

Democratic Candidates for Congress Engage in Lively Forum by Eleonora di Liscia

On February 25, the four primary hopefuls vying for the opportunity to become the first Democrat to represent the Illinois 10th District since Abner Mikva retired from Congress in 1979 appeared before a jam-packed ballroom on a live WCPT radio broadcast of veteran Chicago newsman Dick Kay's "Back on the Beat." Vivek Bavda, Brad Schneider, Ilya Sheyman, and John Tree shared their views on topics ranging from education to the economy to the environment.

Tenth Dems cosponsored the forum at the unionized Hyatt Deerfield in order to inform voters about their choices in the March 20 primary election.

Audience members came to support a candidate they'd already embraced or to learn about the four possible

nominees. Highland Park resident Paula Castleton came because "I'm an avid 10th District Democrat. I want to see who will be the best candidate to run against Bob Dold." Northfield Township Trustee Carol Blustein came to develop an informed opinion, "because this is such an important race, and the whole country has its eyes on the 10th." *continued on page 7*



Ilya Sheyman Vivek Bavda John Tree Brad Schneider

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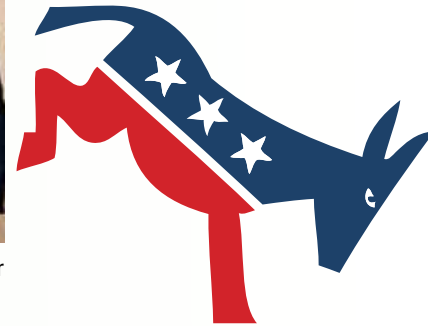
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Special Preprimary Convention Coverage: Candidates Make Their Case to Democratic Voters by Elizabeth Bloom Albert



Conventioners listen to candidates' speeches at Vernon Hills High School

The National Democratic Convention, when it airs every four years on TV, is a vibrant, sensational, rip-roaring event. All those helium balloons and campaign signs! The confetti and air horns! The Star-Spangled Banner and the red, white, and blue! The rousing speeches and the thunderous applause!

The Tenth Dems replicated that jubilant atmosphere at its second District-Wide Convention, held Sunday afternoon, March 4, in the Vernon Hills High School auditorium. The Tenth Congressional District Democrats, or Tenth Dems for short,

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Special Preprimary Convention Coverage: Candidates Make Their Case to Democratic Voters *(continued from page 1)*

Clara Berman & Shelley Orbach



Making sure the program is on schedule



has been in existence since 2003. It was formed to help elect Democrats to all levels of government throughout the 10th District. The district boundaries may have changed for 2012, but the core mission of Tenth Dems remains the same.

At the Convention, Democrats heard stirring speeches from candidates in a number of important primary races, participated in a straw poll for their favorite congressional candidate, and listened as special guest Fay Hartog-Levin, Ambassador to the



Lauren Beth Gash with husband, Gregg Garmisa



Convention Chairman John Hmurovic



Netherlands, spoke of America's image abroad. Barack Obama could not attend, but he did send a representative to address the crowd on behalf of his reelection campaign.

More than 300 Democrats turned out for the event. Admission was free for all, and only Tenth Dems members received straw poll ballots.

Some of the 300-plus attendees came to rally in support of candidates they were already backing, while others came to learn more about the many candidates on this year's primary ballot. Candidates from all parts of the district who are campaigning for offices at all levels of government were invited to the Convention to introduce themselves to an auditorium filled with active, enthusiastic, politically-engaged Democrats.

Among those politically-engaged audience members was voter John Schmitt of Mount Prospect. He had received a call from one

of the congressional campaigns, asking if he'd made up his mind yet about who he was supporting in the primary. When he said he hadn't, the caller suggested Schmitt attend the Convention, where he'd have a chance to hear from all of the congressional candidates. Cyd Walloch of Wheeling, also wanted to hear what the different congressional candidates had to say, noting that her husband was working on behalf of one of them but that she wanted to decide for herself. *continued on page 3*



Lake County State's Attorney candidates (left to right): Chris Kennedy, Karen Boyd Williams, Reginald C. Mathews

Special Preprimary Convention Coverage: Candidates Make Their Case to Democratic Voters *(continued from page 2)*



Candidates for the State Legislature (clockwise from top-left): Amanda Howland (26th State Senate), Laura Fine (17th State Rep.), Sam Yingling (62nd State Rep.), Ed Erwin (61st State Rep.), Scott Drury (58th State Rep.), 29th State Senate candidates on next page

Eric Lipschultz of Buffalo Grove and Joan Herczeg of Highland Park both said they had already been won over by a congressional candidate. They attended the Convention to hear candidates for the other offices with contested primary races. Herczeg, a former educator and former member of a local school board, spoke eloquently about the stifling of

creative learning in public schools these days, thanks in large part to the implementation of No Child Left Behind.

Beverly Stackhouse-Mull of Zion was at the Convention for two reasons. In addition to using the forum to introduce herself as a candidate for Lake County Board (District 2),

Stackhouse-Mull was there to tap into the Convention's positive energy and to learn how we as a party can work together to resolve the issues of the day.

John Hmurovic, chairman of the convention, called the event to order with a slap of his fist against the

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Township Democratic Chairs - Dave McArtin - Grant, Tom Jurgens - Libertyville, Dave Koss - Waukegan, Jim Neel - Warren, Laura Murphy - Maine, Beverly Stackhouse-Mull - Zion, Ellie Sylvan - West Deerfield, *Township Democratic Chairs photos cont. on page 4*: Steve Rosensweig - Vernon, Priscilla Sperling - New Trier, Lauren Beth Gash - Moraine, Beth Martin - Shields

Special Preprimary Convention Coverage: Candidates Make Their Case to Democratic Voters *(continued from page 3)*



podium. Clara Berman and Shelley Orbach got the festivities off to a rousing start with an opening song—the Woody Guthrie classic, “This Land Is Your Land.” By the time we were through singing along, we all had party horns and/or plastic clappers in our hands. We were ready to make some noise!

All three Democratic candidates in the hotly contested race for Lake County State’s Attorney spoke, as did candidates in Lake County Board races, and Illinois State Senate



All the speakers drew enthusiastic applause, and many of their words resonated. One candidate began her speech with, running for reelection to the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, began her speech with, “How sweet it is to be in a hall with so many ardent, passionate Democrats!” and we all wanted to vote for her after these words, even those who don’t live within her district.

Julie Morrison, candidate for State Senate in the 29th District, reminded us that the real battle lies ahead, that whoever wins the 29th District Senate primary will be facing an extremist, Tea-Party Republican come November. “Some of our most important values are under attack,”

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and House races. We heard from candidates seeking positions on the North Shore Sanitary District and the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, as well as one of the candidates running for Lake County Coroner, a Cook County Circuit Court Clerk candidate, and two judicial candidates.



Dan Pierce - Candidate, North Shore Sanitary District Trustee, Ward 5



Julie Morrison (29th Senate)



Milton Sumption (29th Senate)



Cynthia Prium Haran - Candidate, Lake County Circuit Court Clerk



Karen McCormick, Event Chair, keeps agenda on track



Barbara Altman, Tenth Dems Newsletter Editor, reviewing candidate details

Special Preprimary Convention Coverage: Candidates Make Their Case to Democratic Voters *(continued from page 4)*

Candidates Sheyman, Bavda and Tree make their case to conventioners



Morrison said. Milton Sumption, also running for State Senate in the 29th District, touted his public service background. Through his experiences in the Peace Corps and his work in Washington, D.C., he has cultivated a deep commitment to serving his community.

Cynthia Pruim Haran, running for Clerk of the Circuit Court of Lake County, gave a rousing speech and reminded the audience of how much hope we all had four years ago. "We

got the change we needed in Barack Obama," she said, "But it wasn't enough! Candidates like me were 20 votes short in each precinct for our offices!" Haran reminded the crowd that we have to vote for Democrats up and down the ballot if we want to see the change we so desperately need in our communities and our lives. Judicial candidates Patricia Fix and Nancy Waites, running in different districts, encouraged us to turn the ballot over and remind our friends to be sure to vote for the Democratic candidates in the (too often forgotten) judicial races.

The National Deputy Director of Operations for the Obama campaign,

Michael Blake, told the crowd that whereas 2008 represented "the changing of the guard, 2012 will be about the guarding of the change." Blake listed some of the changes that came about during the President's first term: the Lilly Ledbetter Act (which protects women's right to equal pay for equal work), ending the Iraq War, healthcare reform, and slow but steady economic recovery. He then listed some of the bad changes kept at bay—the American auto industry did not go bankrupt—

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19th Judicial Circuit Candidates: Patricia Fix (2nd Sub-circuit) and Nancy Waites (3rd Sub-circuit - Seat B)



Special Preprimary Convention Coverage: Candidates Make Their Case to Democratic Voters *(continued from page 5)*

and other changes on the horizon if Obama fails to win reelection, such as the loss of a woman's right to choose.

Special guest, Fay Hartog-Levin, the 65th Ambassador to the Netherlands, spoke of the improved image our country has in Europe with Obama in the White House. Often asked to explain the Tea Party to Europeans, Ambassador Hartog-Levin noted that the Dutch and the rest of Europe never understood, for example, "how a country with the wealth and influence of the United States did not allow many of its citizens access to healthcare." Hartog-Levin admonished the audience that the world is watching what happens in Illinois. Illinois led the way last time in 2008, and must do so again in 2012, Hartog-Levin said.

In between candidates and other featured speakers, the Convention Chair called on representatives from each of the 18 townships that

comprise the new 10th District to say a few words. Some township chairs used the occasion to plug parades and other activities in their areas, others spoke passionately of the need to get involved in the grassroots of politics. The Grant Township Chair, Dave McArtin, got a few laughs and a warm response when he told us of a recent conversation he had with Nancy Pelosi: he told her to keep a seat warm because the 10th is turning blue this year.

The congressional candidates addressed the crowd. Three were on hand to introduce themselves to the crowd: Vivek Bavda, John Tree, and Ilya Sheyman. Although unable to attend because of a prior commitment, Brad Schneider's representative, Elliott Hartstein, former mayor of Buffalo Grove, spoke. While each of the congressional candidates energetically vied for the votes of the assembled Democrats, they also exuded good will toward

one another. It was apparent that whichever candidate becomes the Democratic standard-bearer in the fall, he will have the enthusiastic support of his onetime rivals.

The Convention closed with a straw poll, won by Ilya Sheyman with 73 percent of the votes cast. John Tree was second choice, receiving 20 percent of the vote.

Convention Chair John Hmurovic closed the event by exhorting attendees "to vote as early and as often as the law would allow."



Michael Blake, National Deputy Director of Operations, Obama for America



Andrew Katz, Illinois Field Director, Obama for America



Gregg Garmisa introduces Hon. Fay Hartog-Levin



65th Ambassador to the Netherlands, Hon. Fay Hartog-Levin

Democratic Candidates for Congress Engage in Lively Forum *(continued from page 1)*



Lois Strzyzewski already supports a candidate but came because “I like to hear ideas.” She viewed the event as an opportunity for the candidates to help one another, inevitably strengthening whoever wins the right to challenge the incumbent.

Prior to the Forum, Dick Kay, Bill Brandt from the Tammy Duckworth campaign, and John Hmurovic, Tenth Dems’s own vice chair, hosted a “pregame show.” The panel discussed changes to the 10th’s boundaries, which have given Democrats their best shot at electing their nominee since Abner Mikva relinquished the seat more than 30 years ago. Hmurovic quipped that the last Democrat before Mikva was swept in on the Grover Cleveland landslide of 1892.



“In recent years, the Democrats have actually shown some life. In 1998, there was no Democrat on the ballot. We have come a long way since then,” said Hmurovic.

Live calls from Kay’s radio audience were taken during the “pregame show.” One caller was roundly booed for opining that the resume of a Democrat was “someone who had only been a lawyer or a politician and wanted to win election to continue living off the public welfare.”



“People say they want government to run like business,” Brandt responded. “I say fine, everyone should have their job come up for renewal every two years. Then the CEOs say, ‘But I have a contract.’ And that’s the difference. Government has to be accountable.” Hmurovic added, “We feel government has a role to play, and Republicans don’t. They want to take

Bill Brandt; John Hmurovic, Tenth Dems Vice-Chair; and WCPT Talkshow Host Dick Kay

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us back to before the Civil War.”

“And sometimes, I think, before the Paleolithic era,” Brandt returned.

The 10th District’s four congressional candidates span a wide range of backgrounds. Vivek Bavda is the son of Indian immigrants. An attorney and former teacher, he fought Republicans to keep stem cell research legal in Missouri. “I’m running because of my parents,” Bavda said. “They left India to seek a better life for themselves and for me. Those beliefs, for which they risked so much, are being shaken.”

A longtime 10th District resident, Brad Schneider is a strategic management consultant for developing businesses,

large and small, a background that he says gives him the experience needed to create jobs. “I’m running because of my kids. The world my kids are inheriting is not the world we intended to give them 20 years ago,” he said.

A community organizer, notably in Tenth Dems’s Waukegan Community Connection Center, Ilya Sheyman immigrated from Russia as a Jewish refugee at age four. While Republicans believe that even in times of crisis “all government can do is get out of the way, my life story has led me to believe in a different kind of America,” Sheyman said. “Your federal government should be there as an advocate for you.... Redistricting presents us with a unique opportunity to send a

progressive to Washington.”

John Tree was born and raised in the U.S. Air Force and lived nine years overseas in France, Italy, and Haiti. Now a U.S. Air Force Reserve Colonel, he advocates cutting the defense budget. Quipping that after “eight years of Bush, it’s time for a Tree,” he is running because “The very fabric of the things Democrats hold near and dear are the focus of a concerted attack. You need to win in the middle because if you don’t win in the middle, you can’t win in this district. I’m a progressive patriot. I can win in the middle.”

Kay asked how each would help the economy. Tree said he would put half of the savings from defense cuts into

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paying down the debt and half into a jobs bill. “Mark Kirk ran as a Navy guy. I’m an Air Force guy. Air Force trumps Navy,” he joked.

“Just so you know, I’m ex-Navy,” said Kay.

“Well, anchors aweigh!” Tree replied. Tree cautioned that Republicans would work to suppress the little green shoots of growth that the economy was showing.

Sheyman proposes a jobs bill, restoring fairness to the tax code, and investing in infrastructure. Schneider agreed with Sheyman, adding that we need to bring back manufacturing jobs.

“The only company of the top five that makes something is Apple, which doesn’t invest here but makes things overseas. We have the ability to make things here,” said Schneider.

Since Republicans would block any national jobs plan, Bavda advocates acting on the local level, such as his “Chicagoland Jobs Plan,” which would double the number of lanes on I-94, invest in a Smart-Grid for green jobs, and aid local governments in rehiring teachers, firefighters, and nurses.

To pay for his jobs plan, Sheyman would roll back Bush tax cuts, set a timetable to end the Afghanistan war, and cut waste, fraud, and abuse

from bloated programs. “A budget is a moral document. It enables the things we value as a people,” he said. “The wealthiest 400 have as much as the bottom 1.5 million. We don’t begrudge their wealth. What we do begrudge is working families have less spending power.”

Tree cautioned that you can’t cut your way out of a hole, as most Republicans believe. “They can’t raise taxes, because they all pledged their life away to Grover Norquist, so they cut, and they cut and nothing is sacred.” Tree said the tax code needed reform so that the wealthy cannot carve out individual exemptions.

Bavda said we need deficit spending in order to pull out of the recession. He proposed tapping Social Security. “It’s a fiction that there is a separate account. We don’t save Social Security in a separate account. We spend it,” he said. He also advocated an effective minimum tax rate of 20 or 30 percent for corporations.

Schneider said he would let the Bush tax cuts expire and reassess the need for all tax deductions other than for mortgages and charitable donations.

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Democratic Candidates for Congress Engage in Lively Forum *(continued from page 9)*



All candidates said they were pro-choice, and all support the Employee Free Choice Act.

On education, Tree said that in a global economy “cutting education today is like a farmer who eats his own seed corn.” He advocated revamping No Child Left Behind, which started with good intentions but is hated by teachers.

Schneider praised Race to the Top, saying that the federal government should work with local districts and that we should stop blaming teachers.

Sheyman said we should resist blaming families. He cited a campaign worker who received a scholarship even though her mother was too busy working nights at Walmart to help with homework. He advocates federal funding of education: “The only reason I can sit here on this stage before you is because I got a world class education, from ESL at Jane Stenson Elementary School in Skokie, to Stevenson High School, to

McGill University.”

As a former teacher doing a stint with Teach for America, Bavda said it was difficult to educate children in poor areas. He proposed renaming teachers “education coordinators” because of the breadth of their responsibilities. “Sometimes you have to have a class to teach parents how to train their children. You have to deal with problems such as when someone gets murdered or a brother is on crack,” Bavda said.

Addressing NAFTA and CAFTA, Sheyman favored a Buy America provision in jobs bills. Schneider said we must insure that economic growth is accompanied by fair wages. Tree “loves trade as much as the next business person, but it needs to be fair or it’s like having your arm tied behind your back.”

Bavda differed, saying we need to grow the whole world economy: “We

can’t change the world on one trade deal. As our ties deepen, we can try to get others to improve” on labor and environmental standards.

All candidates support the environment, cap and trade, and climate change legislation. “I’m a Tree, for goodness, gracious. Of course, I support the environment,” one of the candidates remarked.



Tenth Dems volunteers Carolyn Cerf and Max Boton energetically sell commemorative buttons



Correction: We regret the inadvertent omission of the following article from our March 1 newsletter.

—The Editors

Pat Carey for Lake County Board

by Peter Mule



I support Pat Carey because while working with her and observing her during her numerous terms of elected service to the area over the past 15 years, I have consistently found her to possess the qualities I want to see in a local elected official.

I was fortunate to serve as a Trustee on the Grayslake, Village Board with her a number of years ago when she was mayor. She effectively led the village during its major growth spurt and was able to balance the needs and wishes of longtime residents and businesses with those of newcomers to town. Not an easy task, to be sure.

Pat is a no-nonsense yet sensitive individual who actively seeks information and opinions before taking a position on an issue of importance to the community. She is a proven consensus builder and always has those who she represents first in mind when considering a stand she will take.

Witnessing her work both on the village and county board level, I believe she has earned the respect of all who serve with her because she does the research necessary to make an informed and responsible decision that is best for her constituents.

As a 37 year resident who has raised two boys with my wife in Grayslake and with lifelong roots in Lake County, I feel very comfortable that Pat Carey has the taxpaying interest of all at heart while continuing to provide a safe and enjoyable area in which to live.

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