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The Roadmap to Victory Revealed in *The Political Brain*

by Steve Sheffey

Every Democrat who wants to win in 2008 should read the book *The Political Brain* (Public Affairs, New York, NY: 2007, 457 pages), by Drew Westen. A professor of psychology at Emory University who is affiliated with the Department of Psychiatry, and Behavioral Sciences Westen is also a Democrat who is tired of losing elections that we should have won. *The Political Brain* has as its basic thesis, supported by extensive research, that elections are decided primarily by emotion, and not by reason.

The problem with Democrats is that we act as if voters decide rationally, and we run our campaigns accordingly – and we lose. According to Westen, policy does matter in elections, but only to the extent that it influences voters’ emotions. Reason and data must be sandwiched into an emotionally compelling story. Successful campaigns activate the emotions latent in voters’ interests and values.

Westen says that voters decide whom to vote for

by asking these four questions about candidates, in this order:

- Do they share my values and do they care about people like me?
- Can I trust them to represent me faithfully?
- Do they have personal qualities that lead me to believe they’ll do right by my values and interests?
- If there’s an issue that really matters to me, what’s their stand on it and can I trust them to make the decisions I’d probably make if I had the information they’ll have as my representatives?

Westen’s research also found that voters prefer candidates who are clear on what they believe, even if it is not what the voters believe.

Many Democrats think it is wrong to appeal to

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Tenth News

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Illinois Tenth Congressional District Democrats Newsletter

Volume 4, Edition 10

Take a Stand Town Hall: Support the Troops. End the War.

by Carol Hillsberg

Singer/songwriter Carol Williams began the program performing her composition, “Empty Boots.” The poignant refrain, “We can’t stop the march of empty boots,” resonated. Indeed, the purpose of this event was to stop the march of empty boots by energizing, organizing, and urging members of Congress to take a stand against the continuation of the Iraq war. The town hall meeting, organized by the Iraq Summer Campaign, was held on August 28, 2007, at the Renaissance Chicago North Shore Hotel, in a room that could not hold the overflow crowd.

Aaron Freeman, notable public radio commentator and Second City alumnus, introduced the various speakers, a diverse group of individuals who share a strong desire to end our participation in the war. The purpose of this event and others across the country was to urge 40 targeted senators and representatives to support a responsible end to the war in Iraq and to stand against the policies of George W. Bush.

The congressman from the 10th District, Mark Kirk, is one of these targets, as he has yet to take a definitive stand against the policies of the administration. Freeman aptly described our congressman as the opposite of dishonest and cynical – cynical and dishonest. [Ed. Note: Aaron Freeman will be teaching a Tenth Dems University course on Tuesday, October 16th. See page 4 for details.]

The second item in the program was a video produced by Americans Against Escalation in Iraq, featuring an Iraq veteran who stated that the war was based on a complete fallacy and that the troops did indeed accomplish their mission. What is occurring now is that \$720 million a day is being spent in a futile attempt to bring about political progress in a violent civil war.



An empty suit stands in for Rep. Mark Kirk, who failed to attend the Iraq Town Hall Meeting on August 28th.

The Hon. Jan Schakowsky, member of Congress from Illinois’ 9th Congressional District, Deputy Democratic Whip, and founder of the Out of Iraq Caucus, reported on her recent trip to Iraq. She returned more convinced than ever that the United States must set a deadline for withdrawal; there is no such thing as winning.

The U.S. occupation is a large part of the problem, causing more damage the longer we stay. The surge is a failure, as evidenced by the

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Hidden Lake County Government *by Michelle Feldman*

What can Lake County officials do, and what can't they do?

When there is a minor car accident in Lake County, with property damage only and no injuries, vehicles that are left on the road block traffic. The Lake County Board had to ask for a revision of the Illinois Vehicle Code to require drivers to tow or push these vehicles to the shoulder of the road or to a side street.

As an incentive for Brownfield development, the county would like to waive the late fees on back property taxes a developer would pay. The developer would still pay the back taxes on the property, but the county has no authority to waive the fee which, when collected, goes entirely to the county.

When new schools are constructed in the county, inspections are often conducted by retired school superintendents rather than building and construction experts.

These examples of curbs on Lake County's authority – recounted courtesy of Carol Spielman, Lake County Board member, who taught a class at Tenth Dems University on August 27 about "The Power of Lake County" – arise out of the Illinois State Constitution and the powers it gives to counties. (Cook County is the exception and is under Home Rule.)



Carol Spielman, Lauren Beth Gash and Anne Flanigan Bassi (Lake County Board, Dist 23)

"Lake County has responsibilities without the authority," Carol said. "Perhaps we need not expand the county's taxing power but can broaden our authority to meet the needs of the county." Carol is excited that there will be an opportunity in 2008 for us to vote on whether Illinois should call a Constitutional Convention.

During the class, Carol reviewed the major issues the County Board is currently addressing. Transportation funding is a continuous challenge, especially because the county does not have a motor fuel tax. The Board is reviewing several options for Winchester House, Lake County's nursing home. Alternatives include closing the nursing home, spending the dollars to fix the current building, or building a new smaller facility and plan for supportive living.

The County Board is anxious for resolution of its lawsuit regarding the expensive removal of a major pile of dirt left at the site after development of the new homes at Fort Sheridan. The other hot issue is where in Lake County is the most appropriate place to hold the 2016 Olympic equestrian activity. There is concern that holding the event in our preserves will be damaging to our natural resources, yet having an Olympic event in Lake County will bring economic benefits.

These are the questions TDU Prof. Carol Spielman posed to the class. Take the test to see how knowledgeable you are about Lake County government.

1. Who is the president of the Lake County Board and how is the person placed in that position?
2. How many municipalities and townships are in Lake County?
3. How is the Forest Preserve Board chosen?
4. Name three functions of the county Health Department.
5. If you have a complaint about your property assessment and the issue is not resolved with your township assessor, what are your next two steps of appeal?
6. Where are the Lake County jail and the county juvenile center?

Answers:

1. *Suzi Schmidt; elected president by the County Board members.*
2. *52 municipalities and 18 townships.*
3. *All Lake County Board members serve on the Forest Preserve Board.*
4. *Three examples are: provide health clinics for the uninsured and underinsured, inspect all restaurants in the county, and check water wells.*
5. *First, the homeowner would go to the Lake County Board of Review. If still dissatisfied, the homeowner could appeal to the state, which holds monthly hearings in the county.*
6. *The jail is in Waukegan, and the juvenile center is in Vernon Hills.*

If you scored 6, you attended the class or are a Lake County Board member.

If you scored 1-5, you should definitely attend the next class about Lake County.

Thanks to Carol for a wonderful overview of Lake County government.



Karen McCormick and other Tenth Dems enjoying the Hel's Kitchen buffet at Tenth Dems Ravinia Night on September 7th.

fact that the Congressional delegation had to travel even short distances by Blackhawk helicopter.

Political reconciliation won't be accomplished this September or next September; Iraq is a nation in transition. Rep. Schakowsky reminded us of the crucial needs that could be met with the \$12 billion a month spent in Iraq, and the importance of stopping the tragic loss of life – both American and Iraqi. She urged us not to let anyone in Congress off the hook, not to send one more loved one to die in a war that should not have been.

Eugene Cherry, Specialist and Combat Medic with the Tenth Mountain Division of the U.S. Army, served in Iraq from July 2004 to July 2005 and went AWOL as an act of conscience. Aply billed as "A Veteran Speaks Out," he stated that the mission was never clearly defined and that rather than helping to rebuild, U.S. forces were doing collateral damage in Iraq. The charges against Specialist Cherry have been dropped.



Aaron Freeman introduces a speaker.

In the next 15 seconds, \$125,000 will be squandered and 20 Iraqi civilians will die. The costs are staggering to the Iraqis – 650,000 casualties, 70 percent of the population with inadequate water, one quarter of the children malnourished. David Borris, local businessman and leading member of the North Suburban Peace Initiative, addressed the cost of the war for U.S. and Iraqi citizens, citing a figure of \$1 trillion.



Hon. Jan Schakowsky reports on her visit to Iraq.

But the first casualty of this war has been the truth, as exemplified by Mark Kirk's statement in October 2002, that he had seen evidence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. The truth is that we are only a short time away from the 4,000th American death, that in 2007 there were 177 attacks each day on coalition forces, and that this has been the greatest strategic disaster in our history.

Emil Totonchi, an Iraqi Irish American who grew up in Glenview, is fluent in Arabic and is active in the Service Employees International Union.

He addressed the plight of the 2.2 million displaced Iraqis who are fleeing to Syria and Jordan at the rate of 2,000 a day and 1,000 a day, respectively. Both countries are overwhelmed with this influx and are unable to provide services to the refugees. Tragically, the people who are the key to the future of Iraq are leaving, and necessary legislation legalizing labor unions and governing the distribution of oil has not been passed.

Iraq War veteran Josh Lansdale, an organizer of Americans Against Escalation in Iraq, recalled a recent conversation with Mark Kirk. Rather than engaging in a veteran-to-veteran dialogue, rather than thanking Josh for his service, the congressman said, "Have fun in Washington." Thirty-one Republican representatives and nine Republican senators are being urged to stand with the Democrats and override George Bush's vetoes and bring the troops home.

Rose Marie Slavenas' son Brian died when the helicopter he was

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Concerned Citizens Speak Out Against War, Agitate Kirk *by Sharon Sanders*

With hundreds turned away, nearly 1,000 opponents of the Iraq war filled the hotel ballroom to hear the Hon. Jan Schakowsky, Aaron Freeman, and others speak out eloquently against the war and the Bush administration's failed policies. Joining Congresswoman Schakowsky were David Borris, William McNary, and Iraq War veterans. The event, sponsored by The Iraq Summer Campaign and Americans Against Escalation in Iraq, was put together with a great deal of passion, dedication, and patriotism by Josh Lansdale, an Iraq War veteran, Michael Deheeger of Winnetka, and many others. These are tireless workers who know exactly what they are fighting so hard for – a change of direction in Iraq.

Most of those who attended had lived through Viet Nam. They were old enough and, yes, wise enough to understand the dire consequences of continuing this misdirected war based on lies. The only possible negative to the event was the lack of young faces.

Many of our young people, as bright as they are, have bought into the administration's message: "Go about the business of consuming and keeping our economy humming, and we'll decide which wars to fight and when to call you up if we need you."

President Bush has said, essentially: "I'm the decider. Don't worry about a thing, because I'll make all the decisions for you [along with Cheney and Rove]." Well, we veterans of the Viet Nam era know where that's gotten us. So the challenge for us is: how do we bring our young people (and I mean those in their twenties, thirties, and forties) to join forces with us and understand how necessary they are to getting our democracy back on the right track?

And, Mr. Kirk, though he tries to distance himself from the president, is, in fact, Mr. Bush's point man in the 10th District. He may say he's a moderate and that he works with Democrats for this, that, and the other thing, but in reality, when it comes to the big issues, he's with the president 100 percent.

Having been one of those "agitators," or, from my point of view, merely an inquiring constituent at Mark Kirk's last-minute "town hall forum" held at the very westernmost part of our district, I heard him echo the president when it came to Iraq: "We must wait for General Petraeus' report in September." When asked if the report was the general's own or the president's, he said, "The press has gotten it all wrong. It's Petraeus' only." Well, we all knew what General Petraeus was going to say.

Finally, Mr. Kirk says that the Northbrook event was sponsored by outside agitators. Considering the prominence of those who spoke out, I would hardly call them agitators. I'd call them very concerned and responsible citizens. They represented the thoughts and fears of many constituents in the 10th Congressional District and across the United States.

To see and hear for yourself, the entire event is on YouTube: http://youtube.com/profile_videos?user=drxyzyy&p=r. Please pass this site on to friends or neighbors who were unable to come. Many have asked, "What do we do next?" More events are in the offing, but most importantly, Mr. Kirk and Mr. Bush cannot ignore the growing numbers of people standing up for their beliefs – and we won't let them.

Tenth Dems U October 2007 Class Schedule

Register today at www.TenthDemsU.org

Tips for Talking to Republicans (and others who need convincing)

Date: Saturday, October 6, 10:30 a.m.

Location: Wheeling/Palatine Township Democratic Headquarters, 1310 W. Northwest Highway, Arlington Heights

Instructor: *Patrick Botterman, Political Consultant, Wheeling Township Democratic Chair*

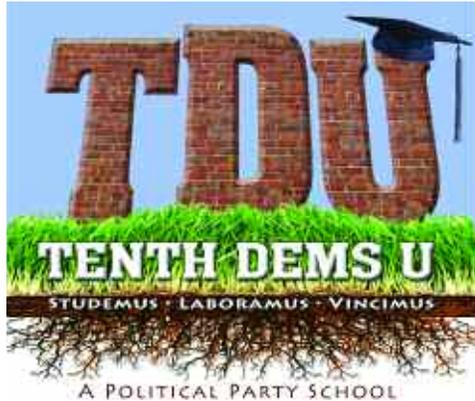
It's bound to happen...you volunteer to help a candidate, knock on a stranger's door, and you quickly discover that the person who opens it thinks the greatest American leader ever...is Dick Cheney.

What you might want to say, and what you should say, are two different things. In this Tenth Dems University class, veteran political consultant Patrick Botterman, who also chairs the Wheeling Township Democratic Organization, will give you some advice on how to talk to a Republican, and anyone else who needs convincing, as well as general tips on going door-to-door and dealing with the wonderful variety of citizens who call themselves Americans.

Once you get some advice, it's time to put your newly acquired knowledge to work. In the second hour of this class we will go out to some local precincts, talk to residents and ask them to sign a petition to get local Democrats on the ballot. You can help for an hour, or as long as you want. Be sure to come to class in casual, but neat, clothing, and wearing a pair of comfortable shoes.

This class is designed for people who want to help candidates with one of the most important parts of a political campaign...reaching voters with the candidate's message.

If you've ever wanted to help a candidate by walking door-to-door, making phone calls, or just by convincing the stranger who comments on the bumper sticker on your car, this is a great opportunity to learn how to approach people with a political message.



Using Reproductive Rights to Win Elections

Date: Tuesday, October 9, 7:00 p.m.

Location: Highland Park Community House, 1991 Sheridan Road, Highland Park

Instructor: *Terry Cosgrove, President & CEO of Personal PAC*

No matter what the election cycle, no matter what the office, there is practically nothing in politics that unifies a candidate's base, or blasts it apart, more than the issue of abortion rights. The preceding years have seen candidates rise and fall on this issue, and this coming election may prove to be no different.

But despite the heated rhetoric from the other side, pro-choice candidates do not need to be afraid to speak their minds on this issue. Terry Cosgrove, President and CEO of Personal PAC, one of the leading pro-choice political organizations in Illinois, explains why in this Tenth Dems University class on "Using Reproductive Rights to Win Elections." He will explain how a candidate's support for a woman's right to choose can be an election asset. He will also discuss how a new Illinois General Assembly, a new president, a new Congress, the make-up of the Supreme Court, and the threat to Roe v. Wade are combining to make this a vital election for pro-choice advocates.

TDU students listen attentively to instructor Steve Sheffey on September 6th at Pro-Israel Politics in the 10th District.

Have You Heard the One About George W. Bush... Comedy and Politics

Date: Tuesday, October 16, 7:00 p.m.

Location: Vernon Area Public Library, 300 Olde Half Day Road, Lincolnshire

Instructor: *Aaron Freeman, Comedian, Journalist, Political Commentator*

From vice presidents spelling "potatoe," to vice presidents shooting friends in the face, politicians have always provided comedians with plenty of good material. But today, with cable TV producing programs like "The Daily Show" and "The Colbert Report," and websites and blogs creating humorous videos, and with creative jokes and cartoons circulated from friend to friend via e-mail, this seems to be the golden age of political humor...and having George W. Bush in the White House certainly doesn't hurt.

Comedian and journalist Aaron Freeman has made a career of finding humor in the headlines and in the people who serve in public office. He is a stand-up comedian, a writer of comedy sketches, a cartoonist, blogger, and radio commentator. In this course, he will take a look at the history of comedy in politics and the role that comedy plays in today's political world – and give everyone in attendance several good laughs along the way.

Is This Any Way to Elect a Commander-In-Chief? The 2008 Presidential Election

Date: Thursday, November 1, 7:00 p.m.

Location: Wilmette Public Library, 1242 Wilmette Avenue, Wilmette

Instructor: *Paul Green, WGN radio political analyst, Professor, and Director of the Institute of Politics at Roosevelt University*

Iowa, New Hampshire, Michigan, Florida, South Carolina, and then 18 other states (including Illinois) on February 5th. Is this any way to elect a commander-in-chief? Like it or not, the presidential primary season is fast approaching, and in just three months after this class meets, both major parties may already have a presidential nominee.

Paul Green is a political pundit. He is the Director of the Institute of Politics and a Professor at Roosevelt University, and also a political analyst on WGN radio. In this Tenth Dems U class he will help us understand the nomination process and what it's likely to mean in America's search for a new president. He will also take a look at the past several presidential elections and explain how 2008 will likely be similar, but also different.

If the names Duncan Hunter, Tom Tancredo, and Mike Gravel don't ring a bell; if you're hoping to find out more about Hillary, Mitt, and Barack than just the first names on their bumper stickers; and, if you're confused about which Republican really was a prosecutor in New York and which one only played one on TV, then this class can help you sort it out...and maybe even help you make your decision at the polls in just three short months.



Rain Water: Is it Garbage or a Liquid Asset? *By Debra Shore*

Why are we using drinking water that has been filtered, treated, and piped to our faucet to irrigate our gardens and flowerbeds when we could be using perfectly good water delivered free to our door by Nature instead? For a variety of reasons, a simple rain barrel connected to your downspout to capture rainwater off your roof makes a lot of sense.

Rain barrels are becoming increasingly popular among homeowners throughout the Chicago metropolitan area. Harvesting rainwater saves money and it's good for the environment. If you use rainwater collected in rain barrels to water your garden or even to wash your car, you are not using – or paying for – filtered, treated drinking water. And the captured rain, when used to water your garden, then helps to recharge our underground aquifers rather than flowing into the sewers as it would during a storm. Most rain barrels come with a screen to prevent mosquitoes from breeding.



A 90-gallon rain barrel can hold 0.24 inch of rainfall from a 600-square-foot roof. In a study conducted by the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, if two 90-gallon rain barrels were installed at 40,000 homes, the amount of rain captured every year would be 243 million gallons. That's 243 million gallons of liquid assets that Nature delivers direct to your yard, that you don't have to pay for, and that won't require treatment at a sewage treatment plant. Wow!

Where can you get one?

I am happy to report that the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District has a new program to sell rain barrels at a very reasonable rate to suburban residents. Starting in October, rain barrels will be available for purchase and pick-up at the MWRD's North Side plant (at Howard and McCormick in Skokie).

Watch the District's website – www.mwrd.org – for details about this program, or send me an e-mail and I will let you know the details as soon as we have them (debra@debrashore.org).

Why not start making deposits in your own water bank? It's one investment that makes total sense.

Roadmap to Victory *continued from page 1*

emotion rather than reason or to campaign negatively. There is nothing wrong with emotional appeals or negative advertising, as long as they are true. Westen points out that whether an appeal is rational or emotional, or positive or negative, is completely independent of whether it is ethical.

And when we are attacked, we must respond. Westen quotes Bill Maher's quip that "ever since Michael Dukakis was asked how he'd feel if his wife got raped and he said 'whatever,' the Democrats have been the party that speaks softly and carries Massachusetts."

There are some voters who are concerned about particular issues, and that's what websites are for. But in mass advertising, we cannot be afraid to go negative and go negative often, and to respond forcefully and quickly when we are attacked. Simply trotting out a list of issues and specifics is not enough. Rather, we must connect with the emotions and values of the electorate and use specifics to support the connections we make with voters.

Westen describes recent losing Democratic presidential campaigns in detail to illustrate these points, but the lessons he provides apply to our own 10th District as well. Following Westen's advice, we should continue to describe Mark Kirk's unprincipled flip-flops on various issues in our newsletter, but we should also design brochures and ads that focus on what Kirk is – an unprincipled flip-flopper – and that use his lack of stands on various issues to illustrate that point, not as ends in themselves. We need to define Kirk for the electorate early on.

We also need to remind voters again and again of Kirk's vote on the Terry Schiavo Restoration Act, when he flew back to Washington and voted for the federal government to forcibly insert a feeding tube into a woman in a vegetative state against the wishes of the woman's husband. We then should ask our voters if that vote made them proud that Mark Kirk was their Congressman.

Buy the book or borrow it from your library. The candidate who will beat Mark Kirk will be the candidate who incorporates the advice of *The Political Brain* into the fabric of his campaign.



Town Crier Ron Weiner read articles of impeachment against President Bush and Vice President Cheney before more than 75 people who gathered in Free Speech Park on September 9th in Highland Park. Attorney and impeachment authority Jed Stone also spoke at the event, *A Call for Impeachment*, sponsored by the North Shore Women for Peace.



Lake County Coroner Dr. Richard Keller and Lake County Sheriff Mark Curran led the Tenth Dems U class, CSI: Lake County, on September 17th.

Kirk Unmasked: How Firm is Kirk's Belated Support for Children's Health?

This is the fifth in an ongoing series of reports on Mark Kirk's voting record in the 110th Congress

As public support for the ultraconservative policies of the Bush-Cheney administration sinks to a new low – a mere 33 percent of Americans now approve of the way President Bush is doing his job according to the latest (September 30) Washington Post-ABC News poll – many Republican officials, especially those facing tough reelection campaigns in 2008, increasingly are seeking to distance themselves from the White House.

This might explain why Republican Congressman Mark Kirk, after supporting the Bush-Cheney agenda for so much of the past seven years, now, all of a sudden, is reversing his position on a handful of high-profile issues. Most recently, Kirk flip-flopped on the Children's Health and Medicare Protection (CHAMP) Act. After voting against an ambitious House version of the bill on August 1, Kirk joined 220 House Democrats and 44 other House Republicans in voting for a compromise version of the CHAMP Act on September 25.

The compromise package, hammered out during weeks of vigorous debate between House and Senate leaders, closely resembles the bill that passed the Senate in August and differs significantly from the earlier House bill. Most notably, the latest version of the CHAMP Act jettisoned provisions contained in the original House bill that would have reversed recent Republican attempts to privatize Medicare by phasing out private Medicare Advantage plans. These plans, which pay premiums to the insurance companies that administer them, cost the government considerably more than traditional, fee-for-service Medicare. The current version of the CHAMP Act also excludes numerous provisions that Democrats designed to improve Medicare benefits (including better

prescription drug coverage), while lowering beneficiaries' out-of-pocket costs.

The Medicare provisions were stripped from the bill during the Senate debate in mid-August, making it possible for Republicans to support the CHAMP legislation without having to take a stand against health insurers. In fact, America's Health Insurance Plans, the country's largest insurance lobbying group, endorsed the compromise bill.

As it currently stands, the CHAMP Act expands the State Children's Health Insurance Program, or SCHIP, by \$7 billion a year over the next five years and would boost the program's enrollment to 10 million children, up from 6.6 million. The bill provides for better allocation of funds to contain the shortfalls that prevent children from receiving coverage. It also gives states outreach and enrollment tools, and adds dental and mental health benefits to the basic package of SCHIP benefits. The program's expansion is to be financed through a 61-cent increase in the federal tax on a pack of cigarettes.

President Bush vetoed the compromise bill on October 3rd. As residents of the Illinois 10th Congressional District surely should have learned by now, we cannot count on Mark Kirk to break with George W. Bush and vote to override any veto. This is especially clear in the case of the CHAMP Act, given Kirk's August vote against expanding access to children's health care. Only when a Democrat represents our district will we have a congressman we can trust to provide consistent and unwavering support for health insurance for the more than 10 million children who will benefit from reauthorization and expansion of SCHIP.



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Big Oil vs. The People

EPA under Bush Administration in Big Oil's Pocket

by George Rosenblit

On July 15, the *Chicago Tribune* published an article entitled, "BP gets break on dumping in lake," outlining how expansion at British Petroleum's Whiting, Indiana, refinery would increase pollution in Lake Michigan. This information set off protests from politicians, environmentalists, and the public (over 10,000 letters) asking BP not to dump. In the face of this strong opposition, Bob Malone, Chairman of BP America, has backed down, for now. But BP still has a valid permit that it could decide to use at any time.

BP solicited and obtained a permit from Indiana regulators to dump 54 percent more ammonia and 35 percent more sludge into Lake Michigan every day. To enable it to do this, BP was exempted from State of Indiana environmental laws and was given the green light by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

There is no valid reason for Indiana regulators to issue a permit that puts human lives at risk. Yet they won't rescind it.

Then, on August 28, the *Tribune's* headline read, "BP gets break on soot limits," and it stated further that, "Indiana decision insulates firm from new federal rules"! What is going on? It's obvious that BP is not interested in community health. The hundreds of millions of dollars it has spent on self-promotion as a "green" company has been wasted. Its image has been tarnished. That amount of money could have been used more effectively if it were used to correct the hazards.

And what is Indiana's motivation to put its own citizens, as well as those of neighboring states, at risk?

Unfortunately, we no longer can trust enforcement of the U.S. EPA's regulations to safeguard our health.

The March 6, 2004 issue of *The New York Times* contained a front page article entitled, "How Industry Won the Battle of Pollution Control at E.P.A." *The Times* reported that Bush and Cheney accepted close to



\$7.5 million from the electric power industry and yielded to the pressure exerted by that industry. The administration ignored the recommendations of the career regulators in the EPA, which led to the resignations of key personnel, including Bush's own choice to head the agency, former New Jersey governor Christie Todd Whitman. Subsequently, the Republican-dominated Congress, in which our own Mark Kirk was a majority whip, repeatedly passed legislation weakening environmental protections – providing favors to large corporations that inured to the detriment of our citizens' well-being.

BP's effluent into Lake Michigan is toxic waste. Ammonia promotes the growth of algae, which depletes oxygen, thereby killing fish. The sludge contains heavy metals, including mercury, which through chemical interaction in the lake is converted to methyl mercury, a neurotoxin. Methyl mercury enters the food chain through small aquatic creatures that are eaten by fish. As small fish are eaten by larger fish, the methyl mercury becomes more concentrated.

Methyl mercury is one of the few chemicals that can pass through the blood-brain barrier. The EPA has reported, "Adult exposure to relatively high levels of methyl mercury through fish consumption can result in numbness or tingling of the extremities and loss of coordination. Exposure of the developing fetus through maternal intake of contaminated fish can result in neurologic developmental abnormalities in cognitive and motor functions." When corporations like BP are permitted to discharge these effluents into our waterways, we must limit our consumption of fish to minimize the toxic effects of methyl mercury on ourselves and our children.

The fine particles in soot can cause lung and heart illnesses in people of all ages, especially the elderly, and can be responsible for shortened life spans.

The best way to make the EPA responsive to human needs rather than corporate greed is to ensure that we have a strong Democratic majority in Congress. We can start here in the 10th District by electing a Democratic congressman who will pursue policies that are in the best interests of all Americans, not just those in the top two percent of earners.



Bush's Insanity: No End in Sight

by Sharon Sanders

If you haven't seen the powerful new documentary *No End in Sight*, you should. In fact every American should see it – but they won't. The theater I saw it in had about thirty people in the audience, most of whom could barely make it up the stairs – not a young person in sight. And as we left the film, I saw familiar faces, the same faces I had seen at numerous Democratic events in the past few years.

No End in Sight is about the decision-making, or lack thereof, that went into the invasion of Iraq. It is told through the eyes of "defectors" and "pink-slipped" ex-compatriots of the Bush administration – each one blaming the other for the lack of a realistic plan for Iraq once Hussein was toppled because of alleged WMDs.

There was no shortage of blame being deflected to Paul Bremer (who refused to be interviewed) and those at the top who had lost any sense of reality about conditions on the ground. Bremer, who has been given full "credit" by the administration for dismissing the Baathist army and Hussein's Palace Guards, and thus putting



Scene from the movie *No End In Sight* with three architects of the Iraq debacle.

approximately 100,000 men out of jobs and adding to the anger and discontent in the streets, was forced to stand alone as the primary

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scapegoat for this failed policy. (Note that Bremer, immediately after the film's release, refused to take the accusations lying down. He said, in *The New York Times* op-ed pages, that Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, and others were very much a part of the decision-making process to dismiss Hussein's army.)

The film, a series of fascinating interviews, is dispassionate, yet spellbinding, as it shows the daily life of our soldiers and the suffering of the Iraqi people. It clearly and succinctly delineates the many missteps made by this administration through the eyes of former participants in the initial planning.

No End in Sight also displays the false bravado adopted by Bush and his supporters on the way to their misadventure becoming our longest "war" and certainly the costliest in terms of money. More than 3,700 of our soldiers have died, but the thousands wounded are coming home with the worst injuries ever seen in any war (partly because of the types of new explosives used by the insurgents).

The conundrum: We need to find ways to get the public to view films such as *No End in Sight*. These films are critical to our understanding of events in other parts of the world as our planet shrinks and becomes ever more dangerous. The Bush administration has cleverly made sure that we go about our lives and spend, spend, spend – and not worry about the war. "It's my problem – I'm the decider," he tells us so authoritatively.

I don't know about you, but Bush's reassurances scare me to death. And what also scares me are our citizens who don't want to talk about Iraq – those who have no time – too busy – don't get into politics –

don't want their children to see death and destruction (except in the movies or on TV). What a quagmire. This film, and many others that have come out of late, would wake up all Americans – but how in the world do we get them to see it?

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piloting was shot down in Iraq. He, along with 15 others, perished when a heat-seeking missile attacked their unarmed helicopter. His mother and all who knew him remember Brian as the handsome young man depicted in a beautiful oil painting, a brave, heroic man who had three pilot's licenses, not as the man who was unrecognizable after his tragic death.

William McNary reminded all present that August 28 is the 44th anniversary of the March on Washington, and that now, just as then, we have to seat ourselves in the center of people's lives. As president of U.S. Action and co-director of Citizen Action/Illinois, he called on Congressman Kirk and others to exercise the proper role of checks and balances – to stand up to George Bush.

The will of the nation should not be thwarted by the will of one man. Across the United States, 80 town hall meetings were held on the same night to change the nation's priorities. "Let the record reflect that on this date the great people in the 10th Congressional District added their voices to the chorus to bring the sons and daughters home to us." With that closing remark the evening came to an end. However, to paraphrase Winston Churchill, hopefully this was not just the end of the town hall meeting, but instead the beginning of the end of this tragic, misguided war in Iraq. As the placards state, "Support the troops. End the war."