

In This Issue:

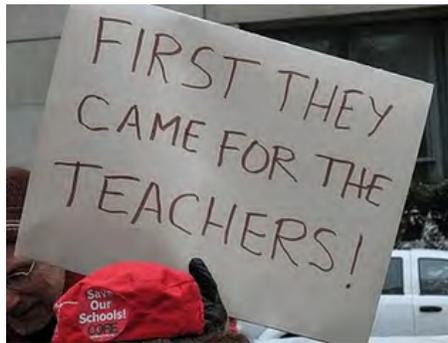
I Don't Get It	1	Congress Watch.....	7
Tenth Dems Madison ..	1	Honk if...	8
Unions Stand	2	Moraine Tshp Dems ...	9
Townships & Toilets	5	David Sedaris	10
The Moral Core	6		

For information or to volunteer:
 Email us at newsletter@tenthdems.org
 Or visit our website at www.tenthdems.org
 Or call us at 847.266.VOTE (8683)
 Or write to Hon. Lauren Beth Gash, Chair,
 Tenth Dems, P.O. Box 523, Deerfield, IL 60015

Editors: Barbara Altman, Susan Friedman,
 Allan Sperling
Editorial Staff: Joan Attenberg, Hon. Carol
 Blustein, Hon. Lauren Beth Gash, Ellen Beth
 Gill, Carol Hillsberg, Adrienne Kirshbaum,
 Ron Levitsky, Leslie Lipschultz, Sam Piro,
 Steve Sheffey, Ilya Sheyman
Design: Sean Kealey
Photos by: Ellen Beth Gill, Amanda McKay
Distribution: Ravi Ganapathy, Glenn Stier,
 Dave DuBordieu, Cosette Winter
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I DON'T GET IT by Carol Hillsberg

The challenge to any teacher is to substitute the plaintive sound of a student's "I don't get it!" with an affirmative "I get it!" But, during these first months of 2011, as a teacher, I'm the one who "doesn't get it." I don't get how writers of blogs can justify calling teachers "glorified babysitters who leave work at 3:00 p.m." I don't get how New Jersey Governor Chris Christie's accusing teachers of greed leads to his becoming a national political star (<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/03/education/03teacher.html>). I don't get how, after teachers and other public employees in Wisconsin agree to cuts in pen-



sions and other benefits, Governor Scott Walker still proposes nearly eliminating collective bargaining and drastically cutting state education funding while forbidding local districts from making up the difference in property taxes. I don't get why it's okay that Wall Street executives keep their gigantic bonuses

after taxpayer bailouts while it is not okay that teachers keep their comparatively meager salaries and benefits because that money comes from taxes.

What I do get is the analysis of Diane Ravitch, a research professor of education at New York

continued on page 8



Tenth News

www.tenthdems.org

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Tenth Dems Volunteers Stand Shoulder to Shoulder with Working Families in Madison by Ilya Sheyman

When Wisconsin's Governor Scott Walker and his Republican allies in the state legislature launched an attack on teachers, prison guards, and other public employees who make up the fabric of our communities, hundreds of Tenth Dems volunteers sprang into action.

On February 26, a group of Tenth Dems members joined with over 2,000 Illinoisans at the Rally to Save the American Dream in downtown Chicago. It was one of 66 solidarity rallies taking place

"I'M EXCITED ABOUT BEING HERE. IT WAS A WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE TO SHOW HOW YOU CAN GET DEMOCRACY GOING WITH NO NEED TO BE VIOLENT, JUST A SPIRIT OF TOGETHERNESS AND A FEELING OF PRIDE IN OUR COUNTRY."

JUDY MANDEL (WILMETTE)

continued on page 2



simultaneously in major cities and every single state capital across the country to stand up to the coordinated, nationwide Republican attack on workers and the core elements of government that have made the American Dream a reality for so many generations.

Speakers at the rally included our senior Senator Dick Durbin; William McNary from Citizen Action/Illinois and USAction; MoveOn's national mobilization director and 10th Congressional

continued on page 3



LOOK INSIDE FOR MORE ARTICLES AND PHOTOS ABOUT WISCONSIN AND WORKERS' RIGHTS





“IT WAS ABSOLUTELY A WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE. IT WAS GREAT TO SEE PEOPLE FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE COME TOGETHER FOR A COMMON CAUSE. IT TOUCHED MY HEART TO SEE ALL THESE PEOPLE STANDING UP FOR THEIR RIGHTS.”

NANCY WILLIAMS (HIGHLAND PARK)

“I AM COLD! MY FEET ARE COLD! MY NOSE IS COLD! BUT MY HEART IS WARM BECAUSE I HAVE JUST SPENT MY DAY SHOULDER-TO-SHOULDER WITH TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE OF ALL AGES, RACIAL BACKGROUNDS, ETHNICITIES, SOCIAL STRATA, BLUE COLLAR, WHITE COLLAR, WELL-TO-DO, AND NOT SO--AND TODAY, LOOKING OUT OVER THE SEA OF PEOPLE, READING THE MESSAGES PENNED ON THE SIGNS THEY CARRIED, I FEEL LIKE THERE ARE MILLIONS IN THIS COUNTRY WHO SHARE MY VALUES.”

ELIZABETH BLOOM ALBERT (HIGHLAND PARK)

continued on page 3

Unions Stand So Workers Don't Have To Beg

by Ellen Beth Gill

It was snowing and it was cold, but on February 26, about 2000 union members and their supporters crowded the State of Illinois Plaza in Chicago to support the public worker unions under siege in Wisconsin and Indiana. Speakers included Senator Dick Durbin, State Senator Don Harmon, MoveOn's Ilya Sheyman, based here in Waukegan in the 10th District, and activists Midge Hough and Bill McNary from Citizen Action Illinois.

Speakers talked about the meaning of unions and solid middle class jobs in their lives. Sheyman talked about his family moving to the US from the former Soviet Union, his father delivering pizzas all over the city, and his journey from poverty to college. McNary told the story of his father, whose union job allowed his parents to provide a nice house and college for his children. With the loss of good paying jobs, it is likely that there will be fewer success stories.



Durbin called it a national crusade against unions. Harmon added that what Walker was doing in Wisconsin is inexcusable. McNary said they were looking for a fight and they were going to get one, observing that there were people in the crowd and corporations are not people. Pat Quinn was commended for his honesty to Illinois, telling citizens he was going to raise taxes before his election last fall. Illinoisans don't like their taxes raised, but they don't want to see teachers cut either.

Represented unions in the crowd included the Teamsters, Machinists Local 126, AFSCME, AFL-CIO, IFT. I saw a lot of school teachers and their families. There were several young people in the crowd supporting their teachers. Discussion in the crowd was about the recently extended federal tax cuts for the wealthy, corporate personhood, and families supporting a teacher family member.

Signs in the crowd asked President Obama for his support, told Wisconsin Governor Walker that the world was watching, and sought support for teachers nationwide. **TD**

A version of this article appeared in Ellen's Tenth Congressional District Blog on February 26.



“IT WAS TOTALLY INSPIRATIONAL; IT GIVES ME HOPE SOMETHING’S GOING TO CHANGE FOR THE GOOD. HE’S GONE TOO FAR. THESE POLITICIANS HAVE TO REALIZE THAT IT’S OUR COUNTRY OF THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE. IT ALSO INSPIRES ME TO MAKE MORE PHONE CALLS TO MAKE SURE THESE GUYS GET RECALLED BECAUSE THEY DON’T DESERVE TO BE IN OFFICE.”

JOAN BRODY (SCHAUMBURG)

just one example, on March 6, a group of long-time Tenth Dems members joined together in Madison with Letter Carriers from Highland Park and across the 10th District to show that union busting is an issue that affects all working families—whether or not they personally belong to a union.

Unfortunately, the developments in Wisconsin weren’t just an isolated case of one rogue, out-of-control governor. Even as the brave 14 Wisconsin State Senators sought refuge in northern Illinois, their allies from the Indiana legislature were sheltered in Champaign-Urbana to avoid similar legislation in their home state.

continued on page 4

“IT’S EXCITING AND MOVING TO SEE SO MANY PEOPLE FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE STAND TOGETHER IN SOLIDARITY WITH WISCONSIN WORKERS. TODAY WE’RE MARCHING, BUT TOMORROW WE’LL NEED TO VOTE FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS WHO WILL STAND UP AND FIGHT FOR OUR VALUES.”

ILYA SHEYMAN (WAUKEGAN)

Shoulder to Shoulder *continued from page 1*

District resident Ilya Sheyman; leaders from progressive Illinois organizations, including the AFL-CIO, AFSCME, IFT, Sierra Club, and more; State Senator Don Harmon; and many everyday working people who value middle class jobs and the labor unions that have worked tirelessly for good wages and decent working conditions.

As developments in Madison escalated, members of Tenth Dems started traveling up to Madison individually, in small groups, and in large convoys, whenever they had a few hours available, in a massive show of solidarity. With the energy and momentum growing, new alliances were formed and old ones rekindled: As





“I’M HEARTENED AND ENERGIZED. WE NEED TO KEEP THE ENERGY OF TODAY AND TRANSLATE IT INTO ACTION FOR TOMORROW.”

ELEONORA DI LISCIA (SKOKIE)

“I WOULDN’T HAVE MISSED IT FOR MY LIFE. AND I CAN’T WAIT TO UNDO WHAT THE REPUBLICANS HAVE DONE TO OUR COUNTRY IN THE PAST DECADE. I’M PROUD TO SUPPORT THE RECALL IN WISCONSIN.”

JUDY DUFFICY (SKOKIE)

“IT WAS FABULOUS TO BE HERE. I WOULD DO IT AGAIN AND WE NEED TO MAKE SURE PEOPLE DON’T FORGET IT COME 2012.”

HEIKE EGHARDT (EVANSTON)

Shoulder to Shoulder *continued from page 3*

In the meantime, even more aggressive anti-union measures were considered by GOP-dominated legislatures from Ohio to Oklahoma to Florida.

Governor Walker and the Wisconsin GOP state legislators may have succeeded in ramming through their legislation to reverse decades of workers’ rights with controversial (and likely illegal) parliamentary maneuvering, but in the process they’ve awakened everyday Americans across the country to the real Republican

“IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR ALL OF US TO BE THERE WHERE WE COULD JOIN THE VOICES WITH THE PEOPLE OF WISCONSIN. THEIR CAUSE IS JUST.”

PATTI VILE (NORTHBROOK)

“WE STAND WITH THE UNION. THAT WAS THE MESSAGE OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WHO CAME FROM ALL OVER THE STATE OF WISCONSIN, AND EVEN BEYOND, TO LET THE GOVERNOR OF WISCONSIN, SCOTT WALKER, KNOW THAT HIS HEAVY-HANDED TACTIC OF ELIMINATING A UNION’S RIGHT OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING WOULD BE MET WITH STAUNCH AND VIGOROUS OPPOSITION...”

BOB BLINICK (NORTHBROOK)

“WE CAME HERE TO LEND OUR VOICES AND OUR FACES FOR A MOST WORTH-WHILE CAUSE.”

BOB RICHMAN (DEERFIELD)

agenda. The weekend after the Wisconsin bill’s passage saw one of the biggest mobilizations yet in Madison as over 100,000 citizens rallied against the legislation and in support of a recall of Governor Walker and his allies in the state legislature.

Participants in this March 12 rally included more than 150 Tenth Dems activists (!), including a large group that carpooled from Highland Park. As we marched through downtown Madison, we ran into the Mayor, Dave Cieslewicz, who expressed his personal thanks to us, as Illinoisans, for housing the Wisconsin Democratic 14 as they bravely made their stand against Governor Walker’s legislation.

In that moment we were reminded once more why our actions are so important. We may not yet know the final outcome in Wisconsin as challenges make their way through the court system and recall petition drives get underway, but we can be sure that our nationwide struggle to rebuild the American middle class and restore the American Dream will go on—and that’s definitely worth fighting for! **TD**

Townships and Toilets

by Carol Blustein, Northfield Township Trustee

There's an old political joke about winning an election—the good news is you won the election; the bad news is you won the election! Before 2008, Northfield Township had been a Republican stronghold. Here's a recipe for change. Mix a slave-driving campaign manager with continuous fundraising. Add superb volunteers with plenty of shoe leather, and the Democrats took the majority for the first time in 70 years.

After the election I was instructed that in order to make informed decisions one must read everything and perform due diligence. All the Democratic trustees have taken that advice to heart. As a result, we've learned a great deal about township government, the oldest form of government in the United States.

Northfield Township was chartered on April 2, 1850. It includes the municipalities of Northbrook, Glenview, and the majority of Northfield. An elected supervisor and four elected trustees govern the township. An elected clerk records the minutes. In Northfield Township, three out of four of the trustees are Democrats, but the Supervisor, the CEO of the township, is a Republican. It makes for some interesting political machinations as, truly, all politics is local.

In Illinois, townships provide a social safety net for their citizens. To that end, townships have three mandates: the administration of general and emergency assistance, including medical and prescriptions monies; providing tax assessment services; and maintaining roads in unincorporated areas.

The social safety net has expanded, and in today's economy, the need has never been greater. Northfield Township supports a robust food pantry that serves 1,466 people. Pantry volunteers packed 1,330 bags of groceries. The township subsidizes



Photo Credit: Flickr - Marc from Borft

transportation by providing discount coupons for taxi rides. Our hope is to someday provide a Pace bus to citizens sorely in need of transportation.

A social service commission is appointed by the trustees. This year the commission visited social service agencies applying for township grants before making recommendations on the distribution of township grant monies. Our greatest angst was not providing greater funding. As one commission member said, "There is so much need out there."

Northfield Township also has some lesser-known responsibilities. The board appoints trustees to the Northbrook and Glenview rural fire districts that service the unincorporated areas. Although the Cook County sheriff provides police service to the unincorporated areas, the township contracts for a "callback program." This provides continuous police patrol on the weekends, when incidents are most likely to occur.

When I ran for office, I never thought I'd be in the sewer business; however, the township maintains four private sanitary sewers. As newly elected officials, we had a "sewer workshop" to meet the contractors, visit the sewers, and view sewer films—not exactly the stuff of Oscars.

Other services the township provides include registering voters and selling vehicle stickers. For a nominal fee, the township also processes passport applications and takes passport photos.

Northfield Township is charged with maintaining unincorporated roads. A separate governmental body, the Northfield Township Road District, performs the construction and maintenance, while the township provides all the accounting services.

I consider my position as like being on a farm team. I'm learning about government from the ground up—literally, from the sewers up. I'm proud that the citizens of Northfield Township elected me, and I will endeavor to live up to that trust. **TD**



Photo Credit: Flickr - CAVE CANEM

The Moral Core of Democracy

by Ron Levitsky

Clarence Darrow once said, “When I was a boy I was told that anybody could become President. Now I’m beginning to believe it.” Our last Republican president was a disaster, but at least he believed in something, even if that something was entirely wrong. Our last two Democratic presidents have been Tickle Me Elmos, without principled beliefs for which they are willing to fight. It is therefore worth considering what makes a great U.S. President, and no time better than this month, the 150th anniversary of the beginning of the Civil War, the greatest crisis in American history. It’s difficult to believe that our nation would have survived without the leadership of Abraham Lincoln.

By anyone’s standards, but especially those of his contemporaries, Lincoln was remarkable. From a dirt-poor family where all males were expected to become farmers, young Lincoln was a loner and dreamer whose father considered him lazy because he liked to read. With barely any formal education, he became one of the most successful attorneys in central Illinois.

In his book, *Lincoln’s Melancholy*, Joshua Shenk explains just how remarkable Lincoln was. Melancholia, which Shenk identifies as unipolar chronic depression, plagued Lincoln his entire life—at least twice driving him to seriously contemplate suicide. Yet, at a time when physicians bled individuals with melancholia, Lincoln struggled alone with his illness, often relying on Shakespeare, poetry, and humor, much of it self-deprecating. As Shenk notes, Lincoln saw “suffering as a potential catalyst of emotional growth.” He may have even used his illness, his “depressive realism,” to see more clearly than others the great issues our nation faced in the decade before the Civil War.

Interestingly, those who knew him were sympathetic to his illness and recognized his internal struggles as acts of courage. Given his gawkiness and the possibility of his having Marfan syndrome, causing disproportionately elongated limbs, it is remarkable that voters appreciated the deeper qualities of courage and conviction that made Lincoln great.

Politically, it might be expected that Lincoln would have supported the first American hero of the common people, Democrat Andrew Jackson. After all, Jackson also had been a poor boy and self-made man. Instead, Lincoln idolized Henry Clay, whose American System favored the growth of business, banks, and industry.

Rather than distrust the national government, both Clay and Lincoln chose a progressive view – that government should take an active role to encourage individual opportunity. Lincoln distrusted privilege and believed strongly in the rights of working men to benefit from their own labor. He was pro-union and said during a shoemakers’ strike, “I am glad to see that a system of labor prevails in New England under which laborers CAN strike when they want to....”

Henry Clay took difficult positions. Although a Kentucky slave-owner, he co-sponsored a resolution calling for the gradual emancipation of slaves in his state. Lincoln was also willing to take unpopular positions. He supported the National Bank because he believed a stable system of credit would help the economy as a whole. In his only term in Congress, he

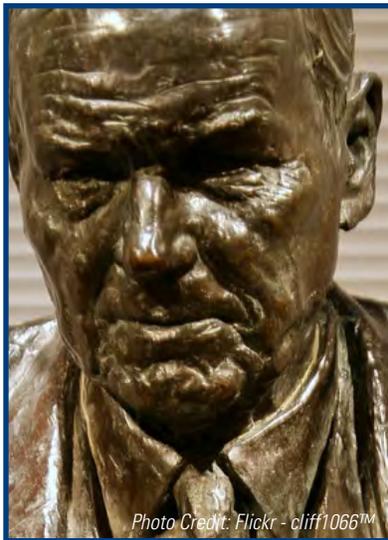


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denounced the Mexican War as a means of spreading slavery. He also accused the president of using false information to lead our nation into war. (Sound familiar?)

Most important, in an era when most white Americans, including those living in central Illinois, were blatantly racist, Lincoln insisted that the principles of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, embodied in the Declaration of Independence, applied to African Americans as well as to whites. In *Lincoln and Douglas: The Debates that Defined America*, historian Allen C. Guelzo describes how Senator Stephen A. Douglas pandered to racial fears, pushing Lincoln at times also to engage in shameful race baiting and stereotypes. However, Lincoln refused to compromise his beliefs in the essential humanity of the slave and that every man, black or white, deserved to reap the rewards of his own labor.

This is not to say that Lincoln wasn’t a careful and canny politician, as Richard Carwardine shows in *Lincoln: A Life of Purpose and Power*. As much as Lincoln denounced Southern slave owners, he also castigated abolitionists, whom he accused of not following the Constitution and wishing to break apart the Union. When, during his 1846 race for Congress, he was criticized for being “an open scoffer at Christianity,” Lincoln issued a handbill in which he professed his belief in “the truth of the Scriptures.” He sympathized with hard-working immigrants coming to America and yet was quiet during the agitation between anti-immigration organizations, such as the Know-Nothings, many of whom joined the nascent Republican Party, and the growing German and Irish populations.

But as the crisis over slavery grew, so did Lincoln’s resolve. Through the doctrine of popular sovereignty, the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 accepted the possibility that slavery could spread throughout the American territories. The Supreme Court’s Dred Scott decision went even further and declared that a slave was the same as a mule, someone’s property that could be moved freely and legally into any territory.

Douglas, who defeated Lincoln in the 1858 U.S. Senate race, promoted the idea of popular sovereignty—that in a democracy the majority, in this case a majority of white men, should decide whether or not they wanted slavery. This seemed reasonable to many since the basis of democracy is majority rule.

However, Lincoln’s view of democracy was more complicated, and far nobler. He took issue with Douglas’ view that democracy simply meant the rule of the majority. Rather, according to Allen Guelzo, Lincoln posed the questions, “Did popular government exist merely to ratify the decisions of its majorities, no matter what those decisions were, or was democracy wedded to a set of fundamental propositions that those majorities were accountable to? And where did these propositions come from?” In his famous Cooper Union speech of February 1860, which made him a serious presidential candidate, Lincoln declared, “right makes might.”

The concept that one’s belief in a set of moral precepts can override majority opinion can be dangerous, as evidenced by those who use violence against abortion clinics or congresswomen with progressive

continued on page 8

Robert Dold Confirms Our Worst Fears

by Steve Sheffey

A unionized public employee, a Tea Party member, and a CEO are sitting at a table. In the middle of the table is a plate with a dozen cookies on it. The CEO reaches across and takes 11 cookies, looks at the Tea Party member, and says, "Watch out for that union guy. He wants a piece of your cookie." I don't know who wrote that, but it probably wasn't Robert Dold (R-IL).

Party affiliation matters. On every vote described below, Dold voted with the overwhelming majority of Republicans, while nearly every Democrat voted the other way. There are good reasons so many of us tend to vote Democratic (whether or not we call ourselves Democrats), and it boils down to this: Both parties are reliably pro-Israel, but only the Democratic party stands behind Israel and the other values we cherish.

If all you know about two candidates is that one's a Democrat and one's a Republican, you can correctly predict how they'll vote roughly 90 percent of the time. There is no single factor more predictive of how a member of Congress will vote than party affiliation. That's why party affiliation should be one of our most important considerations when we choose our representatives. Dold's recent votes illustrate some of these key differences.

Dold Opposes Net Neutrality. Dold followed his Republican leaders instead of the values of our district by voting against net neutrality. As Sen. Al Franken (D-MN) explained, by voting to block the FEC from enforcing its new net neutrality regulations, House Republicans, including Robert Dold, voted for "less diversity of viewpoints, less access to independent content through services like Netflix, and higher prices for Internet service."

Dold Opposes Gun Control. Dold voted with the National Rifle Association to defund the program that requires the reporting of the sale of multiple shotguns or rifles to the same person. As Rep. Chakah Fattah (D-PA) said, "This has nothing whatsoever to do with hunting rifles or guns used in sporting activity. This has to do with long guns with detachable clips used for only one purpose, and that is, shooting large numbers of rounds and killing large numbers of people... I know that some may get paranoid about these issues, but I think we should have at least some paranoia about what this could portend if we don't take reasonable action in the protection of the citizens that we've been elected to protect."

Dold Opposes Environmental Programs. In our district, we care about the environment, but Dold voted at least 17 times to gut environmental programs that about 75 percent of 10th District residents support.

Dold Flipped on Defunding Planned Parenthood. During the election, Dold claimed to be pro-choice, despite the fact that he was recommended by Illinois Right to Life and despite the fact that both Planned Parenthood and NARAL Pro-Choice America said he was not pro-choice. Dold (and Judy Biggert (R-IL)) first voted against defunding Planned Parenthood. But, when the final bill came up for a vote, Dold (along with Biggert) voted to defund Planned Parenthood.

I wonder how Dold will spin this one in 2012.



Dold Wastes Our Time. What do you think your Congressman should be working on? The economy? Crime? Tax reform? Well, Robert Dold somehow found the time to become one of only 38 (at this writing) co-sponsors of H.R. 497, the Ronald Reagan Commemorative Coin Act of 2011. Yes folks, that's just what we need: a bill that would require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of Ronald Reagan, whose misguided policies and rhetoric set in motion the culture of greed and anti-intellectualism that still plagues our nation.

The New Republic summed up Reagan's legacy: "Reagan had two main accomplishments. One was to legitimize the religious right as a powerful Republican constituency, a change that has continued to reverberate through American politics. The second was to legitimize massive, non-emergency deficits." You'd think a self-proclaimed fiscal conservative like Dold would know better. You can tell a lot about a person by his choice of heroes.

Dold Opposes Affordable Health Care. Dold voted at least six times to gut healthcare reform (Roll Calls 97, 98, 99, 100, and 121, 141).

As Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) pointed out, "Repealing health care will destroy jobs in the health professions. It will slow growth by 250,000 to 400,000 jobs a year. It will increase medical spending and add nearly \$2,000 to the average family insurance premium. And according to CBO, repeal would add \$230 billion to the deficit in the first 10 years and \$1 trillion in the second 10 years. ... This amendment adds billions and ultimately trillions of dollars to the deficit, and it starts next year with \$2.2 billion." And that's what Dold voted for.

Dold voted for an amendment that would, as DeLauro explained, "allow insurers to charge women 48 percent more than men for exactly the same coverage. It allows insurance companies to once again discriminate against Americans with preexisting conditions, even children with preexisting conditions. Women may again be denied coverage because they survived breast cancer or because they were a victim of domestic violence or because they had a c-section. It will deny up to 4 million small businesses \$40 billion in tax credits.

"This amendment will increase drug costs for seniors. It will take away the 50 percent discount on brand name drugs for those who have found themselves in the doughnut hole. It will increase, also, seniors' health care costs, making lifesaving preventive services like mammograms, colonoscopies, wellness visits, blood pressure screenings, and diabetes screenings more expensive. This amendment will cost money and it will cost lives."

Illinois' 10th District deserves better than Robert Dold. **TD**

views. However, Lincoln firmly believed in the constitutional process and peaceful change. In doing so, he also believed in the power of reason to persuade his fellow man to allow “the better angels of our nature” to see not only the moral evil of slavery, but also how slavery conflicted with the Declaration of Independence and the intent of our Founding Fathers.

Lincoln had an intellect, eloquence, and humility unmatched by any other American president. But he also had the courage to draw a line in the sand over certain crucial beliefs, even when he was attacked politically and personally. Again, as Guelzo points out, Lincoln believed that “politics was not about helping people exercise rights apart from doing what was right.” Instead, “democracy had a higher purpose, which was the realization of a morally right political order.”

Although not faced with a civil war, our nation has become both fractured and fractious, especially by those on the Right who use words of hate and occasionally violence to promote the interests of the privileged few at the expense of the vast majority of the American people. Abraham Lincoln wouldn't have stood for this.

Nor should our current president. Two foreign wars destroy our courageous soldiers both physically and mentally and suck billions from our economy. A single-payer option for healthcare reform was dead on arrival. Consumer protection and banking reforms remain weak. And millionaires grow richer from a tax cut extension they didn't need, while unions are being ravaged.

Guelzo wrote that in the debates with Douglas, “what Lincoln defended...was that there could be a moral core to a democracy.” We need to find that moral core within ourselves and then demand that our political leaders do the same. **TD**

HONK IF YOU'RE A DEMOCRAT!

by Adrienne Kirshbaum

In 2008, everyone wanted to be a Democrat. People were captivated by Barack Obama and his message and wary of the Republicans whose policies had brought about high unemployment and a deep recession. Voters who had never bothered with party labels were declaring as Democrats, and citizens who hadn't voted in years were registering for the privilege. Most of the country was elated when Obama won. After eight years of George W. Bush, America was ready for change!

Two years later, the greatest change was to the Democratic Party. Members of Obama's base, who had perceived him to be a liberal, were disappointed in his performance as a centrist and decided to stay home from the midterm elections. Fickle independents had fallen in love with the Republicans' promise of more jobs. The right had conspired to vilify healthcare reform and downplay the administration's accomplishments, and, in our troubled economy, their efforts were successful. Despite every reasonable assessment that proved the Republican Party had nothing to offer, and often because of the influence of the hard-right Tea Party, the elections swept in a huge Republican majority in the House and carved the Democratic advantage in the Senate to a sliver. Things were indeed about to change!

The Republicans' agenda is not a mystery. They are dedicated to destroying the fragile social safety net that Democrats have been defending since the New Deal. They want to cut funding for

University, whose ideas appear in her most recent book, *Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice Are Undermining Education*. In a March 3, 2011, interview with Jon Stewart on *The Daily Show*, Professor Ravitch stated that poverty and racial isolation are responsible for low test scores. Teachers not only become demoralized when they are blamed for low test scores, but also when Arne Duncan and Bill Gates place too much emphasis on rooting out bad teachers. In support of her point of view, Professor Ravitch cited the high scores of students in Finland, where there is a 3 percent poverty rate, compared to 20 percent in the U.S. In addition, Finnish teachers, all of whom are unionized, receive substantial support and autonomy.

What I do get is that the median salary in the United States for high school teachers is \$43,437; for middle school teachers, \$42,290; and for elementary school teachers, \$40,426 (http://www.payscale.com/research/US/All_K-12_Teachers/Salary). Granted, these figures do not include benefits, but it is still difficult to fathom the scorn and blame that teachers are presently receiving. A second-year high school science teacher in Madison, Wisconsin, making \$36,000, fears that higher contributions to her benefits will knock her out of the middle class. “Around the country, many teachers see demands to cut their income, benefits and say in how schools are run through collective bargaining as attacks not just on their livelihoods, but on their value to society.” (<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/03/education/03teacher.html>)

While it is the avarice and greed of Wall Street and spending on wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that have brought our economy to its sorry state, it is teachers who are being demonized at the moment. I don't get it. **TD**

programs like Head Start that have long-term benefits, privatize Social Security and Medicare, starve the regulatory agencies that protect our food and water and keep business honest, and, of course, they are determined to do away with labor unions and their beneficial effect on the American worker and the Democratic Party. In essence, they want to return us to a time when nobody looked out for the everyday citizen, before the American middle class grew to be the envy of the world. They want to kill the American dream that ensured everyone a path to success. The middle class is already an endangered species, threatened by high unemployment and the housing crisis. The promise of a chicken in every pot and a car in every garage is no more.

The only thing that stands as a barrier in this path of destruction is the Democratic Party. It is up to us to organize for a fight to the finish. We can do this if we energize our voters to volunteer in their neighborhoods, to write letters to the editors of local newspapers, to contribute to candidates and to grassroots organizations involved in finding progressives who will run for office. We can't lick our wounds and curl up in a corner. We have to come out fighting and believe in our cause and never give up. This is a very serious time in the history of our nation. If we let the Republicans and their corporate interests take over, we will lose the values that make America great. Don't hide your label under your hat. Honk if you're a Democrat! **TD**

Moraine Township Democrats Host Local Candidates by Sam Piro

The Moraine Township Democratic Organization held its spring fundraiser and candidate meet and greet at Las Palmas restaurant in Highland Park on February 24th. The event was well attended by local Democrats who had an opportunity to meet many of the candidates in the upcoming municipal elections. Both

Highland Park mayoral candidates were in attendance.

The late Phil and Marilyn Straus's service to the MTDO was recognized with the presentation of a plaque. Among other things Phil Straus was a former chair of the MTDO. The plaque read:



Whereas, Phil and Marilyn Straus have served as long-time Democratic and community activists;

Whereas, The Moraine Township Democratic Organization (formerly known as the Deerfield Township Democratic Organization) is extremely grateful for all that they did to make the world a better place;

Whereas, Phil served with distinction as the Deerfield Township Democratic Chairman, he was elected Democratic State Central Committeeman, and he was the Campaign Manager for Dan Pierce's State Representative campaigns, whereby Dan was elected as the first Highland Park Democrat to serve in the legislature;

Whereas, Marilyn served as the Director of Ravinia Nursery School and was chosen as Highland Park's 2000 Humanitarian of the Year;

Therefore, in honor of their significant efforts and achievements on behalf of improving our society, we honor their memory, with appreciation.

*Honorable Lauren Beth Gashi
Chair, Moraine Township Democratic Organization
10th District State Central Committeewoman
February 24, 2011*



Join Us!

For

David Sedaris Live!

With sardonic wit and incisive social critiques, David Sedaris has become one of America's pre-eminent humorists. Members of the Tenth Dems will be attending his live performance in Waukegan, and we'd like you to join us.



Wednesday, April 6th, 2011
at **7:30 PM**

Genesee Theatre
203 North Genesee Street
Waukegan, Illinois

Please dine with us at **6:00 PM**
at Tenth Dems Community Connection

\$50 - Ticket to the the David Sedaris Show
\$25 - Dinner at the Tenth Dems Community Connection
(Deliciously Catered.)

RSVP by calling 847-266-VOTE (8683)
or email: info@tenthdems.org

The Community Connection

118 North Genesee Street
Waukegan, Illinois

½ Block South of the Jack Benny Statue

For more information or to RSVP, please call: 847-266-VOTE (8683)
or email: info@tenthdems.org

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Paid for by the Tenth Congressional District Democrats. A copy of our report filed with the State Board of Elections is (or will be) available for purchase from the State Board of Elections, Springfield, IL. Political contributions are not tax deductible.