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The Agony, the Ecstasy and the Taste of Brass

by Ron Weiner

Savvier, more experienced and more objective Tenth Demmers were probably not all that surprised that we couldn't quite bring it off. To them, I suppose, the only surprise was that we came so close.

But for dreamers like me, a novice at this political game, the agony of Mark Kirk's return to the House was only barely balanced by the ecstasy we shared at the almost unbelievable triumph the nation's Democrats and Progressives scored on Election Day 2006. To turn this country around we needed 15 seats, and, whether or not we got as many as that, we were certain at the very least that one of those we would get would be Dan's.

And, holy Truman! Just look at what happened! We got, what, 26, 27, 28 seats? But none of those was to be his.

So the sweetness of victory tasted by other Democrats across this finally-fed-up country of



Illinois Democrats Jan Schakowsky, Dick Durbin and Rahm Emanuel will all play prominent roles in the new Congress.

ours was to be denied those of us who worked so hard to elect Dan – and Sharon Narrod, too – and we were left with the flat taste of brass in our collective mouth, and it may be quite a while before some of us get over it.

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Tenth News

DECEMBER 2006 Illinois Tenth Congressional District Democrats Newsletter Volume 3, Edition 12

Kirk Must Be Wondering How Long It Can Last

by John Hmurovic

If you woke up on November 8 as Congressman Mark Kirk, you had to wake up thankful, but with an uncomfortable feeling. He may have won re-election to a fourth term in Congress, but it wasn't the kind of victory that makes a candidate feel comfortable. If anything, it should make a candidate like Kirk wonder, "How much longer can I get away with it?"

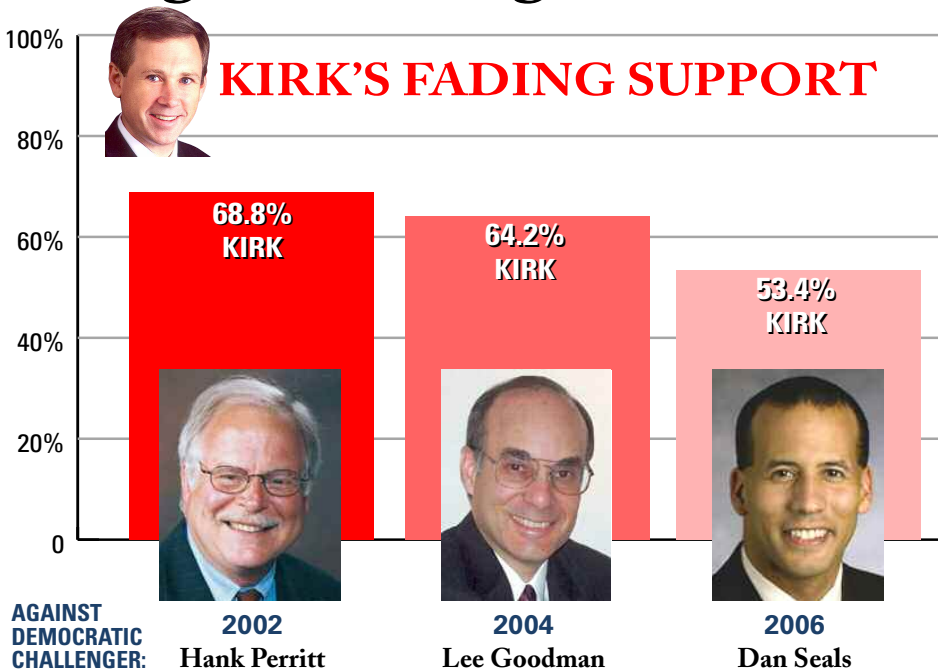
Let's look at some of the facts:

1) Kirk's Support Is Slipping Away

Mark Kirk has run for re-election three times. In 2002, he got 68.8 percent of the vote. In 2004, he got 64.2 percent. In 2006, he got 53.4 percent. Notice a trend there?

2) Where Have All the Supporters Gone?

You can't compare raw vote totals from 2004 to 2006, because voter turnout is always higher in a presidential election year such as 2004, but in the last non-presidential year, 2002, there were 128,611 residents of the 10th District who voted for Kirk. This year, the number was down to 107,301. Over 21,000 people who voted for Kirk just four years ago now think that he isn't doing the job. Was this year's victory a vote of confidence in our congressman? Hardly. By contrast, only 58,300 voters chose the Democratic nominee in 2002, compared to 93,680 who voted for Dan Seals this year. That's an increase of over 35,000 for the candidates opposing Kirk.



3) Chipping Away

Going into this election no one doubted that Mark Kirk was a formidable candidate. Anyone who wins re-election with 69 percent and 64 percent in his two previous tries deserves a challenger's respect. But even with a huge head start in name recognition,

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Getting the Message Out: Not Easy Even For a Great Challenger Like Dan Seals

by Jane Goldenberg



The Seals campaign received national recognition with the support of such Democratic luminaries as Sen. Barack Obama. Locally, however, Mark Kirk did his best to draw as little attention as possible to the race, hoping to keep Dan Seals and issues out of the newspapers for voters to read.

Volunteering for the Dan Seals campaign enriched my life immensely. Okay, so we can't count an electoral win among our accomplishments on November 7, but our grassroots movement that galvanized around Dan, the man and the message, vastly improves our standing for 2008. For one thing, we showed the Republicans in our district – and there are many – that they can't expect to amble into office any longer.

Mark Kirk had to fight to retain his seat, and the fight cost him. He ran a negative campaign that charged Dan with running a negative campaign. This bit of verbal legerdemain, pulled from the Karl Rove bag of tricks, tries to make something sound true just by saying so and repeating it often enough. But, as the election showed, this technique is wearing thin on the American voter.

Still, Kirk may have benefitted from this tactic because most Americans, even in our district, too often rely on political ads for their information, since the media prefer to cover horserace news over the issues in political campaigns. This gets me to my own pet peeve – media coverage, or in our case, the lack thereof, particularly in the Chicago Tribune.

Kirk's game of hide-and-seek, with the Seals campaign raising important national issues – the rising cost of health care, a wholly absent federal energy policy or the disastrous war in Iraq – and Kirk hiding, actually did succeed in keeping the race off the pages of the Chicago Tribune for most of the general election campaign. That an incumbent can hide from the press and thereby depress coverage in Chicago's biggest paper – and thus deprive the challenger of a way to improve his name recognition and get his message out – is scandalous.

According to the Chicago Reader, the Tribune gave the Seals campaign a total of two paragraphs between the March primary and about two weeks before the election. This is a huge component of the incumbent protection policies that keep most congressional incumbents safe, as Dan remarked in his closing statement of the debate.

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Dan Seals: Inspiration for Change

By Neal Blustein

My instructions were crystal clear, "Don't write this guy too big a check because he can't win!" As my wife prepared to go to that January wine and cheese to meet the candidate, she asked if I would reconsider joining her. "No, I'm going to the high school to watch the basketball game." "Won't you PLEASE go with me?" "All right," I conceded reluctantly, "I'll go, but I won't be happy."

When we got to the house on Church Street, battling the snow to get there, I saw a roomful of people I didn't know, including a tall, handsome young fellow in the center of the room. "Hmm," I mused, "I wonder where the candidate is?" I chatted with various strangers and eventually made my way to the tall fellow. I had no idea this was the candidate, Dan Seals, until he introduced himself.

As we talked, I could see this was no run-of-the-mill candidate. This guy possessed some special qualities. He was really smart, very articulate, people-friendly and unbelievably charismatic. And, while I was unconvinced he could win in the 10th Congressional District, I felt compelled to write a check for double the amount I had restricted my wife to.

Over the next ten months, even though I am notoriously frugal (tight with a buck?), I wrote another check, and then another, and still another. Wanting change, I reasoned that each check increased our investment in the United States of the future. I felt like a groupie as I followed Dan to speaking engagements in Winnetka, then Wheeling, then Buffalo Grove, then Glenview. We hosted a coffee at our home. Each time I heard him speak, he sounded better and more polished, and I became convinced that maybe the impossible was possible.



One reason Dan Seals did so well in this race was his ability to attract and energize a large number of volunteers to work with him to defeat Mark Kirk.

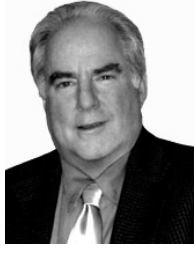
I hadn't worked as a volunteer in a political campaign since Stanley Zima ran for alderman in Chicago's 10th ward on the south side 40 years ago. During college and throughout my 35-year career with the Federal government, I was initially uninspired, and then precluded by law from participating actively in partisan politics.

Now, here I was, marching in what seemed like weekly parades, making phone calls, knocking on strangers' doors, distributing yard signs, writing and monitoring letters to the editor, and doing whatever else I could to be an instrument for change.

Realistically, I wasn't surprised we didn't win this time; we were battling uphill from the beginning. But, the outcome was much closer than most people expected. People throughout the U.S. have spoken, and I'm inspired to continue working in the campaign for change in 2008. I'm hoping our outstanding candidate remains my inspiration.

The New Democrats May Not Be Conservative, Just Smarter

by Sheldon Drobny



Sheldon Drobny, a resident of the 10th District, is the co-founder of Air America Radio and is a regular blogger on the Huffington Post. This article was originally published there.

In the fall of 1964 I took a political science course at the University of Illinois with Milton Rakove. Rakove was a wonderful professor and was an insider in the Democratic Party at the time. He was especially entertaining because the course I took in 1964 was concurrent with the Johnson/Goldwater election.

Rakove's premise was that you have to get elected to govern and to get elected you have to stay away from losing issues. He was an FDR liberal who understood that elections are won or lost on the basis of appealing to the constituents of the region in which a politician is running. He did not advocate triangulation as a campaign advisor for the Democrats. What he did advise his clients was to accentuate the popular winning issues and stay away from the



controversial fringe issues that could allow an opponent to define you as a radical.

He knew that the core Democratic platform of economic fairness, populism and equal rights had to be framed on the basis of regional values. These issues had to be addressed by the candidates in words that their constituency could support. His premise that you have to win to govern was something the Democrats had forgotten in the past three elections. Despite the fact that the Democrats had an advantage in the 2006 election, they could have been unsuccessful in winning the House and the Senate if they emphasized fringe social issues such as gay marriage, gun control and abortion. Senator-elect Bob Casey from Pennsylvania is actually pro-life.

The MSM (mainstream media) and many of the political pundits do not have the capacity to distinguish between winning election strategy and governance.

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Getting Out the Message Continued from page 2

Kirk didn't want to talk about the national issues, and, for the most part, he escaped critical inquiry in the press and almost everywhere else. Dan couldn't get him to meet for more than one debate, and Kirk doesn't hold real town hall meetings where constituents can ask him about the larger national issues.

I went to a carefully choreographed so-called town hall meeting on food allergies in Lake Forest over the summer, and it was clear that other topics were not welcome. With this technique, Kirk managed to be one of the few congressmen reelected to Congress who wasn't forced to publicly reevaluate his ideas about the Iraq war. (U.S. Rep. Christopher Shays, who endured a second tough challenge from Diane

"Seals gave Mark Kirk such a tough race because he tried harder. Not only did he find living people to make his calls, but also to go door-to-door and leave literature hanging off the doorknobs. And there was Seals himself, at the train station, handing out coffee.

Kirk, as usual, was nowhere to be seen. I imagined him supine on a purple couch, a wreath of laurel branches around his head, scowling at a scroll, looking up to dispatch an underling with a flick of the wrist. He didn't deserve to win."

-- Neil Steinberg, Chicago Sun-Times columnist

Farrell in Connecticut's 4th District after a torturously slow public reassessment, stimulated by a series of 11 debates, did finally call for a timetable for troop withdrawal, and won.)

Why does Kirk continue to get away with asserting mushy opinions while solidly voting with the president on all those unpopular policies that the country repudiated on November 7?

Even the local editorial board meetings seemed to be rigged in favor of the incumbent. Almost every local newspaper, while virtually ignoring the campaign, endorsed Kirk, citing his local agenda – which is hardly controversial and, frankly, the responsibility of any congressman from this district – and his leadership in Congress. Yet it was precisely this leadership position in this do-nothing, corrupt Republican Congress that raised the ire of so many of us.

Two of the local papers covering the race on a regular basis, the Daily Herald and the Pioneer Press, provided little contextual reporting that would test the congressman's election-season assertions, which so often contradicted his voting record. For example, on the Iraq war, Kirk framed the issue as a choice between staying the course and defeat, which might hurt our allies, Jordan and Israel. This false dilemma (and red herring) was calculated to play to the fears in the Jewish community that any change of policy might harm Israel. As our generals already have noted, the situation in Iraq is already close to complete chaos. Kirk merely avoided answering questions about how he could support every one of George Bush's policies to "stay the course," and still call himself an independent.

What did our challenge cost Kirk? To those of us who paid close attention to the issues, he increasingly looks like an emperor with no clothes. The most important job of a congressman, according to our nation's founders, is to stay in close contact with the people. He has to go back to the people every other year to remain accountable. But, as a couple of reporters noted – Neil Steinberg at the Sun-Times and Susan B. Noyes at North Shore – Kirk was seen in public very rarely.

And why is that? He's certainly proved himself reluctant to meet with anyone who disagrees with him – hence his record of calling the police when protesting constituents come calling. And he's got a bulldog staff determined to keep their powerful perch.

But thanks to Democrats like us all across this great country, Kirk and staff will be losing their position of power come January. We did good, but as Dan used to say on the campaign trail, we can do better. No time like the present to get started.

Ready for Round Two?

by Barbara Altman

On Nov. 20, more than 200 of us turned in our Dan Seals lawn signs for safekeeping and packed a meeting room at the Northfield Community Center to reunite with Dan and each other. With his older children's arms around his legs, his baby at his feet, and his wife and mother by his side, Dan thanked the assembled volunteers for their support, dedication and hard work. The ranks of volunteers on Election Day had swelled to more than 1,000.

Next, from atop a chair, Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky praised Dan and the exciting grassroots campaign run in the Tenth and thanked all the volunteers for the important groundwork in the district in the past few years. Lauren Beth Gash then ascended the chair to thank Jan, her former seatmate when they both served as State Representatives in Springfield, for her tireless work on behalf of Dan, to thank other Democrats across the country, and to remind all of how far Dan's campaign had brought him. Kirk's seat was considered "safe," and even six months ago few thought Dan could win. Yet because of all the hard work by committed volunteers, by Election Day, the race was too close to call. And she reminded the group that we're not done yet!



Lauren Beth Gash

As occurred throughout the campaign, Dan's presence ignited the crowd, and the speeches ended with chants of "'08, '08." Disappointment that Dan was not able to pull off an upset was leavened by the realization of just how close he'd come, and all were buoyed by the knowledge that the Democrats had won back the House and the Senate.

Following the speeches, energy, camaraderie and sense of purpose abounded as volunteers lingered to chat with Dan and with one

another. The sign-up sheets at the Tenth Dems table filled as so many of us realized that now is the time to harness the energy and start preparing for the next round.



Thank You, Thank You, Thank You, From the New Trier Dems

by Karen Fujisawa

The New Trier Democratic Organization is proud of the following small businesses and service providers who have made contributions to the silent auction for the past few years. During the holiday season we hope you will support them. We wish to say thank you to them for having the generosity and courage to help the New Trier Democratic Organization continue its community outreach. More individuals contributed money and items to the organization, but these are the particular businesses which donated to the silent auction. Remember, too, to support businesses that displayed Dan Seals and other Democratic candidates' signs in their windows.

Happy Holidays!

Jill Meyer's Woodstock Gallery, Winnetka

Scandia Catering, Wilmette

Crystal Cave, Wilmette

Chalet Nursery, Wilmette

Carol's Cookies, Highland Park

Stagman Clothing, Glencoe

Language Stars, Wilmette

Sawbridge Studios, Winnetka

Wilmette Jewelers

Violinist and string specialist Jerry Fields, Highland Park

Gabriel's Restaurant, Highwood

Océanique Restaurant, Evanston

The Renaissance Chicago North Hotel

A La Carte, Wilmette

Hel's Kitchen, Northbrook

Meg's Kitchen, Glencoe

International Silver Plating, Inc., Glencoe

Inspirations Beauty Salon, Glencoe

Toby's Restaurant and Tavern, North Chicago

U.S. Senator Dick Durbin was among the nationally prominent Democrats who showed their support for Dan Seals by helping him on the campaign trail, as well as with fund-raising.



U.S. Senator Barack Obama also campaigned for Dan Seals, and caught up with local supporters such as Lake County Board member Mary Ross Cunningham of Waukegan during his campaign stop here on the day before the election.



Renner Discusses Voting Trends

by Ellen Beth Gill

Tari Renner, Political Science Professor at Illinois-Wesleyan and former U.S. congressional candidate from Illinois' 11th District, spoke post-election to an overflow crowd of Tenth Dems, including a large group from Vernon Township. He led a discussion about some of the numbers and some trends. According to Renner's numbers, there were significant trends toward the Democratic Party by males and young voters. Also, young voters voted in higher numbers than in previous elections.



Tari Renner

Hearing that young voters came out in number made me wonder if that had anything to do with the Iraq War, Republican talk of unending war and concern that it could eventually lead to a draft,



The packed house at a Tenth Dems post-election wrap-up with political science professor Tari Renner is just one indication that many Democrats are ready to get back to work to help elect a new 10th District Congressman in 2008.

or if it had to do with fewer college grants and more expensive school loans and the general lack of concern for education in the Republican party.

Renner also talked about the senior vote. He said that voters 65 years and older were about evenly split between Democrats and Republicans. I found that statistic surprising until I realized that we have just about lost the depression era generation, those people who saw an earlier version of Bush's ownership society up close and personal in the early thirties when Republican Herbert Hoover decided there was nothing the government should do about the depression.

After Renner finished, audience members talked about their opinions of the exit polls and precinct numbers and what they learned from the election. In addition to the statistics, we learned a lot this election about managing election day in the various precincts of our district, coordinating large groups of volunteers and statistically based resource allocation. I also learned how to talk on two phones at once and how to convince a person that he really wants to be a poll watcher when he thought he signed up to phone bank. Finally, and perhaps most important, I learned that you can bring all the healthy food you want to the campaign office, but a campaign really runs on chocolate.

One Election Ends, Another Begins

by John Hmurovic

November 4, 2008 may sound like a long way away. But for Tenth Dems, that date means we have only one year and eleven months to do the work that's needed to completely enjoy our election night celebration on that evening. That's why we've already started.

In 2008, we have officials like Lake County Recorder Mary Ellen Vanderverter and Coroner Richard Keller, state Senator Susan Garrett, and a whole list of Democratic state representatives to re-elect. Not to mention Democratic challengers in both Lake and Cook counties. We also need to re-elect Dick Durbin to the U.S. Senate, and...yes...we need to put a Democrat in the White House. And, of course, one of the top priorities on our wish list is to elect a Democrat to Congress from the 10th District.

Tenth Dems started to work on Campaign 2008 as soon as Campaign 2006 wrapped up. We are analyzing election results, recruiting new volunteers, and putting a plan in place. The only thing that may be missing from this is...you.

A grassroots volunteer group is always in need of people. If you believe that the Democratic Party needs to win in 2008 so that we can continue the job of changing the course that Republicans like George Bush and Mark Kirk have set, Tenth Dems is where you can help make it happen.

Tenth Dems started just three years ago, and has become a large and effective grassroots political organization to help elect Democrats to all offices on the ballot in every part of the 10th District. We are helping to build the strength of the Democratic Party in our area by infusing it with grassroots volunteer help.

Together, we can make a difference. So, contact us today and get involved. The future of our communities, our counties, our state, our country and our lives depends on people like you, people who want to help steer our government on the best course.

To get involved, call **847-266-VOTE** (8683), or e-mail us at volunteers@tenthdems.org.

The Energy Endures

by Barbara Altman

It may have been frigid outdoors, but that didn't deter the 20 or so Tenth Dems from all over the district who gathered in Highland Park's Cosi at 4:30 on Dec. 3 for a lively Sunday afternoon political discussion organized by the Moraine Township Democrats. A chart showing Dan Seals' percentage of the vote in each 10th District community helped fuel the conversation, which was led by James Rosen and Lauren Beth Gash. Over 90 minutes or so, topics ranged from the rumors that Mark Kirk is considering a run for Durbin's seat in 2008 to Jimmy Carter's controversial new book about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, the discussion focused on lessons learned from the Seals-Kirk race, grassroots politics and what can be done right now to build a successful congressional campaign for '08.

Moraine Township Democrats will sponsor similar discussions the first Sunday of every month. For more information, call the Moraine Township Dems at 847-433-8344. If you can't make it to Highland Park on Jan. 7, 2007, you may want to think about organizing a similar event in your township.

The Jewish Vote

by Steve Sheffey

There are many Jewish voters in the 10th District, and both Dan Seals and Mark Kirk courted their votes. Dan's narrow defeat showed that every constituency in this district is important, and there are lessons that can be learned from how the Jewish community reacted to this election.

Jews vote overwhelmingly Democratic, more so than any ethnic group except African-Americans, because the Democratic agenda better addresses most Jewish concerns. The Republican and Democratic agendas overlap on Israel. The Republican party has become more pro-Israel in recent years, in part because of the influence of the Christian right in the Republican party and in part because of a belated understanding of Israel's moral and strategic value – something Democrats have always understood.

It is difficult to know how the Jewish vote split in this election, but there is no question that some Jews voted for Kirk. There was a small but vocal minority of the Jewish community that probably would have voted for Kirk under any circumstances. For those Jews who put Israel at the top of their agenda, Kirk had to be seriously considered because of his very strong record of support for Israel. Many of these voters may have felt that since Kirk had a proven record and Dan was unknown to them, they should play it safe and vote for Kirk. This is the group we should have won, and that we need to win next time.



Dan Seals and supporters, including State Senator Susan Garrett and State Representative Karen May, show their solidarity with Israel at the JUF's Annual Walk with Israel event in Highland Park in May 2006.

When John Porter ran against Abner Mikva, he realized that he could never out-do Mikva on Israel. But he ran as a very pro-Israel candidate in an attempt to neutralize the issue and give voters who would otherwise vote for him an excuse to do so. Dan borrowed this page out of Porter's playbook in his run against Kirk. Those of us who know Dan know that he is completely supportive on Israel and would not have voted differently from Kirk on any Israel-specific issue.

Dan's position paper on Israel and related issues was unequivocally pro-Israel, but Kirk's rhetoric may have been stronger. Many people concerned about Israel remembered that in their one debate Kirk twice said that in a conflict with Israel and Iran he would stand with Israel, whereas Dan would stand for "peace." Those of us familiar with Dan's position know that Dan stands firmly with Israel, but some Jewish voters did not get the reassurance they needed.

There are very real differences between the Democratic and Republican parties and between Dan Seals and Mark Kirk, but Israel is not one of them. Both parties and both candidates strongly support Israel. Within the Democratic party there is strong support for Israel from the centrist faction and the progressive faction: Tom Harkin and Harry Reid

in the Senate and Nancy Pelosi and Steny Hoyer in the House are very pro-Israel, to name but a few. Both parties have elements not sympathetic to Israel (Pat Buchanan and James Baker on the right, Jimmy Carter on the left), but both parties as a whole overwhelmingly support Israel.

Strong U.S. support for Israel is one of the few areas where there is bipartisan consensus, and we must be careful in both word and deed not to give our political opponents any ammunition with which to question our commitment to Israel, our strongest ally.

This election saw a spirited campaign by a group calling itself the Republican Jewish Coalition to convince voters that the Republicans support Israel more strongly than the Democrats. AIPAC and JACAPAC issued statements shortly before the election clarifying that support for Israel is overwhelming in both parties. This should be our position: Israel simply should not be a partisan issue.

No country in the Middle East is nearly as close to our values as Israel is, and in this district, there are only votes to be lost by not taking very pro-Israel positions. Being pro-Israel is both politically correct and morally correct, and we should encourage whoever runs against Kirk next time, be it Dan Seals or someone else, to follow Dan's example on the substantive issues regarding U.S.-Israel relations. Our candidate in 2008 should remember that to win voters on the fence, he or she must be aggressively pro-Israel.

Democrats generally, but especially Democrats in the Tenth, must be careful to avoid the knee-jerk criticism of Israel that is too common among the far left and that even occasionally appears on relatively mainstream blogs such as *The Huffington Post*. We must be careful not to even appear to be armchair quarterbacking, from the comfort of our suburban homes, life-and-death decisions made by Israelis whose homes are literally on the front lines.

The recent tragedy in Beit Hanun in Gaza, where Palestinian civilians were mistakenly killed by Israeli artillery, is a good example. Much of the world was quick to condemn Israel, forgetting that Israel completely withdrew from Gaza in 2005, and Israeli military operations in Gaza would cease if only the Palestinians stopped firing missiles into Israel from Gaza.

This year, over 300 rockets have been fired into Israel from Beit Hanun alone. Any country that cared about its citizens would not tolerate this, and to condemn Israel is to accept the argument that "it all started when he hit me back." The Democratic Party strongly and correctly supports Israel, and for us to have any hope of electing a Democratic member of Congress, we in the Tenth must remain outspoken in our support for Israel, and our candidate must remind voters of his or her support for Israel at every opportunity.

money raised, and media attention, and even with the advantages of incumbency, Mark Kirk came very close to losing.

Just a few months ago, most observers would have called a Dan Seals victory an impossible task. But in every township in the 10th District, Dan Seals did better than any Democratic challenger against Kirk as an incumbent. No previous Democratic challenger against the incumbent congressman had ever won any part of the Tenth outside of Waukegan Township. Yet Seals not only won in Waukegan (62 percent), but also in Moraine Township (62 percent) and New Trier Township (51 percent). In addition, Seals came very close to winning in West Deerfield Township (49 percent), where the Democratic candidate in 2002 was able to win only 27 percent of the vote. Kirk's image of invincibility is being chipped away.

Republicans might scoff at this and say it was a Democratic year, and that Kirk will be back strong in 2008. But as much as this was a Democratic year nationally, it was not a huge Democratic year in Illinois. Instead, it was a good year for Illinois incumbents. Not one Congressional seat changed hands in the state. Every incumbent who ran statewide won re-election. Only one incumbent running within 10th District boundaries lost: the Republican Lake County Sheriff, engulfed in problems of mismanagement of his office, lost to Democrat Mark Curran. In the Lake County portion of the 10th District, all Democrats on the ballot earned 57.5 percent of the vote this year. That's not a huge jump from the 57.0 percent earned in 2004.

Yes, a Democrat (Michael Bond) won an open seat for the State Senate in the northern part of the district that had been held by a Republican, and in the southern part of the 10th District a Democrat (Dan Kotowski) won a State Senate race against a Republican appointed to fill a vacancy. But this election year was hardly a Democratic rout.



Mark Kirk lost ground because Dan Seals started to get the truth out. Despite Kirk's repeated efforts to paint himself as a moderate Republican, despite a local news media that does little to examine Kirk's true voting record, Dan Seals began to get out the message that Kirk has spent the last six years as a loyal Republican rubber stamp, backing the Bush agenda 90 percent of the time. And the Bush agenda is a long way to the right of "moderate."

Mark Kirk has a history of voting one way on an issue, then voting differently on that same issue. When someone does that, it makes you wonder what he really believes. If he really believes in the environment, as he claims, then why does he sometimes vote to allow drilling in the Alaska wilderness? A person who votes like that does it for one reason. It's not because he has strong beliefs.

It's not because he is trying to represent his constituency. He votes on both sides of an issue to advance his personal ambitions. By voting against Alaska drilling some of the time, Kirk can point to those votes and tell us that he is against drilling. And by voting for drilling on other roll call votes, he can show the Republican leadership that he is a loyal soldier who will back whatever they want him to back when they need the votes.

If you are an ambitious politician who either has no core beliefs, or puts them well behind your desire to climb the political ladder, that's the way to play the game. That's how Mark Kirk got appointed as assistant majority whip in the last Congress, and it's how he gets re-elected.

But if you're Mark Kirk, and you woke up on November 8 to ponder the results of the election, you have to wonder, "How much longer can I get away with it?" The results of this election show that as long as the truth about his record comes out, Mark Kirk's time is running out.

Agony, Ecstasy *Continued from page 1*

True, we can savor some successes here in the Tenth: Karen May splattered her opponent by about 70 percent to 30, and Mark Curran's hard work will be redeemed now that he's carved his name on the Sheriff's shingle up in Waukegan. Anne Bassi and Carol Spielman were returned to office; and there were other victories to be celebrated by local Democrats – but, dammit, the races that meant the most to me, personally, were the two we lost.

Surely no candidate ever worked harder than Sharon Narrod, a long-time super-laborer in our Moraine vineyard, as she visited every Lake County nook and cranny in her almost evangelical campaign to win the race for Lake County Clerk, a race we all felt was so important given our fears regarding voting integrity in the Diebold-degraded climate of the past couple of elections.

As for Dan Seals, how could we ever have found a better candidate? His education and background, his sharp intelligence, quiet demeanor and great physical appearance, even his obvious resemblance to Democratic star-of-stars Barack Obama, made him just about perfect.

And, as we worked in Dan's support after the primary, we watched him become even better. Dan is deft and articulate as an interviewee, likeable and sincere as a campaigner, logical and irrefutable as a speech-maker, infectious and inspiring as a leader. How could we, in a district that went for Gore and Kerry, possibly lose?

This for us was the race-of-all-races, and the Democrats lost to an incumbent who continually betrayed his claims to be politically moderate, independent, and a true friend of the environment. Mark Kirk

instead consistently showed himself to be a closet conservative who accommodated the far right when called upon, a Hastert acolyte who voted practically in lock-step with perhaps the worst President in American history, and a nonperformer who accomplished next to nothing as a legislator. How in the world could we possibly lose?

Yet, in spite of all our hopes and dreams, in spite of all our logic in pointing out the truth about a morally corrupt Republican administration, thanks to an overwhelming Kirk war chest and a segment of our local voters who looked only at his reputation as a "great friend of Israel" instead of at the deeper domestic issues presently facing our nation, lose we did, indeed.

God Bless the rest of America, which did not.

As to the future of the Tenth Dems, I hope and feel confident that Dan Seals will be our candidate for Congress against Mark Kirk in 2008 (indeed, he more than hinted such at his "thank you party" on November 20th). Subscribers to this newsletter may remember that in the last issue I described myself as being part of A Rancorous Partisanship. I'm changing. I now declare myself to be part of The Rancorous Opposition.

This is the first month of the next campaign.



Sharon Narrod, who worked hard and ran a strong campaign but lost in her bid for Lake County Clerk, stands with State Rep. Karen May who won re-election with nearly nearly 70 percent of the vote.

Start Your Career in Public Service – Run for Local Office in Early 2007

It's hard to believe that another election is upon us, but Election Day 2006 was the first day that candidates who intend to run for municipal offices in 2007 could start gathering signatures for petitions that would get them on the ballot.

Two elections are coming up early in 2007. The first is the February 27th primary. The only 10th District communities expected to have a primary election are Waukegan, North Chicago and Highland Park. The first two have races for city council this year, while Highland Park has city council contests, plus a race for mayor.

Normally, there would be a general election on April 3rd for all 10th District communities, but with that being the first day of Passover this year, the election has been moved to April 17. A variety of municipal offices, such as town clerk, town board member and town board president are on the ballot this year. So are a variety of school, library and park board positions.

While almost all of the positions on the ballot in the April election are non-partisan, with no candidate labeled as a Democrat or a

Republican, municipal elections are a good opportunity for Democrats to begin their careers in public service. Working on the local level to improve your community is a perfect way to get experience that can be very useful to anyone who may eventually want to serve in other offices. Local officials not only learn about the problems and issues affecting residents of their community, but they also gain valuable problem-solving skills, as well as the ability to work with the others to get things done.

If you are interested in running for office in your municipality, move quickly. All candidates need to circulate petitions to get their names on the ballot. The deadline for candidates to hand in the petitions that get them on the February 27th ballot is December 18th. The petition deadline for the April election is February 5th. If you would like to discuss your options further for running for a local office, please feel free to call the Tenth Dems at 847-266-VOTE (8683). We can help you get information about offices in your area and the facts you need on such details as requirements for obtaining and submitting petitions.

New Democrats *Continued from page 3*

Their immediate conclusion that the new Democrats are conservative comes from the fact that the MSM and the pundits just don't get it and never will. They are so easily fooled by perception that they are easy prey for the Machiavellian types like Rove and his group. The Rove types never mean what they say or say what they mean. However, this group of new Democrats was smart enough to get elected in their region of the country and propose legislation and oversight that represents the core values of their

constituency, the Democratic party, and essentially the values of most Americans.

Furthermore, classical conservative issues of lowering taxes, wasteful military spending and isolationism are not where the prevailing winds are blowing today. Pork barrel politics is being challenged, and the war in Iraq has given the Democrats the opportunity to put an end to the tired unilateral military policy that has dominated our foreign policy since the end of World War II. If the leaders of the Democratic Party understand this and do

not try to rush to the so-called center, they will lead us to what is right for America.

The Democratic leaders must challenge the Clintons and their former lieutenant Rahm Emanuel if they want to retain power. Triangulation is not the message that the American people voted for in 2006. They want positive action that they perceive benefits

them and the country, not partisan bickering or clever political tactics.



Democratic leaders Steny Hoyer, Harry Reid and Nancy Pelosi

*Design and production of this month's newsletter contributed by **teriyaki jones: AN AGENCY OF ONE** – www.teriyakijones.com*

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