

*In This Issue:*

Iowa Postcard . . . . .1	Convention Photos . . .4
Convention . . . . .1	Bin Laden . . . . .5
The Race Race . . . . .2	Talking Politics . . . . .5
Supreme Court . . . . .2	Hillary . . . . .6
Iowa Days . . . . .3	Kirk Unmasked . . . . .6
Resolutions . . . . .3	TDU Returns . . . . .8

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

# An Iowa Postcard

by John Hmurovic

With hundreds of millions of dollars spent on political campaigns, you'd think the bright folks who run the campaigns could come up with a good map. Here I was, in Clinton, Iowa, a heavy, wet snow turning my blue coat and stocking cap into pure white, feeling like Yuri Zhivago (but, unfortunately, not looking as good as Omar Sharif), wondering if the last ten minutes that I just spent trudging through a foot of snow was heading me in the right direction.

I was walking door-to-door for Barack Obama. His campaign staff gave me a map and a list of voters' names and addresses. But no matter how much I tried to shield the walk lists and my map, the wet snow was turning all that paper into mush. Not that the map would have been of much help to me even if it was dry. It certainly didn't do me much good when I was standing in the middle of the road staring at the street sign

on the corner of N. 4th St. and 4th Ave. N., wondering if the locals named streets that way just to confound the political armies that invade every four years.

The map also was of no help to me when I approached the houses I was supposed to visit on the accurately named Bluff Road. The houses were set far back from, and well above, the roadway. But as I soon discovered, few of them had house numbers posted at street level. The only way to find out if I was going to the right house was to hike up the bluff and get close enough to each one to see the house number. It was great cardiovascular exercise to walk up and down the hills to reach each house, and if you see me be sure to notice the muscles in my legs. They are probably as toned as they've been in the past 30 years after I trudded through the foot of snow that covered the hilly path to each

*continued on page 7*



# Tenth News

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## Tenth Dems Practice Grassroots Politics at Their First-Ever Convention

by Carol Hillsberg

A high-energy crowd of more than 500 people "more interested in patriotism than in the Patriots," as Senator Dick Durbin remarked, gathered on Sunday, January 20, 2008, for the inaugural 10th District Democratic Convention. The number and enthusiasm of the attendees at the Hyatt Deerfield on that arctic afternoon were testament to the growth of the grassroots political organization that organized the convention – the Tenth District Democrats.

Lauren Beth Gash opened the event by describing the Tenth Dems as a family who will work together to elect Democrats this November. She contrasted the turnout that afternoon with the first gathering of Tenth Dems four years ago, when the entire group easily fit into a living room.

The convention chair was Zane Smith, a 10th District congressional candidate in the 2006 primary. He deftly managed to keep to the agenda, allowing dozens of candidates and others to say their piece. The program began and ended with performances by Grammy-nominated folksinger Kristin Lems, who made the point that folk singing, like democracy, "is not a spectator sport." She encouraged everyone to sing along with "This Little Light of Mine." (You can visit her website at [www.kristinlems.com](http://www.kristinlems.com).)

Early in the program, keynote speaker Senator Dick Durbin, who as



*Keynote speaker Sen. Dick Durbin stirred the already enthusiastic crowd with his powerful words about the importance of this election.*

majority whip is the second most powerful Democrat in the Senate, spoke about what a crucial election this is. He emphasized how important it is to bring the troops home to a hero's welcome and to restore the U.S. image in the world. He called for a Supreme Court that would stand for justice, freedom, and privacy, and for an administration that would lead in the fight against global warming. Although there is a strong tier of candidates among the Democrats, it is Barack Obama whom Senator Durbin is supporting for president. After that historic keynote address at the 2004 convention, Senator Durbin knew that

Barack Obama had touched the hearts of people all over America. In fact, it was he who told Senator Obama that sometimes there is no next time, and this is his time. Senator Durbin also announced that he endorsed Dan Seals, who won 47 percent of the votes against Mark Kirk in 2006, to represent the 10th District in the House of Representatives. The



*continued on page 4*

## The Race Race by Ronald Altman

When Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama argue over the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr., the discussion has moved far beyond politics. We have entered into a discussion of the fundamental division in America, race and the legacy of slavery. Race is an argument with no bystanders. Since the time of the Color Line, slaves were differentiated from their masters by the "one drop rule," which defined people as black if one drop of African blood ran in their veins. In a world of promiscuous relations between white masters and house slaves, the Color Line was an impenetrable barrier, defining who would be master and who would be slave. Although emancipation eliminated the issue of ownership, the rise of the Ku Klux Klan and Jim Crow laws assured that interpersonal relations remained as before. In the post-Civil War era, some light-skinned Negroes might cross the color line and "pass for white," but they faced severe opprobrium from society if discovered.

If we posit that less than half the current U.S. population can claim descent from pre-Civil War white Americans, the other half would have no responsibility for the relations of master and slave. Yet a society segregated both legally until 1954 and de facto subsequently has maintained the racial divide. Previously, society maintained a color line, placing citizens in categories of white and black, depending on how close to the dominant group they appeared physically. Thus 19th century European immigrants to the United States were initially divided between Northern (fair skinned) and Mediterranean (dark skinned), and associated, respectively, with the white and black groups. Without an enforceable color line among Europeans, they merged in the next two generations and all became part of the "White race." Dark skinned immigrants of the second half of the 20th century complicated matters; many who were originally considered "Black," like South Asians, have been integrated into the dominant society more rapidly than similarly situated African Americans.

Black and white now refer less to skin color (a Melanesian immigrant from the Pacific Islands may be much darker than an African-American descendent of slaves) and more to a person's relationship with the socio-economic world and America's history of repression. A white man, even from an ethnic group that was discriminated against throughout the 20th century, once accepted into the dominant class inherits the guilt along with the power and wealth. A black man, no matter how successful, remains figuratively shackled by his ancestors' lives of slavery.

In Barack Obama we see a new man, son of an African father and a Kansas mother, a man with one foot in each world. In his book *A Bound Man*, Shelby Steele describes the predicament of the mixed race individual, using Obama as his case in point. Steele reports that when Obama's father abandoned him as an infant to be raised by his white mother and grandparents, Obama was left both in the white world and outside it. As a teenager, he deliberately attempted to reconnect with his black identity. Like Steele himself, Obama still is more easily accepted into black society than white society.

Mr. Steele is also the son of a black father and white mother and so knows whereof he speaks. He sees most African Americans as locked in a white-black social dynamic in which the black man must use the legacy of slavery to earn his way in the world. One paradigm is the Bargainer, exemplified by Sidney Poitier, who understands that whites can be either racist or not, and who a priori gives them the benefit of the doubt, offering innocence from the racist sin in return for good will and reciprocity. The alternative paradigm is the Challenger, exemplified by Al Sharpton, one who knows that in their souls all whites are racist but who is willing to deal with them to offer "absolution" in return for concession. Thus

*continued on page 8*

## Let's Not Forget the Supreme Court

*by Steve Sheffey*

The races for Congress and the White House are important, but we cannot forget the third branch of government: the judiciary. We need a Democratic Senate and a Democratic President to ensure that we have a Supreme Court that understands what the Constitution stands for.

The words of Finley Peter Dunne's Mr. Dooley are as true today as they were in 1901: "No matter whether th' constitution follows th' flag or not, th' Supreme Court follows th' illiction returns." If we care about this country, we should care about who is on the Court and not apologize for politicizing it, because it is and always has



been a political institution. The question is not whether the Court will be political, but whose politics it will follow.

Conservatives try to mask their politics by decrying "judicial activism." But our Constitution has endured for over 200 years with so relatively few amendments because its meaning has changed with the times. The doctrine of original intent is intellectually bankrupt tarradiddle that was, ironically, not intended by the framers of the Constitution, and serves as nothing more than an artful way to avoid modernity.

In *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court overturned a precedent directly on point (*Plessy v. Ferguson*) and declared "separate but equal" unconstitutional, even though the very Congress that was elected when the constitutional amendments at issue became effective created its own separate facilities for the races. We should be proud to label the Brown Court as judicial activists and proud of the Court for interpreting the Constitution according to the Constitution's principles as applied in the modern world rather than fossilizing the Constitution according to what its drafters may have intended. The next time we hear about "judicial activism," we should ask our conservative friends if they would have preferred that Plessy be upheld.

*continued on page 5*

# Iowa Days *by Michael L. Millenson*

Somewhere in Iowa the sun is shining, but getting there on New Year's Day 2008 means braving blowing snow, bitter temperatures and quasi-plowed highways in rural Illinois. But Barack beckons, so I have donned thermal underwear, pinned my "Obama '08" button to my parka and headed west.

Truth be told, I need Barack more than he needs me. An "all hands on deck" call has gone out for Tenth Dems volunteers to help in the crucial Iowa primary. One poll shows Obama with a comfortable lead, but other signs point to a close three-way race. Like other Obama supporters, I desperately want our man to win and, while respecting Hillary Clinton, am terrified of the political consequences of her becoming the nominee. (I'm not thrilled about John Edwards, either.) Sitting home surfing through blog sites and blah-blah only makes me anxious, and I jump at the chance to go work in the trenches.

In keeping with my status as one of hundreds of individuals on various policy teams "affiliated" with the campaign (translation: kept at arm's length), I rendezvous with an Obama field rep at the Gas America station in Coggon (pop. 700), a nerve center of the Linn County campaign. From there, I'm sent to knock on doors in vital Central City (pop. 1,150). Far more eminent volunteers – including elected officials – have left home and work to do precisely the same thing. The campaign doesn't need generals, it needs "boots on the ground."

And that is what the Iowa experience was all about: the joy of nuts-and-bolts politics. The campaign had print-outs showing voter preferences gleaned from previous canvassing. Our job was to track the undecideds, convince them and those "leaning toward" Obama to commit firmly and to make sure the "leaners" and other likely Obama voters knew where to go to caucus and actually went there. In person and on the phone, that's what I did.

In Central City, I spent 10 minutes speaking earnestly with a single mom who was thinking of voting for Mitt Romney because of his management background, but didn't like his anti-choice stand. She was worried about Obama's experience; I talked about his record in

Illinois and his values. A nurse in Marion, a Cedar Rapids suburb, told me she liked Obama, but feared his healthcare plan would raise her taxes. I assured her Obama's plan was less expensive than those of his Democratic rivals and that phasing out the Bush tax cuts for the wealthy would pay for it. And on the phone I sympathized with a woman who spoke of a stunning \$80,000 a month bill for medication for her five-year-old hemophiliac son – "more than the cost of my home" – a tab that bound her to her well-insured job.

In a caucus process where a handful of voters in each precinct could make a major difference, I think that my three days of day-and-night effort directly contributed a few votes here and there, and maybe loosened up other votes that Obama precinct captains harvested later. But what I got in return was far more significant.

Politics can promote cynicism through an overdose of choreographed stump speeches and superficial sound bites. But it can also be a vehicle for something much different. When we volunteers based in the Cedar Rapids area gathered to hear Obama speak at one of a flurry of pre-caucus rallies, there was real joy in knowing that we had backed a man who understood our commitment to a cause greater than ourselves. When, unbelieving, we learned of the magnitude of the election night triumph, there was joy in a downtown hotel room as an extraordinarily diverse group of Obama volunteers and staff – black and white, gay and straight, college-aged up to senior citizens – shared the happiness that so much hard work had actually paid off. And there was joy because all of us – some with thick skins grown calloused from years of politics – witnessed a campaign slogan about the possibility of change come to life.

My son, a college junior, came home from volunteering for Obama in Des Moines with the same feelings of euphoria. On the listserv for my policy team, those same feelings came pouring through in the testimonials of others thrown out of their armchairs and into front-line action. Before politics becomes policy, we all learned in high school, it first must become civics. When that ideal for a moment became real, we experienced a powerful infusion of fresh hope for our country in a way that we had not even been able to imagine for many years.

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## New Year's Resolutions for a Democratic Congress *by Sharon Sanders*

*I would like to make a few "modest" recommendations for this coming year in the hope that we can right some of the numerous wrongs inflicted by the current administration and a gutless Congress:*

- Hold regular town hall "listening" meetings and get out of the Washington beltway; visit high schools and colleges and reenergize our young people.
- Be willing to stand for what you believe in and the platform you ran on; your constituents will support you.
- Don't let the media remove the Iraq War from our conscience; don't be afraid to talk about the dead, dying, and destruction taking place and ways to bring the "war" to an end.
- Insist the words "fiscally conservative" first apply to the hundreds of billions wasted on the war before talking about budget cuts on social programs back home.
- Don't allow taxes to be the dirty word the Republicans are making it out to be. Without taxes we can't have public schools, infrastructure, and social programs. Privatization is not the answer for everything; after all, corporations are in it for the profit.
- Fight for a strong public school system. Testing alone will not solve what ails education; we must insist on excellent, motivated teachers, small class sizes, and programs that encourage thinking, and expose students to diverse ideas and cultures.
- Resist the pressures of lobbying groups and, instead, reflect the wishes of your constituents. Introduce bills for real lobbying reform and public financing of campaigns.
- Have the guts to cast unpopular votes, even if a bill has little or no chance of passage.
- Don't be intimidated by right-wing name-calling. We need strong representatives – not ones who shake in their boots and flinch every time the media spin machines go to work.
- Resist appointments of unqualified judges, attorneys, department heads; there's no need to compromise when it comes to mediocrity.
- Stand strong against the religious right's determination to make this country a theocracy. Stop the demonization of science and freedom of choice; we cannot survive as a nation without the individual right to make reasonable and personal choices for ourselves.
- Reverse the anti-regulation mentality of this administration; "balance" is the key word.
- Push for greater consumer protection from the abuses of the media and the financial, healthcare, food, and manufacturing industries. Product and consumer safety should not be considered dirty words.
- A democracy needs a combination of private business and government programs; support both. Work to keep both alive and thriving.

*continued on page 5*

# Tenth Dems Practice Grassroots Politics at Their First-Ever Convention *continued from page 1*

senior senator from Illinois, along with many of the other speakers that afternoon, emphasized the themes of the convention – unity and growth.

And, what an array of speakers there was! The chair called upon a Democratic leader of every one of the 12 townships within the 10th District. Representatives of each of the four presidential candidates, Hillary Clinton, John Edwards, Dennis Kucinich (since withdrawn from the race), and Barack Obama, lauded their candidate to the cheers of their supporters. Most of the candidates from the many precincts within the boundaries of the 10th District, from both Cook and Lake Counties, spoke. Several candidates in the hotly contested race for Cook County State's Attorney spoke, as did candidates for the Lake County Board, the State Senate and House, the North Shore Sanitary District and the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, as well as the

candidate for Lake County Coroner.

Jay Footlik and Dan Seals, each of whom would like to replace Mark Kirk in the U.S. Congress, spoke last. Footlik told how he was inspired by Bill Clinton, for whom he was a Special Assistant. Seals castigated the present administration, calling it arrogant, divisive, and incompetent. He said it was time to say goodbye to both George Bush and his friend Mark Kirk.

While the convention was open to the public, only members of the Tenth Dems were eligible to vote in the straw poll – the event's finale. In the congressional straw poll, Dan Seals garnered 180 votes to Jay Footlik's 44. In the presidential race, the votes were 131 for Barack Obama, 72 for Hillary Clinton, 12 for John Edwards, and 6 for Dennis Kucinich. It will be interesting to see how closely the results in the February 5th Illinois primary reflect these totals.



*Despite subzero cold, hordes of Democrats overran the Deerfield Hyatt to participate in Tenth Dems' ground-breaking convention.*

*Convention photography: Larry Silverman*

# Bin Laden Still Not a Priority for Bush

by Gary Lukens

It is beyond belief that after more than six years Osama bin Laden still has not been brought to justice for his crimes against this nation. Each and every American should be outraged by the utter complacency of our current presidential administration.

Was it not our president who vowed to hunt this man down until he had not a single rock to hide behind? Was it not our president who said justice would be served for the innocent lives lost on that infamous day? More and more we see how political agendas trump the moral action of America's conscience.

Still, one could see how finding this man might pose a problem, if say, he were scuttling about the globe incognito. But our president has a fairly good idea where bin Laden is. In fact, America controls – in one way or another – the very land this man uses for his base of operations.

Suffice it to say, it's extremely hard to believe the most powerful nation on earth is unable to find anyone it really wants to find. Furthermore, while bin Laden taunts our democratic existence with his sinister threats, our president continues to insult our intelligence with his inane rhetoric about Iraq.

To be sure, the superficial view of America's invasion of Afghanistan was to remove the Taliban, capture bin Laden, and eventually bring him to justice. But today, the Taliban grows opium at will, attacks civilians unimpeded, and is as strong as ever. And bin Laden, who may very well be hiding in a cave somewhere in the Hindu Kush Mountains, continues to eat, sleep, breathe, and threaten.

Nonetheless, there are two questions that continue to tug at my



intelligence: Why does America provide billions of dollars to a Pakistani dictator who claims to be our ally in fighting terrorism, yet the mother of all terrorists still lives unmolested in his mountains? And why isn't America's president beating the bushes looking for the man responsible for 9/11? The answer to these questions may shock you. Osama bin Laden is no longer a priority.

It has been more than six years since the World Trade Center was destroyed, more than six years since a portion of the Pentagon was destroyed, more than six years since a handful of heroic Americans thwarted an attempt to destroy the White House. Let us hope our next president makes finding Osama bin Laden a priority. After all, six years is a long time to wait for justice.

## Tenth Dems to Host Political Conversations

Tenth Congressional District Democrats are inviting other Democrats, independents, and, yes, Republicans, too, to come together to talk politics on Tuesday evening, February 19th at 7:00 p.m., at the Northbrook Public Library, 1201 Cedar Lane. Participants are invited to share concerns and frustrations and to exchange ideas about how to do something positive to address them. A second current political events discussion will be held on February 27th at 7:00 p.m., at the Vernon Area Public Library, 300 Olde Half Day Road, Lincolnshire.

For more information, email [events@tenthdems.org](mailto:events@tenthdems.org) or telephone 847-266-VOTE.

## Court *continued from page 2*

Similarly, the Court in *Roe v. Wade* adapted its intellect to modern times and used the principles of the Constitution to protect what we now consider fundamental rights. Attempting to divine "original intent" requires just as vivid a judicial imagination as – and quite a bit more intellectual dishonesty than – adapting Constitutional principles to the problems of today's world.

In this term alone, the Supreme Court will consider a challenge to the lethal injection formula, voter identification laws, the meaning of the second amendment's "right to bear arms," and the legal rights of Guantanamo detainees. And, as we all recall, in 2000 the Court overrode the popular vote to install George Bush as president.

We need a president who will, as Al Gore said in 2000, "look for justices of the Supreme Court who understand that our Constitution is a living and breathing document, that it was intended by our founders to be interpreted in the light of the constantly evolving experience of the American people."

The appointment process is political; that's why the Senate is involved. There is no such thing as objective decisionmaking. The justices' ideologies and political beliefs necessarily inform their decisions. Precedents are adhered to when convenient and disregarded when inconvenient. Be it conservative or liberal, the Court makes public policy; so we need to fight for a liberal judiciary just as hard as we fight for a liberal Congress and a liberal president.

## Resolutions *continued from page 3*

- Have the courage to work for healthcare reform. It's an uphill battle with such powerful lobbyists breathing down your neck, but the majority of your constituents will be behind you all the way.
- Help pull us out of this recession by introducing and voting for resolutions to fund small businesses and to allow consumers to renegotiate and lock in their loans at reasonable interest rates. Demand transparency in financial transactions, support income-documented mortgages only, and use other tax and financial incentives to squelch the rising bankruptcies and foreclosure rates. Clamp down on abusive credit card rates.
- Let the Fed know that providing liquidity to the big banks and not to the consumer will do little or nothing to help the economy or those losing their homes. Zero interest rates didn't help Japan and it won't solve our problems; it's a misguided stimulus.
- Stand up for renewable energy sources. Forget the oil-industry ruse of 30 mpg by 2020; that will do little to save the environment. Go for broke and demand alternatives; vote to protect the environment and reverse the destruction of our planet; reward innovative design in alternative energy.
- Protect our wildlife and natural resources; vote to stop the endless drilling of our lands.
- Remember that the Constitution is the law of our land and not to be altered at the whim of an administration or Congress.
- And always remember why we put you in office: to serve and represent us, your constituents.

# Working for Hillary, From Iowa to Illinois

by Mike Sullivan

Over the past few months, I have been asked why I am such a staunch supporter of Hillary Clinton, particularly since I have never before shown any real political interests. The fact is, I was a huge fan of Bill Clinton's presidency. I saw our economy flourish and watched how deftly President Clinton handled our foreign affairs, particularly in my ancestral Ireland. By his side, watching and learning, stood Hillary. Listening to her speak and support her husband during his presidency made me want to learn more about her. It took little research to see what issues she supported and the various boards she served on, and I became a big fan. As an educator, I saw her support for early childhood education and watched her write the Student Borrower's Bill of Rights. As a parent of a college student, I know how expensive it is to put my daughter through school and what the costs would have been to her in student loans if we hadn't been able to step forward on her behalf. Hillary constantly stepped forward on our behalf as a senator. Her attempts at maximizing the Pell grant, increasing the federal work-study program, lowering student loan interest rates, and broadening the direct loan program all played a part in my wanting to return the favor and help her get elected president.

When Hillary announced her candidacy for president, I immediately made up my mind that I would do what I could to help get her elected. I went on [www.hillaryclinton.com](http://www.hillaryclinton.com) and signed up as a volunteer. In November I attended a meeting of volunteers in Chicago. Surrounding

me were approximately 300 enthusiastic people of all ethnic backgrounds, all there to support Hillary. I was amazed. In December I attended a fundraiser in Chicago and heard Hillary speak for the first time. If you were there and had any doubts that she could make the



necessary changes needed to turn around our economy and improve our standing in the world, your doubts would have been erased. Her confidence and leadership qualities stood out.

At the November meeting the campaign called for people to help get the vote out in the Iowa caucus. I looked at the calendar and saw that Iowa would fit perfectly with my Christmas break from school. I signed up and on New Year's Eve I drove to Muscatine, Iowa and went to work. Hillary was going to speak in a middle school that night, so with two volunteers from New York, and one from Washington, D.C., I helped set up the gym for her. My other jobs ranged from seating the overflow crowd, to serving food and holding a microphone for the Q&A session after Hillary spoke. Listening to Hillary speak with such conviction was in itself almost overwhelming, but meeting her and Chelsea afterwards was one of

*continued on page 7*

## Kirk Unmasked: Mine Safety Doesn't Matter

*This is the ninth in an ongoing series.*

Congressman Mark Kirk has just given 10th District voters yet another reason to question his claims to independence from the Republican establishment.

Approximately six months after the cave-in at Utah's Crandall Canyon mine that killed six miners and three rescue workers—and in spite of the pleas from families of miners who died on the job, as well as the expert advice of health and safety professionals—Kirk voted, in lock-step with all but seven House Republicans, against H. R. 2768—the Supplementary Mine Improvement and New Emergency Response Act (S-MINER).

The S-MINER Act, which passed the House in a nearly straight party line vote (214:199) on January 17, was designed to prevent mining disasters and to improve emergency response when disasters do occur. The Act also seeks to reduce the long-term health risks (i.e., black lung disease) facing coal miners.

"With this legislation, we hoped to prevent the appalling loss of life that we've seen in the last two years," said Representative Lynn Woolsey (D-CA), chair of the House Subcommittee on Workplace Protections and one of the bill's 24 co-sponsors. Thirty-two miners died on the job in 2007; and 47 miners lost their lives in accidents in 2006.

Siding with the coal mining industry, Republicans argue that the S-MINER Act is premature and unnecessary, given that many of the provisions of a 2006 mine-safety bill, called the MINER Act, have yet to be implemented. They say the proposed legislation will undermine these ongoing efforts.

But this Republican/industry argument is specious. "The 2006

MINER Act is primarily concerned with what happens after a mining accident occurs," says Phil Smith, a spokesperson for United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), which along with other unions, supports the passage of the S-MINER Act. "The 2008 S-MINER Act, in contrast, focuses on preventing accidents in the first place," he says.

In fact, the S-MINER Act actually builds upon the 2006 law. It requires the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) to more closely review retreat plans and to monitor mining operations. It strengthens standards to contain explosions and fires inside mines, improves enforcement, creates a miner ombudsman's office to handle safety complaints, and requires MSHA to coordinate disaster response plans.

The legislation also provides for improved safety technology, better tracking and communication equipment, more reliable air supplies, and the installation of refuge chambers where trapped miners can safely await rescue. It also updates standards to combat black lung disease and to reduce miners' exposure to other deadly health risks, such as asbestos.

The S-MINER Act is now waiting to be debated in the Senate. President Bush, meanwhile, has threatened to veto the bill. Unfortunately, as residents of the 10th District, we have barely a shred of hope that our congressman will have the compassion and sense of decency to put the lives of miners above corporate interests, or the courage to vote to override the president's veto. This is precisely why 10th District voters must replace Mark Kirk with a Democrat in November.



## Postcard *continued from page 1*

house. But I'm still glad no one was near when I muttered my response whenever I realized that the house number that was coming into focus wasn't one that the Obama campaign wanted me to visit. Why, oh why, don't they post the house numbers at ground level? Another trick to punish campaign volunteers?

Yet, I can't really blame the people of Iowa if they did come up with passive aggressive methods to torture us. In Illinois, it's been years since any presidential hopeful spent much time or money to woo us. But in Iowa, voters can't escape the presidential wannabes. While I was knocking on doors, other volunteers were making phone call after phone call to many of those same houses. The only other person I saw walking outside with me when the snowstorm was at its worst was a mail carrier, whose bag was stuffed with candidate literature.

And if the politicians don't get through to you by foot, phone, or mail, they will definitely invade your mind the minute you turn on your TV set.

That's why I wasn't surprised when some people (just a small handful of the hundreds of doors I knocked on) slammed a door in my face. I

kind of understood. What I didn't understand were those who emphatically told me, "I don't vote," as if it was something to be proud of. View it from my perspective: I gave up a week of my life,



invested a week's worth of housing, eating expenses, and gas expenses, walked in below zero wind chills on some days, in blinding snow on others, only to be told by some people that voting isn't important? Those people and I have a very fundamental difference of opinion on what it means to be an American.

Still, those people were a minority. I was amazed at how many people I met, when I knocked on their doors, who wanted to talk to me about the race. Many readily told me that they would be glad when the campaign ended, but I could see that they also took seriously their important role as the first in the nation to pick our next president.

I would guess that Iowans would also be the first to tell you how flawed our system of choosing a president is.

Campaign workers, wondering why we were doing this on New

Years Day, might be second on that list. But system flaws and all, I developed a deep respect for the people of Iowa (even though I still believe they need to do a better job of naming their streets). Despite the annoying barrage of TV ads, frequent phone calls, mountains of campaign literature in the mailbox, and occasional knocks on the door from strangers covered in snow, most were polite and friendly, and they caucused in record numbers,

spending two hours in crowded public meeting rooms to do their civic duty. And, in my biased opinion, they proved to be pretty smart, too. After all, Barack Obama won in Iowa.

## Hillary *continued from page 6*

the highlights of my life. After cleaning up the gym, we walked out to blizzard conditions, but nobody seemed to care. We were on cloud nine.

Starting at 7:30 the next morning, the real work began. The volunteers were given neighborhood grids and in below zero windchills we went door-to-door talking to people and leaving door hangers for those not at home. When darkness fell, we went back to the office and started calling the people we'd left the hangers for, giving them all the information they needed and trying to convince them to support Hillary at the caucus. On January 3rd, the day of the caucus, we rented vans and went to a local nursing home to pick up Hillary supporters to take them to their polling place. As my first caucus, it was quite the experience. We took our supporters to the part of the room sectioned off for Hillary. We watched as the other parts of the room filled with supporters for Obama, Edwards, and the other candidates. After the first round of the caucus was over, only Hillary and Obama qualified with the necessary percentage to advance to the next round. In our precinct, we led Obama by 23 votes at that point. From there, the candidates' voters could mix with everyone in the room and try to get them to come over to their side. Since I was not a resident, I was not allowed to participate. Still, when the judges were not looking, I did my best to hustle people to our side. After two warnings, I finally just sat back and watched. I did not want to be asked to leave and chance missing the event I had worked so hard for, so I kept my mouth shut. I sat in discouragement as the entire

Richardson vote went to Obama and the Biden vote to Edwards. The Kucinich supporters went to Hillary. Now it was a three-horse race, with Edwards qualifying. A second and last count was taken, and we found ourselves in second place, seven votes behind Obama but way ahead of Edwards. As it turned out, three delegates went to Obama, two to Hillary and one to Edwards. We left the polling place in a funk and drove our supporters back to the nursing home. We then went back to the office and watched the totals come in. Watching Obama beat us handily, with Edwards coming in second by the slimmest of margins, was a gut-wrenching experience. Our little band of Hillary warriors really thought we were going to win. When it didn't happen, we were devastated. We packed up the office and headed back to our hotels wondering what we could have done differently.

The next morning, when I packed up my car and headed back to Illinois I was still in a state of shock from the previous night's events. Two-thirds of the way home, at a highway oasis, I ran into two other Hillary volunteers who worked in a different Iowa precinct. We drowned our sorrows over a burger and Coke and reminded ourselves that this fight wasn't over. We would just have to work harder and make sure that the results in Iowa would not happen again on our watch. Hillary was going to win this nomination and we were going to do anything in our power to see that happen. As we watched her win in New Hampshire and Nevada, we knew our small contributions in Iowa, and now in Illinois, would not be in vain. Hillary Clinton will win the Democratic nomination and will be the next President of the United States, because volunteers like us will have it no other way.

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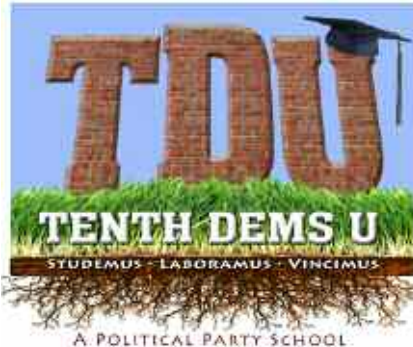
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## Tenth Dems University Is Back In Session

January is over, and so is Tenth Dems University's winter break. TDU resumes on Thursday, February 7, at 7:00 p.m., at the Highland Park Community House, 1991 Sheridan Road, where Illinois State Representative Lou Lang will lead a post-primary discussion. This class, titled *Winners, Losers and*



*What's Ahead: A Post-Primary Analysis*, will examine not just what happened on February 5, but why it happened, and also will look forward to the challenges that lie ahead for the likely Democratic candidates for president, Congress, and state and local offices. Representative Lang, who has served in the Illinois House for 20 years, will offer valuable insights on these important topics as TDU begins its spring semester.

Next month, TDU students can join Professor Ron Miller, chair of the Department of Religion at Lake Forest College, on March 4, at 7:00 p.m., at the Northbrook Public Library, 1201 Cedar Lane, for the course, *What Role Will Religion Play? The 2008 Election*. To register, visit [www.tenthdems.org](http://www.tenthdems.org) and follow the link to Tenth Dems University. As always, all courses in this political party school are tuition-free.

## Race Race *continued from page 2*

Rev. Sharpton can use his power as does Peter to bind in heaven as he binds on earth, forgiving a university the sin of racism in exchange for a Black Studies program.

We have endured the ministry of the Challengers since the revolutionary days of the '60s, and our society has gotten tired of them. Bargainers have generally been confined to the world of entertainment and sports, although many Challengers make their homes there as well. Rarely have we been faced with a successful Bargainer in politics. According to Shelby Steele, Bargainers face a double bind, hence his title, "A Bound Man": if they offer the benefit of the doubt to whites they are not black enough for the black community. Yet their concessions toward the dominant paradigm in the black community – Challengers – alienate their white support. Black conservatives face an even greater challenge, since they reject the entire framework of the legacy of slavery and white guilt in favor of black responsibility. If a black person is responsible for his or her own future, he or she cannot mediate white guilt, either through challenging or bargaining.

According to Steele, Obama offers another relationship altogether, a relationship among equals. This new paradigm is less anti-racist than post-racist. It arises in a world of billions of individuals, each able and willing to contribute on his or her own terms. It is a relationship that acknowledges the past but rejects its ability to control us now and into the future. We now refer to Barack Obama as "mixed race," a term that could not have existed 150 years ago, since the Color Line was maintained to prevent such ambiguity. Perhaps Barack Obama will be part of a future when society will attach no more importance to an individual's skin color or racial heritage than we now do to his height or the high school he attended.