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My First Experience as a Candidate



Marla Sundh

by Marla Sundh

Marla Sundh is a first-time candidate who is running for Vernon Township Trustee on the Vernon Democrats for Change slate.

First, let me say that I never had any intention of running for office. I have been happy working behind the scenes, laboring to help others achieve their goals for the betterment of all of us.

When I was approached about running for the position of Vernon Township trustee, I thought long and hard about whether I had the stamina, and whether I had anything to offer as a candidate. I thought about my job as a property manager and reasoned that if I could do that type of job, working in a township post should be a natural progression. So I signed on.

It has been an exhilarating campaign so far. And as time has gone on, my commitment to serving has grown, and I am all the more committed to helping our team prevail.

I thought I'd share with *Tenth News* readers some of what I have learned through this experience so far.

To run for office, a sturdy pair of shoes is a top priority. I pounded the pavement for Dan Seals and other candidates, but when YOU are the candidate, the amount of time spent going door to door is incredible. You must take the opportunity to meet the electorate face to face and hear their concerns, or else how can you effectively represent people in your community? Go, get the shoes. Flip flops just will not suffice.

Don't make too many social plans. You won't have much spare time for "hanging out" with friends. The clock is ticking, and you have to

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Tenth News

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The Big Pharma Tango

by George Rosenblit

Note: Big Pharma refers to pharmaceutical companies with revenues in excess of \$3 billion, and/or R&D expenditures in excess of \$500 million.

For a list of Pharma companies and 2006 Revenues, Healthcare R&D Expenditures, Net Income/Loss, and Number of Employees, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_pharmaceutical_companies

It takes two to tango, and Big Pharma has plenty of willing partners.

The pharmaceutical companies have a profit motive like any other viable enterprise, and they are entitled to make a profit. Their pricing, however, can be reduced by negotiations for large volume purchases, and any entity serving our healthcare needs must be allowed to do so.

The Congress Tango

Healthcare providers, such as HMOs and insurance companies, can and do negotiate for low prescription drug costs. Yet, our government does not negotiate costs on behalf of Medicare beneficiaries to preserve the Medicare trust funds and lessen the burden on seniors. Congress introduced Medicare Part D in 2005, which was supposed to reduce drug costs for seniors. Instead, it was a boon to Pharma because of the "doughnut hole" that was built into the plan by Congress.

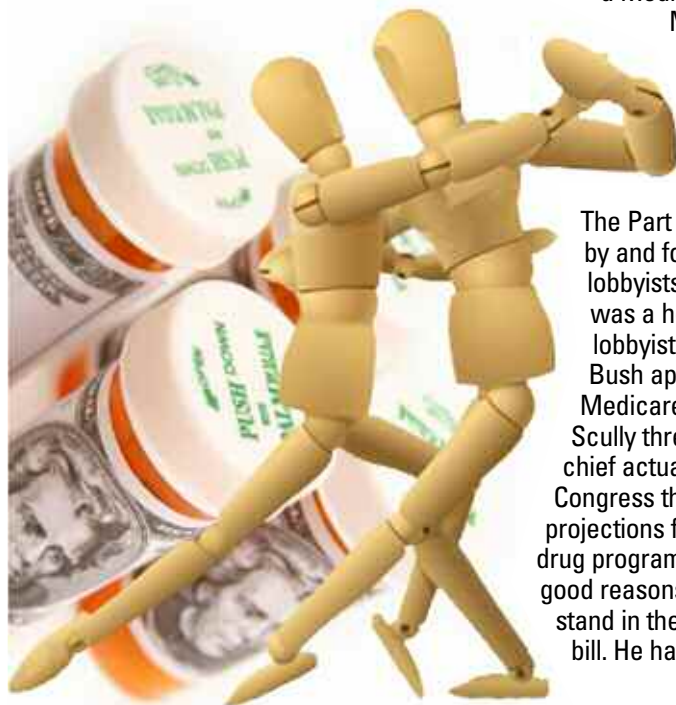
Here's how it works. After beneficiaries meet their deductible (which is determined by the provider's plan they choose), they pay 25 percent of drug costs until their drug bill reaches \$2,250 in a year. Then, they are confronted

with the hole. They must pay total costs until they've spent \$3,600 out of pocket. After that, the benefits kick in again and cover 95 percent of the costs for the rest of the year. So, they must pay a total of \$5,850 before being eligible for the 95 percent benefit. (See "How to Choose

a Medicare Drug Plan," Martinez & Leuck, *The Wall Street Journal*, October 4, 2005.)

The Revolving Door Tango

The Part D bill was written by and for drug company lobbyists. Thomas Scully was a hospital industry lobbyist before President Bush appointed him to run Medicare. In that job, Mr. Scully threatened to fire his chief actuary if he told Congress the truth about cost projections for the Medicare drug program. Mr. Scully had good reasons not to let anything stand in the way of the drug bill. He had received a



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Mark Kirk is a Funny Guy...



by Kim Foster

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: THE DIFFICULTIES OUR COUNTRY AND OUR WORLD ARE CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING HAVE MADE ME PAUSE AND REFLECT, ESPECIALLY SINCE THE POLICIES WHICH LED TO OUR CURRENT SITUATION WERE ENACTED ON MY WATCH.

I WANT TO APOLOGIZE FOR MY IGNORANCE. FROM VOTING TO ALLOW SPYING ON AMERICAN

CITIZENS, TO COMPLAINING ABOUT THE STIMULUS AT \$40 BILLION WHEN I VOTED FOR FUNDING THE IRAQ WAR AT \$650 BILLION, I HAVE FAILED TO REPRESENT MY CONSTITUENTS' INTERESTS. I HAVE CONSISTENTLY VOTED TO PROTECT GUN RIGHTS WHILE HYPOCRITICALLY TOUTING MY RECORD AS ONE OF PUTTING

CHILDREN FIRST. I HAVE CLAIMED A PRO-WOMEN'S RIGHTS PLATFORM YET VOTED AGAINST THE LILY LED BETTER ACT. LET'S FACE IT FOLKS, I'VE BEEN OFF BASE FOR MOST OF THE LAST EIGHT YEARS.

WELL, NO MORE FOLKS. I WANT TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE WITH MY IDIOCY, ASK YOUR

FORGIVENESS, AND ASSURE YOU THAT I WILL NO LONGER BEHAVE IRRESPONSIBLY. NOW IS THE TIME FOR US TO COME TOGETHER AS A NATION. I DON'T KNOW IF THE PRESIDENT'S PLAN WILL WORK BUT I HAVE RESOLVED TO DO EVERYTHING IN MY POWER TO HELP OUR PRESIDENT SO WE CAN GET OUR COUNTRY BACK ON THE RIGHT TRACK.

Tango *continued from page 1*

special ethics waiver from his superiors allowing him to negotiate for future jobs with lobbying and investment firms—firms that had a strong financial stake in the form of the bill—while he was still in public office. He became a lobbyist for drug companies.

Also, Representative Billy Tauzin (R-LA), the bill's point man on Capitol Hill, quickly left Congress once the bill was passed to become president of Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, the powerful drug industry lobby. (See "The K Street Prescription," Paul Krugman, *The New York Times*, January 20, 2006.)

The Generic Tango

Major lobbying by Big Pharma has interfered with the availability of cheaper drugs. One method is to make small changes in drugs and then to ask Congress to extend patents, thereby blocking generics. In 1984, Congress passed the Hatch-Waxman Act, which established procedures to encourage generic companies to challenge patents before their expiration. But in recent years, generic companies have increasingly resolved such challenges through settlements in which they receive cash or lucrative licensing and marketing agreements. Such settlements restrict competition at the expense of consumers, whose access to lower-priced generic drugs is delayed, sometimes for many years.

So, Big Pharma has paid manufacturers of generics to tango—to delay introduction of generic drugs. Billions of dollars are at stake. Generics are 30 to 80 percent cheaper than brand-name drugs, according to the Generic Pharmaceutical Association. (See "Lobbying Stalls Generic Drug Legislation," *The Associated Press*, November 13, 2007.)

The Physician Tango

We have all seen the fancy Pharma pens, memo pads, and coffee mugs at doctors' offices, and many of us have received free drug samples. Some doctors even receive a significant portion of their income from consulting arrangements with drug and device makers. Others take regular vacations and golfing trips that are paid for by Pharma. And Pharma also provides free instruction on drugs that are not adequately addressed in medical school; the problem is that Pharma has not been totally forthcoming about side effects. Free samples tend to "push" high-priced drugs for Big Pharma even though they are no better than lower priced drugs. These practices seriously undermine good medical care, hurt patients medically and in their wallets, and should be banned.

Surveys show that most doctors do not believe that these gifts influence their own medical decisions, although most believe that they do affect their colleagues' medical judgment.

Dr. David Kessler, dean of the University of California at San Francisco

School of Medicine, and former Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration, stated that, "Everyone knows that drug marketing is out of control." (See "Doctors Urge Ban on Gifts from Drug Makers," *The New York Times*, Gardiner Harris, January 24, 2006.)

The FDA Tango

Scientists employed by the federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are often subjected to inappropriate political and commercial interference that compromises their mission to protect public health and safety. Big Pharma is the guiding hand. Science, and not greed, must be the controlling factor.

In a survey conducted by both the Union of Concerned Scientists and the Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility of 997 FDA staff members, about 17 percent of respondents said they had been asked by "FDA decision makers," for nonscientific reasons, to exclude or alter technical information or their conclusions in an FDA document. More than 40 percent said they knew of cases where political appointees had inappropriately injected themselves into FDA determinations or actions, and 47 percent said they knew of situations where "commercial interests" (Big Pharma?) improperly tried to have an FDA conclusion reversed, withdrawn, or modified. The FDA has also been accused of suppressing and seeking retribution against FDA experts concerned about potential suicide risks associated with antidepressants and the heart attack risks of the withdrawn painkiller Vioxx.

Among the survey's other findings is that only 51 percent of the scientists felt FDA was acting effectively to protect public health; 40 percent said they could not publicly express concerns about public health for fear of retaliation; nearly 70 percent said they do not believe the FDA has sufficient resources to effectively perform its mission; 40 percent described morale as poor or extremely poor; and only 32 percent said the agency is moving in the right direction.

As Senator Charles Grassley (R-IA) aptly stated, "The leaders of the FDA would be well-served to listen to what the FDA scientists are saying in this survey." (See "Survey Says Scientists Feel Pressured, Which FDA Denies," Robert Cohen, *The New Jersey Star Ledger*, July 21, 2006.)

The Tax Loophole Tango

If President Obama, with the cooperation of Congress, would close tax loopholes, a sizable amount of money would be made available to help defray costs of stimulus programs.

A case in point is the tax breaks available to pharmaceutical companies through the American Jobs Creation Act signed into law by President Bush in October 2004. It allows any company with profits in foreign countries a one-year window in which it can return profits to the U.S. at a 5.25 percent tax rate, compared to the standard 35 percent rate. Pharmaceutical companies can easily move profits from

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Mark Kirk Happy to Help Mortgage Lenders

Not Interested in Helping Families Save Their Homes

Republican Congressman Mark Kirk has eagerly come to the aid of the banks and mortgage lenders who created the housing crisis that shattered the world's economy. Without blinking, he supported the government bailout of teetering financial institutions. It's also fair to say he helped create the crisis in the first place by supporting the anti-regulation movement that allowed Wall Street insiders to enrich themselves while destroying their firms and, in the process, the world's financial infrastructure.

But now, given the chance to assist the real victims of the credit crisis—homeowners facing foreclosure—Kirk isn't the least bit willing to provide assistance. After opposing every piece of legislation aimed at mitigating the fallout of the housing meltdown (see "Mark Kirk, We Have a Problem," *Tenth News*, May 2008, http://www.tenthdems.org/newsletters/0805_nl.pdf, and "Mark Kirk Votes Against Victims of Sub-Prime Mortgage Crisis," *Tenth News*, August 2008, http://www.tenthdems.org/newsletters/0806_nl.pdf), Kirk joined all but seven other House Republicans on March 5 in voting against the Helping Families Save Their Homes Act of 2009 (HR 1106).

HR 1106, still awaiting passage in the Senate, authorizes bankruptcy court judges to modify the terms of mortgages on primary residences for homeowners in Chapter 13 bankruptcy proceedings. HR 1106 also permits the courts to restructure mortgage debt by: reducing the principal owed; extending repayment periods; reducing interest rates; and prohibiting, reducing, or delaying future interest rate increases. In the upside-down legislative scheme that exists today, in which financial breaks are an exclusive right of the rich, bankruptcy law already permits such restructuring for vacation homes, luxury yachts,



and private jets—but not for primary residences. "This [imbalance] must be rectified," Representative Alcee Hastings (D-FL) told the House on February 26.

Taking their cues from the banking industry lobbyists who fund their campaigns, Republicans have presented a number of fallacious arguments to justify their opposition to the bill. At a Town Hall Meeting in Waukegan on February 7, Kirk said he opposed Helping Families Save Their Homes Act of 2009 because it would cause banks to stop lending. Has he not noticed that banks have already stopped lending?

Presenting the Republican case against the bill on the House floor on February 26, Representative Virginia Fox (R-NC) said, "We are continually punishing the people who play by the rules [the 94 percent of homeowners who continue to make their mortgage payments] and rewarding those who don't." Fox's logic makes an excellent case for not bailing out financial institutions like AIG and Citigroup, whose evasion of the rules and principles of sound lending and investing created the crisis. Negating their own logic, Fox and Kirk voted to use billions of taxpayer dollars to prevent Wall Street firms from suffering the consequences of their irresponsible actions.

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The Future of Liberalism

by Steve Sheffey

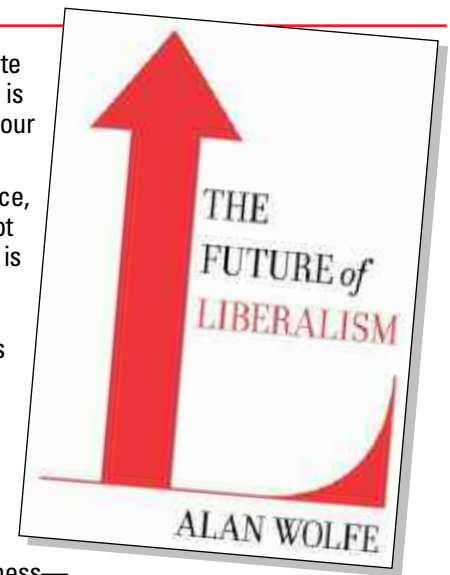
Looking to settle in with a good book? I'd recommend *The Future of Liberalism*, by Alan Wolfe (Alfred A. Knopf, New York: 2009, 334 pages). Wolfe is Professor of Political Science and Director of the Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life at Boston College. Wolfe's book traces the history of liberalism from the Enlightenment to the present day, explaining what liberalism is, why it is relevant today, and how liberalism can help us solve today's problems.

The book's overview of political thought through the centuries is intrinsically interesting, but Wolfe also provides practical insights for today's world. Wolfe approvingly quotes historians Neel Jumanville and Kevin Mattson: "The term *liberalism* should be championed today and reinvigorated as a source of pride and a reminder of Americans' connection to basic values that stretch back centuries. To avoid the moniker is to run from the past, and liberals have no reason to do so."

According to Wolfe, liberalism is defined by a set of seven dispositions toward the world:

1. A disposition to grow—We are products of our culture more than creatures of nature, and we are not destined by forces beyond our control to live lives whose outcome we cannot influence.
2. A sympathy for equality—Inequality, even if it benefits some people economically, imposes huge costs socially.
3. A preference for realism—Let the imagination soar, but keep politics and policy close to the ground.

4. An inclination to deliberate—Liberal proceduralism is important to maintaining our democracy.
5. A commitment to tolerance, even for those who do not tolerate you—Liberalism is in favor of freedom for religion, not just freedom from religion. Liberalism's enemy is not religion but religious oppression; and its friend is not skepticism but freedom, including religious freedom.
6. An appreciation of openness—Open government and freedom of speech are essential.
7. A taste for governance—Better to accept government and want to see it improve than reject its importance and preside over its ineffectiveness. As Wolfe points out, "From a liberal perspective, conservatives cannot govern for the same reason that vegetarians cannot prepare a world-class boeuf bourguignon; if you believe what you are called upon to do is wrong, you are not likely to do it very well."



Liberalism has a strong intellectual foundation. By reading this book and reacquainting yourself with the ideas that created liberalism, you

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The Story of the Seven Slates (plus 1)

by Adrienne Kirshbaum

Once upon a time, in a district not so very far away, there were no Democratic slates. Elections came and went, and nobody ever put together a slate of Democrats to run for township office. The sad truth was, there were not many Democrats living in this district, and the Republican majority had ruled the area for so long that nobody really believed anyone else could win an election.

But years went by, and the district began to change. Little by little, many people who moved to the district from the great city to the south called themselves Democrats. And the townships within the district began to become more evenly divided between parties. In some places, the Democrats even began to outnumber the Republicans.

And so, in this the ninth year of the twenty-first century, in the 10th Congressional District of the State of Illinois, there are no fewer than seven Democratic slates running for township office, and another slate running in one of the municipalities.

This is such positive news for all those who call themselves Democrats that we wanted to tell you the story. We hope you will support these candidates by helping them get out the vote. If you live in a township where a Democratic slate is running, join the candidates to knock on doors or make phone calls. You can make a difference by telling your neighbors about their excellent qualifications. If you live in a township where no Democratic slate is on the ballot, your help will be welcome in one of the townships in the following list.

Moraine Township Democratic Organization

Supervisor – Mari Barnes
Clerk – Ellen Gussin
Trustees – Dwayne Douglas Margoth Moreno
 Bryna Gamson Jackie Schechter

Democrats of Northfield Township

Supervisor – Karen Nystrom
Clerk – Laura Fine
Trustees – Carol Blustein Karen McCormick
 Catherine Caporusso Mary Reynolds
Collector – Doug Gerleman

Palatine Township Democratic Organization

Supervisor – Duncan Swenson
Highway Commissioner – Joe Gump
Park Commissioner – Dexter Strokes
Trustees – Beth Siela Marcin Jan Wood
 Hal Snyder

Vernon Township Democratic Organization

Township Supervisor – Sam Flint
Township Assessor – Peter Hopkins
Township Clerk – Glenn Stier
Highway Commissioner – Michael Lofstrom
Trustees – Phil Hirsh Akrom Hossain
 Cassandra Horvath Marla Sundh

Waukegan Township Slate

Supervisor – Patricia Jones
Clerk – Rose Staben
Assessor – Pat Morris
Highway Commissioner – Michael Hewitt
Trustees – Jeff McBride Katherine Rothwell-Francis
 Percy Johnson Charles “Chuck” Willms

West Deerfield Township Democratic Organization

Supervisor – Julie Morrison
Clerk – Roberta Boudreau
Assessor – Thomas Healy
Trustees – Ron Levitsky Rob Rosenbacher
 Betty O’Shaughnessy Ron Schwartz

Wheeling Township Democratic Organization

Township
Trustees – Melanie Schikore Bob Jostes
 Renee Kaufman Shapiro Brian Koppe

Waukegan Municipal Slate

Mayor – Richard Hyde
Clerk – Wayne Motley
Treasurer – John Roger Schwab
Alderman, Ward 2 – Thomas Koncan, Jr.

It’s not too late. Election Day is April 7, and the slates will be working hard this week to get their message out. For more information, or to sign up, call Tenth Dems at 847-266-VOTE or contact us at volunteers@TenthDems.org. We need your help to make sure this year’s elections are a success story, and not just a fairy tale!

Candidate *continued from page 1*

make the most of the time available to get your message across.

Get used to people looking at you in public places. I have learned not to go out of the house without makeup and nicely coiffed hair. It is disconcerting when people at the grocery store look at you, trying to remember where they’ve seen you before, and you want to look your best.

Raising money is one of the hardest things a candidate has to do. Asking people for contributions in a difficult economy made me uncomfortable, but I am learning that I should not be afraid to ask – people can always say no.

The generosity of other Democrats has been a wonder to experience firsthand.

Driving through the community seeing your name and/or photo on a yard sign is also a startling feeling. But you’ll get used to it and pretty soon you know you belong there amongst the other signs.

The best thing about running for office has been seeing the positive reaction from friends and colleagues, and the willingness of others to roll up their sleeves for our common cause. I’ve met so many new people I have come to value, and that is a precious gift at any time in life.

After April 7, I’d like to write another article about this experience. Hopefully, it will be about how it feels to win an election.

Mayor Hartstein Endorses Democrats For Change Slate In Vernon Township

Elliott Hartstein, who serves as Mayor of Buffalo Grove, has announced his strong support for the entire Democrats for Change slate of candidates for Vernon Township. Hartstein stated, "As someone who appreciates the significance of having top-notch people in all of the taxing bodies that serve our area, I feel compelled as a citizen of Vernon Township to lend my support and unqualified strong endorsement to the entire Vernon Democrats for Change slate of candidates for Vernon Township."

Mayor Hartstein went on to point out that based on extended conversations on multiple occasions with the individuals on the slate, he was "seriously impressed with the caliber, intelligence, background and experience of each and every candidate on the slate, ranging from Supervisor candidate Sam Flint to Assessor candidate Peter Hopkins, Highway Commissioner candidate Mike Lofstrum, Clerk candidate Glenn Stier, and Trustee candidates Phil Hirsh, Marla Sundh, Cassie Horvath, and Akrom Hossain." Mayor Hartstein noted that Supervisor candidate Flint is a Ph.D. University of Chicago Professor of Public Management who previously served in state government as a procurement officer who reduced taxpayers' expenditures by millions of dollars in that capacity and that Assessor candidate Hopkins is a certified real estate appraiser with over 23 years of appraisal experience.

Mayor Hartstein noted that, in fact, all of the slate candidates have impressive professional experience that would enhance township governance. He pointed out that "though Vernon Township is not overly visible to many residents, it is a taxing body that assesses taxes that appear on all of our property tax bills for township services, including such services as road maintenance, tax assessments, and general assistance." He went on to say, "That dictates that we have people in office like the Vernon Democrats for Change who are committed to fiscal responsibility, accountability, and transparency." He said that one example of the responsiveness of the slate to these challenging economic times is their commitment to roll back recently adopted salary increases to 2008 levels.

Mayor Hartstein urged all citizens "to make a concerted effort to come out to vote for this tremendous team to serve our township." He pointed out that the slate candidates are the top names on the ballot for each Vernon Township office and that you can learn more about the entire slate on their web page at vernondemocratsforchange.com. He urged voters to lend support to the slate and to encourage their friends and neighbors to vote for the entire Democrats for Change slate.

Local Elections and Party Affiliation: *Knowledge is Power*

Everyone who votes in a primary in Illinois must, by law, declare his or her party affiliation in order to receive a primary election ballot. That information is a part of the public record. If you would like information about the primary voting records of the candidates on your election ballot, e-mail info@tenthdems.org.

Why would you want this information?

If all else were equal between two school board candidates, for example, many of us would vote for the Democrat, because that person is more likely to share our values about education. In local elections, however, most of the candidates on your ballot will be listed without party identification. There is no way to tell if you are voting for a hard-core Republican over a solid Democrat. But if you know the candidates' party affiliations, you have one more bit of information to use in making your voting decisions.

Here's a second reason. Republicans have long controlled many public offices throughout the 10th District. These township, municipal, school board, park board, and library board offices have been a good training ground for their candidates. Today's library board member will acquire some name recognition and some skills at being a public servant and will be better equipped to be tomorrow's Republican county board or state representative candidate. If all else were equal, wouldn't it be better if Democrats were obtaining those skills?

If you are interested in receiving this information, here is what we need from you:

- 1) Your street address, including city and zip code (for example: 1234 Sunny Street, Waukegan 60085). If we have your address, we can look up who is on your ballot.
- 2) The county you live in.
- 3) Your name.
- 4) Send your request via e-mail to info@tenthdems.org. The information will be e-mailed to you as soon as possible.

This offer applies to all Lake County residents, and all Cook County residents living within the 10th Congressional District.

Remember, turnout for local elections is often extremely low. Some races could be decided by a vote or two. So, regardless of who you vote for, be sure to vote.

Early voting runs through April 2. Election day is Tuesday, April 7.



At the Vernon Public Library, the Tenth Dems "Let's Talk Politics" session may have officially concluded, but the conversation continues. For details on the next Tenth Dems "Let's Talk Politics" session, see the box on page 8.

A Day Without Water

by Debra Shore

Reprinted from the *Huffington Post*, with permission of the author.

Since March 22 was World Water Day, let's conduct a thought experiment: Imagine a day without water. Brush your teeth in the morning with toothpaste and saliva (No rinsing!). No shower, no bath, no washing your face. No flushing the toilet. No coffee or tea. No pop, no milk, no juice (the largest ingredient in all these? Water). No chats by the water cooler. No shampoo at the gym. No rocks for the Scotch, no dip in the pool. You get my drift?

Our dependence on water links us—happily, mysteriously—with much of the rest of creation. The very fiber of our being is, in fact, liquid—we humans are approximately 60 percent water by weight. Regarded this way, we are ambulatory water vessels! While we can live for a month or so without food, we can survive a mere five to seven days without water. And unlike oil and other fossil fuels, there are no substitutes for freshwater.

So why are we so cavalier about the single element upon which our lives utterly depend? I had a friend who lived for a time in Santa Fe. She kept a bucket in the shower and captured the water as she waited for it to warm up enough to shower, then used this to water her garden. A perfectly reasonable practice—and one that seems entirely foreign to most of us. (I began doing this and discovered I am capturing 15 gallons a week in just that minute it takes for the shower to warm up. If you live in an apartment, you can use this water to flush your toilet.)

U.S. residents use more water than people in any other part of the world—about 151 gallons per day on average for domestic and municipal purposes. (Quick test: what is the number one irrigated crop in America? The American lawn.) In Britain, people use water more efficiently, consuming just 31 gallons per day. In Ethiopia, people make do with just three gallons per person per day.

We who live near one of the world's great lakes are truly fortunate.



Most of us have access to ample fresh water. But this may not always be the case. Even in our region, some communities dependent on groundwater are experiencing localized water shortages. And in fast-developing areas on the fringes of the metropolis, the problems of water supply will only grow.

Our use of Lake Michigan water in the Chicago region is capped by a 1967 Supreme Court decree. We can withdraw no more than 3,200 cubic feet per second for residential and industrial use, to ensure adequate levels for navigation in the Chicago area waterways. Fortunately, that is plenty of water—especially if we undertake simple conservation measures.

Today, for instance, Chicago loses approximately 70 million gallons a day of water from old, leaky pipes, open fire hydrants, and other unaccounted-for flows. That's enough water—at current usage rates—to supply 700,000 more people. The city has an aggressive program to reline and replace these leaky older pipes, one of the best measures we can take to conserve water. This is important because conserving water also conserves energy. When we lose water through leaking pipes, we have wasted the energy used to pump water to the filtration plant, to treat and filter it, and to pump it towards

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Energy Efficiency: Good for the Environment and Good for the Economy

by Donnie R. Dann

Looking beyond the current economic crisis, significant new sources of energy will be required for a growing world economy. Whether these are from renewables or traditional fossil fuels, shouldn't our first priority be to use our existing supplies more efficiently and simply waste less? Just how much additional energy output can we derive by avoiding waste? Here are some examples of energy inefficiency and solutions we can employ.

Electric Power. The typical electric generating plant in the United States delivers to the consumer only about one-third of the fuel it burns. This level of squandered power generation is inexcusable in terms of pure inefficiency, but when you add its impact on global warming it is especially egregious. This sorry picture has been essentially unchanged since the late 1950s, despite the 600 percent increase in U.S. energy consumption over that period of time. However, on a positive note, an entire industry has developed around waste-to-energy technology, with companies whose business is to reduce greenhouse gases profitably through the development and ownership of energy recycling facilities. They capture industrial waste energy to produce electricity and thermal power, often without burning any additional fuel or emitting more pollution.

Transportation. An estimated 40 percent of American automobile use is associated with daily commuting. Congestion on our highways and city streets costs us 2.9 billion gallons of wasted gas and 4.2 billion lost work hours, costing \$78 billion annually. These statistics don't even

take into account air pollution and global warming. Many urban areas offer subsidized public transportation. In the State of Illinois, seniors ride mass transit free. Other improved efficiency ideas that can be more widely employed include high-occupancy vehicle lanes, lower tolls for cars with multiple riders, and more car pooling. All of us can drive smarter by avoiding jackrabbit starts, driving the speed limit, and maintaining correct tire pressure. These are incrementally small steps, but collectively they can have a substantial impact. Significant investment in high-speed rail could also pay huge dividends.

Energy Star. Poor construction and old appliances can be energy hogs. In 1992 the U. S. government created Energy Star, now an international standard for energy-efficient consumer products. If you're not using Energy Star appliances, computer products, and peripherals, or are occupying older residential or office buildings, you are likely wasting 20 to 30 percent of the energy used to power them.

Food. A report from the International Water Management Institute describes a greater than 50 percent wastage in food between field and fork. Inefficient harvesting, transport, storage, and packaging make a considerable dent in the potential availability of food from the time it is harvested until it is actually consumed, all of which translates into wasted energy. Remember to buy local whenever possible.

Does avoiding waste cost jobs? The evidence is to the contrary. The University of California found that energy-efficiency policies created nearly 1.5 million jobs from 1977 to 2007, while eliminating fewer than 25,000.

Where in the World is My Obama?

by Terry Wrem Jones

I won my very own life-size cardboard Obama in a raffle at a Tenth Dems fundraiser last fall. Upon taking possession of this fabulous prize, I folded him gently, let him ride in the front passenger seat on



My cardboard Obama is welcomed with smiles after his long journey to a village near Nairobi, Kenya.

the way home, and then stood him in a place of honor in our living room. It took several days for the dogs to stop growling at him (could my cute, fluffy little puppies actually be Republicans?), and, frankly, it took a little while before his presence ceased to startle me whenever I entered the room. But he soon felt like a member of the family. Just having him around gave us hope.

My Obama watched the TV coverage with us on election night, displaying his signature calm even as it became clear that he had won. That's our guy, "No Drama Obama." He stayed with us through the holidays, basking in the glow of our fiber-optic Christmas tree forest.

As I mentioned in an article I wrote for the March issue of *Tenth News*, the man who owns the small company I work for does a lot of international humanitarian work. This past February he was heading back to Kenya to check in on some of his ongoing projects. Last November, while discussing his upcoming trip, he mentioned to me that the people he had met in Kenya were tremendously proud of their native son, and that anything featuring Obama's name or likeness was highly prized. I knew in that moment that the only right thing to do was to offer him my Obama to take to Kenya.

On Inauguration Day, I brought my Obama to the office to share with my co-workers and to let him preside over the televised ceremonies. Had I brought him in before the election, that might have been frowned upon as a political act. Now that he was President Obama, bringing him to the office could only be perceived as a patriotic gesture. I have to say I thoroughly enjoyed that shift in attitude.

Now-President cardboard Obama hung around the office with me for one more day before I wished him a fond farewell and handed him over to be carefully packed away for his long journey.

Two weeks later I received an email assuring me he had arrived safely and had been welcomed by his new Kenyan hosts with joy and celebration. I kind of miss having him around, but I'm pretty sure he's having a much more interesting time than when he was just standing around our living room watching MSNBC with us.

Congress Watch *continued from page 3*

"The banks have received billions of dollars from taxpayers to keep the industry afloat, but they scream at the thought of helping a few thousand families," Representative Jerrold Nadler (D-NY) said during the February 26 House debate.

Another fallacious Republican talking point against HR 1106 is that the authority it gives to the courts to modify mortgage loan terms—dubbed the "cram-down" provision—has the potential to "cause lenders to raise interest rates and down payments to supplement the loss from loan mediation...adding [more] uncertainty and upheaval into an already volatile housing market." This argument ignores the obvious: building in a premium for default risk and requiring adequate down payments are exactly what sound mortgage lenders are supposed to do.

It also distorts economic reality, turning it completely upside down. HR 1106 will do the exact opposite of what Republicans claim. By stemming the rate of foreclosures, the law will help to stabilize the housing market and the nation's economy. "It will help to put a stop to the deadly spiral in which foreclosures continue to rise, home prices and tax revenues decline, financial institutions, saddled with growing losses, stop lending, causing our economy to grind to a halt," Hasting said during the House debate. "The bill will mitigate the destructive impact of foreclosures on families and communities."

The fact is that Republicans, beholden to the banking industry, oppose HR 1106's cram-down provisions because these provisions take control of loan modifications out of the bankers' hands and give it to bankruptcy judges. But, as Representative Kathy Castor (D-FL) told her House colleagues on March 5, "The banks have brought this on themselves." Rep. Castor encouraged her colleagues to view the video of Congresswoman Maxine Waters (D-CA) waiting on hold for more than an hour trying to get a bank to answer the phone and help a responsible homeowner refinance. "The new law will prod lenders and [mortgage] servicers to hire the necessary personnel, answer the phone, and begin the refinancing they should have been doing over the past year," she said.

Unlike the financial institutions, "homeowners are not asking for a bailout," Rep. Hastings noted. "Many of the banks received billions in taxpayer dollars. Sitting down with folks and refinancing must be a requirement now. Otherwise, foreclosures and the continued deterioration in our property values will continue."

The HR 1106 is expected to meet even more opposition in the Senate than it did in the House. At least 10th District residents can depend on both of their representatives in this chamber of Congress to vote in the interests of the American public rather than in support of the corporate hooligans who created the crisis that has shattered the global economy.

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Tango *continued from page 2*

U.S. to overseas operations, and they then can falsely claim bloated overseas profits.

Though the companies stand behind their accounting, financial analysts and tax lawyers say that the drug makers' claims defy reality and that their profits come mostly from sales in the United States. But the I.R.S. lacks the resources to challenge the companies effectively, the analysts and lawyers say. As a result, the six major companies—Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson, Merck, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Wyeth, and Lilly—collectively pay a federal tax rate of less than 15 percent on their worldwide profits, with some companies paying much less. Had the six companies faced standard federal taxes on those profits, they would have paid \$26 billion to the United States. Instead, their tax tab was less than \$4 billion. (See "Drug Makers Reap Benefits of Tax Break," Alex Berenson, *The New York Times*, May 8, 2005.)

So now it's time for President Obama, his hand-picked staff of experts, and Congress to stop the music. There are regulations on the books that must be enforced; and where there are none, new regulations may be needed. But the key is honest, transparent oversight and enforcement.

Liberalism *continued from page 3*

can help yourself better understand how our liberal principles apply in today's world and how to articulate those principles.

As Wolfe concludes, "A deeper appreciation of what liberalism stands for combined with a greater determination to be proud of its accomplishments can help liberal politicians in the rough-and-tumble world of contemporary campaigns...[and] this is too good a political philosophy to dare not speak its name."

Water *continued from page 6*

our faucets. Only it doesn't get to the faucet—it leaks out underground!

Rain barrels are another nifty conservation tool. By attaching a barrel (often a recycled vegetable oil, juice, or pickle container) to your downspout, not only are you able to capture rainwater for use on your lawn or garden, but you also reduce the amount of water flowing into the storm sewers. Rain barrels save money—you don't use as much potable water for gardening—and they allow more water to recharge our underground water supplies. (Cook County residents can purchase rain barrels—limit two—for \$40 apiece from the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District.)

I submit that we who live near the Great Lakes are blessed by the accident of geography, at least with respect to freshwater. With efforts to conserve, we can enhance our supply and meet future needs. Chicago is poised to have a robust economy for the rest of this century due to its access to freshwater and transportation infrastructure.

But the rest of the world will be watching. Will we in the Chicago region be responsible stewards of this irreplaceable resource—or will we be wasteful?

Come add your voice to the discussion at the next

"LET'S TALK POLITICS"

Coffee & Conversation

Tuesday, April 14, 2009, at 7:00 PM

Northbrook Public Library, Pollack Room, 1201 Cedar Lane (corner of Cedar and Cherry), Northbrook. Refreshments are on us!

For more information, call 847-266-VOTE (8683)
or email Events@TenthDems.org.