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TENTH DEMS ENJOYS SEDARIS HUMOR

by Adrienne Kirshbaum

He walked out on the stage without much fanfare, a Mr. Peepers-like presence at the rostrum. It was hard to believe that this was the man I'd heard so much about...the man who made people REALLY laugh. This was David Sedaris, and his show was the highlight of a Tenth Dems theater event on Wednesday evening, April 6. The festivities began with a delicious dinner at our Community Connection office in Waukegan and ended with the Sedaris show at the Genesee Theatre just down the street.

And once David Sedaris began to speak, it was clear that he was one of the funniest people I had ever seen in performance. Judging from the belly laughs breaking out in every corner of the theater, the rest of the audience thought so, too. His humor isn't the kind that hits you over the head, and he doesn't use a lot of blue material



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Tenth News

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MAY 2011 Illinois Tenth Congressional District Democrats Newsletter Volume 8, Edition 5

Down in the Doldrums

Dold Votes Against Americans Facing Foreclosure

It's no surprise that new Congressman Bob Dold voted on March 29 for the passage of the HAMP Termination Act of 2011. In the three months since he was sworn in to represent the 10th District, Dold has voted in virtual lockstep with his party's ultraconservative leaders. In the process, he's proven his willingness to be an accomplice to the all-out Republican effort to serve corporate interests and shrink government at the expense of the American public.

The HAMP Termination Act proposes to eliminate the Home Affordable Modification Program while using approximately \$29 billion in unspent TARP (Troubled Asset Relief Program) monies toward reducing the federal budget deficit. The bill passed the House in a 252 to 170 vote (18 Democrats voted for it), but it's unlikely to ever become law. Even if it were to pass the Democratic-held Senate, President Obama has said he will veto it.

In a March 29 statement of administration policy, the Office of Management and Budget said, "The Administration is committed to helping struggling American homeowners stay in their homes and has taken many steps over the last two years to stabilize what was a rapidly-declining housing market. As tens of thousands



of responsible American homeowners struggling with their mortgages receive permanent assistance each month from HAMP, the Administration believes that continuation of HAMP is important to the Nation's sustained economic recovery."

HAMP was launched by the Treasury Department in the wake of the housing crisis. The program aims to provide mortgage servicers an incentive to modify mortgages—i.e., to lower monthly mortgage payments to manageable amounts—for homeowners on the verge of foreclosure. Assuming the program succeeds in significantly reducing the number of foreclosures, it also will help support home values and preserve the American dream of home ownership.

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GO TO PAGE 8: THE 2012 CAMPAIGN HAS BEGUN.

ALL PROSPECTIVE 10TH DISTRICT CANDIDATES ARE WELCOME TO SUBMIT ARTICLES OR PHOTOS.

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Unfortunately, HAMP has fallen considerably short of the administration's initial objective of saving between three and four million homeowners from foreclosure. Through December 2010, the program has resulted in 579,659 permanent mortgage loan modifications and roughly 1.7 million three-month trials. Of the roughly \$46 billion in TARP funds set aside for HAMP, Treasury has spent only \$12 billion in payouts to servicers and homeowners, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

The heart of the problem seems to be mortgage servicers' difficulty obtaining proper financial documentation from borrowers. As a result, servicers swept borrowers into trial modifications, resulting in a backlog of trials lasting more than six months. At the start of 2010, Treasury issued new guidance, requiring servicers to gather the required documentation before moving borrowers into a trial. The change resulted in an approximately 45 percent increase in the number of conversions from trial to permanent status since June 2010. Still, getting borrowers to fill out the necessary financial documents for HAMP is the "biggest friction point" to the program's success, Tom Marano, CEO of ResCap, told the Mortgage Bankers Association in January.

Rather than seek additional solutions for improving a program with significant potential to help more homeowners and bolster the weak housing market, Republicans are instead using HAMP's weaknesses as an opportunity to further their goal of dismantling TARP-funded programs aimed at helping the victims of the mortgage crisis. In March, House Republicans shut down the President's FHA Refinance Program, rescinding \$8.12 billion of TARP funds.

Speaking on the House floor, the bill's sponsor, Patrick McHenry (R-NC), asked his colleagues: "If we can't eliminate a blatant failure of a program that is actively harming Americans every day, and costing them billions of dollars, then I ask my colleagues on the other side: What can we cut?"

The simple answer to Mr. McHenry's question lies in the real reasons for the nation's \$14 trillion budget deficit—tax breaks for the uber rich; loopholes that allow highly profitable corporate giants, like General Electric, to pay zero income taxes; and unnecessary wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya. These are the truly wasteful spending items that a responsible, moral Congress would be seeking to eliminate. Unfortunately, Congressman Dold has signaled that his votes will be with colleagues like Patrick McHenry, not his constituents in the 10th District. **TD**



The Legend of Better Days

by Ron Levitsky



Recently, I had breakfast with a friend, a Greek immigrant and civil engineer, who had just retired. He said, "I don't think our children are going to have the same kind of life we do."

According to Pew Research, his perception is shared by more than half of adult Americans. I'd had the same thought and, later that day, went to my bookshelf to review British historian E. P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class*. I'd remembered the first sentence of one of his chapters. "The history of the weavers in the 19th century is haunted by the legend of better days." During England's Industrial Revolution, some economists emphasized progress and improvement in people's lives due, in part, to advances in technology. However, Thompson argued that for England's workers, the era was a "catastrophe," in that "the older moral economy" (e.g., fair wages and fair prices) had given way to an economy dominated by "a master-class without traditional authority or obligations," which in turn revealed, "... the transparency of the exploitation at the source of their new wealth and power, ... [and] the reduction of the [working] man to the status of an 'instrument.'"

We see the naked power of this new class in the works of Charles Dickens, especially in the mocking words of his 1852 novel, *Hard Times*. "Surely there never was such a fragile china-ware as that of which the millers of Coketown were made. Handle them never so lightly and they fell to pieces with such ease that you might suspect them of having been flawed before. They were ruined when they were required to send labouring children to school; they were ruined when inspectors were appointed to look into their works; they were ruined when such inspectors considered it doubtful whether they were quite justified in chopping people up with their machinery; they were utterly undone when it was hinted that perhaps they need not always make quite so much smoke."

As the son of a factory worker, I'd gotten shivers reading these two

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Sedaris *continued from page 1*

to keep you interested. It's just wry commentary on his world and the things that have happened to him; but he's so likable that you instantly relate to him and his troubles. His childhood experiences on the swim team of his North Carolina country club are hilarious. His parents, his siblings are so perfectly realized that you can picture them all driving home in their station wagon after a swim meet.

For about an hour and a half, Mr. Sedaris read from his books, which are probably best tackled in the privacy of your home, where you're not embarrassed to laugh out loud. But he is just as clever without notes, as he proved when he asked to turn up the lights and took questions from the audience. Looking at the people filing out of the theater after his performance, I saw smiles on almost every face and thought that they all must be David Sedaris fans now. I know I am.

The dinner that night was catered by Big Ed's Barbeque, a popular local restaurant. The combination of a belly full of good food and belly laughs from David Sedaris made for a very special evening. **TD**

Poetry Slam to Rock Waukegan

by Elizabeth Bloom Albert

Once upon a time, all stories ended happily ever after. Then we became teenagers and everything changed. This month, the Tenth Dems set out on a mission to actively solicit and collect stories and poems written by some of the teenagers living and attending school within our own 10th District.

We organized a writing contest for high school students in Waukegan and North Chicago, which will culminate in a Poetry Slam to take place in late spring at the Community Connection storefront. For those unfamiliar with a Poetry Slam, it involves a microphone, a room full of writers, and a lot of applause. All students who participated in the writing contest are being invited to read their work, poetry and short prose pieces, at the first ever Tenth Dems Poetry Slam. The event will take place Thursday, May 12, at 7 p.m., at the Community Connection, 118 Genesee Street, Waukegan. Families, friends, and teachers of these bright, talented students are also invited to attend the Slam, as are members of the public.

The entire steering committee of the Community Connection has been very supportive of the writing contest. One of the missions of the Tenth Dems' Community Connection storefront is to help the members of the Waukegan and North Chicago communities to "find" their voices, and to "use" their voices to bring about change in their lives and in their neighborhoods. We foresee workshops on the topic of writing letters to the editor, writing resumes and essays for college applications, etc., but for now, it's all about the poetry!

Please consider joining us for the Poetry Slam, which should be a lively, fun event! Light refreshments will be served.

Jan Schakowsky Power Lunch a Wonder Moment for Women and Their Supporters

by Neesa Sweet

Over 1500 women—and a good number of brave men—came out to support Jan Schakowsky and her 10th Annual Ultimate Women’s Power Lunch at the Chicago Hilton on April 11. The luncheon raised over \$225,000 for the 9th District Democratic Congresswoman.

The Tenth Dems—and the Tenth District—were well represented. For many of us Tenth Dems, Jan is our voice in Congress by proxy—powerfully representing our issues even if we live beyond her district’s boundaries. From the beginning, the luncheon has grown from the idea that each person who comes invites 10 friends.

As always, the luncheon is also a “who’s who” of Democratic elected officials. Attendees heard remarks by Governor Pat Quinn and introductions of officeholders including Attorney General Lisa Madigan, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, and many others. Jan personally introduced the officials, remarking that she knew from her own experience what it was like to wait to be recognized.

Congresswoman Gwen Moore from Milwaukee’s 4th District and author/playwright/activist Eve Ensler outdid one another as the luncheon’s featured speakers.

Moore, the Democratic Co-Chair of the bipartisan Congressional Caucus on Women’s Issues, had all of us laughing and applauding from start to finish. She answered those who say it was the voters who mandated recent Republican actions targeting unions and women’s health—including the 15 percent of women who voted Democratic in 2008 and who switched in 2010—by invoking the legend of no less a cultural icon than Wonder Woman. Wonder Woman, Moore pointed out, was the first woman in the Justice Society of America.

Wonder Woman had her distinctively feminine weapons, and Moore—magnified on the ballroom’s big screens—pulled them out of a bag to illustrate her speech. She had the golden lasso that forces people to tell the truth. Moore swung hers over her head to demonstrate. She modeled the deflector bracelets that could push away bullets or come together to create explosive force yet also could be used by men to take away Wonder Woman’s powers. Moore banged her bracelets together to show us how to stay in charge. She readjusted a brightly colored headband and, voila, there was Wonder Woman’s tiara and the invisible airplane.

Moore shared how, in 1954, people railed against the comics. They said Batman and Robin were gay and criticized Wonder Woman as anti-feminine. While the Caped Crusader and his sidekick survived, Wonder Woman was transformed, and not for the better. She let Steve Trevor bind her bracelets; she gave up her powers and opened a boutique. Then Betty Friedan wrote *The Feminine Mystique* and Gloria Steinem put Wonder Woman on the cover of the first *Ms. Magazine*. After 20 years, the Amazonian Warrior was back!

Today’s Wonder Woman, Moore announced, would be Jan Schakowsky—with bracelets to deflect bullshit and a lasso to



find the truth. She recounted Jan’s history—from her early fights for food expiration dates legible to consumers, to the recent budget fights where Jan offered commonsense fixes such as eliminating subsidies to big oil, raising payroll taxes, and winding down wars.

Moore then revealed a variety of different colored tiaras and placed them on her head one at a time—one for ending domestic violence, one for economic equity for woman, one for family planning, and several more, all brilliantly visible on video magnification.

Wonder Woman, said Moore, is not far away. You can see her in your mirror and the woman sitting next to you. The point, she concluded, is not to let the patriarchal arguments take away the power of the bracelets.

As is said on Passover, “Dayenu.” Had Congresswoman Moore been the event’s only speaker, it would have been enough. Yet Moore was followed by Eve Ensler, who was up to the task of moving the rapt audience as thoroughly as did Moore.

Ensler is the creator of *The Vagina Monologues*, which has become a worldwide sensation. This June she is to receive a special Tony award recognizing her career as an activist and playwright.

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Thinking Rationally about Climate Change

by Steve Sheffey



Earlier this year, 31 Republicans on the House Energy and Commerce Committee—the entire Republican contingent on the panel—declined to vote in support of the very idea that climate change exists. Reasonable people can disagree about what to do about climate change, but it is beyond dispute that climate change is occurring as a result of human activity.

Yet, we keep hearing that climate change is a fabrication designed to give power to unelected bureaucrats at the EPA. Or as a friend of mine said, “Liberals speak of global warming and climate change as a certainty and call anyone who doubts that fact a heretic or an ignoramus when the reality is that this link still cannot be proven.”

So which is it? Are Democrats guilty of manipulating the facts to fit their view of the world, or are Republicans guilty of manipulating the facts to fit their view of the world? How are we to decide? How can nonscientists, or even scientists who are not specialists in a particular field, evaluate any scientific claim?

Unless we are experts in the field, we have no choice but to rely on scientific consensus. We can believe what we want, but for public policy purposes, we must rely on the scientific community.

Twenty percent of Americans think that the sun revolves around the earth. Ask yourself honestly: Could you prove to them that the earth revolves around the sun? Have you personally tried to prove it? Most of us believe the earth revolves around the sun because science says it’s true. Do you think Einstein’s theories are better predictors than Newton’s? Can you prove it? Do you understand how evolution could have produced something as complicated as the human eye? Have you ever seen the planet Neptune? How do you know it exists? We are correct in believing that the earth revolves around the sun, that Einstein’s theories are sound, that evolution is real, and that Neptune exists, not because we’ve proven it to ourselves—most of us haven’t—but because scientific consensus supports those facts.

At one time, Einstein, Galileo, and others were minorities of one. Maybe those scientists who today dispute evolution and climate change are right. Every theory was once a heresy, and many commonly accepted theories have been proven false.

In a great article titled “How To Not Get Blinded By Science,” Michael White explains “how to figure out what to believe when it comes to science that you’re not able to evaluate on your own because you lack the highly specialized technical expertise to judge that particular field” by doing the following:

- 1.** Believe the mainstream scientific consensus.
- 2.** Learn to live with ambiguity and uncertainty when there is no mainstream scientific consensus.
- 3.** Contrarianism may be cool, but that doesn’t make it right—especially if your contrarianism violates rule #1.
- 4.** The side that invokes conspiracy theories in any scientific argument is pretty much always on the wrong side. Individual labs or, more likely, government or corporate organizations, may conspire to suppress research results, but the scientific community at large is incapable of organizing a conspiracy to hide all that great evidence against evolution, global warming, the health benefits of tobacco, etc.
- 5.** Big scientific ideas are always supported by multiple lines of evidence.

Climate change is a fact, not a theory. Human contribution to climate change is a fact, not a theory. Al Gore didn’t come up with this. Michael Moore didn’t come up with this. Both publicized it, but the consensus of the scientific community supports the reality of climate change and human responsibility for climate change, and that’s why I—and most reasonable people—take it seriously.

As the Environmental Defense Fund explains, the most respected scientific bodies have stated unequivocally that global warming is occurring, and people are causing it by burning fossil fuels and cutting down forests. The materials used by climate-change skeptics to cast doubt on global warming—whether it be a handful of emails stolen from an East Anglian research facility or a few errors in an IPCC report—are meaningless. The mountain of climate data assembled over decades by the scientific community as a whole is irrefutable. The records collected and analyzed by independent scientists from many disciplines and thousands of locations paint a consistent, verifiable picture of a rapidly warming world.

The scientific consensus on climate change is overwhelming.

Some Republicans argue that climate change is an excuse for more government regulation. We can disagree about the solution, but to dispute facts proven by science is irrational and counterproductive, and to dispute facts because the conclusions they lead to cut against the grain of your political philosophy is disingenuous.

Yes, there are scientists who dispute the facts. There are scientists who dispute the fact of evolution, too. If you look hard enough, you can find what appears to be a well-reasoned argument against anything, no matter how commonly accepted. It’s possible that the entire scientific community is part of a vast left-wing conspiracy, but I doubt it. It’s more likely that

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The Winds of Change

by Eleonora di Liscia

Between the Japanese nuclear crisis and the Gulf oil spill, the need for clean energy has never been clearer. To that end, the cities of Evanston and Waukegan have made cautious steps toward bringing wind energy to the north shore.

But the reality of a wind farm in Lake Michigan is a long and challenging process and one that could use your participation along the way.

The Evanston wind farm proposal envisions a 40-turbine wind farm about seven miles offshore and east of the Northwestern campus and would ideally be sited to minimize the view from the lakeshore. Further study is needed to determine if the wind pocket off Evanston is the best location, how the turbines impact wildlife, and how the energy produced would get to homes. The current proposal estimates power for 59,000 to 82,000 homes.

After soliciting information from potential developers last year, the city of Evanston formed a wind farm committee this spring, a citizens committee to review responses and recommend additional action, said Jonathan Nieuwsma, who co-chairs the Renewable Energy Taskforce with Nathan Kipnis and is on the Board of Citizens' Greener Evanston, the group that initiated the proposal.

Meanwhile, in Waukegan, the city has answered a Department of Energy announcement making federal funds available for research on removing market barriers to offshore wind. These market barriers include the cost and the research needed to make a wind farm safe for birds and bats. The Obama administration offered the funds as part of a coordinated plan to promote wind energy with the goal of having 80 percent of the nation's energy come from clean sources by 2035.

"Our mayor is very interested in sustainable projects, green projects and eco-friendly efforts including renewable energy products like wind," said Noelle Kischer-Lepper, legislative liaison for the Office of the Mayor of Waukegan.

Mayor Robert Sabonjian put together a team, led by principal investigator Michael Hoadley, to apply for these funds. This does not mean that Waukegan expects to build a wind farm in addition to Evanston's proposal.

"We want to do whatever works best. We heard the wind is better off Evanston, but we have a federal harbor. There are some positive opportunities for partnership. Our mayor sees wind as an opportunity for everybody, and that city limits do not control clean environments. We are looking at ways to remove market barriers. How do we make a project feasible? Maybe it's feasible in Milwaukee. Great! That's good for everybody," said Kischer-Lepper.

To help with the proposal, you can let your representatives know at all governmental levels that you support wind energy and a wind farm.

"Residents who want to be involved could express interest to their mayor's office, their council or village board member, their county board members, and their state representatives and senators. Let your elected officials know you support a wind farm project, because

when it comes time to make decisions, it's important that officials know there is community support. They often hear from the people who don't want one; it's also good to hear from the people who do," said Kischer-Lepper.

Nieuwsma agreed that wind farm opponents often do not want one in their backyard. To that end, he suggested that contacting your representative and telling them you support Illinois House Bill 1558, initiated by Evanston Rep. Robyn Gabel (D-18), would also be help-



ful. Bill cosponsors include Karen May (D-58) and Daniel Biss (D-17). Once a wind farm becomes more than a feasibility study, a developer will need to get permits and leases from the state. HB 1558 is designed to pave the way by setting up a commission to answer questions regarding which state departments are in charge.

The Evanston wind farm proposal grew out of a citizen's initiative working with local government. After the Bush administration failed to ratify the Kyoto protocols to reduce greenhouse emissions, local environmental groups worked with the Evanston Sustainability Coordinator to create the Evanston Climate Action Plan (ECAP). ECAP includes more than 200 proposals to reduce Evanston's carbon footprint with a goal of 13 percent reduction by 2012. The proposal with the most significant potential for reducing the carbon footprint was a wind farm. Citizens' Greener Evanston (CGE) evolved from the ECAP working group, and CGE's Renewable Energy Task Force researched the wind farm concept in more detail. Additional information, including the *Frequently Asked Questions* booklet, can be found at <http://www.greenerevanston.org/pdf/Evanston%20offshore%20Wind%20Farm%20FAQ.pdf>.

Both Nieuwsma and Kischer-Lepper stress that any project would require an experienced developer. Funding would need to come from the developer as neither city can afford to fund the project at this time. While downstate Illinois has wind farms, the electricity generated does not efficiently transmit to northern Illinois. So far, there are no offshore wind farms in the United States, although a number of farms have been proposed off the Atlantic coast, with the Cape Wind project in Massachusetts being closest to completion. Several Great Lakes states are also investigating their options. **TD**

Envision Scholars: If You Can Dream It, You Can Achieve It!

by Chuck Gutman

On February 12, with members of the Community Connection Steering Committee in attendance, three high school students and I introduced our vision for the creation of a scholarship foundation that translates the college dreams of highly meritorious and financially needy Waukegan and North Chicago high school students into reality. Stymied by financial concerns, too many young people in these communities are being robbed of their opportunity to make positive contributions to our society.



Among the high school students attending this meeting, Luis Tinoco, Quentin McKnight, and Alberto Ulloa inspired Community Connection Steering Committee members with their tales of triumph and transformation. Luis Tinoco, Waukegan High School's first Hispanic male valedictorian (and a future cardiologist), credits his ascent to the apex of academic achievement at Waukegan High School to the encouragement he's received from his teachers, the values instilled in him by his mother, and the opportunities he's capitalized upon at the high school. Grateful for opportunities

extended to him, Luis implored us to open our eyes to the vast majority of his classmates who seek bright futures and a college education but haven't had the same support he's had and lack the financial wherewithal to pay for college.

After speaking, Luis introduced Alberto Ulloa, a young man who admitted to frittering away his first two years of high school with little hope or thought of a positive future until he, too, was able to connect with adults and programs at the high school to help launch his dreams. Alberto plans to attend Calvin College as an Entrada Scholar and study business, ultimately becoming an entrepreneur with his own brand of clothing. Still, Alberto worries about whether he'll be able to afford Calvin.

Quentin McKnight, Alberto's classmate, relayed his struggle to keep his eyes focused on the prize of college matriculation amongst a peer group that veered from a focus on academic pursuits. Like his classmates, Quentin exhibited courage and constancy in pursuit of his collegiate dreams by taking "the road less traveled," taking advantage of unique opportunities afforded him through his AVID ("Advance-ment Via Individual Determination") College Readiness class and as a student in UIC's Talented 25 program for African American males.



This fall, Quentin will enter Marquette University and plans to major in biomedical science.

Inspirers of others, Luis Tinoco, Alberto Ulloa, and Quentin McKnight exemplify the greatness teeming within high school students in Lake County, greatness that comes alive when young people embrace opportunities and take actions necessary to make their dreams come true. With hopes of increasing the number of high school students in Waukegan and North Chicago poised to succeed in college and able to afford a college education, Envision Scholars seeks the engagement of Tenth Dems members from all walks of life.

Please consider contributing your energies to building the capacity of Envision Scholars to bring the American Dream to fruition for as many young people as possible. In starting up, we especially seek individuals with experience in fundraising and nonprofits. **TD**

For additional information about Envision Scholars, go to envisionscholars.com or email me at chuckgutman@envisionscholars.com.

A Short Course in Tactics, Strategy, and Goals by Jack Altschuler

With the blizzard of political ploys assaulting our senses, it is sometimes difficult to have any clarity about what is going on or how to deal with it. It's rather like being in the middle of a circle of bullies who are taking turns kicking you: it's hard to know which way to face. Here's a short course in Republican kicking and what it's really about.

Strategy is about the "what" issues—what will be done. Strategy is the key decision or plan at a course-setting level. For example, Horace Greeley saying, "Go west, young man," was a strategy, as we shall see.

Tactics are in service to strategy, in that they are the "how" questions: how to get things done, the solutions to the strategic decisions. Greeley's young man might consider acquiring horses, a wagon, and provisions and joining a wagon train as tactics to execute the strategy of going west.

As tactics serve strategy, strategy serves something else—the "why" issue or the goal. In the case of Greeley, his real focus was on national expansion and "west" was his strategy. Let's bring that hierarchical thinking to American politics and see those relationships in action.

Currently, 17 state governments led by Republican governors have eliminated or are attempting to eliminate collective bargaining from the tool kit of public employees. They claim that this is about their states' budgetary crises, but recent events in Wisconsin have put the lie to that. While creating a bulwark against this outrageous Republican "kicking" is important, it's critical to understand what such a move serves.

It's been well documented that unions are traditionally big donors to the campaigns of Democrats and busting the unions will empty the unions' piggy banks. That is a tactic and the effect of that will be to cause cash starvation of the Democratic Party. That is the strategy. That is to say, to accomplish the cash-starvation strategy, the tactic is to bust unions. The key issue, though, is the goal that is served by that cash starvation strategy.

The goal is long-term Republican control of the United States, a one-party oligarchy, along with all the nefarious ramifications that one-party rule would bring. We know what that looks like in other countries, and it isn't a pretty picture except for the extremely rich who benefit from it.

You can apply this hierarchical model of tactics-strategy-goal to much of what Republicans have done for the past 30 years, including Reagan's supply side economics and privatization efforts, both of which served to shift cash to Republicans. Phil Gramm drove the elimination of regulation of the American banking industry, resulting in a massive wealth shift to Republicans. I have long believed that President Bush led us into war in Iraq for his neurotic need to both vindicate and surpass his father. That may be accurate, yet it's probably incomplete. That war shifted huge amounts of money to Republican donors. If the cash went there, it didn't go to Democrats, so the strategy of starving Democrats of money has had many tactics and has been both quite effective and consistent.

All of that and more serves the long-term goal of Republican control of America, and that is what all the Republican kicking is about. It isn't about you or America. It's about power, control, and money. **TD**

Talking and Listening: The 2012 Campaign Is Underway

Photos from Sheyman for Congress Exploratory Committee Listening Sessions in Buffalo Grove, Highland Park, and Waukegan



Politics should be about more than just elections. It should be about making our community, our world, a better place to live. It should be about connecting people who share common dreams. It should be about working together.

And what does that actually mean? Connecting what to whom, how, why? Let's answer that by looking at examples of just what Community Connections has been up to. We'll focus on our Job Interview Workshop in this article, but a number of other projects are underway, all with great opportunities for volunteer participation. And we continue to explore possibilities with local businesses, political groups, community service organizations, government entities and individuals, as well as ideas originating within the Community Connection itself.

The new Tenth Dems office in this northernmost reach of our Congressional District opened in January and is already alive with connections. It has been incredibly interesting to learn what this office can do, and the role it can play. We know a great deal of valuable work is already underway in these communities, led by numerous local organizations and individuals. One of our strategies is to connect to these organizations to see how we might be able to help in their existing programs.

Our work with the Lake County Coalition to Reduce Recidivism, is one great example of how a community connection can work, and can multiply. Chaired by Patricia Jones, Waukegan Township Supervisor, the Coalition has numerous programs underway to help ex-offenders become self-sufficient, productive members of society. A key element of this reentry—or repatriation—is em-

ployment, and a number of township and other groups are deeply involved in the Coalition's job efforts. The high rate of failed job interviews by ex-offenders revealed the need to better prepare job candidates. Patricia mentioned this gap in an outreach meeting with us, and a connection was born.

We volunteers in the Waukegan office developed a one-hour Job Interview Workshop, and within three weeks of learning of the need, we were facilitating our first workshop with about 15 participants. We anticipated about one workshop per month, but are now doing one per week. In addition to people leaving the criminal justice system, we have now added job candidates whose health challenges have made it difficult for them to find employment. We've done four workshops to date, so we've connected this service to 50-plus individuals. The feedback from participants has been excellent. Three participants from our first workshop—who failed their previous interviews—were hired on their post-workshop try. Success is the best feedback of all.

Now, wouldn't you like to connect? These men and women seeking employment are also being advised about dressing for an interview, and for the workplace. This aspect of employment support is being led by DUFF (Democrats United For Fairness). If you have available professional clothing for men or women, please let us know at info@tenthdems.org. **TD**



A note about the Community Connection:

The Tenth Dems Community Connection office in downtown Waukegan is available for use by nonprofits, community groups, and Democratic campaigns when it is not being used for Tenth Dems meetings or events. If you're interested in having an event or meeting at the Community Connection, please email info@tenthdems.org or call 847-266-VOTE (8683) for more information and to reserve a time.

books in college but considered them from the distant past, like a faded nightmare from childhood. I was wrong.

In a recent interview, John Perkins, author of *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man*, discusses the resurgence of “predatory capitalism.” According to Perkins, this type of economy, which began under Reagan and Thatcher in the 1980s, has three broad principles. “The first is that the only responsibility of business is to maximize profits, regardless of the social and environmental cost. The second is that business shouldn’t be regulated, because that gets in the way of making profits. And the third is that everything should be run by private business,” such as schools and even the military.

Is this any different from the world of Dickens?

In one way, perhaps so. The English workers of the Industrial Revolution understood who they were and that they were of the same class. According to Thompson, “class” occurs when, through common experiences, a group of people realizes that they share interests different and frequently opposed to those of others. For that era, the old world of mutuality and fairness fought a losing battle against the new free market and exploitation. And the results were terrible. “After defeat [of a strike for union recognition], the woolcomber was translated almost overnight from a privileged artisan to a defenceless outworker.”

My own life, and that of my friends growing up in the working class suburbs of Morton Grove and Niles, was far better than that of workers’ children decades earlier. This was due to those before us who understood what their interests were, organized, and fought for a decent life for their families. It was the unions that expanded America’s middle class to include not only skilled laborers but unskilled wage earners as well. During my college years, working summers in a factory’s shipping and receiving department, I paid dues to the United Steel Workers of America and, in return, received decent pay to help me through school.

When I first became a teacher, I made very little money but was doing something that I loved. Again, I joined a union, the Illinois Education Association. My fellow teachers and I joined together to fight for better wages, benefits, and working conditions in order to buy a home, go on a family vacation, and send our kids to college so that they, too, could live the American dream. Since most of us did better economically than our parents, we thought the same would hold true for the next generation.

Many have written about the shrinking middle class. In his recent article, “Rule of the Rich,” Bill Moyers notes that from 2001-2008, 40,000 American manufacturing plants closed and, during the past 12 years, six million factory jobs have been lost. From 1980-2008, average income in the U.S. increased a mere \$303, to \$31,244. Yet,

by 2007, the wealthiest 10 percent of the population absorbed 50 percent of the national income. As in the case of the Industrial Revolution, the standard of living is going up for some in our society—those who are the wealthiest. And the diamond-shape, which used to illustrate our society with its middle class “bulge,” is now looking more like a pyramid.



What has been going on in Wisconsin recently is nothing less than an attempt to drag more of the middle class, in this case teachers and other public employees, toward the bottom of the pyramid. The fact that the teachers were willing to make economic concessions demonstrated clearly that Governor Scott Walker’s real intent was to break the union and educators’ rights to bargain collectively for themselves and their families.

In a recent op ed piece in the *Chicago Jewish Star* entitled, “Whatever Happened to ‘The Calling’?” Rabbi Philip Lefkowitz takes Wisconsin teachers to task for their public protests and what he considers unseemly behavior. “Developing the values and knowledge of children was a sacred task, not the means to a pay check.” He further argues that his best teachers were not “... found walking the picket line unbecoming for one of their profession.”

I disagree. In fact, I found that many of the best teachers I knew were active union leaders. Back in the 1970s, I was proud to walk the picket line with my little daughter beside me. I wanted her to learn a very important lesson.

When people use the play on words, “teachers have class,” they’re referring to a teacher’s students. But, as E.P. Thompson reminds us, “Class is defined by men as they live their own history.” Teachers, police and firemen, nurses, and postal workers have far more in common with carpenters, bricklayers, hotel employees, roofers, and restaurant workers and, as time goes on, the \$2 per day overseas sweatshop workers, than they do with the CEOs of Fortune 500 companies.

David Zirin, a political sports columnist, reminds us that as much as we might resent millionaire sports figures, it was only a generation ago that these players would have had to work off-season construction jobs to get by. What changed was their organizing to fight company-run unions and the reserve clause binding a player to the team that drafted him.

Working people need to take this lesson to heart. Only then will we see our better days ahead, and not behind us. As Thompson again reminds us, it took a 30-year struggle by British workers and reformers to limit the workday of women and children to 10 hours. Bill Moyers echoed this sentiment, noting that our own eight-hour day, Social Security, minimum wage, and decent working conditions are not part of the Constitution, but rather a result of the struggle of working people and their unions to gain justice for themselves and their families. **TD**

Enslar was the featured speaker at Jan's first Women's Power Luncheon 10 years ago. Since that time, she has survived uterine cancer. She told Jan's supporters that her cancer surgery also "took away the bullshit."

"I don't show up for many politicians, but I show up for Jan," said Enslar, noting that honest politicians are few and far between. Jan, Enslar pointed out, has always shown up for others. Enslar also said that Jan models the heart and head combination—where it IS okay for your feelings to dictate your actions—that the new woman's leadership is about.

Enslar works with rape victims in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where she has collected horrific stories of rape and resulting mutilation of women that leads to lifelong debilitation, inability to properly function, and devastating illness, in addition to psychological desolation and social ostracism.

The violence there is not arbitrary like her cancer, Enslar said, but planned, rooted in the mineral business and fights over resources. Enslar calls it "femicide."

Her work in the Congo collecting women's stories became her own best medicine, she recounted. As she helped women see themselves not just as patients or victims, but as human beings, they became her medicine, and today she is cancer free. "I realized that the women of Congo saved my life," she said.

Enslar travels around the world raising money, holding "V Day" (the global movement to end violence against women and girls, which she founded) events, and talking about The City of Joy, a safe haven center she started for sexually abused women and girls in the DRC. She recounted how over 3,000 people came to the center's opening and how the very walls of the center were built by female construction workers, themselves victims, who discovered self-esteem and joy in the act of creating their own refuge. "They danced with the bricks," Enslar recounted—and that music is in the walls."

Enslar went on to talk about women in Haiti and other parts of the world, saying it is the same issue everywhere. "We have a tendency in the U.S. to silo issues, but it is the same story," she said, noting that when cancer comes to your uterus, it affects the whole body, and so the cancerous practices of overconsumption and greed anywhere in the world, affect the whole Earth. Talking of the inequity in the world she noted that 225 billionaires have the resources of 2.5 billion people. Continuing the cancer metaphor, she said that the cure is to put a spotlight on the tumor and change the practices and envision the long-, rather than the short-term, plan for the future.

Schakowsky closed the event recounting her family history—how her grandfather was a peddler, yet her father and uncle could build a summer home in Michigan and live out the American dream. She pointed out how the possibility of such an achievement is threatened today. She noted, however, that she was optimistic, as "a sleeping giant" was awakened during the attempted government shutdown when the Republicans waged war on women's health. "They lost and

Unshared Prosperity

Small groups get the biggest gains:

Change in average, pre-tax household income (2005 dollars) by income group, 1979-2005



Source: RFF analysis of Congressional Budget Office data

we won," Jan noted to applause. "Make no mistake—they are not finished, but neither are we!"

Schakowsky said that her second cause for optimism was Wisconsin. "There is a prairie fire spreading across the Midwest. The firefighters are on our side and they are not going to put it out," she said. "We have a new narrative. It's about economic rights, and it can grow."

Her third point was demonstrated by a slide that showed that income disparity in the U.S. had reached gilded age levels. The polls, she said, show that the American public is with us and she pointed out statistics—56 percent are in favor of abortion rights and 81 percent think taxing millionaires is acceptable. "My mantra is, go to the polls," she said. "I tell my colleagues to have the courage to stand up and follow."

As will the 1,500 people who were at the Chicago Hilton on April 11 to celebrate the wonder of Democratic women. **TD**

Climate Change *continued from page 5*

those who dispute the vast weight of scientific evidence, those who themselves are in no position to intelligently evaluate the competing claims, are the ones opting to believe the "facts" that fit their political philosophy.

It's no coincidence that in nine states where anti-evolution measures are advancing, all have Republican majorities. And as Timothy Egan noted in his article "Building a Nation of Know-Nothings," "climate-change denial is a special category all its own. Once on the fringe, dismissal of scientific consensus is now an article of faith among leading Republicans, again taking their cue from Limbaugh and Fox."

Bryan Appleyard summed it up writing in *The Times* (of London), "The climate is warming. It is almost certain this is caused by emissions of greenhouse gases caused by human activity. Nobody has come up with an alternative explanation that stands up." **TD**