

In This Issue:

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Convention Coming...1 | Impeachment Sign...5 |
| Paul Green@TDU...1 | Art of Deception...6 |
| Holiday Gifts...2 | Kirk Unmasked...6 |
| 10th Dems Store...3 | Logic on Our Side...7 |
| Gun Violence...3 | Seals Endorsed...8 |
| Vet Health Care...4 | Holiday Party...8 |

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The 10th District Democratic Convention Is Coming on January 20th...Stay Tuned for More Details

by John Hmurovic

The first 10th District Democratic Convention is coming in January, just one year prior to the inauguration of the next President of the United States. Organizers are still busily working out many of the details, but here's what we already know:

The Convention will be held at the Deerfield Hyatt on Sunday afternoon, January 20.

All candidates running on the Democratic Party ballot in any part of the 10th Congressional District will be invited to attend. All of the candidates will be introduced, and some will be given time to speak. The Democratic candidates for Congress will be asked to speak.

We are also extending invitations to the campaigns of all of the Democratic presidential contenders. We expect that each campaign will

send a representative to the Convention.

The Convention will be open to all. It will give voters a chance to meet the candidates and their supporters. There will be time both before and after the Convention program for voters to talk individually with the candidates, and for campaigns to distribute their literature.

Two straw polls will be taken at the end of the Convention. The straw polls will give voters the opportunity to choose a Democratic presidential candidate and a Democratic congressional



continued on page 8



Tenth News

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Is This Any Way to Elect a Commander-in-Chief?

The 2008 Presidential Race As Viewed by Tenth Dems University Professor Paul Green

by Carol Hillsberg

H and L represent geographically the Democratic and Republican state of the nation less than a year before the 2008 presidential election. H is for Democrat, meaning that the blue states lie on the east and west coasts and connect in the midwest. L is for Republican, meaning that the red states form a vertical block in the southern midwest and mountain states, and extend to the southeast. The Democrats would like to shrink the L, focusing on mountain states like Colorado and Montana. Conversely, the Republicans would like to shrink the H, focusing on the midwest – Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Paul Green, political pundit, director of the Institute of Politics and professor at Roosevelt University, and political analyst on WGN radio, presented this theory as part of the Tenth Dems University course he taught on Thursday, November 1st, at the Wilmette Library. Professor Green credited another political pundit, Rhodes Cook, with this analysis that also appears in the August 2007 *Crystal Ball*, an electronic publication of the University of Virginia.

During his lecture, the final TDU course before the "political party school" entered its extended holiday/political season break, Professor Green made four major points:



Political analyst Paul Green deconstructs the 2008 presidential race for 75 Tenth Dems U students

- **Politics – it's all about winning.**
- **Money talks.**
- **A campaign rhythm prevails.**
- **Electability is most important.**

It's all about winning. In order to win the nomination, candidates play to their base, and then move to the center in the national election. They do so because it's all about winning. National polls are irrelevant as the national election is state-driven. For example, the charming and mystifying Iowa caucuses on January 3rd can make all the difference. If Hillary wins, the contest is probably over.

If she loses, the winner, be it Obama, Edwards, or someone else, will be the alternative. Why, one speculates, does the most powerful nation have a little state like Iowa decide who will be its president?

Money talks. The amount of money raised trumps the candidates' positions on the issues. Clinton and Obama, Giuliani and Romney have the most money. The last election cycle in 2004 was the only time since John Connelly ran that the candidate with the most money (Howard Dean) did not get the nomination. As the media receives 85 to 95 percent of the money, its representatives are not complaining energetically about the system.

Rhythm prevails. This year, the traditional campaign rhythm has

continued on page 5

Holiday Gifts with Political Twists

by Ross Nickow

Next year, in December 2008, we will celebrate the holiday season with heartfelt thanksgiving as George Bush prepares to return to Crawford, mightily working to collect brush to fill his "Presidential Library." Meanwhile, a Democrat will be preparing to move into the White House.

Next year, in December 2008, we will rejoice knowing that a greater majority of Democrats will be readying themselves to travel to Washington, preparing to take over Congress and begin legislation to counteract the damage inflicted by Republicans during the past eight years. We will especially rejoice knowing that a Democrat will be representing the Illinois 10th District in the U.S. Congress, as Mark Kirk begins his new career as a lobbyist.

For now, we have a long, hard year of campaigning before we can relax and bask in the success that will come from ringing doorbells, making phone calls, sealing envelopes, rallying at campaign events, bombarding the print media with Letters to the Editor, and performing other grassroots work that will culminate in a Democratic victory on November 4, 2008.

To prepare for this year's holidays, you may choose from many gifts that both entertain and have the potential to enlighten others about political issues. Discourse and debate about healthcare reform, the fallout from the Iraq War quagmire, and the uncertain future of the Supreme Court will play a major part in the presidential and congressional campaigns; many DVDs, books and CDs address these issues, some drawing attention to the incompetence, arrogance, and gaffes of the Bush Administration.

Last summer, 180 Tenth Dems enthusiasts attended a sold-out screening and discussion of Michael Moore's latest documentary, *SICKO*. The film is now available as part of a special edition DVD, which includes many new features that expand on the film's vision. Healthcare reform is already one of the key issues in the upcoming elections, and *SICKO* highlights those aspects of the healthcare system in America that are failing our citizens.

Many films about the Iraq War, both documentaries and feature films, have been released in the past year. One of the most shocking is *No End in Sight*, also out now on DVD. The film documents how Rumsfeld, Cheney, and other Bush cronies sabotaged well-meaning efforts by military experts, assuring chaos and disaster in Iraq. It's heartbreaking to watch as Paul Bremer, with Rumsfeld's backing, despite howls of protest from people with years of military experience and wisdom, dismantled the Iraqi army, thereby giving rise to the insurgency. Another DVD, *The Ground Truth*, examines the profound physical and emotional effects of the war on the troops, who, the film clearly shows, are not supported by this administration after their return home.

Spike Lee's four-hour documentary, *When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts*, is available in a stunning boxed set that has been given a rating of zero stars by former FEMA head Brownie, who nevertheless called it "a heckuva film." The four parts splice

together interviews and narratives, drawn from film and television coverage of the events, for an oral history of the devastation in New Orleans during and after Hurricane Katrina. The documentary highlights how issues of race and class played into the dismal government response and exposes the empty promises of the Bush Administration.

Turning to the race for the White House, dozens of new books are now available by and about every candidate, as well as about a multitude of political issues. Several books focus on media coverage of these issues. One of the most important issues that the 2008 election will impact is the future of the Supreme Court, as the five most conservative (i.e., far-far-right) of the nine justices are also the five youngest and healthiest. Jeffrey Toobin's *The Nine: Inside the Secret World of the Supreme Court* provides a fascinating glimpse into the backgrounds and rise to power of the current justices, as well as a behind-the-scenes look at the Court in action. Since at least a few of the more liberal-minded justices will likely retire

during the next presidential term, the upcoming election will be critical in shaping the court for decades to come. A new autobiography by Justice Clarence Thomas is also available, and will provide excellent kindling for fireplaces on cold, winter nights.

If you select as a gift *Fair Game: My Life as a Spy, My Betrayal by the White House* by Valerie Plame Wilson, proceed with caution; big chunks of truth have been edited out. Wilson's story of a dedicated CIA operative outed by the Bush Administration for political revenge against her husband, Joseph Wilson, is so hard to fathom that it seems like fiction. But paragraphs upon paragraphs have been "redacted," i.e., censored, by the CIA, and many pages of the book have been blocked out with heavy black lines.

Other books recently released would also make thought-provoking gifts. *The Greatest Story Ever Sold*, by Frank Rich, just out in paperback, tracks the methods used by the Bush Administration, including public relations techniques, to sell the Iraq War to the American people. And *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, by Naomi Klein, exposes how major corporations, using governments throughout the world as accomplices, prey on people's misfortune, using unconscionable methods.

Two new CDs stand out among an abundance of inspiring music released this fall. During the Vietnam War, John Fogarty led Creedence Clearwater Revival through such blistering anti-war songs as "Who'll Stop the Rain?" and "Fortunate Son" (which could have, for obvious reasons, been written for George W. Bush). Fogarty's new album, *Revival*, carries on the anti-war tradition with music from the bayou that condemns the current war in smokin' hot songs like "I Can't Take It No More." His partner in the 2004 Vote for Change tour, Bruce Springsteen, just released *Magic*, a rocking album that blasts the war with songs like "Last to Die" and "Devil's Arcade."

This holiday season will kick off a long year of hard work, but next year at this time Democrats can proclaim "Mission Accomplished"—and mean it.



Watch for the Tenth Dems Online Store

by George Rosenblit

The Tenth Dems Online Store is celebrating its grand opening, just in time for the holiday season. You've seen the ads for our attractive hats, but that's not all Tenth Dems has to offer. Go to our website, www.tenthdems.org, and see our current product line, as follows:

The Bush's Last Day Hat. The date printed on this attractive hat, 01.20.09, is the date of George Bush's last day in office. When I look at the message on my hat just before I put it on every day, it reminds me of all the horrendous acts performed by the Republican administration during the last seven years.

We need social justice in this country, and the Democratic Party has advocated this as long as I can remember. So join me and wear this hat proudly every day and let everyone know where you stand as a person and a Democrat. And buy one for every Democrat you know!

Books: bad president. This book contains real full color photographs of George W. Bush and his cohorts, with humorous captions. You'll smile and you'll laugh. You'll have an irrepressible urge to share these pictures with all your friends.

But let's not forget the seven bad years in which the Bush Administration made many bad decisions. This book contains a brief

running account of these events, so when you're through looking at the pictures you'll want to read, too. Pictures and text make this book the perfect gift.

Why Mommy is a Democrat. This is a different kind of children's book. It's been hailed by Thom Hartmann of Air America Radio as "a marvelous and child-friendly introduction to the values of Democrats." It's been "Highly recommended" by the National Center for the Study of Children's Literature. But it isn't just for children. This book brings to life the core values of the Democratic Party in ways that young children will easily understand and enjoy, even as it reminds grown-ups of their true values. With warm and whimsical illustrations of Mommy Squirrel and her children, this colorful paperback depicts the Democratic principles of fairness, tolerance, peace, and concern for the well-being of others. This is a great gift for caring parents and grandparents to share with their little ones.

Political Buttons. Make a statement by wearing a political button. Some of the buttons in the Tenth Dems' vast inventory remind us of the inequities that exist between the haves and have-nots; others suggest a change in laws, or in the direction our country is going.

There are many who make a hobby of saving political buttons; you may want to help someone get started on such a hobby. When mounted in a frame with a white cloth or black velvet background, buttons make a very attractive gift.

Kirk Out of Step with His Constituents on the Issue of Gun Violence

by Jeanne Bishop

Congressman Mark Kirk claims to be a moderate, but on the issue of gun violence prevention, he is out of step with the majority of his constituents.

Here is Mark Kirk's record on the gun issue:

The Assault Weapons Ban. Kirk refused to support the call for a straight up or down vote on extending the federal assault weapons ban. The ban had an automatic 10-year sunset provision that called for its demise in 2004.

Before the ban expired, several of Kirk's constituents, including family members of gun violence homicide victims, asked Kirk to pick up the phone and call then Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert to ask for a vote on extending the assault weapons ban. Such a phone call should have been easy to make: Hastert is a member of Kirk's own Republican party, and even President Bush had said he supported the ban.

Mark Kirk flatly refused. The reason he gave to one of the gun victims' family members who had simply asked for a vote: "The NRA is more powerful than Al-Qaeda."

Kirk's silence on this vital issue has contributed to what we have been living with since the assault weapons ban expired in 2004: military-style weapons easily available to the public, overseas orders shipping those weapons into the hands of violent organizations, and assault weapons accounting for 20 percent of all law enforcement deaths nationally.

Meanwhile, more than 85 percent of Cook County residents voted in November 2006 to support a complete ban on assault weapons in the State of Illinois. To paraphrase one commentator, "You can count on the fingers of one hand the number of people in the 10th District who think having assault weapons on the streets is a good idea."

Tort Immunity For Gun Dealers And Manufacturers. Kirk flip-flopped on how he would vote on the key issue of victims of gun violence being able to sue irresponsible gun dealers and manufacturers.

A bill drafted by the gun lobby passed last year giving unprecedented immunity from legal accountability to gun dealers

and manufacturers, even those who make a defective product and those who knowingly supply criminal markets. No other industry enjoys that kind of protection. Imagine giving blanket immunity from lawsuits to pharmaceutical companies or to car manufacturers.

In a meeting prior to the first vote on the measure, Congressman Kirk told constituents (including me) that he would vote against immunity for the gun industry. Two days later, he voted for it. We learned later that the gun lobby was short on the votes needed to pass the immunity legislation, and Kirk voted with that lobby. Later, he defended the vote by claiming that he was concerned about tort reform.

Kirk's stated concern about tort reform apparently evaporated later, however. On the final vote, when it was apparent the gun lobby had secured well in excess of the number of votes it needed to pass the immunity bill, Kirk again switched his position. When it became clear that immunity for the gun industry would become law with or without his vote, Kirk was free to vote against it – secure in the knowledge that he could do so without alienating the gun lobby.

Kirk's inconsistent and tepid support of reasonable gun violence prevention laws stands in stark contrast to the strong leadership of other members of Congress, such as Illinois Senator Dick Durbin. The 10th District deserves better.

Kirk's Moderate Image. Okay, people ask, so if Mark Kirk is so weak on the gun issue, why has he gotten an endorsement and an award from gun violence prevention organizations? It's a good question.

First, Mark Kirk was endorsed by the Brady Campaign in the last election because it has a policy of endorsing any incumbent who has a record of not voting with the NRA on a certain percentage of gun-related laws. The endorsement was not meant to suggest that Kirk is better on the gun issue than his opponent, and that certainly was not the case when Kirk faced off in his last election against Democratic challenger Dan Seals. Seals's positions on gun issues align solidly with citizens' concerns for the safety of our children and communities.

Second, because not-for-profit organizations have to be non-partisan, they search every year to find not just Democrats, but also Republicans to honor. They look for Republicans with even halfway

continued on page 7

Have Republicans Dished Out Bad Vet Healthcare to Try to Force Privatization?

as excerpted from *Ellen's Tenth Congressional District Blog*

Did you read about the problems at the VA facility in Marion, Illinois? They recently stopped performing inpatient surgeries after a patient bled to death from gallbladder surgery. As it turned out, this was not an isolated mistake. Investigations and lawsuits turn up more. In one case, a vet was in agony after surgery only to find out later that they embedded surgical staples in his bladder. In another case, staph-infected equipment was left in a veteran's leg. One of the doctors in question has had nine patient deaths during a time period when two would be closer to average.

If Mark Kirk had his say, these veterans would not be able to file suit for injuries sustained from malpractice, because, as Kirk told us at his Wilmette townhall in October, healthcare should be nothing more than tort reform, reform in this case meaning, "We will try to prevent you from suing and if you do, we will set a cap on your damage award." Kirk has a lot less to say about putting a cap on the actual injuries.

Luckily, there are far better government officials in Illinois than Mark Kirk. Tammy Duckworth testified before the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs in early November. Duckworth and Senator Durbin are working on improving hiring and facilities at Illinois VA facilities. One of the problems is that a doctor under question at one VA facility can be hired at another without much scrutiny. Durbin is planning legislation to change that. While Duckworth's office has no power over VA hirings, she and her staff work with the individual veterans to find them better care. In her testimony, Duckworth described the particular problems for veterans in rural Illinois who do not have easy access to facilities. "It is normal for a veteran in central Illinois to have to travel four days away from home roundtrip, for a single doctor's visit, sometimes for a procedure as simple as an x-ray," Duckworth told the Senate committee. Her department has created more intake offices, but veterans still have to travel for actual care. Then, there is the issue of the quality of that care, and the diversity of patient needs, as VA hospitals have the young injured veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan to help along with the aging Korean and Vietnam War vets and the elderly WWII vets. Duckworth further testified:

So the USDVA is now faced with our young service members returning home and entering the VA medical system at the exact same time that the medical needs of our Vietnam veterans will be increasing. The amount of money this is going to cost the nation and each individual state is tremendous. In addition, we don't have enough room at our facilities, state or federal, to take care of both eras at once. The dedicated staff at the USDVA medical hospitals is already overworked and understaffed...

[for a more complete excerpt from Duckworth's testimony, go to ellenofthetenth.blogspot.com/2007/11/did-republicans-dish-out-bad-vet-health.html]

Access problems for veterans were exacerbated by the Bush administration when they halted enrollment of most middle-income veterans by Executive Order (that tried and true replacement for Congress) in 2003 and increased co-pays. I don't remember Mark Kirk fighting with Bush over this one, do you?

Duckworth was also concerned about how far behind VA facilities are in the use of new medical technologies. She told the Senate Committee:

However, in other areas, the VA is far behind current developments and will be unlikely to catch up and adequately meet veterans' needs at the same time. For example, in the case of prosthetics, the VA is not ready and our veterans cannot afford to wait for them to play catch-up. My VA hospital, Hines, is superior in blind and spinal cord rehabilitation, but the prosthetics department, while eager to meet my

by *Ellen Beth Gill*

needs, is many decades behind in prosthetics technology. I now receive care at Hines for my primary medical care, but also continue to return to Walter Reed for prosthetics, paying for my own travel costs. I also travel to a specialist in Florida for state-of-the-art care. Recently, Hines sent a prosthetist with me to Florida to learn about the high-tech artificial legs that I obtain from the private practitioner there. He was overwhelmed by the technology and the civilian practitioner was appalled at the lack of current knowledge shown by the Hines representative. The USDVA is absolutely not ready to treat amputee patients at the high tech levels set at the DoD medical facilities. Much of the technology is expensive and most of the VA personnel are not trained on equipment that has been on the market for several years, let alone the state-of-the-art innovations that occur almost monthly in this field. I recommend that the VA expand its existing program that allows patients to access private prosthetic practitioners. There is simply not enough time for USDVA to catch up in the field in time to adequately serve the new amputees from OIF/OEF during these critical first two years following amputation. Perhaps after the end of the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the VA will have time to advance its prosthetics program.

The idea of privatizing veteran healthcare just puts vets into the same inadequate healthcare system most of the rest of us have. Could that be what the Republicans were going for when they consistently voted to underfund veteran healthcare? Funding and manning federal departments for failure so the tasks can be privatized is part of their MO.

Once again, here is Mark Kirk's voting record on military and veterans' care issues:

5/26/05 - Voted against adding \$53 million for veterans' healthcare (H.R. 2528, Vote #224)

5/25/05 - Voted against expanding TRICARE to thousands of National Guard & Reserve volunteers (HR 1815, Vote #22)

4/28/05 - Voted to cut funding for veterans' healthcare by \$13.5 billion over five years (HCR 95, Vote #149, H.Con.Res.95; House Budget Committee Democratic Caucus, "Summary and Analysis of FY 2006 Budget Resolution Conference Report.")

3/16/05 - Voted against increased funding for military healthcare and transitional job training (HR 1268, House Vote 76, Hooley motion to recommit, Congressional Record H1524)

3/16/05 - Voted against providing debt assistance for returning guard and reservists and extra assistance to veterans returning from conflicts overseas (Vote HR 27 Vote#47)

3/16/05 - Voted against increased funding for military healthcare and transitional job training (HR 1268, House Vote 76, Hooley motion to recommit, Congressional Record H1524)

9/29/04 - Voted against increasing funding for the Veterans Health Administration (H.J.Res.107, Vote #478)

11/7/03 - Voted against allowing veterans to receive full disability and retirement benefits simultaneously (HR 1588)

7/25/03 - Voted to cut \$1.8 billion in funding benefits for veterans health programs (HR 2861, House Vote 456)

3/21/03 - Voted to cut veterans spending by \$28 billion over 10 years (H Con Res 95, House Vote 82)

One veterans' group, Iraq and Afghan Veterans of America, gave Congressman Kirk a C+ on supporting our troops. When I was in school, a C+ wasn't considered too good.

On the Sign Calling for Impeachment in the Public Forum Park – Political Speech in the Best American Tradition

by Annette Jacobson

Recently a comment appeared in a Community Center column by Chuck Wenk noting that the IMPEACH sign that had been placed in the Public Forum park in downtown Highland Park was a “hate sign.” (*Highland Park News*, November 1, 2007)

The sign that inspired that remark had first been carefully vetted by the City of Highland Park to ensure that no rude, discriminatory, immoral, or uncivil language was included in its message (but with no prior restraint as to content). One wonders how that carefully juried, legally objective political sign could be construed as a “hate sign.”

Objectively the sign is a careful, concrete statement of recognized facts, undisputed by bipartisan national and international scholars and legal bodies. It sets out a short list of charges against the present administration, charges that have grave import for the present and future existence of our democracy, and we would overlook them to our folly.

For there are many far-reaching unconstitutional changes that have been brought about by this administration, not the least of which, begun before 9/11, include secret widespread illegal eavesdropping on Americans without court orders; flouting of international agreements which the U.S. is signatory to, including the Geneva Conventions against cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and the U.S. Convention Against Torture; and an attack on our unique system of checks and balances. Under the Constitution the three branches, as we know, are referred to as separate and co-equal.

This separation of power places limits on presidential power and is basic to our constitutional system. And the Bill of Rights also limits governmental power and protects persons of all persuasions and beliefs. It is the very emblem of our system. Without those two important limits, our country would be unrecognizable.

But we have an administration committed to acquiring (and in some respects already has acquired) unprecedented, virtually royal, power that it is using to dismantle the Constitution, to subvert U.S. laws, and, with respect to the treatment of prisoners, is also perverting common perceptions of morality itself.

The selling of the illegal and immoral invasion of Iraq was manipulated through fraud and open deceit upon the public, the Congress, and the

media. The administration is unapologetic and continues, like an arrogant scofflaw, to expand on the same abuses and policies. And now new threats of an air war on nuclear research labs in Iran perpetuate the systematic violation of fundamental American values. “The release of radiation,” as one courageous member of Congress said, “would create a humanitarian and ecological disaster. This is a war crime in motion.”

The Public Forum sign’s call for impeachment constitutes a short warning to the larger community to stop and consider what was always taken for granted – and now has been quietly changed – about our democracy:

That we would never summarily imprison any person without charge, without limit, or access to lawyers; that we would never allow the government to listen to our phone calls or view our e-mails, or rummage into our private papers without legal court order; that we never could conceive of rendition, i.e., secret abductions of persons to prisons in Third World countries to be interrogated through torture in violation of international law; that we never would have private (but taxpayer financed) mercenary military forces employed by our State Department in multi-million dollar contracts and answerable in their illegal actions to no laws; that our Constitution never gave any president or vice president unchecked power; and that we never faced generational unending war as government policy.

So was the impeachment sign a hate sign? I think not. Rather it is an exercise in true patriotism and a small wake-up message for the restoration of our Constitution. The Framers provided the remedy, mentioned no less than six times within the body of the Constitution: the power to impeach to prevent executive undermining or subverting of the presidential oath to “preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States.”

It has become increasingly clear that the very foundations of this nation have been subverted as at no time before in our history. Our populist democratic traditions are at stake. To let the subversion stand and allow it to continue would be a dangerous precedent for any future president, no matter of which party. And to express these sentiments by means of a sign placed in a public forum is to honor everything our nation stands for.

Paul Green *continued from page 1*

been altered in that the states are competing for relevancy. Therefore, states are holding their primaries earlier and earlier. Despite the fact that Illinois’ primary is indeed earlier, on February 5, 2008, the nomination could be decided by then. Because of this altered rhythm, tempers become shorter, the rhetoric becomes hotter, and the debate is reduced to sound bites.

Electability is important. Both parties face issues of electability with their leading candidates. The Republicans feel they have no one to turn to, no conservative champion. Rudy owes it all to 9/11. Romney is rewriting his own history. Fred Thompson is the Gary Hart of the campaign – a strong candidate until he actually announced. Now there’s no momentum. McCain speaks his mind – a terrible disadvantage in politics. In fact, Huckabee seems closest to what the conservatives want.

Among the Democrats, Hillary has run a flawless campaign with an organization that is superior to everyone’s now and in the past. She has a sizable national lead, but she is not ahead in Iowa. Edwards and Obama are sort of a tag team, crusading against the frontrunner in

Iowa. Indeed, Obama’s campaign is remarkable in that he’s ascended to second place after such a short time on the national scene. Edwards is doing well in Iowa with union support. Richardson, as evidenced by his pseudo-defense of Hillary during a recent debate, has quite a resume, but is not an effective campaigner. He seems to be situating himself to place, as vice president, not to win as president. In considering electability, Professor Green was reminded of what satiric comedian Mort Sahl said during the 1960 campaign between Kennedy and Nixon – to paraphrase – “Neither one can win.” But someone will win Iowa, and someone will win the nomination, and someone will win the general election in 2008.

But first, the conventions occur, each in a city and state that the respective parties are seeking to win. So, the Democrats, who wish to widen their H by winning in Colorado, will hold their convention in Denver. And, by the same token, the Republicans, who wish to widen their L by winning in Minnesota, will hold their convention in Minneapolis. So, even though the nominations will be assured by

continued on page 7

Mark Kirk and the Art of Deception

by Sharon Sanders

If nothing else, I have to admire the deftness with which Mark Kirk skirts answers and moves on to totally unrelated topics during his so-called town hall forums. I've had the "pleasure" of attending several of them and I must give him credit for his political dexterity. He is smooth. In order to cultivate his pose as a moderate, he side-steps answers to questions involving Iraq and the Middle East in general. He dances around universal healthcare, public education, the removal of our individual freedoms in the name of security, and his dislike for malpractice lawsuits and regulation in general.

Mr. Kirk puts on a great dog-and-pony show for his audience. He gives medals to the families of deceased World War II veterans. He warns us of the destruction of our trees by ash borers and brings in baseball bats made from dead oak trees. He talks about his success in obtaining the freedom of a reporter jailed in Bangladesh. He boasts about his victory against the dumping of hazardous waste in Lake Michigan by BP. And that's how it goes.

But, when you try to pin him down on ending the war, his pat answer is, "We have to follow General Petraeus and the Iraq Study Group recommendations. We will stop the fighting when we never have to go back, and we have to fight them there so we don't have to fight them here. The Sears Tower is still in danger of being hit, and the height of the new Trump Tower had to be lowered so it wouldn't be hit." Funny, that's not what I had read, but, oh well, the Bush regime scare tactics work so well with the voters, why not keep using them? On the issue of spying on Americans by their government, Kirk said, "It's a necessary sacrifice we must make for our freedoms; and we must give the phone companies immunity

from prosecution, even if they are unlawfully spying on our citizens." When asked about universal healthcare or reducing the cost of pharmaceuticals, he shows his disdain for any government intervention. After all, the pharmaceutical lobbyists are watching over his shoulder. Did you know, according to Kirk, that even SCHIP had to be modified and the number of children to be covered had to be reduced because to pay for it those "Democrats wanted to cut benefits from Medicare recipients, particularly their dialysis, IVs, and wheelchairs"? Bad Democrats – except nowhere could I find any support for Kirk's accusations that the Democrats were the bad guys on SCHIP. If we go to a "government paid-for medical program, there wouldn't be any incentive to find cures for diseases or invest in new technology," Kirk threatens. However, the free market, which he extols, seems to work only for the rich and has now priced 48 million Americans entirely out of healthcare services. Those with some insurance get only the basic care they need with little or nothing for catastrophic illnesses. Mr. Kirk also advocates "a \$250,000 cap on malpractice awards since so many doctors are leaving Illinois because of the cost of insurance."

Having listened to him carefully, I believe Mark Kirk intensely dislikes government regulation of any kind, including by agencies that are designed to protect citizens against abuses by corporations; and I have never yet seen him enthusiastically support social programs of any kind, be it public education, increasing veterans' benefits, or Medicare. No matter how he reframes it, Kirk is an anti-government conservative. We need to hold his feet to the fire on how he can be fiscally conservative, while advocating a \$1.6 trillion war. He is a moderate on only a very few issues, and certainly not on those that are most important to us, the voters of the 10th District.

Kirk Unmasked: Town Hall Meeting Exposes the Real Mark Kirk as a Conservative Republican

This is the seventh in an ongoing series.

At a Town Hall meeting at the Winnetka Community House on October 21st, Congressman Mark Kirk sought to present himself as a champion of human rights and environmental protection. But as attendees chipped away at his façade, the meeting achieved the opposite result, revealing the real Mark Kirk: an ultra-conservative Republican stalwart who continues to support all of the immoral policies of the Bush Administration, including the war in Iraq.

Act I of the carefully staged meeting consisted of a 45-minute presentation – including reports from Steven Knight, state plant health director for the USDA, and Wilmette Village President Chris Canning – about the emerald ash borer, a metallic green beetle that feeds on ash trees. The beetle poses no risk to public health, but it threatens the state's population of ash trees (there are about 110 to 130 million in Illinois). Someone not familiar with Kirk's environmental voting record could easily have walked away with the impression that he's a true friend of the environment. In reality, however, Kirk's environmental voting record is spotty at best, as reflected in the low 53 percent score he received from the League of Conservation Voters for his votes on key pieces of environmental legislation during the 109th Congress.

In Act II, Kirk turned the spotlight onto his role in freeing Shoab Choudhury from a Bangladesh prison, attempting to align his image with causes important to the 10th District's voters – Israel and human rights. Choudhury is a Bangladeshi journalist who has criticized the anti-Israel and anti-semitic attitudes that prevail in many Muslim nations. He's also written about the rise of al-Qaeda in

Bangladesh. In 2003, he was arrested on his way to Tel Aviv. While in police custody in Bangladesh, he was blindfolded, beaten, and interrogated. He was released from prison after Kirk intervened and contacted Bangladesh's ambassador to the U.S. Kirk uses the journalist's tragic experience to highlight his own support for Israel and to present himself as an opponent of human rights abuses, such as torture.

Attendees familiar with Kirk's record on human rights and his consistent approval of Bush Administration policies on extraordinary rendition, torture, and domestic spying, saw through the theatrics. One man directly asked Kirk why, if he was willing to intervene against human rights abuses in other parts of the world, does he condone the human rights abuses committed by the U.S. government. Kirk defended the Bush Administration's actions as necessary for protecting Americans against terrorism and, resorting to Bush Administration scare rhetoric, responded to the questioner with a question of his own, "Should we shut down Guantanamo and bring [the terrorists] into the U.S.?"

Attendees also pressed Kirk to articulate his position on the Iraq War. In response, Kirk said he wanted to end the war, "but not without winding up our mission." Asked many times to define what he meant by "winding up our mission," Kirk talked about securing Iraq's borders and ensuring that Iraq is not left in the hands of terrorists. He said: "We have strong interests in the region." Clearly, "until we wind up our mission" is Republican code for "staying the



continued on page 7

Logic is On Our Side

by Steve Sheffey

Gloria Steinem said that logic is in the eye of the logician, but some of the stuff coming from the Kirk camp lately just doesn't make sense. A logical fallacy that the Kirk campaign seems particularly fond of is the fallacy of composition, the fallacious assumption that what is true of the parts is true of the whole.

Kirk supporters profess to love Israel, but many do not seem to realize that by turning support for Israel – one of the few issues on which both parties agree – into a partisan issue, they weaken support for Israel. Just because there are a few Democrats who are not pro-Israel does not mean that Democrats, or the Democratic party, is not pro-Israel. One will naturally find critics of Israel on the fringes of both parties because in our two-party system, critics of Israel on the left have no place to call home but the Democratic party, just as critics of Israel on the right (David Duke, Ron Paul, Pat Buchanan, Darrell Issa, James Baker, etc.) have no place to call home but the Republican party. Yet the Democratic Party, along with the overwhelming majority of Democrats in Congress, are staunchly pro-Israel by AIPAC's definition. So how do we refute this fallacy of composition?

First, we point out that Nancy Pelosi, Steny Hoyer, and Harry Reid, the Democrats who actually run Congress, have long and strong ties to AIPAC and the pro-Israel community. We point out that the congressional committees that matter to the U.S.-Israel relationship are chaired by Democrats who are strong supporters of Israel. We point out that this Democratic Congress has voted pro-Israel at every opportunity. Are there people who call themselves Democrats who would opt for policy alternatives? Of course there are. But like their Republican counterparts on the fringes of American politics, they are not representative of their party's positions on Israel—the proof is in the halls of Congress.

Second, we remind voters that the views of Jimmy Carter, Michael Lerner, and their ilk would matter if Jimmy Carter, Michael Lerner, or their ilk were running against Mark Kirk. But they are not. Holding our candidate responsible for the views of former president Carter makes as little sense as holding Mark Kirk responsible for the views of Pat Buchanan. What matters are the views of the Democrats actually running against Mark Kirk, not the views of surrogates cherry-picked by the Kirk campaign.

The assertion by certain Kirk myrmidons that being pro-Israel means supporting the Iraq War is another fallacy. AIPAC is a big tent, and members of the pro-Israel community were – and are – on both sides of the Iraq issue. A September 16, 2007 letter signed by 16 Democrats, including Jan Schakowsky and Barney Frank, explains that "AIPAC as an organization never took a position on the war and none of us were ever lobbied by the organization on the war in Iraq." The letter's signatories comprised Jewish Democrats on both sides of the war issue. The letter also states that AIPAC's views represent "the overwhelming opinion of all Americans" and that hostility to AIPAC has no place in the House Democratic Caucus – an absolute refutation of the arguments made by these Kirk followers.

Democrats understand that Israel is an oasis of human rights in an Arab desert of oppression. No country in the Middle East gives women, gays, and other minorities anywhere near the freedom and respect they enjoy in Israel. Israel is not perfect; no country is. But true progressives recognize that American sympathy properly belongs to Israel, not to those whose goal is to eradicate the world's only Jewish state. They see that the measures Israel takes, some of which of necessity cause hardship to Arab Palestinians, are the result – not the cause – of terrorism.

The partisan game some Kirk backers are playing is dangerous

because they imply that to be pro-Israel requires a rightward tilt. In fact, AIPAC supports policies that enhance the U.S.-Israel relationship, not one political viewpoint or another. With a center-right party elected by Israel and a Republican president elected here, it is natural that U.S.-Israel relations should gravitate in that direction, just as they naturally gravitated in the other direction when President Clinton and Prime Minister Barak were in power. Watch what happens when Democrats take back the White House.

America's bipartisan pro-Israel foreign policy, supported by the vast majority of Democrats and Republicans alike, is based on the fact that as long as the Arab Palestinians see the destruction of Israel as their goal, it is essential that the U.S. not be even-handed, but stand firmly with Israel. Our goal is peace, which will come not from making concessions to terrorists, but from Arab acknowledgment of Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state and from Arab commitments to live peacefully with Israel.

Democrats will win in 2008 not only because the facts are on our side, but also because logic is on our side – and it is up to us to make sure the voters know it.

Kirk Unmasked *continued from page 6*

course." Another glimpse of the real Mark Kirk came when he responded to an eloquent, heartfelt plea from a physician in the audience who asked Kirk to support efforts to repair our broken healthcare system. The physician spoke earnestly and passionately about the inequity of our current system and proposed an extension of Medicare for all Americans. In response, Kirk declared that he will never support government "interference" in individuals' relationships with their doctors. (Does this mean that Kirk has forgotten his vote in favor of congressional interference in the relationship between Terry Schiavo and her doctors?) Not surprisingly, Kirk failed to articulate how extending Medicare could possibly interfere with doctor-patient relationships.

In spite of Kirk's carefully staged attempt to portray himself as a leader who represents the values of the 10th District, the October Town Hall meeting revealed the real Mark Kirk: someone who is willing to fight to protect Illinois' ash trees but is unwilling to fight for healthcare for all Americans; someone who opposes government "interference" in healthcare but supports warrantless eavesdropping; someone who pays lip service to the Constitution while condoning Bush Administration practices of domestic spying and torture; and someone who spews rhetoric about ending the war in Iraq but who actually continues to support it.

Kirk Out of Step *continued from page 3*

decent voting records on the gun violence issue. The vast majority of Republicans in Congress have records so abysmal that Kirk's spotty record looks good in comparison.

But Kirk doesn't look so good when compared to his Democratic challengers, who are strongly committed to protecting the public from gun violence. Those voters who support an assault weapons ban, and holding the gun industry responsible for the havoc wreaked by its products, should be cognizant of these facts when they go to the polls in November 2008.

Paul Green *continued from page 5*

convention time, each party will be wooing those important swing electoral votes. According to Professor Green, the conventions are no longer party-driven; they are candidate-driven. It's fascinating to speculate who that candidate will be, both for the Democrats and the Republicans.

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The Tenth Congressional District Democrats Invite You to Join Us at our Annual Winter Membership Party

Where: The Silo Restaurant
625 Rockland Road (Rt 176), Lake Bluff
(Between Waukegan Rd. and Route 41)

When: Tuesday, December 11
6:00pm to 9:00pm

Why: To partake in free pizza, raffle, and Democratic camaraderie

To reserve your place, or for more info, call 847-266-VOTE (8683) or email: Events@TenthDems.org



Convention *continued from page 1*

candidate. Although the Convention is open to all, only Tenth Dems members will be allowed to cast a ballot in these straw polls. (So, become a member today!)

Organizers want the Convention to be a fun-filled event. We plan to give the event the look and feel of an old-fashioned political convention, complete with balloons, confetti, music, political speeches, demonstrations in support of the candidates, and a roll call of the townships to announce the results of the straw polls. All this will be gavelled to order by the Convention's chair.

Watch www.tenthdems.org, your e-mail, and your snail mail for more details. In the meantime, mark your calendar, block out your schedule, plan to bring your partner, bring your kids, and bring your neighbors, as the greatest spectacle in grassroots democracy comes to our area on January 20, 2008, with the 10th District Democratic Convention. You will not want to miss it!

Dan Seals Gains Two Township Democratic Organization Endorsements *by Barbara Altman*

On Sunday, November 18th, two Democratic organizations in the 10th District endorsed Dan Seals for Congress. The Northfield Township Democrats held their primary endorsement meeting at the Northbrook Civic Center where they unanimously endorsed Seals's candidacy. In addition to their unanimous support for Dan Seals, the Northfield Township Democrats endorsed the following contested primary candidates: for President of the United States, Barack Obama; for Cook County State's Attorney, Larry Suffredin; and for Cook County Recorder of Deeds, Eugene Moore.

Also meeting on November 18th, the New Trier Democratic Organization voted to endorse Dan Seals as the 10th District's Democratic candidate for Congress. Seals received 88.5 percent of the NTDO vote.