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

# Illinois Electors Cast Their Votes for Obama, Officially

by Paul Kelly

It's official. Illinois' Electoral College votes will go to Barack Obama.

This is not news, you say? True, but until the Illinois electors cast their Electoral College votes on Monday, December 15, it was all unofficial.

"This was historic, exciting, and a great honor," said Hon. Lauren Beth Gash, Tenth Dems Chair, 10th District Democratic State Central Committeewoman and one of 21 Illinois Presidential Electors.

On December 15, Gash and 20 other electors met on the floor of the Senate chambers in the Illinois Capitol, the building in which she and Obama once served together as state legislators. "I am pleased to cast a vote to elect Barack Obama as the 44th President of the United States. It doesn't seem that long ago that we worked together as legislators in this very building. Many people have asked, 'Did you know back then?' And the answer is 'Yes, there was always something very special



*The Illinois Presidential Electors*

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# Tenth News

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JANUARY 2009

Illinois Tenth Congressional District Democrats Newsletter

Volume 6, Edition 1

## 2009: Year of Potential

by Ross Nickow

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

~ Ellen Goodman

Finally, after eight years of the Bush administration ripping the heart out of virtually everything that's great about America, our hard work has paid off. We've all had New Year's resolutions and hopes in past years, but this time we did more than talk. We came together in a BIG way and set this country on a restorative path. We sent Barack Obama to the White House, and now he and his administration, with our support and continued footwork, have the monumental task of putting Humpty Dumpty back together again. We also must not let up in our efforts to gain the 10th District Congressional seat that Dan Seals sought with outstanding grace and dignity and our whole-hearted support.

What follows are some heartfelt resolutions and wisdom from elected officials and community activists in the 10th Congressional District.

**For 2009, I predict** that we as citizens, with the incredible leadership of Barack Obama, will generate a new wave of economic prosperity, simultaneously improving our environment and reestablishing affirmative world relations.

~ State Senator Susan Garrett, 29th District



**My wish for 2009** is that we rediscover the common good. In times of great stress and upheaval, such as we are experiencing now, we are tempted to focus solely on what we don't have, what we missed out on or have lost. Let us instead remember what binds us together, that we are many individuals yet we are one people, fortunate to live at the southern tip of a very great lake, sharing the same air and water, occupying the same habitat as myriad other wondrous creatures. (Late one night last week I saw a coyote trotting blithely through an intersection and across several lawns in my neighborhood.)



*Debra Shore*

In 1968, philosopher Garrett Hardin published a famous essay called "The Tragedy of the Commons." In it, Hardin invites us to consider a pasture shared by numerous herdsmen as a commons. Each herdsman grazes as many cattle as possible to maximize the benefit to him and his family, but the numbers are kept in check by disease, poaching, disputes, and so forth. At some point, the "rational herdsman" decides to add one more cow to the pasture. The benefits of the additional cow accrue to him, but the costs—the additional grazing on a finite pasture—are shared by all, so they seem minimal. Soon each herdsman does the same, wanting to increase his income while the degradation to the pasture is only slight. Eventually, however, the ability of the pasture to support many more cows—the carry capacity of the land—is exceeded and the "commons" is ruined. Hence the "tragedy" of Hardin's title.

Today the health of our local ecosystems and the very survival of

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# Tenth Dems Celebrates a Memorable Year

by John Hmurovic

Neither snow, nor sleet, nor gloom of night kept some from attending the Tenth Dems holiday party. But the combination certainly kept the crowd down. Still, with snow falling, traffic delays of three, four, and even five hours, and snowplows out in full force, the size of the crowd that showed up at the Silo Restaurant on December 16 in Lake Bluff was impressive.

These hearty Tenth Dems were there to celebrate the holiday season and to mark the end of an amazing year in politics. We didn't win 'em all, but in 2008 Democrats had a year like no other. And, for Tenth Dems, it was a busy and productive year.

Hundreds of new volunteers came into Tenth Dems in 2008, and thousands of dollars flowed in from generous donors. With those resources, Tenth Dems went to work on energizing the Democratic base and channeling that energy to elect Democrats throughout the area.

Every Democratic incumbent on the ballot in every part of the 10th District was reelected in 2008, and seats vacated by retiring Democrats stayed in Democratic hands. Meanwhile, although unable to unseat the Republican incumbent in the U.S. House, Democrats in the 10th District took away Republican seats in the Illinois House (Mark Walker in District 66) and on the Lake County Board (Diane Hewitt in District 2, Pat Carey in District 11) and elected a Democratic Judge in Lake County (Jay Ukena). And, last but certainly not least, we supported a Democrat who took control of the White House.

10th District residents traveled to Indiana, Wisconsin, and other states to help elect Barack Obama; but many more stayed closer to home and helped Obama and other Democrats on the local ballot. Tenth Dems kept everyone informed and involved in the election by hosting the first ever 10th District Democratic Convention early in the year. Over 40 candidates showed up to speak to a crowd of

over 500 (also on a cold winter day), and U.S. Senator Dick Durbin was our keynote speaker.

In the summer, another 500 showed up to a Tenth Dems Convention Watch party on the night Barack Obama accepted the Democratic nomination for President of the United States. We watched on two large screen TVs set up in adjoining ballrooms of the Renaissance Chicago Northshore Hotel in Northbrook, and stood on our feet, waved flags, and cheered almost as loudly as the live crowd in Denver as our own senator spoke to the world.

Those were just two of the large events that Tenth Dems organized in 2008 to bring people into the political process and get us working together for our candidates. But throughout the year, we brought people together in smaller groups. Tenth Dems University had its first full year of operation in 2008, and hundreds of "students" attended the 30 classes we offered this year. "Professors," such as Illinois State Treasurer Alexi Giannoulias, Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky, and State Representative Lou Lang gave us their inside views of political events. Roosevelt University Political Science Professor Paul Green (also of WGN radio) and Lake Forest College Religion Professor Ron Miller talked to us about trends they saw. We discussed Pro-Israel Politics in the 10th District and conducted grassroots training and voter registrar training. We also held over a dozen Let's Talk Politics sessions in Arlington Heights, Waukegan, Libertyville, Lincolnshire, Northbrook, and other communities in the district.

Tenth Dems also produced over 100,000 pieces of campaign literature that were distributed to homes throughout the 10th District, produced hundreds of campaign buttons supporting our candidates, distributed hundreds of yard signs, organized phone banks, helped with door-to-door campaigning, and played a major role in making 2008 a very busy, memorable, historic, and satisfying political year. Neither snow, sleet, traffic jams, nor a bad economy should keep us from feeling good about that.

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## The Great Illusionist—Mark Kirk

by Sharon Sanders

Mark Kirk must be breathing a sigh of relief as he reviews his win over Dan Seals in November. He fooled so many people with his talk of being a moderate that I can just see the big smile on his face while he pounds his chest in victory. But those of us who study his record carefully know better.

He's no moderate, and his voting record proves it. He voted with the far right on such issues as religious discrimination in hiring and firing at government-funded entities like Head Start agencies, government intervention in the Terri Schiavo case, and putting the Soledad cross on public lands. In fact, there is not one single bill of any consequence in which he voted for the individual over the corporation.

If you follow Kirk and his record, you see that he's quite brazen in his attacks against unions, particularly the SEIU and the UAW. And given that he voted for No Child Left Behind's test-but-don't-teach philosophy, without voting funding for education itself, and follows the Bush doctrine of pushing federal money into the hands of the private and parochial sectors, one can only assume that he despises the teachers' unions as well.

Mark Kirk despises unions and has been all over the media accusing them of this, that, or the other thing. Mr. Kirk came up with the ridiculous accusation that we "imported" union workers from outside the 10th District to man the precincts during the November election. However, he was mute regarding the behavior of some of his poll

watchers, and he had no problem having his signs illegally posted on public thoroughfares throughout the district. He blames the unions for Detroit's failures and voted against any help for the industry. He has also voted against giving the individual the right to organize without employer interference; he has voted against worker safety, against miner safety, and against forced clean-up of toxic air in factories; and he basically has voted against OSHA, which was designed to protect you and me from abusive policies in the workplace.

Yes, I know unions are not the answer for everything, and they're certainly not perfect, but it's critical that we have some balance. Reasonable working conditions and reasonable pay on the job should be basic rights of every American, not just the bottom line for corporations as they aim to please Wall Street. One must look at the corporate structure in America to see that the Bush administration policies, of which Mr. Kirk is an integral part, have desperately failed this nation in their attempt to prop up the profits of American and global corporations.

Also, one must become very aware of Mr. Kirk's buzz words. When asked why he doesn't vote for this or that bill, he usually says something on this order: "Well, there was too much in there I couldn't vote for." "Too much pork." "We need a balanced budget." "We must be fiscally responsible." What a joke. His party's administration has given us the greatest federal deficit in our history. Mr. Kirk needs to be questioned as to why fiscal responsibility doesn't apply to his party's

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# *Kirk Votes Against House Auto Bailout Bill, Risking Millions of Jobs and a Depression*

Ignoring dire warnings from economists, Bush administration officials, and President-elect Barack Obama that failure to pass a bill to provide emergency loans to the nation's big three auto manufacturers would cause millions of additional job losses and lead to an even deeper recession, 10th district Congressman Mark Kirk voted against H. R. 732 on December 14, siding with all but 32 fellow House Republicans.

We would not have expected more from Kirk, who long ago proved that his primary interest is the advancement of his own political aspirations—not the welfare of the American people.

Even amid the current economic crisis, when elected officials should be doing everything possible to avert a full-scale depression, Kirk supported House Republicans intent on killing the auto bailout bill in furtherance of the larger goal of crippling organized labor. "The Republican opposition was clearly aimed at killing the United Auto Workers Union," reported the *Miami Herald* on December 13.

No thanks to Kirk, the bill to provide between \$15 and \$30 billion in loans to the nation's automobile manufacturers (a meager sum compared to the \$700 billion allocated to save teetering U.S. financial institutions) passed the House in a 237:170 vote. But Kirk's fellow Republicans still managed to kill it in the Senate, where Democrats failed to garner the 60 votes needed to prevent a Republican filibuster.

The Senate opposition to the bill was led by Republican Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, along with senators from other southern states (notably Bob Corker of Tennessee and Richard Shelby of Alabama) that are home to foreign (read: anti-union)



auto manufacturing facilities. Toyota, Mercedes, Hyundai, and Honda, for example, all have plants in Alabama. As the *Los Angeles Times* reported on December 18, "The foreign nonunion auto companies located in the South have a plan to reduce wages and benefits at their factories in the United States. And to do it, they need to destroy the United Auto Workers" (see "UAW Busting, Southern Style," <http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/commentary/la-oe-raynor18-2008dec18,0,4066838.story>).

The Republican senators were demanding that the U.S. automakers make deep cuts in wages and benefits to bring workers' compensation packages in line with those provided to U.S. workers employed by foreign automakers in the U.S. The Republicans were insisting that the cuts be made in 2009. Democrats and union negotiators had agreed to make the cuts, but not until 2011 when the United Auto Workers' current contract expires.

Republicans also opposed the bill because it included what they described as "unacceptable" environmental mandates for the Big Three U.S. automakers. Specifically, the House version of the bill

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## **Redefining the Center**

*by Steve Sheffey*

"The centre cannot hold"—William Butler Yeats

Mark Kirk said after his narrow victory that "the center held." One has to wonder if Kirk even knew he was quoting Yeats, let alone that he was implying that a Seals victory would have resulted in mere anarchy being loosed against the world. Or maybe Kirk thinks that he personifies the Second Coming (many of his supporters seem to think so).

But whether he knew it or not, as Kirk slouches toward his last term, he reminds us that thanks to years of right-wing propaganda, the best too often do lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity.

The right has managed to move the center of debate in this country, and we need to move it back. Where once we debated whether to ban guns, now we debate about trigger locks and waiting periods. Where once we debated about national health insurance, now we debate about portability of benefits. Where once we debated about taxing the rich, now we debate about whether to continue tax cuts for the rich. Truly the falcon cannot hear the falconer.

We may not get a complete ban on firearms, but we should be making the case that a complete ban on the sale, manufacture, distribution, and ownership of handguns is in the best interests of this country. If George Ryan was responsible for six deaths because of licensing corruption, we all have blood on our hands as a result of our willingness to tolerate private gun ownership. We should point out to conservatives who are so fond of reading the Constitution literally that unless they are part of a well-regulated militia, the

Second Amendment does not apply to them, and that the Second Amendment was originally intended as a safeguard against disarmament of the militia, not as a mandate for making firearms as accessible as candy.

We may not get guaranteed health insurance for everyone, but we should be making the case that adequate healthcare is a right, not a privilege. It is disgraceful that the wealthiest, most powerful country in the history of the world cannot take care of its own. As Illinois 5th Congressional District candidate Charlie Wheelan has pointed out, it is a historical accident that employers provide health insurance in this country. FDR imposed wage and price controls, and since employers could not raise wages, they competed by providing health insurance. The right to medical care should not come from the fortuity of having a certain employer, or even being employed. We deserve better, and we should demand it.

We may not get a truly progressive tax code, but we should be making the case that fairness demands that the wealthy pay not just more taxes, but proportionally more taxes. The tax code does not exist to make the world safe for plutocracy. We all need roads and infrastructure, defense and police, fire protection and garbage pick-up. The rich benefit more than anyone else from the infrastructure that allows them to prosper. Moreover, the marginal utility of money diminishes as the amount of money grows, so only with truly progressive taxation do we all pay our fair share.

The election of Barack Obama presents the perfect opportunity to redefine the national debate on these issues. It's up to us move the center back to the center, where it belongs.

# Republicans Still Don't Get It

by George Rosenblit

Now that we have all experienced the joy of witnessing the announcement of Barack Obama's electoral victory, we should take a moment to reflect on the enormous responsibilities that face him as our president-elect. He's preparing now to get a running head start on all that will face him as the 44th President of the United States.

Barack Obama plans to undo the harm that the Bush administration has perpetrated against us for the past eight years, and his transition team has already started to review at least 200 of Bush's Executive Orders to determine which should be nullified. This can be done immediately after Obama's inauguration, without congressional approval, "with the stroke of a pen." That's the easiest part, and it will produce fast results.

But the most urgent matter is our economic crisis. Here is some of the history that set the stage for our current financial problems. (See "The Subprime Mess and Phil Gramm: An Experiment in Deregulation," InjuryBoard.com, June 24, 2008.)

In 1933, soon after the 1929 stock market crash, Congress passed the Glass-Steagall Act to regulate banks and provide proper oversight to keep commercial banks that service consumers separate from investment banks that deal with speculative trading and mergers.

Then, in 1999, deregulation hit and oversight fell by the wayside. Congress passed the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, which allowed commercial banks, investment banks, and insurers to merge. Senator Phil Gramm (who recently claimed that our citizens hurt by the imploding economy were "whiners") was the driving force behind that Act. (Was it a coincidence that he had received over \$4.6 million in donations from the finance, insurance, and real estate industries over a decade?) After the Act passed, many mergers took place among banks and insurance and securities companies.

Gramm stirred the deregulation pot again when he surreptitiously included a 262-page amendment to the Commodity Futures Modernization Act that President Clinton and Congress were trying to pass in 2000, right after Bush's election as president, as part of a \$384 billion omnibus spending bill. The act exempted energy trading from oversight, enabling Enron's subsequent collapse. It also deregulated derivatives trading.

Without regulation of our financial markets, many lending institutions became greedy and enticed people to buy homes who could not afford to do so. The carrot was zero or very low down payments and interest-free periods. Then the demand for accelerated (high) monthly payments in accordance with the fine print in the mortgage documents took over.

As the new homeowners who could not afford the high mortgage payments defaulted, they stampeded to sell their homes for less than their purchase price, and some even left their keys and abandoned their homes. The housing bubble burst and the domino effect went into play. Homeowners became bankrupt. New housing construction dropped. And a number of simultaneous and consequential financial events happened.

Companies started downsizing, or they filed for bankruptcy. A credit crunch followed. Banks were in trouble. Some failed and some needed money and/or guarantees of government "umbrella" insurance. People lost their jobs. Ten million people are now unemployed. 1.2 million jobs were lost in 2008 alone, and those numbers keep increasing.

Robert Reich, advisor to Obama, calls it a "mini-depression"; others see the economy becoming even worse. Analysis of causes and solutions are complex. Reich's solution is to spend "a lot" more on infrastructure projects on top of a trillion dollar budget deficit – "repairing roads and bridges, levees and ports; investing in light rail, electrical grids and new sources of energy." In other words, to



provide jobs on a scale similar to Franklin Roosevelt's government-financed works projects during the Great Depression of the 1930s. (See Craig Roberts, "America's Economic Crisis," *CounterPunch*, November 1-15, 2008)

In their zeal for deregulation, the Republicans sowed the seeds of their own destruction.

They have tried for many years to cause the decline of the middle class, including unions. Without a viable middle class with disposable income, the markets shrink and businesses go bankrupt. Even though the stock market has taken a nosedive, Republicans still don't get it. Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY) spearheaded the vote in the Senate to defeat bridge loans to the auto industry, which would have caused massive unemployment among auto workers, auto dealerships, and parts suppliers. Millions more would be unemployed had Bush not authorized use of funds from the financial industry bailout package to tide over GM and Chrysler until March!

Everyone is affected—Republicans as well as Democrats, at all income levels. Common sense dictates that we should all stop playing politics as usual and join in a common effort to promote all the programs leading to the creation of jobs. Let your voice be heard and your votes follow suit, at every opportunity.

# The Great Distraction

by Lee Goodman

Anyone who thought the right wing political/money elite was going to quietly cede power for four to eight years should take a closer look at what the Great Illinois Distraction is doing to the entire nation's political agenda. Besides being amused, people in the other forty-nine states don't care who the governor of Illinois is or what he does. Most of the people in Illinois don't really care either, any more than they care whether the same political families that have neglected and plundered Illinois, Chicago, and Cook County for generations continue to do the same in perpetuity. So, if the people of this country aren't surprised or upset by politics as usual, we should ask who is it who is prompting the television networks to nurture this not-really-a-story as if some has-been athlete was driving a white Bronco at slow speeds on the expressway?

In just a few days, the president-elect will have the chance to slow the environmentally disastrous extraction of coal, uranium, oil sands, and other minerals. Some very powerful people don't want him to do anything. He will have the opportunity to halt the occupation of Iraq. Some very important people seem to have already convinced him not to be in any hurry. He will have the ability to direct government spending towards mass transit, wind energy, and lots of other things that seemed to interest him when he was a candidate. His economic plan appears to indicate that his main interest has shifted—now he mostly wants to build roads for cars.

The forces of sameness have been spending the days between the election and the inauguration convincing the candidate of change that he would be better off not tampering with stuff-as-usual. The Illinois governor is being held up to him as an example of what happens to meddlers and people who don't do as they are told by the people who are accustomed to doing the telling. To make the point that no one is beyond the reach of those who want no change, the scandal has been brought right to the door of the designated incoming chief of staff, like a horse's head under the sheets.



The reason this campaign of intimidation is working is that we, the people, play the parts as they are scripted for us. We express outrage at the same corruption that we laugh at with cynical pride as "just the way things are done." We applaud our state legislators for trashing the presumption of innocence and calling for the governor to leave without a trial. We ignore the obvious reality that most of the politicians who have been leading the chorus of condemnation have personal stakes in who the next senator and governor are and how they are chosen. And we overlook that if the charge against the governor is that he tried to make a trade for exercising his discretion, many of his critics are at least as guilty as the accused.

By letting ourselves be drawn into this classic American comedy, we forfeit the hope that the things that really need to be done will be done. And we allow the people whom we worked so hard to remove from positions of power to continue to wield their power in ways that are mostly unseen and beyond control.

We should have learned something from the impeachment of President Clinton. The Republicans did. They learned what works.

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## A Little Lost on Me

by Ellen Beth Gill

Shortly after Governor Blagojevich's arrest put the kibosh on his naming an Illinois senator, Illinois Republicans screamed and shouted about Blagojevich, and more particularly, Illinois Democrats' plan to delay work on a special election. Frankly, all the hysterics are lost on me.

The Downing Street Memo, the British memo that proved the Bush administration intentionally and knowingly lied about WMD in Iraq in order to start a war they pre-planned before 9/11, should have put an end to the Bush administration. It should have started an impeachment effort. It should have led to prosecutions of administration officials up to and including Bush and Cheney. All quiet from Republicans then. The mainstream media didn't care either. Both loved the war and neither cared much about the truth.

The investigation of the Plame leak should have continued until the party or parties responsible for treasonously outing an active field CIA agent were found. With Karl Rove in his sights, the great Patrick Fitzgerald simply gave up on that one without filing a criminal complaint, holding a preliminary hearing or obtaining additional discovery; and there was no screaming and shouting from the right. Fine by them.

The Department of Justice firing scandal that made possible illegal use of torture, stalled prosecutions of Abramoff, Ney and Cunningham, and pushed the politically-motivated investigation of

Don Siegelman, should have also sparked special investigators and special prosecutors, but Bush Attorney General appointee Mukasey said he wasn't all that interested (sort of like how Bush said he wasn't all that interested in capturing Osama bin Laden). Again, we heard no screaming and shouting from Republicans. In fact, Mark Kirk, along with the other House Republicans, mocked the importance of the matter when they very theatrically walked out of congressional contempt hearings.

So, with all that happened, and all the terrible and very real consequences for Americans that they gladly ignored, including the needless deaths of over 4000 American soldiers, all the present long-winded and fake emotional pleas from Illinois Republicans for "justice" are a little lost on me.

What it does say to me is that the Obama administration must continue to press for justice on these three issues. Some say it would not be good for the country, but I think that is nonsense. It would be both legally and politically foolish to allow Republican politicization of investigations and prosecutions, or the lack thereof, to consume our new administration. It would hand Republicans a disingenuous and undeserved platform of reform they intend to use to stop the much needed change we all fought so hard to achieve. It would also allow the perpetrators of very serious crimes to get away

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## 2009 Resolutions *continued from page 1*

planet Earth as we know it teeter in the balance. We vacillate between despair and determination. Let us choose hope; let us roll up our sleeves and each do our part. Tackling climate change, restoring our ecology and our economy, will take time, restraint, sacrifice, and love. We have not a moment to lose.

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

**It is my wish for the New Year:** that no one should die before their time, that no one's future potential is snuffed out by an untimely death.

~*Richard Keller, MD, Lake County Coroner*



**My New Year's resolution** is to find a Democratic candidate for Lake County Sheriff!

~*Mary Ellen Vanderverter, Lake County Recorder of Deeds*

**In light of the recent events** surrounding the Governor and the ongoing chaos in Springfield—my New Year's Resolution is to help educate voters and build public pressure to implement SERIOUS campaign finance reform in Illinois. We have to stop putting politics above good policy at all levels of government in Illinois, and I believe campaign contribution and spending limits will help elected officials stay focused on the work needed to meet our very significant challenges. I look forward to taking a lead on the issue with the Illinois Campaign for Political Reform and my colleagues, but we need the public to demand these actions or the leaders will not take this



seriously. Let's resolve that 2009 is the year for campaign finance reform in Illinois!!!!

~*State Representative Kathy Ryg, 59th District*



**My hopes for 2009** are universal healthcare, affordable high-quality education for all, peace in the Middle East, and that every man, woman, and child in America will buy a copy of my book, *God Has Brought Me Laughter*, available on amazon.com for only \$9.95.

~*Steve Sheffey, Tenth Dems U Professor; Democratic and pro-Israel activist*

**I predict** the Illinois House and Senate will work together in harmony and peace with Acting Governor Quinn.

I predict President Obama will take the steps necessary to turn around the economy and climate disruption, making him a very effective and respected world leader.

I predict the Illinois General Assembly will pass campaign finance reform this next session.

~*State Representative Karen May, 58th District*



**I'm sure all of us were saddened** and outraged by the recent reported abuse of the highest office in Illinois for personal gain. Democrats were particularly stung by this betrayal of public trust. Let's resolve in 2009 to put the Democratic Party in the forefront of the fight against political corruption in Illinois.

Happy New Year!

~*Bill Crowley, 10th District State Democratic Committeeman*



## Great Illusionist *continued from page 2*

war in Iraq at the cost of \$12 billion per month, a number he usually leaves out when talking about the need for less government. He's very much a "we have to fight them there so we don't have to fight them here" kind of a guy—so we can't count those expenditures when attempting to balance our federal budget.

When it comes to healthcare, yes, he voted for the the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)—finally, after so many revisions and cuts—but I'm sure he's fully aware that the bill expires in March of 2009 if not reauthorized. His healthcare "ideas" include touting the notion of taking COBRA with you from job to job if there is no other source of insurance. He forgets to mention that if you become unemployed, you can in no way afford COBRA. He also voted against reimporting drugs from other countries and against Medicare's negotiating with the drug companies for better prices for its beneficiaries, yet the VA has done a great job in negotiating prices with its medical providers. Could Mr. Kirk be protecting the interests of the pharmaceutical companies and the healthcare industry in general? He's all about healthcare savings accounts, tax cuts, more tax cuts, and tax credits—the problem is those so-called breaks are not affordable for many and cannot make up what is lost by not having insurance. He has called for privatizing Social Security and Medicare and many other government programs. Who is he protecting there? Just think where we'd be now if we'd privatized all of our retirement funds. It's bad enough that many of us have lost a

good portion of our accounts as a result of the trickle-down mentality of the Bush administration.

Ultimately, the economic mess our country is now in basically rests on the shoulders of the Mark Kirks in the Bush administration. Having had several homes over the past fifteen years, I can tell you that while Clinton's policies were not perfect, and yes, he allowed the combining of investment houses with mortgage companies and banks, when I bought a home in the nineties, I could not get an interest only, no-doc loan. It was unheard of. It was not until the deregulation, anything-goes mentality of the Bush years that I could have pretty much written my own mortgage for my next house if I chose to. Luckily, I decided against it. However, as an investor, I could see the writing on the wall as the subprime toxic loans were packaged and sold all over the globe as AAA investments. The result was inevitable and the fallout will last for many, many years to come.

Mark Kirk is an anti-regulation, pro-corporation, anti-individual, pro-privatization, Bush-style conservative dressed up to look like a moderate. He's not a moderate.

So what's his future?

He could move up to bigger and better things or he will run again in the 10th. We must do a better job of holding his feet to the fire next time.

## TDU Back in Session

# Farewell 2008: It Was a Fun, Scary, and Memorable Political Year

**Date:** Thursday, January 8, 7:00 p.m.

**Location:** Deerfield Public Library, 920 Waukegan Road, Deerfield

**Instructor:** Neil Steinberg, *Chicago Sun-Times* columnist

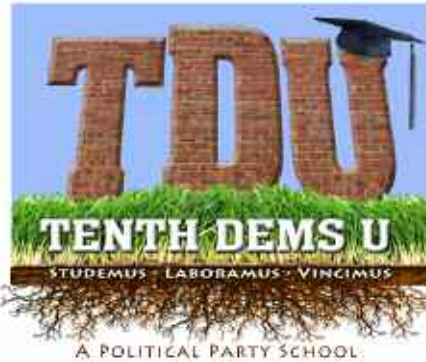


*Neil Steinberg*

You have to go back a long way to find a political year as interesting as 2008. Obama, McCain, Palin, Biden, Hillary, Jeremiah Wright, William Ayers, Lipstick on a Pig, Hussein, Hockey Moms, Joe the Plumber, and...of course...Blagojevich.

*Chicago Sun-Times* columnist Neil Steinberg has been watching it all and will share with Tenth Dems University his unique perspective on the year that was,

and the year that is fast approaching. Besides writing a regular column for the *Sun-Times* for over a decade, Steinberg is the author of six books. He is also a 10th District resident.



**Tenth Dems U is free, and open to all. Advance registration is not required, but it does help us to know how many will be in attendance.**

**To pre-register, go to [www.TenthDemsU.org](http://www.TenthDemsU.org).**

## Paul Green Featured at Tenth Dems University

*by Carol Hillsberg*

Viewing the recent economic collapse as the maraschino cherry on the sundae of the Democratic victory on November 4 is a compelling metaphor and an interesting spin on our recent economic disasters. Roosevelt University Professor Paul Green, director of Roosevelt's Institute for Politics, and political analyst at WGN radio, asserted that the double whammy of the low approval rating of President Bush and the dire condition of the economy led to the gigantic Democratic victory. Just a little over a year after his pre-election analysis in November 2007, Professor Green returned to Tenth Dems University on December 2 with his analysis of the 2008 election results.

Explaining to the more than 100 Tenth Dems who turned out at the Northbrook Public Library to take his course on how traditionally red and blue states performed in this year's election, Professor Green invoked his alphabetic representation of the U.S.'s political geography. The Democratic blue states lie on the East and West coasts and connect in the Midwest, creating an H. The Republican L consists of the red states in the southern Midwest and mountain states, extending into the Southeast. This year, the Republican L was shattered when the Obama/Biden ticket won Florida, North Carolina, Virginia, Indiana, and Colorado.

The first Mayor Daley stated that you win elections by addition, and this year the numbers added up for the Democrats. The biggest change in 2008 was that nonwhite voters increased from 23 percent in 2004 to 26 percent. Although the youth vote only increased from 17 percent to 18 percent, this demographic voted overwhelmingly for Obama. In addition, the suburbs were a Democratic stronghold, accounting for victory in Pennsylvania and Virginia. The Hispanic vote increased from three percent twenty years ago to nine percent in 2008, tipping New Mexico and Colorado for the Democrats. These demographic shifts, plus the extraordinary money and manpower devoted to the ticket, led to a seven percent margin of victory. It definitely added up.

The conventions each had their moments, and Professor Green witnessed both. What resonated the most for him in Denver was the uncomplaining crowd waiting four to five hours to get into Invesco field to hear Barack Obama's acceptance speech. Most memorable to him from the Republican convention was Governor Palin's acceptance speech. In this, her first foray into national politics, she was, as Professor Green put it, the good food at the buffet that heretofore had nothing to offer.

Paul Green posited that President-elect Obama might disappoint the ultra-liberals as he is center-left and cautious. As a Hyde Parker and former teacher at the University of Chicago Law School, Obama likes discourse. Since we are facing the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression, he has assembled an all-star foreign policy team, led by Hillary Clinton, so that he can focus on the economy.

Turning to state politics, Professor Green quipped that Illinois is now so blue that it needs an anti-depressant, hence the overwhelming Democratic victory. For example, Melissa Bean won in the district that the right-wing Republican Phil Crane used to control. Mark Kirk, one of the few winning Republicans, lost in Lake County and barely won in Cook County. However, Professor Green warned that if the Democratic Party implodes in Illinois, it could lose its dominance.

Professor Green's Tenth Dems U appearance took place before the appalling and surreal December 9 arrest of Governor Blagojevich. This sequence of events demonstrated yet again that prognosticating politics in this state is risky at best, as Illinois politics and politicians careen from the sublime—our president-elect, to the ridiculous—our governor.



*Prof. Paul Green shares the lectern with a cardboard Obama likeness at his December Tenth Dems U class.*

## Tenth Dems Presidential Inaugural Ball

Tuesday, January 20th, 2009

**SAVE THE DATE!**

Tenth Dems is planning an Inaugural Ball that will be open to all, family-friendly for older children who want to experience this historic occasion, and, most of all, fun.

Location and time will be announced when confirmed.

Contact:

[info@tenthdems.org](mailto:info@tenthdems.org) or call 847-266-VOTE

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## Electoral College *continued from page 1*

that gave us a clue.' When I served as the Chair of the House Judiciary Committee, I had the opportunity to work directly with Barack on legislation. He is the kind of leader who brings unusual intellectual and emotional intelligence, political savvy, integrity, values, goals, and vision. Many politicians have some of those attributes, but they're rare to have in one person. Barack is that person. That's why I was happy to spend nine very cold days in Iowa before the caucuses. I am glad to call Barack Obama a friend but will be even more so to call him Mr. President," Gash said.

Nineteen of 21 members of the Illinois Electoral College are, like Gash, district electors, who represent specific congressional districts in the state; and there are two at-large electors. All 21 Illinois electors cast their votes for Obama for President of the United States and Joe Biden for Vice President. These votes now have been signed, sealed, and certified. They were delivered to the President of the Senate, the Archivist of the United States, and other designated Federal and State officials in plenty of time to meet the December 24 statutory deadline.

On January 8, Congress will meet in joint session to count the Electoral College votes. On that day, Illinois' 21 votes will be officially counted for Obama and Biden.



*Hon. Lauren Beth Gash casts her Electoral College ballot for Barack Obama and Joe Biden.*

And then it will be official that Barack Obama is the President-elect—but only until January 20. On that day, he will take the oath of office and become the 44th President of the United States. Officially.

## Congress Watch *continued from page 3*

included a provision that would have prevented U.S. automobile manufacturers from legally challenging state laws on greenhouse gas emission standards. In light of Kirk's long-standing claims to being a great supporter of environmental reforms—claims we've always viewed with a healthy dose of skepticism—his refusal to support the auto bailout bill seems hypocritical—although not the least bit surprising. More often than not, Kirk's votes belie his so-called principles. His opposition to this bill was no exception.

Illinois Democratic Senator Dick Durbin supported the bill and was a central figure in attempting to negotiate a compromise in the Senate. Following the failure to reach an agreement with Senate Republicans, Durbin said: "It's going to be hard for a lot of [members of Congress] to explain how just a few weeks ago they voted for \$700 billion to bail out the biggest banks in America...but couldn't bring themselves to be concerned enough to help the autoworkers and give them a vote today. I think this is tragic...I thought we owed our best efforts to save an industry...that so many workers depend on."

At least 10th District residents have one representative in Congress whom we can count on to consistently represent our values.

## Lost on Me *continued from page 5*

with all of them and encourage others to try again one day, much as the failure to prosecute Iran-Contra all the way up to the top probably inspired Cheney, Rove, and Bush to do what they did to us and to the world.