. Employee-employer relations, higher than average turnover, constant expenditures that just don't make sense and a consistent inability to "own up" to mistakes were the dominant themes. Our clerk answers to no one. She believes that her employees are not county employees but "her" employees. She picks and chooses those rules and regulations that fit her interests and disregards the rest. This has resulted in lawsuits, which we paid for. We need to tell her that it's not Willard Helander and Co., but the Lake County Clerk's office. The clerk serves the citizens of the county, not her own self-promoting interests.

J² Productions, Shields Democrats & Rock the Vote Committee present

SNL
(Seals Night Live)

Saturday
October 28, 2006

8:30 pm
Auditorium

95 West Deerpath Road, Lake Forest, IL

(Deerpath Middle School East)

A "Rock the Vote" Event

Comedy & Music Featuring
Current & Alumni Members of:

Second City Teen Ensemble
Improv Playhouse Teen
Performance Ensemble
Lake Forest High School Improv Troupe
Improvisers from New Trier Township

SPECIAL APPEARANCE BY DAN SEALS,
CANDIDATE FOR CONGRESS

Admission:

One canned good to be donated to
Shield's Township Food Pantry

Host committee forming: 847.735.9521
This event is not a corporate or school sponsored
activity or endorsement.

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.

Rod Blagojevich Governor

Residence: Chicago

District: Illinois

Rod Blagojevich took office in the face of a \$5 billion budget deficit, a national recession and a state government that was not meeting the needs of working families. Experts wanted to cut education, cut health care or raise taxes. Rod Blagojevich thought that it was wrong to ask the working people of Illinois to sacrifice vital services or pay more in income or sales tax. Instead, he took on a system that wasn't working. Blagojevich ended corporate tax loopholes, streamlined state government and reordered priorities, saving billions of dollars and making vital investments in health care, education and economic development, all without asking families to pay more sales or income taxes.



Tom Dart Cook County Sheriff

Residence: Chicago

District: Cook County

Tom Dart is a former prosecutor and state legislator. Currently, as Chief of Staff for Cook County Sheriff Michael Sheahan, Dart helps administer the second largest sheriff's department in the nation. When elected Sheriff, Dart proposes the use of video surveillance to deter misconduct by officers and the use of video teleconferencing for court appearances of jail inmates, to cut down on the cost and security risks of transporting up to 1,500 inmates a day to preliminary court hearings. He also proposes comprehensive psychological screening processes for new recruits and civil service testing for individuals who apply for civilian jobs in the Sheriff's Office.



Charles Flowers

Cook County Regional Superintendent of Schools

Residence: Maywood

District: Includes all 10th District portions of Cook County

Charles Flowers is a board of education member at Proviso High School District 209 and a past board president at Maywood

School District 89. If elected as Cook County Regional Superintendent of Schools, he plans to increase accountability and emphasize staff development in local school districts, particularly in districts dealing with financial problems. He holds Master's degrees in Criminal Justice, Educational Administration and Special Education from Chicago State University, and he has taught special education and coached wrestling at Proviso East. He also served as the school's Director of Community Education. He is currently Director of Special Education for the Ada S McKinley Community Services.

Diane Hewitt

Lake County Board District 2

Residence: Waukegan

District: Includes portions of Waukegan, Beach Park

If elected as a Lake County Board member, Diane Hewitt will work to protect our open space, wetlands and forest preserves; develop and implement smart-controlled growth policies; reduce traffic congestion; promote small business growth and help existing businesses. Diane Hewitt is a real estate broker who has managed two offices, has been a retail sales manager at local area stores, and has served as a general foreman for Waukegan Township with experience in dealing with tax levies, budgets and intergovernmental relations.



Amanda

Howland

State Representative District 51

Residence: Lake Zurich

District: Includes Libertyville and Mundelein, as well as communities to the west.

A former school principal and special education teacher, Amanda Howland's interest in improving our schools gave her the desire to return to school to earn her law degree. That same desire motivated her to run for state representative, and her experience as a teacher and a problem-solver and mediator gives her the skills and



knowledge it takes to hammer out solutions to the problems facing our state's schools. A 20-year resident of the area, Amanda Howland is committed to improving the safety of our communities, and to sustaining the environment and the quality of life for our families.

Jeffrey Ketelsen

State Representative District 54

Residence: Palatine

District: Includes portions of Palatine, Rolling Meadows, Hoffman Estates, Inverness, Barrington

Jeffrey Ketelsen is focusing on tax reform, educational funding and affordable health care as his key issues in this election campaign, particularly the need for property tax reform. His solution to what he sees as a property tax crisis is a progressive income tax based on the ability of people to pay. He supported the 7 percent tax cap proposal in the legislature, which was opposed by his opponent. He says he does not, however, support the "tax swap" proposal, because he says it would not benefit most residents, as it would simply lessen property tax payments by increasing income taxes.

Terry Link

State Senate District 30

Residence: Waukegan

District: Includes Waukegan, North Chicago, Vernon Hills, Green Oaks, Park City as well as portions of Lincolnshire, Indian Creek, Buffalo Grove, Long Grove, Lake Forest, Lake Bluff and Riverwoods.

Senator Terry Link is the Majority Caucus Whip and chairs the Senate Revenue Committee. In the Senate, he led the fight for millions of dollars in new funding for our schools, while also fighting to cap property tax assessments at 7 percent. He is on the board of the Illinois Comprehensive Health Insurance Plan, which seeks to insure the uninsured; and the Illinois Economic Development Board, which is working to attract new businesses and jobs to the region. Senator Link has received the Henry Toll Fellowship for outstanding leadership, and the Distinguished Service Award by the Illinois Coalition for Honest Government.



Karen May

State Representative District 58

Residence: Highland Park

District: Includes Highland Park, Deerfield, Northbrook, Glencoe, Lake Forest, Lake Bluff, Highwood, Bannockburn and Riverwoods

First elected in 2000, state Representative Karen May has earned a reputation as someone who works with Democrats, Republicans and Independents to get the job done. She is a recognized leader in Illinois on environmental issues. As chair of the Environmental Health Committee, she was the driving force behind a new law that reduces mercury emissions into the environment. Her work to provide funding for open space preservation and to protect wetlands has won her the endorsement of the Sierra Club and League of Conservation Voters. She has also been a leader on expanding access to health care, helping the disabled and protecting women's reproductive freedoms.



Mickie Polk

Cook County Commission District 14

Residence: Inverness

District: Includes all or a portion of Glenview, Northbrook, Northfield, Palatine, Inverness, Wheeling, Rolling Meadows, Hoffman Estates, Arlington Heights, and Buffalo Grove in Cook County

A lifetime resident of Cook County, Mickie Polk



has more than 12 years of experience in public service as an Inverness village trustee and planning commission member. She has worked in advertising, real estate and telecommunications, and she has run a family business. She has an MBA from DePaul. Mickie Polk believes that Cook County can do a better job of managing its assets. Her pledge if elected to the Cook County Board of Commissioners is to eliminate waste and duplication, provide accountability, offer a sound and balanced budget and improve the overall use of the county's resources.

John Sonnenberg

Lake County Board District 18

Residence: Vernon Hills

District: Portions of Vernon Hills, Long Grove, Indian Creek and Buffalo Grove

John Sonnenberg is nationally recognized for his visionary solutions as the head of educational technology for the Illinois State Board of Education. That role combines his six years of experience as a science teacher, 15 years in school administration, membership on the Villa Park School Board, and work as a business executive providing technology and consultant support to schools and businesses across the country. John Sonnenberg has been an active scout leader, coach and church member. If elected to the county board, he will use his experience to find better ways for the county to deal with its problems and more effectively manage its tax dollars.



**Remember, early voting begins October 16th.
For more information go to www.tenthdems.org**

Volunteers: the Key to Victory

by Marla Sundh

One misconception about political campaigns is that campaign offices can do it all. People imagine donations streaming in to the offices and a flurry of staffers generating publicity materials and advertisements. Money is a precious commodity for most candidates, so at best, a paid staff is a campaign manager and a skeleton crew.

The truth is that campaigns rely more heavily on the unpaid volunteer. The volunteer is truly the backbone behind political campaigns and can mean the difference between victory and defeat. The importance of volunteers cannot be overstated. Volunteers are generally people who have a strong passion for philosophies shared by a particular candidate or party – people who have a strong desire to help achieve a common goal. Volunteers can be trained and organized by a campaign, or they can act on their own. How to recruit and retain volunteers is so

Continued on page 6

The strong support of volunteers has played a key role in the helping Michael Bond of Grayslake wage what many believe will be a successful campaign for the State Senate.



A Time to Reap What You Sow: Yard Signs Blooming in the 10th

by Ross Nickow

Autumn is harvest time, with crops such as corn, wheat, yams and pumpkins ready for the picking. But the summer of 2006 will be remembered as one during which another kind of crop was planted, bore fruit—and spread like wildfire.

This summer, political yard signs were planted and bloomed throughout the 10th Congressional District. The grassroots momentum and excitement generated by Democratic Congressional Candidate Dan Seals' campaign took root in the grass of homes from Wilmette to Glencoe to Waukegan. The fervor spread west to many areas, among them Deerfield, Buffalo Grove, Glenview, Arlington Heights, Lincolnshire and Palatine.

The Seals campaign began its yard sign effort early to enhance visibility and name recognition and drum up support for Seals, as well as bring out volunteers to help in the quest to overthrow three-term incumbent Mark Kirk. The signs help put Seals' name out front and center on the streets of the 10th District. Only a hermit locked in a basement watching reruns of American Idol could miss the overwhelming support represented by the sheer number of signs. According to Rich Ringer, communications director for the Seals campaign, more than 3,500 signs are already in yards throughout the district with countless more to follow.

"We've been delighted with the sproutings of yard signs for Seals all

Continued on page 6

Volunteers *Continued from page 5*

important that voluminous literature on the subject is readily available.

The 2004 presidential campaign illustrated the impact of grassroots organizing. While Howard Dean did not ultimately capture the Democratic nomination: his methods have been copied by other candidates. The theory stems from a belief in the power of volunteers; that a return to local campaign workers will have improved results at the polls. The advent of Internet campaigning, including blogs, has expanded the reach of candidates and their volunteers. Now the chair of the Democratic Party, Governor Dean has polished his techniques, which have resulted in the "50 State Campaign" aimed at people at ground level to spread the word.

With the November elections drawing ever closer, a volunteer can contribute in a multitude of ways. For example: the Dan Seals supporter has people over for dinner, and leaves Seals brochures around the house where people can't help but pick them up and discuss them over dinner. A personal e-mail from a Sharon Narrod supporter to friends across the county can often have far reaching effects that surpass what advertising could do. A letter written from parents to their college students can ignite interest and result in "word of mouth" free advertising among new voters. This creates a momentum, a positive buzz that can become a groundswell of support.

For those of you who are reluctant to canvass door-to-door, or say that telephone calls are "not your thing," there are many other things you can do to contribute:

- **Placing of yard signs in key locations**
- **Wearing a button**
- **Speaking about candidates as in the aforementioned dinner conversation; taking any opportunity to turn conversations toward your candidate(s)**
- **Identifying likely voters and calling them to make sure they get to the polls**
- **Registering voters**
- **Licking envelopes**
- **Writing letters to the editor, friends, relatives, and neighbors**
- **Passing out brochures in public places**

On the road to victory in November, remember that every volunteer ensures that every vote counts!

Yard Signs

Continued from page 5

over Highland Park," said Bob Barris, yard sign coordinator for the Moraine Township Democrats. "While we still have some areas that we need to seed, for the most part it's been very nice. Driving around town and comparing it to the Kirk signs has been very gratifying."

Candidates vary in the strategies they use for distributing yard signs. Karen May, running for her fourth term as state representative from the 58th District, won't begin her yard sign distribution until early October. "It makes a dramatic impact and shows strong support to put them up all at once, though a few of them are sprouting up already," said May. "It's a fairly inexpensive way to show grassroots support and to remind people to vote," she added.

May said yard signs also help candidates generate enthusiasm for their own campaigns. "As a candidate driving from meeting to meeting, ringing doorbells, and going to everything from coffees to debates, seeing the signs makes me feel good and gives me energy and strength to go on," May said. "We candidates love our yard signs!"

In addition to name recognition, Lake County Clerk candidate Sharon Narrod hopes her yard signs will alert voters to the importance of the office she is seeking. Her signs contain the slogan, Making Every Vote Count, beside a checked-off ballot box. "The Clerk's office supervises elections, and it's my hope to assure all the citizens of Lake County that I will safeguard their vote, particularly in this age of electronic voting," Narrod said. "The slogan on my signs should help people make the connection that election integrity is a significant responsibility of the Clerk's office."

Yard signs can be obtained by contacting or stopping by the candidates' campaign offices, or from any local Democratic township office. The Lake County Democrats, for example, are using their offices in Waukegan and Mundelein to distribute more than 12,000 signs. Pete Couvall, first vice chair of the Lake County Democrats, said the organization will "deliver and put up yard signs for anyone who calls our office." In addition to Seals signs, he said, his organization is well stocked with signs for all state, county and local candidates, among them Alexi Giannoulas for Illinois State Treasurer, Mark Curran for Lake County Sheriff and Sharyn Elman for District 62 State Representative.

Many residents say they are thrilled with the opportunity to be part of the political process. Vicki Bailyn, 10th District resident, is proudly displaying signs for Seals, May and Narrod in her yard. "I would like Dan Seals to represent me in Congress, and I want to say that and let others know I feel that way," Bailyn said. "I so much want change, and you just want to do something because you're so frustrated with the situation. Putting up a yard sign is an easy and useful thing to do."

Municipalities throughout the 10th District have their own regulations concerning timing and placement of yard signs. The First Amendment protects freedom of speech and expression, especially on private property. [As this article goes to press, the Bush administration has not yet been successful in completely shredding the U.S. Constitution.]

With the election a month away (and early voting starting on October 16th), volunteers supporting the many candidates running for office in the 10th District will also continue to display bumper stickers, wear political buttons, make calls at phone banks, walk door-to-door, write letters to the editor, as well as utilize other opportunities critical in helping Democrats gain control of Congress and bringing accountability back to American government. And for concerned citizens who may not have much time to volunteer or money to donate, planting a yard sign is one way of getting involved and demonstrating support for qualified candidates. It could actually give them the edge they need to win.

Yard Signs are available from the campaign offices of most candidates, and through your local Democratic Township office. For more information, visit the Tenth Dems website www.TenthDems.org, write to info@tenthdems.org, or call 847-266-VOTE.



The Importance of Blogging Earnest

by Ben Struhl



The mainstream media recently has been paying more and more attention to the role that weblogs (blogs), political websites and other Internet activities have been having on the political process. However, there continues to be widespread disagreement over the extent of the influence of electronic media and whether it will act in good or bad ways upon the political landscape.

The “netroots,” a term for the network of web commentators and activists online, has gotten a lot of press recently for their role in the nomination of Connecticut’s Ned Lamont as the Democratic candidate for Senate, defeating long time incumbent Joe Lieberman. Major figures in the “netroots” say they are crashing the gate of the establishment and functioning as revolutionaries returning power to the masses. Critics of the “netroots” say that it was Lamont’s large bankroll and voters’ dissatisfaction with Bush that led to Lieberman’s downfall, and not online activists.

One power of the Internet that everyone agrees upon is its exceptional fundraising ability. Several liberal blogs have banded together to make a list of “netroots candidates” to which they encourage donations, and Dan Seals has made their list. From all such donation pages for the “netroots candidates” Seals has raised a remarkable \$281,077.04 – quite a significant amount of money. Republicans have no comparable online institution, meaning a total online boost of about a quarter million for Seals.

Other blogs and websites have been providing coverage of the Seals campaign where the mainstream media has been absent. “Daily Kos” and “Soapblox” have both posted articles on Seals, and the more local “Archpundit” and “Ellen’s Tenth Congressional District Blog” have provided frequent commentary and analysis on the race’s status that would otherwise be impossible to find.

However, blogs can also be used for political mischief, allowing a prospective audience to anyone who can type, perhaps to mislead. Recent reports from the *New York Times* told of an official in the Republican “Kean for New Jersey” campaign who had been commenting on many blogs under a series of assumed names, attacking opponent Bob Menendez (D). This is actually standard practice in all places of online commentary and information – difficult-to-identify partisans corrupt otherwise clean information channels.

A supporter of Mark Kirk tried something similar at the end of August of this year, starting a blog called “Lost in the Center,” which was written from the standpoint of an “objective moderate” who just so happened to despise Dan Seals and spew Republican talking points. After a blogger from Maine accused “Lost in the Center” of being a fiction (based on lack of name or location identification), “Lost” vanished and then reappeared a few days later with the criticisms deleted and now identified as “Tom from Glencoe.”

Not long after that, “Tom” changed his/her name to “Elle McPherson” and started a new blog, this time a decidedly anti-liberal screed. Yet, due to blog compilations many people read the work of this serially dishonest individual. That’s another worry about the supposed “netroot revolution” – who, exactly, are we empowering? Are “normal” Americans getting a chance to speak, or are they staying detached while such hijackers as “Tom” and “Elle McPherson” get all the attention?



A New Era of Unity

by Gary Lukens



With the five-year anniversary of 9/11 stoically passing by, it comes as no surprise the growing chasm within this country. As partisan politics become the normal pattern of government, it’s a wonder anything gets done in our nation’s capital. Democrats and Republicans have become more bitterly divided than at any time since the coming days of the Civil War. By all reports, America has begun to unravel at the seams.

To be sure, for years now George W. Bush has sought to divide this country into two warring factions: those who support his policies, and those who denounce them. The standard Republican tactic of isolating those who question policy, while insulating those who follow the tail in front of them, seems to be his plan of attack. Along the way, families, friends and coworkers have drawn battle lines and taken sides.

Still, for the Bush administration and the Republican Party, it’s not enough that people are divided. I fear the upcoming midterm elections will regress into a study of venom so vile, it will leave an indelible mark on the integrity of this nation.

So as we head into the November elections, each of us should be aware what will befall this nation should the Republican Party continue to hold power and continue to divide America.

Julius Caesar, Rome’s first emperor, was asked once how he planned to conquer the barbarians raging along the empire’s border. Caesar casually replied that he would employ the same tactics he used to conquer the Roman Senate: He would divide and conquer.

If history has taught us anything, it’s that too often the few rule the many. In November, Americans have an opportunity to send a message that the vindictive policies of George W. Bush and his Republican Party will no longer divide this country.

Let the new era of unity begin.

What a Mess Kirk Has Made

by Mark Paul

Mark Kirk has served in Congress for six years, entirely in the majority and with a member of his party in the White House. With so much information flowing from newspapers, TV, radio and the Internet, it is easy to focus individually on one debacle after another and miss the forest for the trees.

This is his foreign policy record:

- The two organizations most hostile to Israel, Hamas and Hezbollah, now control the Palestinian Authority and Lebanese government.
- The U.S. took no steps to support the moderate elements within the democratically elected Lebanese government.
- The CIA's request was denied for a few hundred troops at Tora Bora. Osama Bin Laden escaped and is still at large, capable of delivering his message on video and audio throughout the world.
- The Taliban is regaining control over Afghanistan, now the world's largest source for unrefined heroin.
- The best intelligence sources on Bin Laden and Al Qaeda, the tribal chiefs along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, have been systematically assassinated. Pakistan signed a non-aggression pact with Al Qaeda.
- Shipping containers entering the U.S. are not inspected for nuclear weapons.
- Without provocation, the U.S. invaded Iraq with no plans for a military occupation lasting more than six months.
- By election day, the death toll among U.S. military personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan will likely reach 3,000, matching the 9/11 slaughter.
- Al Qaeda, its affiliates and Sunni nationalists now control Iraq's Anbar province, about one third of Iraq's land mass, which borders on U.S. allies Jordan and Saudi Arabia, the single largest oil supplier in the world.
- The Iraqi government is building close ties with Iran.
- U.S. relationships with allies are in disarray. The leaders of our closest allies, Great Britain and Israel, are both in deep political trouble.
- The disastrous, unplanned adventure in Iraq has worn-out and used-up our conventional land forces.
- A full two-thirds of the active U.S. Army is officially classified as "not ready for combat."

- The Army has no non-deployed, combat-ready brigades at its disposal
- The Army raised the maximum enlistment age from 35 to 42, while doubling the number of high school dropouts it will accept. Nonetheless, only 7.6 percent of new recruits failed basic training through the first six months of 2006, down from 18.1 percent in May 2005
- The total Army – active and reserve – now faces at least a \$50 billion equipment shortfall.
- The Marines have drawn down their prepositioned reserve equipment stocks (tanks, armored vehicles, helicopters, etc.) in the Pacific and Europe by up to 70 percent.



The people who took us into this mess are not capable of leading us out of it.

CORRECTION

A Tenth Dems brochure titled, "I Thought Mark Kirk was a Friend of the Environment" incorrectly stated that he voted against House Amendment 72. However, as the brochure states, he has, in fact, voted in favor of drilling in the Alaska Wilderness.

On April 28, 2005, he voted for a resolution (H. Con. Res. 95, Roll Call 149) which contained instructions to open up the Alaska Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas companies.

Then, on December 19, 2005, anti-environmentalists slipped a provision into a Defense Appropriations bill which would allow drilling. A motion was made to strip that provision from the Defense bill (H. Res. 639), but Kirk voted against that motion... voting in support of drilling for oil in the Alaska Wilderness (Roll Call 666).

Partially as a result of these votes, the Sierra Club has refused to endorse him and the League of Conservation Voters gave him a 39 percent rating, which shows once again that Mark Kirk is not a friend of the environment.

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