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My Year of Leslie Knope-ness

(And if you don't get the reference in the title, why aren't you watching Parks and Recreation? You need some Ron Effing Swanson in your life!) by Pat Ferruzza

So a little more than a year ago I undertook the task of running for the Lake County Board. I had volunteered for local and national campaigns, but I had never run for elective office before. I'd be going against a 16-year incumbent, running as a Democrat in a majority GOP district. And I had no money, and no way to self-finance a campaign.

How did it turn out? ***SPOILER ALERT*** I did not win. Not really even close. The polls closed at 7:00, and my precincts were tabulated and reported by 8:30, not in my favor.

Beyond the numbers, I think I did pretty well. I ran a campaign that I was proud of, and I did it the way local races need to be run, by going out and knocking on doors. It was a lot of solitary

walking, in sweltering heat and chilly rain. I found out that there are a lot of hills in my district, and it seemed like there were many more streets running uphill than down, if that's physically possible.

I met a lot of people. Most were good-hearted and welcoming. They said that I was the first candidate of any kind to come knocking on their door and ask what was on their minds. There



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Tenth News

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Post-Election Analysis: Reasons to Be Thankful

by John Hmurovic

In November, we give thanks. As Tenth Congressional District Democrats we are thankful for the reelection of President Obama, for Brad Schneider becoming our first Democratic congressman in decades (and, for some areas of the 10th, in more than a century), for a record number of Democratic state legislators who will represent us in Springfield, and, begrudgingly for many, we maybe, possibly, perhaps, ought to, kind of, should be thankful for Democratic State Party Chair Mike Madigan and other Illinois Democratic Party leaders.

What? The guy who Republicans, the *Chicago Tribune* and many Democrats love to hate? That Mike Madigan?

If you count yourself among those who are not fond of the Illinois House Speaker and head of the Illinois Democratic Party, pause and give him at least one moment of appreciation. Yes, kudos to Brad Schneider for defeating a tough, well-funded opponent, and kudos to a strong team of state legislative candidates for winning almost every contested seat within



the 10th District. But maybe we owe at least a tip of the hat to Mike Madigan for his leadership in redrawing the congressional and legislative maps after the 2010 census.

Not convinced? Look at the numbers.

The Congressional Race

Before the election, it was said the new 10th District, the one drawn after the 2010 campaign, was two to four percent more Democratic. With Congressman-elect Schneider receiving 50.5 percent of the vote, that added edge mattered.

Schneider received 38.4 percent in Libertyville Township and lost in the townships of Shields (41.4 percent), West Deerfield (47.5 percent), Northfield (47.7 percent), Vernon (47.9 percent), and Wheeling (49.2 percent), all of which were a part of the old 10th. The two most reliably Democratic parts of the old 10th District did come through for Schneider. He won big in Waukegan (72.5 percent) and Moraine Townships (60.9 percent). But that wasn't enough. Parts of the new 10th added in

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during reapportionment provided the extra boost. He won big in Zion (63.0 percent) and Maine Townships (59.5). Districtwide, Schneider won by nearly 2,700 votes; he carried Zion and Maine townships by nearly 4300 votes. Without the new townships, the outcome may have been different.

But the new district boundaries don't tell the whole story. In townships where we can make a direct comparison, Schneider ran slightly better than Democratic congressional nominee Dan Seals in the presidential year of 2008 when Seals lost with 47.4 percent of the vote. Seals ran better than Schneider in Shields (43.9 to 41.4 percent), and the two received the same vote percentage in Vernon. But Schneider did better in Waukegan (72.5 percent for Schneider and 71.8 percent for Seals), West Deerfield (47.5 percent versus 44.1 percent) and Moraine (60.9 percent versus 55.6 percent). Without that improvement by Schneider, even the new maps would not have made a difference in the final outcome.

State Legislative Races

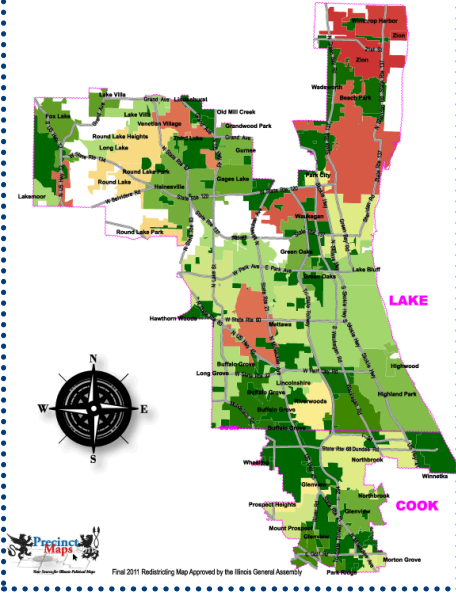
The state legislative districts were also redrawn after the 2010 election, and after this year's election the northeast corner of Illinois will be represented by more Democratic legislators than it has probably ever had. Not only did incumbents Dan Kotowski and Terry Link win, but Daniel Biss and Julie Morrison held onto seats of retiring Democrats. Melinda Bush won a Republican seat, and Ira Silverstein and John Mulroe were unopposed. That adds up to seven Democratic state senators who will represent 10th District residents, while Republicans held on to just two seats.

It's the same story in the House. Robyn Gabel, Elaine Nekritz, Rita Mayfield, and Carol Sente won reelection. State Representative John D'Amico was unopposed. Those five Democrats are joined by newly elected state representatives Laura Fine, Marty Moylan, Scott Drury, and Sam Yingling. Democrats won eight of nine contested races for state representative within 10th District precincts. It was an impressive, unprecedented victory. Again, the candidates and their campaigns deserve most of the credit, but the new district maps certainly helped.

Lake County Races

Maps were also an issue in Lake County Board races. This time, it was the Republican-controlled board that redrew the boundaries to benefit the majority's party. But election results show that map-drawing isn't enough. You need good candidates to win. Going into this election Republicans held

10th Congressional District



a five-seat majority on the Lake County Board, but with impressive victories by Democrats, including newcomers Steve Mandel and Sandra Hart, the Republican majority remains at five seats, despite the best efforts of Republican map-drawing.

Lake County Recorder Mary Ellen Vanderverter led all Democrats on the ballot. In just the 10th District portion of Lake County she received 62.1 percent of the vote. No one ran better than that.

Thomas Rudd held onto the coroner's seat for the Democrats, with 54.3 percent of the vote in 10th District precincts helping him secure the win.

State's Attorney candidate Chris Kennedy probably wishes all of Lake County followed the 10th District's lead. He received 53.0 percent of the vote in 10th District precincts, which was stronger than Brad Schneider's 50.4 percent in precincts where they were on the same ballot. But the 12,000 vote margin of victory for Kennedy in the 10th got wiped out by a 17,000 vote loss in Lake County precincts in the 6th and 14th Congressional Districts.

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Community Connection Makes a Difference in the Northern Part of the 10th District

by Ilya Sheyman

Since launching just two short years ago, the Tenth Dems Community Connection in downtown Waukegan has become a genuine resource in the northern part of the district. Volunteers have hosted the first two annual Poetry and Prose Slam competitions for high school students in the Waukegan, Zion, Gurnee, and North Chicago area. A group of leaders hosts a bi-weekly "To Infinity and Beyond" interview skills training workshop together with community allies at Waukegan Township and the Lake County Coalition to Reduce Recidivism. And the office has been a bustling hub of activity—for OFA (Obama for America) and other campaign volunteers, as a kick-off location for voter registration drives, as a prominent source of visibility for Democrats during Waukegan's ArtWauk, and so much more!

Our work at the Community Connection is just beginning, but there's no denying that Tenth Dems has put its values into action and demonstrated to the community that Democrats are guided by the belief that politics should be about more than just elections—it should be about people working together to build stronger communities.

There's no substitute for that kind of on-the-ground engagement in non-election years, and it's certainly one of the reasons voters in the northern part of the district were so fired up to mark their ballots for the Democratic ticket on Election Day.

Tenth Dems Voter Protection Team on the Scene

by Eleonora di Liscia

Lake County had gotten the word.

Scores of out-of-state attorneys were expected to descend upon area polling places for the November 6 election. Democrats had earmarked the 10th Congressional District as a seat they ardently hoped to turn from red to blue. Republicans just as ardently wanted to stop them by returning Tea Partier Robert Dold to Washington.

The out-of-state attorneys were expected to do what Republican operatives had been doing nationwide: Block the vote. Through a variety of tactics, Republicans hoped to chip away votes, possibly costing Democrats close elections.

Send in the Tenth Dems Voter Protection Team!

"Of the 70 plus volunteers, each one of us has a story of voters who would not have voted that day if we had not been there," said team member Barbara Altman.

Tenth Dems recruited attorneys to insure that every legitimate vote would be cast and counted. Less than 72 hours before the election, team organizers worked furiously to prepare training materials and precinct assignments. Organizers held back-to-back hour-long training sessions as volunteers crammed into the Moraine Township Democratic Organization office.

Trainer Jennifer Clark alerted team members that emotions could run high. There had been kicking and spitting at some precincts during the 2008 election. The team was warned to beware of voter intimidation, such as improper challenges to voter identities that could jam up polling lines. The delay caused by the extra paperwork required to process a challenge could discourage voters from sticking around.

Altman was one of a group of lawyers covering several precincts in Waukegan. While some ran smoothly, others did not. One precinct with a high minority population included many voters who had moved within the precinct or the county. The Lake County Clerk marks a voter as inactive if official mail addressed to that voter is returned. An inactive voter must then produce two forms of identification. The high volume of inactive voters overwhelmed election judges, some of whom were not adequately trained. While one laptop judge who, even when shown the applicable instruction in the judges' manual, insisted on checking in with the County Clerk's office before moving forward with each voter's issue, long lines formed.

The Voter Protection Team worked to counter any problems that threatened to deprive a voter of a ballot. Many team members started before 6:00 a.m., witnessing the opening precincts, and stayed until after 7:30 p.m. for the close.

Armed with copies of the same manual that is given to elections judges, team members made sure that the judges followed the rules. For example, some judges tried to offer provisional ballots to voters who had moved within the county more than 30 days before



the election, even though these voters were entitled to vote a federal ballot for President and Congress. Many judges also were pressing provisional ballots on voters who came to the polls with an absentee ballot in hand, even though Illinois law directs that the absentee ballot be "spoiled" and the voter given a new ballot to vote in person. Even though there were disputes throughout the day, often all that was needed was for the volunteer lawyer to direct a judge to the applicable rule in the manual.

Voter Protection Team members also made sure that voters who were in the wrong polling place knew how to get to the right polling place. Sometimes that meant just giving the voter a ride.

Volunteers prevented a host of abuses across the district, including illegal electioneering—candidates or their representatives campaigning within 100 feet of a polling place. **TD**

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The Presidential Race

Nationwide, Barack Obama's popular vote total dropped from 52.9 percent in 2008 to 51.4 percent in 2012. In the 10th District, the total also dropped. Obama received 61.4 percent in the 10th in 2008 and 58.1 percent this year. He dropped only 0.7 percent in Waukegan Township, but was down seven or eight percentage points in Moraine, Shields, Vernon, and West Deerfield townships.

Still, in 2012, Obama was one of the strongest Democrats on 10th District ballots. He ran 7.6 points ahead of Brad Schneider. In the 10th District portion of Lake County he ran ahead of every countywide candidate except Mary Ellen Vanderverter (62.1 percent for her, 57.8 percent for him). In the Cook County portion of the district the President ran ahead of every other candidate but State's Attorney Anita Alvarez (63.8 percent in 10th District precincts for her, 59.3 percent for the President in those same precincts).

Of the 18 townships that make up the 10th District, President Obama won 14 of them, losing only slightly in the consistently Republican townships of Shields (49.2 percent for Obama), Benton (47.7 percent) and Libertyville (47.6 percent). It was a solid victory in the 10th, and a very satisfying one nationwide. **TD**

What a Great Night!

by Steve Sheffey

I'm still on a high from Election Night that might last four years. In my head I knew we'd win, but in my heart, I prepared myself for the worst: a long night, days of recounts at the presidential level, and another narrow loss for the good guys here in the 10th District. Instead, we went two for two.

President Obama was reelected easily. We didn't even need Florida. Closer to home, Brad Schneider edged out Tea Party Republican Robert Dold to become the first Democrat to represent the 10th District in 38 years, and only the second Democrat to represent the 10th District in a century.

It was a harrowing night. Lake County does not release the early votes until all precincts have reported the Election Day votes, and Brad was thousands of votes behind for most of the night. And then, suddenly, the early votes were tabulated all at once, and Brad was ahead, and ahead to stay.



Now it's the Republicans' turn to figure out why they lost and who to run next time. We have our candidate. Strike that. We have our *Congressman!* Brad pulled together a great campaign team and despite being outspent two to one managed to turn the 10th District blue.

We won. Our mission now is to keep the seat. First-term incumbents are frequently vulnerable. The party that controls the White House (that's us!) tends to lose in mid-term elections, so the Republicans will see this seat, our seat, as a takeover opportunity. We need to keep organizing,

keep talking, and keep doing all we can to support Brad so that he wins reelection in 2014.

But 2014 is a long way away. Actually, it's just around the corner, but we can still take a few moments, perhaps between now and President Obama's inauguration, to savor our victories and to wake up every day knowing not only that Barack Obama is our President, but also that Brad Schneider is our Congressman. **TD**

Year of Knope-ness *continued from page 1*

were lots of people home in the middle of the day on weekdays, which speaks to the changing nature of what was a 9-to-5 workplace world, but also indicates that we have a lot of unemployed and underemployed people in the area.

I found people who were deeply involved in the community, helping out at schools, volunteering with Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, running 4-H clubs, coaching teams, teaching in literacy and English as a second language programs, standing with crime victims and fighting for justice, even running food pantries and clothing exchanges out of their homes. And these people thanked me for taking the time to run for office and come ask for a vote. Humbling.

Was it all soft focus and *West Wing* moments? No. Fundraising is soul-sucking and Sisyphean. Sitting for endorsement interviews is intimidating, and waiting to hear back from them is maddening. And there were some voters who assumed that since I shared their skin color they could indulge in all manner of racist and xenophobic rantings and hateful language. But they were few in number and I stood quietly until they ran out of venom, and hoped that they would not vote for me. Or that if they did, they would not tell anyone.

I did have great people around me. I had help with door-knocking, and with getting the lists of names and addresses assembled. I had people to sit with and work on literature for walking and mailing. I had a party structure to make me feel not alone, and to turn to when I needed advice or a kick in the pants. I had family that cheered me on from afar and even surprised me by driving up for a fundraiser. And My Lovely Husband wrestled with the Avery wizard to turn out mailing labels, created stickers to update the preprinted candidate sheets when one of our candidates dropped out, and crafted me a striking yard sign, plus cooked me dinner and poured wine when I was tired from campaigning.

If you're still reading this, you'll be wondering if it was worth it. Yes, I am such a democracy nerd that it was thrilling to see my name on the ballot, and I was pleased to be running with great Democratic candidates locally and nationally. As our Congressman-elect Brad Schneider likes to say, we are better together. We supported each other at events, in parades, and when talking to voters; and I am so glad that the hard work paid off for so many of my friends.

Beyond that, it was a revelation to see what being a candidate is really like. I urge any of you that have ever entertained the thought of running for office, DO IT! And I urge the rest of you who maybe don't think you have what it takes to be a candidate but care about your community--get deeply involved in a campaign, especially a local one. Be so involved that you worry about fundraising, see how messages are crafted and polished, and get at least one blister from walking. And if you don't have time for that, spend at least one weekend helping out the candidate of your choice. The candidate will love you for it, and you will meet some fantastic people and have great stories to tell. Better than that, you'll help move us away from hyperpartisan politics conducted by cynics more concerned with the horse-race aspect and toward the self-government dreamed of by the Founding Fathers. And as Teddy Roosevelt said:

*It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat. **TD***

It Isn't About the Message by Jack Altschuler

Here are some comments made by political pundits following the election.

"The Republicans will have to change their messaging if they are going to appeal to Latinos."

"Mitt Romney had to pivot to the center in order to attract independents."

"Republican candidates have to stop saying things like, 'A woman's body has a way of shutting that down [in cases of rape],' and '[Pregnancy from rape] is God's plan.'"

All that "how to win elections" talk is completely misguided, wrong-headed, and even dishonest. It seems to say that all that matters is winning an election and, therefore, that manipulation of the message and of voters is what is important.

To which I say, "Nuh-uh." What is important is not the pivot to the center, the crafted messaging, and the avoidance of stupid, physiologically erroneous statements. All that pivoting and messaging is about attempting to fool people. It is the beliefs and the values of the candidates as indicators of what they would do that is important and however you dress up those rape-related statements, it's clear what these goofballs would do. Fixing their words to be more palatable would leave them just as radical.

Mitt Romney has shown his true value to America, that of being a finely-honed example of disingenuousness. John Huntsman called him, "a perfectly lubricated weather vane," and that makes him useful and instructive about this messaging business.

Romney was "severely conservative" during the primaries, telling far righties what they wanted to hear. If the principles he



espoused at that time are his core principles, then what are we to make of the opposite views he declared during the general election campaign?

He pointed his messaging weather vane in whatever direction he figured might be to the liking of his then-current audience, even lying about his previous statements, leaving us to wonder what his actual principles (other than getting elected) might be on issues like abortion, healthcare, the auto industry bailout, Libya, a date certain for our troops to leave Afghanistan, and so many others. We were left clueless about what he might do if elected.

Romney's abandonment of his prior, polarized positions to claim a moderate middle left President Obama apparently perplexed and

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2012 Jewish Vote Not Swayed by Republican Super PAC Spending

by Richard Goldwasser

Much ink has already been spilled on the unprecedented influx of cash into Republican advertising coffers and its failure to overcome the Democratic "ground game" in the 2012 election.

One segment that was the clear target of this intense Republican spending, but has more or less been overlooked by the wave of post-election punditry, which has been focused largely on women and Latino voters, has been the Jewish vote. Despite a well-financed campaign by Republicans to use Israel as a wedge issue to pry Jews from their historic loyalty to the Democratic Party, Jews remained solidly in the Democratic camp in 2012.

Election-night polling conducted by Highland Park native Jim Gerstein of GBA Strategies and sponsored by J Street found that Jewish Americans continue to be a strong base Democratic constituency. According to these polls, which offer a scientifically driven examination of Jewish voting patterns on Election Night 2012, Republican efforts to turn support and pursuit of peace between Israelis and Palestinians into a political third rail for American Jews proved futile, nationally and in key swing states.

The results of the election night polls mirrored those of the national exit polls of Jewish voters. President Obama won 70 percent of Jewish support, compared to Mitt Romney's 30 percent. In the key swing states of Florida and Ohio, where many of the Republican efforts to sway Jewish voters over Israel were targeted, the President captured 68 percent and 69 percent of the Jewish vote, respectively. In Ohio, Democratic Senator Sherrod Brown received 71 percent of the Jewish vote against Jewish Republican Josh Mandel.

President Obama's Jewish vote share is solidly in line with the average 70 percent support garnered by Democratic presidential candidates since 1972, when exit polling began. In the extremely close 2012 elections, where Obama saw a three percent drop within the overall electorate, Jewish Americans remained a reliable Democratic voting bloc, with only a four percent decrease in the 2008 level of their support.

American Jews interviewed on election night overwhelmingly said they approve of President Obama's job performance (67 percent), far outpacing the rest of Americans (50 percent, Washington Post-ABC, 11/4/12). When it comes to the

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nearly speechless during the first debate. If you weren't perplexed by Romney's pivots to moderate positions, perhaps instead you felt insulted by his apparent lack of respect for your intelligence, as though he assumed you lacked memory function.

Now that the Republicans have lost big, the hand-wringing over Latino voters has begun in earnest, and the talk is all about the messaging that will be needed to attract them for the next election. All of that misses the point. What is important isn't the messaging; it's the meaning.

MESSAGE TO FUTURE POLITICAL CANDIDATES: You need to understand that Latinos don't care much about what you say about immigration reform; they care about what you would do about immigration reform. They don't care any more than any other Americans how you flap your lips about Medicare and Social Security; they care about what you would do about them. What can they count on from you? If you're all about the hot air of your messaging, then all you are is a manipulator and Latinos are as good as any of us in sniffing you out.

This election was about many things, including voter disenfranchisement backlash, big money influence, and the price to be paid for lying to Americans. All that pivoting and crafted messaging and biological stupid stuff gets seen for what it is, sooner or later.

So, it turns out that Abraham Lincoln was right: You can fool some of the people all of the time and all of the people some of the time, but you can't fool all of the people all of the time. Eventually, they will figure out who and what you are. You may have had your way with them for a while, but if you have been dishonest with the American people they will figure you out, swat you like they would an annoying housefly, and flick you away. **TD**

Jewish Vote *continued from page 5*

president's handling of the Arab-Israeli conflict, 73 percent support his policies.

In Ohio, where a barrage of television advertisements and mailers assailed the President's positions on Israel, 22 percent said that the attacks had actually made them more inclined to support him. Nearly two-thirds reported that the attacks made no difference.

Voters reacted similarly to a controversial television ad about Iran that ran in Florida featuring Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The ad was viewed by nearly half of those polled. About a quarter of those who saw it said it made them more likely to support President Obama, and a little more than half who saw it said it had no effect on their vote.

Like the rest of the electorate, American Jews cast their votes with the economy and other bread-and-butter issues in mind. Nationally, only 10 percent identified Israel as decisive in how they vote, ranking it sixth behind the economy (53 percent), healthcare (32 percent), Social Security and Medicare (23 percent), and other domestic issues. In Florida and Ohio, the results were similar, with only 14 percent and nine percent, respectively, citing Israel as one of their top two voting priorities.

"For Jewish voters, Israel is a threshold voting issue; once candidates demonstrate that they are supportive of Israel, voters move on to consider other issues that more directly affect their daily lives," pollster Jim Gerstein said. **TD**

The author is a member of the National Board of J Street.

The Tenth Congressional District Democrats Annual Holiday Membership Party

at the CUBBY BEAR NORTH
21661 North Milwaukee, Lincolnshire

MONDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2012
From 6:00 PM 'til 8:00 PM

Free Appetizers and Soft Drinks

Preregistration is not required but space is limited.
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