

<i>In This Issue:</i>	I Told You So..... 3
Resolutions..... 1	Dear Friends..... 3
Camp Wellstone... 1	Knee-Jerk Support . 4
To Impeach..... 2	Nova M Radio..... 6
Live Fire..... 2	Looking to 2008 ... 8

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*The opinions expressed are those of the writers, and not necessarily endorsed by Tenth Dems*

## Resolutions for a Blue (as in Democratic) New Year

by Ross Nickow

*We spend January 1 walking through our lives, room by room, drawing up a list of work to be done, cracks to be patched. Maybe this year, to balance the list, we ought to walk through the rooms of our lives...not looking for flaws, but for potential. ~ Ellen Goodman*

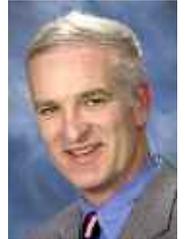
*Stay the course... ~ George Bush, Dick Cheney, Mark Kirk*

Last year, *Tenth News* featured its first annual list of New Year's Resolutions from local Democrats. Activists in the 10th District, as well as those from throughout the country, fought for their expressed hopes and dreams for a change in Bush's disastrous policies by volunteering in overwhelming numbers. The effort put forth made a critical difference at local, state, and national levels as evidenced by the November Democratic election victories. While Mark Kirk is resolving to send more troops to almost certain deaths in Iraq and escalating this disastrous war, exploring draft reinstatement, and avoiding taking a stand on

anything, Democrats are looking to make changes. For the year 2007, some local Democrats embrace the following resolutions and passions:

### Mark Curran, Lake County Sheriff

My goals for the New Year are to be a better person, a better citizen, a better father, and a better husband. In the Sheriff's office, I'd like to follow through on my goals and plans from the campaign, with the first



*Continued on page 7*



# Tenth News

JANUARY 2007

Illinois Tenth Congressional District Democrats Newsletter

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## Camp Wellstone: Teaching the Tools to Win Elections

by Carmen Corbett, Karen Fujisawa, Nalani McClendon, Harry Pascal, Steve Rosenzweig, and Mary Trew

Pro sports teams use training camps to learn how to play the right way during a long campaign. Camp Wellstone was a training camp to learn how to campaign the right way.

Despite the first snowstorm of the season, about 150 people trekked to Loyola University for a weekend-long training session in what is termed the "Wellstone Way." The Wellstone Action Fund sponsors these trainings in memory of the late Minnesota Senator Paul Wellstone and his wife, Sheila Wellstone. Their commitment to building and sustaining an active and committed electorate is commemorated and realized in training programs where hundreds of Americans across the country have learned the tools for success to win elections and to keep the light of participatory democracy alive in our country.

Three distinct tracks were offered: Being a Candidate; Working in a Progressive Campaign; and Citizen Activism. Among those attending were 10 stalwart Dan Seals volunteers and Tenth Dems activists, along with other participants from near and far, Wisconsin to Washington, D.C. The training was non-partisan, but committed to promoting progressive values. The group of trainees ran the gamut – from aspiring campaign managers for aldermanic campaigns to volunteers smarting from losses in the last congressional election. The sessions were chock-full of information and role-playing.

### Track 1: Being A Candidate

The opening session featured Erik Peterson regaling all with stories about everything from his very first campaign volunteer experience (which happened to be Paul Wellstone's first victory in his bid for

the Senate) to his most recent accomplishment: Get Out The Vote (GOTV) in Duluth, Minnesota, with 91 percent voter participation, including 3,400 newly-registered voters. Peterson recounted how for years he refused to vote, until he was drawn into the campaign and experienced grassroots democracy in action. And, he has not looked back. He looks forward, relishing every opportunity to organize, and enjoying it all.



*Paul and Sheila Wellstone*

### Track 2: Working In A Progressive Campaign

The trainers in this track encouraged participants to think about choosing the kind of campaign we wanted to run. Do we want to begin now on base-building by working in our communities to make real differences in peoples' lives year-round, or do we recruit volunteers to descend on our communities three weeks before Election Day and GOTV? Put that way, the answer seems obvious, but when we're deep in campaign mode, with too little time, too few trained volunteers, and too many people to contact, the best-laid plans can be thwarted and the best intentions – well we all know where that road leads.

One of the exercises that was the most fun was the "crisis mode news conference." Three of the trainers represented different news agencies, and one of them was clearly from Fox News. We saw how

*Continued on page 5*

# To Impeach or Not to Impeach

by Ellen Beth Gill

Around the 2006 mid-term election, key Democrats including Nancy Pelosi and Howard Dean went on record confirming that a Democratic majority in the House would not seek to impeach President Bush and Vice President Cheney. Pelosi told Lesley Stahl of CBS's 60 Minutes:

*"Wouldn't they just love it if we came in and our record as Democrats coming forth in 12 years is to talk about George Bush and Dick Cheney? This election is about them. This is a referendum on them. Making them lame ducks is good enough for me."*

Even after releasing a 345-page report last summer detailing 26 broken laws in connection with the Iraq War and NSA spying, incoming chair of the House Judiciary Committee, John Conyers, has backed off impeachment. In his November 9, 2006 statement to Newhouse News Service, Conyers said:

*"To be sure, I have substantial concerns about the way this administration has abused its authority, but impeachment would not be good for the American people. The country does not want or need any more paralyzed partisan government – it wants a check and balance and real progress on the issues that matter to their lives."*

Conyers has moved on from gathering support for his resolution requiring investigation of the Administration's handling of pre-war intelligence, torture, and national security leaks (H.R. 635), to working on his National Health Insurance Act (H.R. 676), which he considers a more positive face to put on the new Democratic Congress.

Despite the stand-down by House Democrats, there is still a strong grassroots effort to impeach fueled by anger at the authoritarian governing style of the Administration. The case for impeachment includes violations of U.S. law in the invasion of Iraq and in the conduct of the war both abroad and at home, violations of national security laws, and the use of signing statements to claim the President is not bound by the law.

The case includes violations of Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution, because the Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) did not specifically declare war (invasion of Iraq); violations of the U.N. Charter and the Geneva Conventions; violations of U.S. law under Article 6 of the Constitution; violations of The War Crimes Act of 1996 (18 U.S.C. § 2441) and the federal anti-torture statute (18 U.S.C. § 2340A), for torture, military commissions, and extraordinary renditions; and violations of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) and the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution, for NSA spying.

Administration arguments that the President's actions as Commander-in-Chief were legal under the AUMF have been eliminated by *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld*, as the Supreme Court held that neither AUMF nor the President's role as Commander-in-Chief trumps explicit federal law.

However, a case for impeachment is not made by a litany of illegal acts, because the constitutional standard is not the violation of law, but "high crimes and misdemeanors." Impeachment advocate, author, and former Congresswoman and member of the House Judiciary Committee in 1974 during the Watergate crisis, Elizabeth Holtzman, believes that the high crimes and misdemeanors standard has been met in the case of Bush and Cheney because



*Impeachment advocate and former Congresswoman Elizabeth Holtzman*

*Continued on page 7*

# Coast Guard to Abandon Live Fire on Great Lakes

## A Story of Democracy in Action

By David Borris

Margaret Mead once famously remarked, "Never doubt that a small group of committed individuals can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

Over the past 10 weeks or so, Citizens for Lake Safety ([www.citizensforlakesafety.org](http://www.citizensforlakesafety.org)) may not have changed the world, but we certainly had a decisive impact in our little corner of it. Beginning as a small group of concerned citizens who were outraged upon learning that the United States Coast Guard had begun to conduct live



*Dick Durbin meets with Citizens for Lake Safety to discuss live fire threat*

fire target practice on the Great Lakes, this group came together in a simple suburban living room and decided to do something about it.

After the Coast Guard was absorbed into the Department of Homeland Security, some in government took a view that its traditional role of safety and rescue should transition to a more aggressive, militaristic presence. As a result, and despite a treaty between the U.S. and Canada dating back to 1817 prohibiting armed boats on the Great Lakes, the Coast Guard installed deck-mounted machine guns, capable of firing 600 rounds per minute, on its Great Lakes boats.

Next, 34 live fire zones were established over all five of the Great Lakes. And, in the early spring of 2006, live fire target practice was begun, with almost no public notice. But several towns and cities along the lake did notice and began to object. And due to public outcry from all over the 42 million strong Great Lakes region, and pressure from public officials all over the area, the Coast Guard reluctantly agreed to temporarily halt the shooting while it held nine public hearings.

Citizens for Lake Safety began to organize, activating a variety of networks from a broad coalition of interests, including boaters, environmentalists, anglers, and peace and justice organizations. Among the groups, there were different specific concerns, but all shared the universal belief that dumping 7,000 pounds of lead and firing 430,000 bullets into the lakes every year was a gross misuse of this international treasure, the repository of 95 percent of this nation's fresh surface water and 20 percent of the world's freshwater reserve.

With the tremendous support of State Representative Karen May, a letter objecting to the plan was drafted and circulated to a number of state legislators and local public officials for signature and presentation to the Coast Guard. The website [Citizensforlakesafety.org](http://Citizensforlakesafety.org) was launched and collected almost 2,000 signatures on its Illinois petition within a few short weeks.

And within another week, the Wisconsin and Minnesota petitions were gathering signatures at a brisk pace. Utilizing previously established networks our local group was able to help bring out more than 650

*Continued on page 8*

# Hate to Say It, But ... I TOLD You So!

by Anne Wedner

It's the day after Christmas. My six-year-old daughter and I collected the morning paper – okay, I'll admit, it's the New York Times. After the puppy did his business, we looked at the front page. There, together, we saw a white building exploding in Iraq. My daughter asked, "Is that the White House?" I said, "No, it's a police station in Iraq." "Oh," she said, "Mommy, why don't you be a candidate?" "Why?" I asked and added, "I thought you didn't like when I did politics, talking too much on the phone, overcooking hamburgers, allowing the puppy to grab your teddy bear?" No, she said, but this is important.

It's time to say it loudly, I TOLD YOU SO! So many of us knew that there were no WMDs in Iraq, neither were there ties with terrorists – not with the benefit of our expensive U.S. national intelligence estimates, but with common sense. How many gang leaders let rival gangs set up in their territory? How many bullies inflate their firepower? Why is the U.S. government so distant from common sense?

I will admit that I had a bit more reason to doubt the U.S. government's ability to know secrets. I served in the U.S. foreign service at the time of Saddam's venture into Kuwait – which he did with what he thought was the blessing of the U.S. ambassador in Baghdad. And, at the time came Alberto Fujimoro's surprising victory as President in Peru – it was surprising because our folks at the U.S. Embassy in Lima did not know Fujimoro's name until two weeks before the election.

The U.S. has lost its way in the world; when did it happen? Did we ever really know how to act on the global stage, or were we just thrust there when the Soviet Union imploded?

If we don't develop any sense of what is going on in other regions, other countries, other tribes, or other clans, if we remain shut off without an ability to speak foreign languages or to understand foreign customs, we will not be able to develop a foreign policy that allows us to succeed. This is where and why the 10th Congressional seat is so important. Our district is one of the places in the world with an educated, diverse, internationally sensitive population. The seat is truly an independent one – no NRA, no pro-lifers, etc. – and as such, I have always believed that we had a responsibility to give to Washington a dose of common sense.



Many were fooled to believe that Mr. Kirk's interest in international travel and the military might make him sensitive in a strategic way – but we wait in vain for him to come to his

senses. Mr. Kirk does not see the virtue of legislating against war profiteering; he does not see the wisdom of the adage, "Keep your friends close, but your enemies closer."

He does not understand that military power – even the greatest military power – cannot solve political questions. I have asked myself so many times why he wants to be our Congressman – he doesn't hold town halls, he barely comes home to visit us, he can't stand disagreement, and he conceals his real votes from us.

So, here comes 2007 and a respite from politics. But, not so fast. We all still need to be involved. The greatest gift we can bring any endeavor will be our value of integrity – of sacrificing nothing for the right answer and the honest way.

*Dear Friends,*

What a year! On January 4, 2007, a new Congress was sworn in. How exciting to see Nancy Pelosi become the first female Speaker of the House and Illinois' own Dick Durbin the No. 2 Leader in the Senate!



*Lauren Beth Gash*

I continue to marvel at the size and energy of the volunteer force our Tenth Dems have built. Volunteers are the backbone of campaigns, and your work in the past few years has made a tremendous difference here in the 10th. We organized and trained hundreds of volunteers, recruited candidates, canvassed, made phone calls, and held fundraisers and donated quite a large amount of money to candidates in 2006. Tenth Dems was born a few years ago, in 2003, when several of us decided we'd had enough and we were going to work to make changes. And changes we have made, from state legislative to county-wide seats to local township races, where we elected Democrats in areas where Democrats had never even run previously! And our group has been growing exponentially. Of course we are disappointed that our own Dan Seals won't be joining the Congress this year, but we must acknowledge what a strong race he ran. Who would have thought a year ago that Dan Seals could get SO close to defeating Mark Kirk? We did. And your skill, hard work and dedication showed.

With the '06 election behind us, Tenth Dems members are as active as ever, gearing up for the municipal elections, and gearing up NOW for November '08. Petitions for candidates for '08 will be available in September '07! Campaigns come and go, but the political activists who make up the Tenth Dems know we must work year-round and constantly look for ways to bring our progressive message to voters in our district.

With this in mind, we need your continued help. Opportunities are almost unimaginably infinite whatever you like to do – be it reading, writing, or 'rithmetic – there are possibilities right outside your doorstep (and even inside your house) in any part of the district. Our goal as Tenth Dems is to elect Democrats at every level of government within the 10th Congressional District. Whatever you can do to advance our effort, no matter how much or how little, will bring us that much closer. We worked hard and picked up several seats that were formerly Republican in November, yet our work continues.

This newsletter is the product of many talented volunteers. Of course, the opinions expressed are those of the writers, and not necessarily those of the Tenth Congressional District Democrats. Submissions are welcome. If you have ideas or suggestions about Tenth Dems in general (particularly if you can help implement your suggestions), if you have a special talent, if you want to run for office, or if you just want to volunteer, call me at 847.266.VOTE (8683).

*Lauren*

P.S. Please join us for a Speak-Out on January 10 at the Highland Park Community House at 7:30. Share your opinions and hopes with other Democrats, or just come to listen.

## The Tenth Congressional District Democrats

would like to invite you to a

# SPEAKOUT

**Wednesday, January 10th, 7:30 PM**

at the

**Highland Park Community House**  
1991 Sheridan Road, Highland Park

**This event is free and open to the public – come share what is on your mind.**

If you have any questions, call 847-266-VOTE (8683)  
or email [arielschwartz1@gmail.com](mailto:arielschwartz1@gmail.com)

# Knee-Jerk Support of Bush Policies Will Not Do

by Mark Paul

Jewish Democrats have some unfinished business from the Seals-Kirk race, something we should not put off until 2008. It is time to put to rest the myth that there is such a thing as bipartisan foreign policy, especially regarding the Mideast. This is Joe Lieberman's delusion and it amounts to nothing more than Democrats palely repeating failed Republican principles that drove this country over a cliff in Iraq and put Israel in an even more precarious position than when the neocons took over in 2001.

Let us be absolutely clear: Democratic support for Israel's security is absolutely unequivocal. What is at issue – what must be at issue – is what policy will advance Israel's security.

Jews don't just vote overwhelmingly Democratic, they voted almost unanimously Democratic in November: 87 percent according to CNN's national exit polls, up from 76 percent in 2004. It is the Jewish communal leadership and the (predominantly Jewish) neocon wing of the foreign policy intelligentsia that intensely skews Republican. Even Democrats who are active in Jewish organizations develop a false sense of Republican enthusiasm among Jews.

Republican Jewish leaders claim to speak for Jews, and they have set the terms of any debate on Mideast policy. If Jewish Democrats continue to give these architects of catastrophe prominent positions in reporters' address books, we will always be playing catch-up in a race to see who is more "pro-Israel," without ever independently determining what it means to be pro-Israel beyond a few banquet bromides. We will continue to see that deer-in-the-headlights panic that was evident among congressional Democrats during the run-up to the Iraq invasion – and presidential candidates who explain they were in favor of Republican policies before they were against them. Or was it the other way around?

When Bush re-nominated John Bolton to be U.N. ambassador only days after the election, the vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations did not hesitate to express support for Bolton when a reporter called from *The Jewish Daily Forward*:

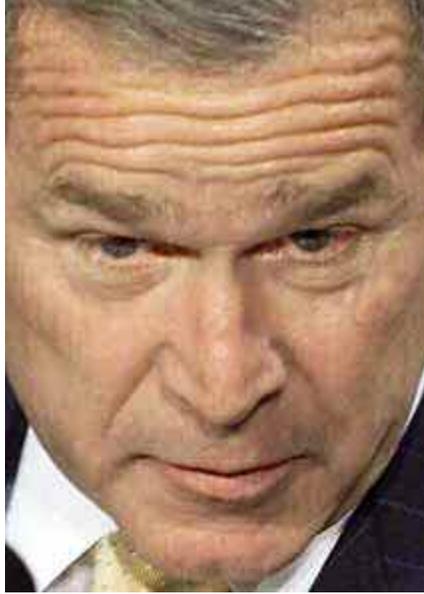
*"The Jewish community remains supportive and would want to see [Bolton] stay," said Malcolm Hoenlein. "He has been an effective advocate, and he is appreciated by the diplomatic corps. The administration and the Congress know where the community stands."*

I spoke with Hoenlein a few days later to get a clearer idea of how he knew "where the community stands" on Bolton. He knew of no polls conducted by the Conference or any of the constituent organizations to determine membership support for Bolton. "I know what the sentiments are of the organized Jewish community," Hoenlein asserted. "Organizations have invited him to speak," he added; but he did not say how many of the Conference's 51 organizations Bolton has addressed since he was appointed to the U.N. without Senate confirmation. On the basis of this slender evidence Hoenlein presumes to speak for the Jewish community.

Bolton is gone now, slinking off-stage to take his place in history among Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, Perle, and others who designed and executed this catastrophic foreign policy, but Hoenlein still claims to speak for Jews.

Hoenlein is not alone. A few weeks after reporting his comments, *The Forward* said this in an editorial(<http://www.forward.com/articles/dear-john/>):

*Alas, one major constituency on the public stage has chosen to greet Bolton's resignation not with relief but with regret. In a noisy, tin-eared outpouring of sycophantic unanimity, a phalanx of America's most influential and respected Jewish organizations has flooded cyberspace this week with heartfelt salutes to Bolton and laments of his departure. At last count, the list included the American Jewish Committee, the Anti-Defamation League, the World Jewish Congress, B'nai B'rith International, the Orthodox Union and the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs. In statement after statement, the agencies hail Bolton for his supposed effectiveness and passion in defending Israel and advancing the causes of democracy and U.N. reform.*



The delusion is so strong that some actually believe that Mark Kirk has a very strong record of support for Israel. Kirk made the evening news when he spoke at a Loop rally at the beginning of Israel's invasion of Lebanon. When the cease-fire was signed, however, the Israeli general in charge of the operation resigned and the government appointed a commission to investigate the process that led to the decision to invade Lebanon. At the same time, Hezbollah staged a celebratory demonstration in Beirut attended by hundreds of thousands; and since then, yet another Gemayel has been assassinated (on Nov. 21, 2006, Pierre

Amine Gemayel was assassinated; he is the nephew of Bachir Gemayel, who was assassinated in 1982). Meanwhile, the democratically elected Lebanese government grows weaker by the week.

The ancient Chinese strategist Sun Tzu said that the outcome of a battle is determined even before it is fought, and this certainly was true in southern Lebanon, even if Ariel Sharon could not warn against repeating his mistake there. A strongly pro-Israel Democratic administration would have helped the democratically elected Lebanese government consolidate its power in the south and co-opt Hezbollah. A strongly pro-Israel Democratic administration would have counseled Israel against invasion. A strongly pro-Israel Democratic administration would have pointed out that this was not 1967 or 1973; there were no uniformed Arab armies massed at the border. A strongly pro-Israel Democratic administration would have warned Israel that invading Lebanon would only make Hezbollah stronger and the government weaker. Instead, Bush-Cheney-Rice-Rumsfeld sent Elliott Abrams (a convicted perjurer from the Iran-Contra fiasco now in charge of the Mideast desk at the NSC) to Jerusalem, where he reportedly encouraged the Israelis to attack Syria.

Although plans to bomb Syria seem to have been returned to the contingency files, the Bush administration – strongly supported by Israel and organizations such as AIPAC – insists U.S. negotiators will not sit down with Syria or Iran unless they explicitly meet conditions that more reality-based observers would hope to reach at the conclusion of negotiations. One need not agree with anything else James Baker says to acknowledge that he is right when he advocates talks with Syria and Iran. Those of us of a certain age remember that during the pre-ICBM era there were anti-aircraft missiles in the Skokie Lagoon forest preserve while Soviets and Americans staffed embassies in each other's capital. In fact, George Kennan first proposed the containment doctrine in a diplomatic cable dispatched from Moscow. You can learn a lot simply by walking around a capital and talking to people.

*Continued on page 5*

## Camp Wellstone continued from page 1

quickly a candidate's fortune can turn with an ill-considered comment or exposure of that skeleton in the closet. In reality, of course, these moments have dire consequences, but in play-mode they provided a bonding experience in hilarity.

The Wellstone experience resonated with the heady idealism we often feared has vanished from today's politics. These people were the embodiment of the Wellstone way. Those of us who remember the senator from his teaching days marveled at how his staff brought his spirit to life.

### Track 3: Citizen Activism Track

Enthusiasm for the Citizen Activism, Advocacy and Organizing track at Camp Wellstone ran high. Many speakers from various walks of political life stressed the need to communicate, communicate, and communicate. The messages for the weekend were to build relationships, to engage people, to find and retain allies, and to mobilize voters: all the things that need to be done in order to win elections.

The sessions overall seemed to validate the activities and ideas that were evident during our campaigns for Tenth Dems. It was refreshing to find mostly young, enthusiastic folks working hard to elect progressives. One of the most important ideas we came away with is not to be afraid of building and retaining power. Power is not a dirty word. This lesson was well taught during role-playing in small groups, such as setting up issues-based volunteer phone scripts, setting up a press conference, and lobbying legislators for your cause.

Camp Wellstone was an extraordinary experience that every Tenth Dem would have appreciated – informative and eye opening. Successful campaigns run year-round as an integral part of the community not just during the election cycle. We should always be in a "base-building" mode. Also, volunteers are the backbone of any campaign and deserve the respect and gratitude of the campaign.

The Seals campaign did a lot of things right, and we can build upon our experience at Camp Wellstone for future successful campaigns. We met many dedicated progressive folks. What an invigorating weekend! It was definitely time well spent!



### Tenth Dems Host Holiday Party

*Clockwise from top center: Del Parra, Sharon Narrod, Dan Seals and his daughter, and Amanda Howland; Susie Krasnow entertains by singing the "10th District Blues"; Nancie Blatt, Marcy Maller, and Jane Seiden; Ross Nickow, Dan Seals, and Ellen Gill; Lauren Beth Gash, Patty Livingston, and friend.*



## Knee-Jerk Support Continued from page 4

And it is not as if the U.S. is not already doing business with Syria and Iran. When U.S. agents arrested a Canadian computer engineer who was changing planes in New York on his way home from a North African vacation, he was flown to Syria, where he was tortured for months until someone finally concluded that either he had a superhuman pain threshold or he actually knew nothing about terrorist cells. Iran provided important intelligence during the planning for the Afghanistan operation.

Some current Jewish communal leaders and activists might characterize this as knee-jerk criticism of Israel, but they seem to advocate a knee-jerk support for Israeli policy. The U.S. is a poor ally if it simply rubber-stamps counter-productive Israeli policy. While Bush solidifies his status as the worst president in U.S. history, Ehud Olmert seems determined to claim a similar niche for himself. To the utter astonishment of anyone who's glanced at a newspaper or news broadcast in the past six months, he declared at a White House press conference early last month that the U.S. occupation in Iraq is building stability in the region.

Ever since Bush took office and withdrew from active diplomatic efforts to shape movement toward peace between Israel and its

neighbors, Israel has been locked into a downward-spiraling revenge cycle. And speaking of revenge, we will not have to deal with Kirk staffer and wannabe thug Caryn Garber in 2007. I spoke with her in early December to see what she thought about the email affair now that the campaign was over. She is completely unapologetic about her outrageous threat to Tel Aviv University, but she did reveal that she will retire at the end of the month. I was shocked to learn she is 70; I figured her to be in her early 20s.

So Garber may be gone, but we can count on the Young Republicans, communal groups led by people like Hoenlein, and think tank warriors like Michael Ledeen to train a steady stream of replacements. As much as I dislike historical analogies, these people remind me of the anti-communist blacklists in their heyday. They share the same Manichean certainty that there is no alternative but to annihilate their enemy, and an eagerness to portray those who disagree with them as traitors. That crew never quite ran the government, but their descendants do now. The results are obvious, and it is long past time to stop giving these irresponsible, impulsive, and simple-minded hysterics the honor of speaking for American Jews. We have nothing to lose but the dead weight of 30-year-old clichés.

# Nova M Progressive Talk Radio Up and Running

*10th District's Anita and Sheldon Drobny Go Beyond Air America*

by Neesa Sweet



Mothers never give up. And that's why Nova M radio will soon be a name as familiar to liberal radio listeners and investors as Air America. Nova M is the name of Anita and Sheldon Drobny's new

progressive talk network--currently on the air in Phoenix, Sacramento, Seattle, San Francisco, Sirius radio and other markets—which is about to make waves with new satellite power, powerful talent, more stations and a possible public offering.

Anita Drobny is the “mother” of Air America because she and her husband Sheldon conceived of national progressive radio and set the wheels in motion in 2002. However, “The people in New York and LA kept saying there was no audience for liberal radio,” said Anita in a recent conversation. “So we received no endorsement from the bicoastal cities to move forward.”

“What Air America did was show that that was wrong,” she states emphatically. People did listen. In fact, “Over the last election, if it wasn't for Air America radio and other progressive hosts who hadn't had a voice before, I don't believe the country would have been so well informed as to how important it was to go out and vote,” she points out.

In October, Air America's current owners, Piquant Media LLC, filed for bankruptcy. While right wing radio has had a field day with this development—reiterating that progressive talk can't be successful—the Drobny's, who make their living as venture capitalists by knowing how to recognize successful companies, think otherwise. They see it as a lack of good management rather than a lack of audience.

This most recent situation was different from the first effort to stave off bankruptcy in 2004. In the story already told in the film “America Undercover: Left of the Dial,” and Sheldon's book “Road To Air America: Breaking The Right Wing Stranglehold On Our Nation's Airwaves,” investor-management originally brought in to expand on the Drobny's \$10 million investment turned out to mislead investors, employees, and the public.

The last scene in the film shows Evan Cohen, then chairman, signing over the company. Anita describes how, at that moment, she was upstairs in the law offices of Air America Radio, retaking control. But even as the Drobny's created Piquant LLC as the new parent company, they still didn't have the resources on their own to make the effort work. A new board was organized with the investors, but as time went on there still were problems. This time, however, the errors were of judgment rather than deception. “Some people think you can throw money at problems and solve them,” Anita said ruefully. By the Drobny's standards, overly expensive contracts were signed, overly expensive offices maintained, and high managerial salaries paid—all with little accompanying sales effort or advertising. Not surprisingly, expenses exceeded sales and by late summer the bankruptcy rumors were flying.

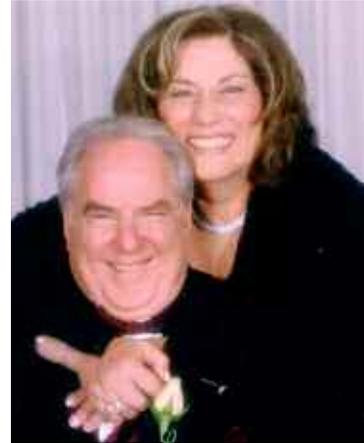
In an effort to stave off bankruptcy, the Drobny's took a closer look. “In August, we had Accenture, political consultant Joe Trippi, and all sorts of experts look at the company in addition to our own expertise as CPAs,” said Anita. “We all came to the conclusion that this was a phenomenal company—but one that had been poorly managed,” she said.

Anita raised \$9 million. A plan was devised. Since most of the debt was owed to the board, it at first agreed to convert the debt to stock in the Drobny Acquisition Group. Then, Anita says, Piquant management began to make additional, and the Drobny's thought unreasonable, demands. The upshot is that Anita and Sheldon felt they'd be putting good money after bad. Two weeks later, Air America filed for

bankruptcy with a subsequent exodus of affiliates and sponsors. Unlike a bankrupt airline which can maintain a core business, radio stations in bankruptcy become less credible. Over 24 stations left and national sponsors had Air America on a list of “do not advertise.”

“The Air America brand is dead,” said Anita. “They threw out my baby and I'm very upset.”

But she is not giving up. Hence, the new and better dream—Nova M radio, which went live October 30. The Drobny's already controlled two stations in Phoenix and Little Rock, and, Anita says, they decided that, instead of having just the two stations, they'd go national. Soon, they were up and running on a Westwood 1 transponder, with commitments from over 20 affiliates and Sirius satellite radio, providing programming to markets throughout the country.



*Sheldon and Anita Drobny*

Right now talent includes Mike Malloy and Dr. Mike Newcomb (also a partner); they are signing John Loftus (author of *The Secret War Against the Jews*), and pollster John Zogby; and Anita is in discussions with many other people she cannot yet name. (She could not say, but the

sense was strong, that she knows when Air America contracts, including that of XM satellite radio, might be up for renewal and talent might become available).

It is a labor that makes good business sense, she feels, and, as with any mother, it is also a labor of love. She points with pride to how discussion of the Downing Street memos on progressive radio led to discussion throughout the country. “We've provided an echo chamber that doesn't stop,” she says. Looking locally, “In the 10th District, I think that one of the reasons people came out so strongly and volunteered for Dan Seals was what they were hearing on the shows. The talent encouraged people to be open and think about how we were losing our country, and people went to work because of what they were hearing.”

It's exactly that grassroots effort that backs Anita's plans to take Nova M public. “Right now we need investment in at least \$100,000 units and investors have to be qualified,” she says. However, she gets emails on a regular basis from people who believe in the venture and want to invest in smaller amounts. An IPO would make that possible. The Drobny's have taken many companies public through their venture capital company, and “We want to do this so people can buy the stock and become part of the effort,” she says. “The financial case is there, based on the advertisers that have stayed with Nova M.” A likely timeline, if all goes well, would be for the public offering to begin in the spring.

Anita sees the need for progressive talk as ongoing, not something that stops when the Democrats win an election. “Progressive talk speaks truth to power,” she notes. “Right wing talk,” on the other hand “goes along with the prevailing authorities.

“Without voices that give you alternate thoughts, we cannot have a sustainable democracy. Our country is based on ideas that may differ from one another. So we have to provide that ability to be able to hear various thoughts.”

For ongoing information, go to [www.NovaMradio.com](http://www.NovaMradio.com). “We are talking about doing so many things with the website,” says Anita. “It is all so brand new and so fresh. We're like the little chick in the egg. We're emerging from our shell.” And “mother” is excited and proud!

## Impeachment Continued from page 2

the alleged violations and other acts such as lying to Congress and the American people about Iraq intelligence prior to the war amount to the abuse of power contemplated by our founders under the British law they understood as "high crimes and misdemeanors." Ms. Holtzman told Truthdig in September 2006:

*"... to pervert the democracy, to subvert it by depriving Congress and the American people of the actual facts, is a huge abuse of power, because it deprives them of the ability to participate in a rational way about one of the gravest decisions that can ever be made in a democracy, namely whether to go to war or not."*

Congressional Democrats' arguments against impeachment are that it will hurt the party's chances in 2008 and that it will lead to further partisanship in Congress stalling real work that needs to be done on health care, the minimum wage, and other national projects.

However, the current atmosphere of partisanship will never end while there is political capital to be gained from it and no risk of consequences.

## Resolutions Continued from page 1

objectives being fiscal responsibility, ethics, and morale.



**Democat (FOE – Friend of Ellen [Gill]), DFA Activist (Democratic Felines of America)**  
To sit directly on the keyboard while the provider of cat food

tries to blog, to sit on Barack Obama's lap and purr, to find the warmest place in the house and to nap more.

**Susan Garrett, State Senator District 29**

It is my hope that the U.S. adopts new domestic and foreign policies that speak to the real needs of our country and of the world. By being so focused on the Iraq War, we have ignored our most pressing concerns such as health care, our environment, and providing fairer funding for our schools. It's time to turn that around.



**Ellen Gill, 10th District Blogger**  
([www.ellenofthetenth.blogspot.com](http://www.ellenofthetenth.blogspot.com))



To save more, walk to the train station more often, stop letting the right wing media aggravate me, continue to watch the votes in Congress, and eat more chocolate and fewer of those scary bacteria-laden vegetables.

**Karen May, State Representative District 58**

To work to make the state – and world – a better place for our new grandson, Jackson Hunter May, born on Dec. 19. I want to rid the



world of toxins that poison our children and provide clean air, water, and open space for future generations. While we're at it, I want to help assure that hatred, bigotry, and social injustice are eradicated so that all our children can grow up in peace and reach their full potential.

**Kathy Ryg, State Representative District 59**

As the New Year comes around faster and faster and the resolutions start to blur, it's become more important to me to not sweat the small stuff and really think about what matters. Each year I pledge to seek and find the balance in my life – to spend quality time with family and friends, to do the best I can knowing I can't do it all, and to stop complaining about too much to do, too little time. I've made progress in some areas and not so much in others! So for the new year of 2007 I will have the opportunity to enjoy family and friends at my daughter's wedding – the first in my extended family. Our goal is to have fun – in the planning, preparing and celebrating! I am committed to finding my focus as State Representative – I hope to chair the Disabilities Services Committee and work tirelessly to insure Illinois improves its dismal track record on how we serve the disabled. We can and must do better in helping them be as independent as possible in how they live, work and get around their communities. It's the right thing to do for these individuals, their families, and our communities and it is proven that community based services are more cost effective for the state. And finally, as we all live in a world where schedules are full, voice and email messages constant, and traffic never ending, I hope to be more patient with others and ask that they return the favor! With my best wishes for health and happiness in the New Year.



Those desirable national projects described by Democratic leaders may never happen while we continue to throw most of our resources into a misguided war. Now, despite bipartisan calls for withdrawal from Iraq, Bush seems to be listening to the few voices calling for more troops. Bush can pretty much stay the course unchecked until January 2009 – unless Congress votes to stop funding the war and that seems less likely all the time despite the clear message sent in the mid-term election.

The case for impeachment has been made. Whether or not to impeach should not depend on what our elected officials say is in our best interest. Dropping the notion might be in their best interest, but we do not necessarily share their interests.

Americans have to decide if we are better off staying the course or throwing off this Administration. Unless the new Congress can figure out another way to mount a real challenge to the Administration on Iraq and related issues, enforcing our laws, protecting the intended structure of our government, and preserving our democracy through impeachment might be in our best interest after all.

**Dan Seals, Former (and maybe future) candidate for Congress from the 10th District**

My resolution is to do everything I can to strengthen the Democratic base in the 10th district so that we can win in 2008 – and to get more sleep.



**Debra Shore, Commissioner, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago**

My dreams and hopes for 2007 are these:

- 1) to become as effective a commissioner of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District as I was a candidate;
- 2) to spread the word that water is a precious liquid asset to be captured, treasured, and used wisely and not a "problem" to be disposed of as swiftly as possible;
- 3) to promote an understanding that having a robust economy depends utterly on having a healthy ecology;
- 4) to plant majestic oaks along with sturdy ideas;
- 5) to always carry forward the generosity of spirit that typifies progressive politics for me.



**Mary Ellen Vanderverter, Lake County Recorder**

2006 brought us huge Democratic victories both nationally and locally. The year also brought with it many new wonderful friendships that I will cherish and nurture. My hope for 2007 is more of the same! Now, if I just had my original hair color and waist size from 1997, I'd be a happy camper! Happy New Year and Happy Campaigning to all!



# Looking to 2008 by Steve Sheffey

In preparing for 2008, we must be careful to learn the right lessons from 2006. Many of us have sore arms from patting ourselves on the back for how well we did, but the bottom line is that we lost. I've heard many people say that if only we had more money, if only the DCCC had backed us from the start, if only the election had occurred two weeks later, if only this, if only that. ...

We also have to remember some other factors. In general, the party out of power does better in midterm elections. In particular, the Republicans in Congress displayed a spectacular amount of corruption and incompetence while fighting a very unpopular war. In 2008, many of those factors will be mitigated, and since the Democrats now control Congress, the case for change will be harder to make.

We know from past elections that 35 percent of the 10th District probably would vote for anyone running as a Democrat. Dan Seals came out of nowhere to pick up an additional 12 percent. It would seem that all we have to do next time is pick up another 4 percent and we are off to Washington.

But that thinking assumes the Kirk camp will stand pat. Say what you will about Mark Kirk, he is no dummy. He won't be caught unprepared next time, for both he and his party now realize that his seat is vulnerable. We can expect him to raise more money and focus more on helping constituents. We can also expect him to massage his voting record to

bolster his claim that he is a moderate. Now that he is in the minority party and his vote counts for little, he will be in an excellent position to vote with an eye toward re-election.

To win, our candidate in 2008 must be prepared from day one to articulate his or her goals for our country and to explain why Mark Kirk must be replaced. Saying that Mark Kirk does not hold townhall meetings is not a winning platform.

If someone likes the way Mark Kirk votes, then that person probably will be glad that Kirk spends time in Washington rather than in the district. Indeed, the rap against Sid Yates was that he spent too much time in Washington, but he always won because people liked his record. Our candidate in 2008 needs to identify substantive issues where Kirk is deficient, which might be harder than it would seem because we can expect Kirk to pick up a fair amount of endorsements and positive press.

Mark Kirk can be beaten, but we must not delude ourselves into thinking it will be easy. Yes, this district voted for Clinton and Kerry, but at the same time, this district voted Republican for Congress, and we have not been represented by a Democrat since Clinton appointed Abner Mikva to the judicial bench.

We can expect a much tougher and better organized campaign from Kirk in 2008, and we need to start preparing now.

## Great Lakes Continued from page 2

people to those hearings where more than 1,000 people and groups submitted comments that became part of the public record. Over 95 percent of those comments were opposed to the Coast Guard's plan.

It was time to reach out for support at the federal level. Arrangements were made for a delegation from our group to meet with an aide to Senator Dick Durbin, where we were listened to attentively, and where we provided a large amount of background information. Several days after that meeting, we received a phone call asking if we would meet with the Senator personally.

We met Senator Durbin the next day at a kitchen table in Highland Park to discuss the situation at length. Senator Durbin was prepared, informed and insightful, listening to what we had to say and asking all the right questions. Senator Durbin has always been a champion of environmental causes, and he did not disappoint us. At the conclusion of our meeting, we knew we had a powerful ally.

Our real work, though, was yet to come, as we began to develop the plan to arrange senatorial meetings with activist groups in the remaining seven Great Lake states. Emails went out, phone calls were made, and meetings were scheduled.

And then, on Monday morning, December 18, 2006, Lee Goodman received a call from Dick Durbin advising him that the battle was over. The Coast Guard had withdrawn its plan and agreed to abandon live fire target practice on the Great Lakes.

Amazing.

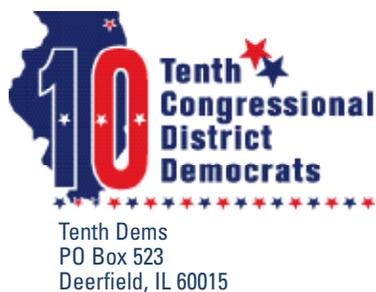
From a simple suburban living room, to a kitchen table, to the ear and heart of a United States Senator, a small group of committed individuals were able to demonstrate how democracy in America is supposed to work. Starting with a simple visceral objection to violating the pristine beauty and tranquility of one of the world's most precious natural resources, a State Representative and thousands of ordinary citizens participated in the American democratic process.

For all who work tirelessly on issues like this every day, with very often little to immediately show for the effort, it should be reaffirming to believe that perhaps Margaret Mead was right after all.

And for those who signed a petition, made a phone call, or simply forwarded an email on this issue, thanks for helping save the Great Lakes this time. Generations of Americans you will never meet will forever be grateful. I guess this is what Democracy looks like after all.

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