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*The opinions expressed are those of the writers, and not necessarily endorsed by*

# Obamacare By the Numbers: Check It Out

by Mark Rosenberg, M.D.

Despite more than 37 votes to repeal it by the Republican-controlled House of Representatives and a conservative PAC media campaign against it, the Affordable Care Act, aka "Obamacare," is the law of the land, and many have already benefitted from it. Here are some of the tangible benefits to us here in the

10th Congressional District:

As a result of the law:

- ✓ **6,300 young adults** in the district now have health insurance through their parents' plans.
- ✓ More than **8,900 seniors** in the district received prescription drug discounts worth **\$14.2 million**, an average discount of **\$730 per person in 2011, \$800 in 2012, and \$710 thus far in 2013.**
- ✓ **95,000 seniors** in the district are now eligible for Medicare preventive services without any copays, coinsurance, or deductibles.

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# Tenth News

www.tenthdems.org

AUGUST 2013 Illinois Tenth Congressional District Democrats Newsletter Volume 10, Edition 8

## A Bright, Busy Summer for Tenth Dems Interns

by Adrienne Kirshbaum

I love summer! Like everyone else, I enjoy the long, lazy days; the soft breezes; the crystal blue skies. But another reason that I love summer is the Tenth Dems Internship Program. Every year, beginning in May and June, our offices are flooded with young people, all carefully selected, who have pledged to spend their summer vacations working for Tenth Dems. They come from high schools, from colleges, from graduate programs. They all share one trait: they are interested in the political process and want to see how it works at the grassroots level.

These interns bring with them some pretty impressive qualifications. They are intelligent and industrious. Their fingers fly on their laptops; their computer skills put mine to shame. Ask them for an answer to almost any question and they will come up with a researched reply. They accept every assignment with enthusiasm. And they work under pressure without losing their poise. Somebody has been teaching them well!



*Interns meet with Gov. Quinn following "Suffrage at 17" bill-signing ceremony at Stevenson High School. Read about the bill on page 5.*

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by Rachel Hirschhaut, Tenth Dems Intern

People may think that political organizations wind down during a nonelection year, but this is not the case with Tenth Dems. This summer, the Tenth Congressional District Democrats and its 17 interns are as busy as ever, working together on short-term and long-term projects designed to support Democrats in office and ensure the future.

All high school and college students, this year's interns join Tenth Dems with a variety of backgrounds. Many worked on congressional and presidential campaigns in the past. Others simply are interested in grassroots politics and media.

Interns played an active role in planning and staffing the annual Candidate and Volunteer Appreciation Reception in June. We spent the days and weeks leading up to the event calling past candidates and local Democratic supporters, enthusiastically stuffing envelopes with invitations, and welcoming guests that

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See pages 2 - 6 and 12 for more photos and articles featuring Tenth Dems interns and their bright and busy summer.

If you are uneasy about the future of the world, you should drop in and watch them at work. If these kids are typical of their generation, there is no need to worry! I am confident that our country will be in good hands when young people like our interns are in charge.

In the late summer, one by one the interns will leave our offices to go back to school. It is always a strange experience to say goodbye. They go off to new adventures, while we remain behind. We throw them a party, offer to write letters of recommendation, tell them that they are always welcome at Tenth Dems. After their internship summer, they are forever a part of our family. But it seems so quiet, once they are gone.

Judging from their performances so far this summer, I am confident that they will be successful in whatever they attempt. And we will all be better for having worked with them. **TD**



*Above left: Interns Christina Danno and Lauren Pliskin, on their way to a Chicago Bar Association meeting; above right: Tenth Dems staff a Democratic sign-up booth on the Fourth of July.*

## **Tenth Dems Interns, Summer 2013: Who We Are**

*by Jeremy Frisch, Tenth Dems Intern*

**Edgar Beltran** will be a senior political science major and economics minor at Illinois State University. He is interning at Tenth Dems because he is looking for an opportunity to interact in politics and wants to get a chance to work with state legislators. He believes in the Democratic Party because he supports environmental issues, immigration, and same-sex marriage policies. After he graduates, he would like to go to law school and either work at a law firm or with legislators in Illinois to make positive change in the community.

**Emily Bender** will start her first year at Vassar College in the fall and will major in political science. She is interested in grassroots politics. Emily believes strongly in social welfare programs and women's rights. After college, she hopes to have a job that can help others and the community.

**Marissa Bohrer** attends Washington University in St. Louis and will be a senior this fall. She majors in political science, with a minor in women, gender, and sexuality studies. Marissa, who served as a Tenth Dems intern in 2012, is this summer's Internship Coordinator. After college, she is considering working in the nonprofit sector or in the media.

**Matthew Bondy** will be a senior at Glenbrook North High School. He enjoys studying English, social studies, and Mandarin Chinese. He thought that this internship would be a good opportunity to view the American political system from a grassroots level. Matthew supports many Democratic values such as marriage equality, women's rights, gun safety, and environmental issues. After college, he hopes to do governmental work with foreign policy or go into the private business sector.

**Raquel Boton** will be a sophomore at DePaul University and plans to major in international studies. She wanted to work at Tenth Dems to learn more about the political process on a local level, since

she plans to work in politics when she is older. Raquel fully supports social issues such as LGBT and women's rights and strict gun control. After college, she hopes to work internationally for an IGO or NGO to bring human rights to people in other countries.

**Ryan Cenek** is an incoming senior at Deerfield High School. He says he has always been interested in what is going on in his community and in the country. He supports same-sex marriage, strict gun control, and environmental regulation. Ryan is looking forward to attending a college of his choice, and is still exploring his options for the future. Once he goes to college, he hopes to major in either political science, economics, or history.

**Andrea Cho** will be a senior at New Trier High School. Her favorite class is Spanish, and she looks forward to her psychology and sociology classes. Andrea wanted to work at Tenth Dems to learn more about the political system. She trusts the Democratic Party because of marriage equality and immigration issues. She is keeping her options open for after college.

**Christina Danno** will be a senior at Illinois State University where she majors in English and philosophy. She wanted to intern at Tenth Dems to gain experience working in a political office. She supports the Democratic Party because of its positions on marriage equality, women's rights, and student loans. After graduation, she hopes to attend law school.

**Emma Flanagan** will begin her senior year at College of Wooster in the fall, continuing her studies as a political science major. She thought that interning for Tenth Dems would be a good introduction into politics and a way to make connections and learn the dynamics of the area. Emma strongly supports same-sex marriage and women's rights. After graduation, she hopes to work at a legislative office.

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# The Life of a Tenth Dems Intern

by Christina Danno, Tenth Dems Intern

Being an intern for the Tenth Congressional District Democrats offers a variety of experiences simply not available anywhere else. Researching, writing for the Tenth Dems newsletter, and organizing political events are only a few of the projects interns participate in. In addition, the day-to-day work we do exposes us to a typical office environment.

One of the major Tenth Dems events this summer was the Local Candidate Appreciation Reception where we honored all the candidates who ran in the spring 2013 local elections. Wisconsin Congresswoman Gwen Moore was the Keynote Speaker for the event. She charmed the crowd with her humor, and brought up important political issues we need to fight for as a democratic society. To prepare for the event, the interns worked on editing the flyers, made phone calls to people who have donated to our organization inviting them to the event, and attended meetings to create the event schedule.

Interns also have the opportunity to write for the Tenth Dems newsletter. One of our number, Jeremy Frisch, just recently interviewed each intern in order to write small biographies for this issue. "I thought by interviewing each intern I could get to know them on a more personal level. It also gave me the opportunity to write for a professional publication," Frisch said.

Another great advantage interns enjoy is being able to attend meetings with the Chicago Bar Association. Lauren Pliskin went to one of these meetings where she learned about important legislative updates. "Given my interest in law and advocacy, I benefitted from the opportunity to observe lawyers in action. This unique opportunity was a direct benefit of my internship at Tenth Dems that I never would have had otherwise," Pliskin explained.

Along with other volunteers, interns also had the privilege to walk in the Highland Park Fourth of July parade. This gave Tenth Dems an opportunity to shout out to the community what we believe and stand for.



These are only a few of the innumerable opportunities we interns have had to participate in exciting events and projects. **TD**

*Above: Governor Quinn with Tenth Dems interns, including Keely Ward, Emma Flanagan, Christina Danno, and Jeremy Frisch; left: Interns march and hand out literature on the 4th.*



## Interns: Who We Are *continued from page 2*

**Jeremy Frisch** will be a senior at Highland Park High School and enjoys taking history and social studies classes. He chose to intern at Tenth Dems because he wanted to experience working in a political office. He supports Democrats because of their positions on LGBT and women's rights, and he believes that everyone should have free access to healthcare. After college, Jeremy would like to work in the political field and eventually run for office.

**Rachel Hirschhaut** attends Brandeis University in Boston and will be a junior in the fall. She majors in English with a minor in journalism. She chose to intern for Tenth Dems because she has worked in politics before and wants to continue to do so. Rachel is a Democrat because she supports women, access to education, and marriage equality, as well as environmental issues. After she graduates, she hopes to pursue a job in journalism or media.

**Michelle Patino** will be a freshman at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign as a linguistics major and Arabic minor. A returning intern from the summer of 2012, Michelle wants to help her community because she feels that she can relate to the Latino population in her area. Michelle feels strongly about many social programs such as Planned Parenthood and the Affordable Care Act. After college, she would like to pursue a career in academia or become a community organizer.

**Frank Pettis** attends Roosevelt University in Chicago and will be a junior. He majors in political science with a minor in journalism. He interns at Tenth Dems because he wants to be engaged with the political process. After graduation, Frank would

like to either be a political journalist or run for office. He says that by being elected he would be able to affect many more lives than the average person.

**Lauren Pliskin** attends the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and will be a sophomore. She majors in political science with a minor in leadership studies. She wanted to work for Tenth Dems to learn the political process from a grassroots level and to get involved and meet people. She is a Democrat because she backs women's reproductive rights and marriage equality. After college, Lauren's dream would be to represent a country, an international governmental organization, or get involved in U.S. foreign policy.

**Ariel Sheffey** is our youngest intern and a rising sophomore at Deerfield High School. Her interest in politics was the reason she chose to intern at Tenth Dems, since she holds liberal values. She is still exploring her options for the future.

**Paul Stauffer** will attend his last year at the University of Dayton, majoring in international studies with a minor in political science. He is interning at Tenth Dems because he wants to help the community and do something involving politics. He supports the Democratic Party because he would like to see marriage equality for same-sex couples, as well as immigration reform. Later in life, he would like to live in Chicago and work for a non-profit organization.

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# Democrats Celebrate the Fourth of July 2013



# Tenth Dems Interns Look on As Governor Quinn Signs “Suffrage at 17” Bill Into Law

By Christina Danno, Tenth Dems Intern

On July 3, Governor Pat Quinn stood on the running track of Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire and signed the law “Suffrage at 17.” As a result, 17-year-olds who will turn 18 before the November 2014 general election will have the opportunity to vote in the March 2014 primary.

With the support of State Representative Carol Sente of Vernon Hills and State Senator Terry Link of Waukegan, Illinois has become the 21st state to allow 17-year-olds to vote in the primary preceding the first general election in which they are eligible to vote. Sente commented that this is “only fair.”

The new law increases democracy by allowing more citizens to participate in electoral decisions. “We are ringing a bell for democracy and expanding democracy and encouraging people to participate,” Quinn declared.

Civics teacher Andrew Conneen and many of his students, along with other faculty members, first proposed the bill and lobbied state legislators. At the signing ceremony, Conneen



Several Tenth Dems 2013 interns at Governor Quinn’s bill signing ceremony at Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire, with bill sponsors State Rep. Carol Sente and State Sen. Terry Link.

compared the elections to the NCAA basketball tournament. “They’ll be more interested in the championship game if you

*continued on next page*





allow them to fill out the bracket in March, and that's exactly what our bill does," he stated.

Long Grove resident and 17-year-old Stevenson High School student Neli Farahmandpour, one of the students who helped advance the legislation, stood beside Quinn and shared with the crowd her excitement about the bill's passage. "I cannot wait to participate in the



process of voting next March, with all the other students who will be able to vote in the general election, to ensure that voting will become a lifelong habit," she said.

Many students, including a contingent of Tenth Dems interns, gathered around Quinn as he signed the bill. A round of applause greeted the Governor when he stood and displayed the signed bill to the crowd. The scoreboard clock behind him read 2:26, which is the official number of the House bill, and the score shown for the Stevenson Patriots was 17.

After the signing, the Tenth Dems interns were able to speak with Quinn. Each intern shook his hand and named the school he or she attended. The governor showed a genuine interest in getting to know us.

We were grateful to be able to witness such a monumental event. **TD**



*Lauren Beth Gash and Nancie Blatt at a Barack Obama event in Chicago, with some guy talking in the background.*

# VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH: Pat Lind – *Quietly Doing What Is Right*

by Eleonora di Liscia

By most counts, Tenth Dems volunteer Pat Lind has led a pretty uneventful life.

She has lived in Arlington Heights, Illinois almost all her life. She has been married for 37 years to her high school sweetheart, whom she met because of a mutual, lifelong interest in art. They are proud parents of two sons: one an architect and the other an analyst leader for the National Council for Teacher Quality.

Pat majored in art education at Western Illinois University in Macomb. After graduating, she taught middle school art in Buffalo Grove/Long Grove for 35 years until retiring two years ago. Her husband also taught art, at Hersey High School in Arlington Heights.

But throughout her rather ordinary life, Pat has always stood up to work for a better world. From college protests against Viet Nam to serving as a teacher's union president to volunteering at Tenth Dems, Pat has provided the kind of quiet, behind-the-scenes support that makes progressive change possible.

Pat characterizes herself as a "bleeding heart liberal." She says that she is not quite sure where that comes from, although her parents were more liberal than not.

"I feel like the older I get, there is a switch in people's heads that turns them one way or another, because we can't ever get the other side to believe what we believe. My brother is super-conservative, and I don't know how we came out of the same family," Pat said.

But Pat was also a child of the '60s. She started college at the then-named Wisconsin State University-Whitewater, outside Madison, Wisconsin. At that time, the war in Viet Nam was raging, and there were many Black Panther organizations on campus and many protests. After Old Main Hall, the main academic building, partially burned down, the campus was under martial law.

Pat was involved in the antiwar protests, believing that Viet Nam was the wrong place for Americans to be. After teachers were fired for protesting, the students protested all the more.

"We were protest-crazy," Pat said. "Then I left for Western Illinois, and they didn't even know a war was on."

Besides the war, Pat has always felt passionately about women's issues. She staged her own act of passive resistance against the treatment of women at Whitewater.

"We had a sign-out system for girls, and if you were late, you received late minutes. Once you accumulated ten late minutes, you were grounded in your dorm, but the boys didn't have any of that. It made me mad," she said.

One night while everyone was watching the Miss America pageant (which also made Pat angry), she spotted the box of sign-out cards and simply got rid of them.

"We never had to sign out again," she said.

Pat also recalls the days when women could obtain an abortion only by flying to New York or getting one illegally. Not wishing to see a return to those days, Pat feels strongly that every woman should have access to a safe, legal abortion.

During her long tenure as a teacher, Pat served five years as a union president.

"The person who was sick of doing it was sick of doing it, and I was the only one who didn't step back fast enough," Pat said. "I felt like it was my duty to do it, but I did not enjoy one second of it."

Pat believes that unions are needed to provide a voice for people, especially people like teachers who, she says, are not usually rock-the-boat people. Some criticize unions, and occasionally even union members think their union doesn't help them; but, says Pat, this is "because people don't realize what a union does."

"People would never realize how much was on my plate, because a lot of it was confidential. There are so many issues that people don't know about. If they're lucky they never know what their union does for them, because they haven't encountered a parent or child that places them in an adversarial position," Pat said.

Pat first came to Tenth Dems nearly two years ago, after retiring.

"I was determined after working my entire life that I would take time off and do nothing. But after six months, I got really depressed. I felt like I better get up and do something," she said.

Pat began contacting every Democratic organization in the area. While many did not respond, she heard immediately from Tenth Dems. She started by signing people in at a congressional candidate debate.

"Marcy Maller started talking about what Tenth Dems did, and it was what I was really looking for. A one-day-a-week kind of thing. And she said, 'You can do it,'" Pat recalled.

Now, Pat helps with whatever needs to be done. She makes calls, organizes materials for events, and performs clerical work. "Just supporting whatever needs to get done," she says. "I'm there to make leadership's life easier. I only want a supporting role."

"What I found I missed most from working all day was laughing with kids and teachers. My husband is a funny guy, but I missed the laughter, and the people I work with at Tenth Dems make me laugh," Pat explained. "The interns are so smart and so clever and fun to be around. They work their little tails off. They make it fun to be there too. It's a fun place for me to be."



Pat Lind

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# ***Guns in America – The Root Cause of the George Zimmerman and Trayvon Martin Tragedy: A Personal Perspective*** *by Steven Gan*

Like many others, I was riveted by the television coverage of the George Zimmerman trial. I'm sure that over the two weeks or so of testimony I watched about four hours a day, listening to the talking heads slice and dice every word, inflection, and strategic move by all the parties on both sides. It was a courtroom chess match where the defense and prosecution tried to predict each other's maneuvers and blunders, all with the goal of bolstering their version of the truth.

When the "not guilty" verdict was announced, it was an enormous relief for some and a devastating shock and disappointment for others. For me, it was complete confusion as I wasn't sure what the words "not guilty" actually meant.

When I think of the phrase "not guilty," especially as applied to this case, I don't necessarily equate it with "innocent." Rather, I take the phrase to mean that the evidence, the lawyers, the laws, and the legal system could not necessarily find the ultimate truth of what happened that night when George Zimmerman and Trayvon Martin crossed paths and their destinies became fatally intertwined. Since we may never know how the altercation between George and Trayvon started, the whole truth may never be known, and this is what "beyond a reasonable doubt" is all about.

Now this article is not about whether I personally think George Zimmerman was guilty of murdering Trayvon Martin (by the time you read this article in August, there will have been non-stop commentary and additional legal proceedings that will continue to impact this event). Instead, it's another expression of exasperation about one of our most ongoing contentious issues, guns in America.

As we heard from the testimony, George Zimmerman reported from his car to a police dispatcher that there was a "suspicious person" walking in his neighborhood. When the dispatcher asked Zimmerman if he was following the individual, Zimmerman responded that he was, to which the dispatcher replied, "Ok, we don't need you to do that."

However, contrary to this advice, George Zimmerman subsequently left his car and walked a short distance in order to confirm down which street in his neighborhood the "suspicious individual" was walking.

After this point is when things become murky and perhaps not provable beyond a reasonable doubt, but one thing that I have continued to mull over is what George Zimmerman would or would not have done that night if he had not been carrying a gun.

Just after the not guilty verdict came out, Mayor Bloomberg reacted to the acquittal of George Zimmerman, stating, "Sadly, all the facts in this tragic case will probably never be known. But one fact has long been crystal clear: 'shoot first' laws like those in Florida can inspire dangerous vigilantism and protect those who (may) act recklessly with guns."

Bloomberg continued, "Such laws—drafted by gun lobby extremists in Washington—encourage deadly confrontations by enabling people to shoot first and argue 'justifiable homicide' later."

In reading over Mayor Bloomberg's statement, I feel that the key word here is "enabling." If George Zimmerman had not had a deadly

weapon on him, perhaps he would have done what most of us scaredy cats would have done if we'd thought that there was a suspicious person in our neighborhood: he would have stayed in his car and maybe even high-tailed it out of the immediate area.



But because George Zimmerman had a gun, which made him perhaps feel more comfortable, safe, and even empowered, he decided to pursue the "suspicious character," who turned out to be an innocent, unarmed 17-year-old boy.

We have heard the NRA's slogan so many times that "guns don't kill people, people kill people." However, any person with any nugget of rationality also knows that a gun "enables" a person to take that extra step, just as George Zimmerman did, which could end up in killing people. And it's not only killing people who are actually doing something criminal, it's killing innocent people who are simply in the wrong place at the wrong time.

What makes this so tragic is that Trayvon Martin's death was not an isolated incident. There are thousands of innocent people who are killed in our country every year in circumstances in which they are not doing anything wrong but are just in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Recently, Illinois became the last state in the country to allow the concealed carry of firearms; and, regrettably, only a few of our communities have adopted semi-automatic gun restrictions. Out of more than two dozen communities taking up the issue, only Highland Park, North Chicago, Melrose Park, Buffalo Grove, and Skokie joined eight other cities, also near Chicago, to adopt semi-automatic gun restrictions.

I attended the Highland Park City Council meeting on June 24 where, with standing room only, the city council listened to close to one hundred residents and nonresidents of Highland Park voice their opinions as to whether or not to ban the sale of semi-automatic guns within its city limits. There were many passionate feelings on both sides of the debate and I also put in my two cents on the issue.

As the last person to comment I expressed the idea that none of us can ever state with 100 percent certainty that we are always in our right mind. Factors outside of our control could make any of us react in a way that we normally wouldn't. When you add the availability of a gun to the mix of an emotionally-heightened state in which frustration, fear, worry, anxiety, anger, and a host of other emotions are taking hold, a gun, let alone an assault-style weapon, will not only "enable" the type of tragedy that befell Trayvon Martin, but also potentially inflict unprecedented damage to many more people and the community at large. **TD**

# Rainbow/PUSH Coalition's Annual International Conference:

## *A Tenth Dems Intern's Perspective*

by Matthew Bondy, Tenth Dems Intern

As an intern for Tenth Dems, I had the pleasure of attending one day of the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition's annual international conference. The Rainbow/PUSH Coalition's mission is to "protect, defend, and gain civil rights by leveling the economic and educational playing fields, and to promote peace and justice around the world." Each day of the conference, held at the Chicago Hilton and Towers, was devoted to a different theme. Discussions were held on topics as diverse as education, healthcare, and foreign policy.



I sat in on the International Plenary, which focused on relations between the United States and African nations. The session commenced with a performance of the South African national anthem in honor of that country's ailing former president, Nelson Mandela, and remarks from Reverend Jesse Jackson, founder and president of the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition. Reverend Jackson called on President Obama to visit Nigeria, the most populous nation in Africa. South Africa and Nigeria were the two nations with the strongest representation at the event.

Also appearing at the International Plenary, Governor Pat Quinn noted that among the 50 states Illinois is the leading exporter to Africa. He named Illinois companies Caterpillar and John Deere, which now sell high-tech agricultural equipment (such as combines with sophisticated information technology) to African farmers.

Following the Governor's remarks, a panel of distinguished experts on Africa that included former U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria Howard F. Jeter discussed a number of the issues facing the African continent. Topics ran the gamut from disease to trade. Many members of the panel called on Congress to renew the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), set to expire in 2015. Signed into law by

President Clinton in May 2000, this legislation is intended to "expand U.S. trade and investment with sub-Saharan Africa, to stimulate economic growth, to encourage economic integration, and to facilitate sub-Saharan Africa's integration into the global economy. The Act establishes the annual U.S.-sub-Saharan Africa Economic Cooperation Forum (known as the AGOA Forum) to promote a high-level dialogue on trade and investment-related issues." (<http://www.ustr.gov/trade-topics/trade-development/preference-programs/african-growth-and-opportunity-act-agoa>)

The International Plenary's keynote speaker, a representative from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, praised President Obama's Feed the Future Initiative, which has made great strides in improving food security around the globe. Food security is a huge concern for African nations because Africa faces a 50 percent increase in population over the next 40 years. This means that food productivity per acre must double just to feed the growing population. Examples of recent USDA projects involving Africa include a project to develop pest-resistant cacao trees and another to breed goats genetically suited for African climates. The speaker called for continued agricultural research "as a tool for development."

All members of the panel seemed to agree that the United States must increase economic engagement with Africa. Strategies to increase trade must ensure that Africans add value to the goods they export to promote economic self-sufficiency. That is, an increase in the manufacturing sectors of African nations, as opposed to simply the export of raw materials, is necessary to these nations' economic well-being. As one panelist phrased it, "Don't just put it on a ship."

For many Americans, Africa is a misunderstood and forgotten region of the world. Remember when Sarah Palin referred to Africa as a country? Yet, despite the myriad of problems plaguing the continent, it is home to many of the globe's fastest-growing economies and has made considerable progress with conflict resolution in the past decade. It may not be a stretch to say, as did Ambassador Jeter, "This is Africa's century." **TD**



## **“Moderate Republican” an Oxymoron**

Preserve tax cuts for the uber-rich, eliminate vital assistance to the poor (i.e., food stamps), and raise borrowing costs on student loans so that only the rich can afford to send their children to college. Forget about equal opportunities for everyone, let alone ending the cycle of poverty and building a strong middle class—the key to solid economic growth, as evidenced by our nation’s prosperity from 1947 to 1977.

Welcome to Republicans’ vision of America, land of opportunity for the already-rich.

As most of us have asked ourselves time and again over the last two decades, how did this happen? Where is the country I knew as a child—the country that balanced the demands of enterprise with the moral obligation to create opportunities for all Americans?

The answer, simple as it may be, is that our nation increasingly is being reshaped by public policies, put forward by Republican legislators, that benefit the rich while hurting the middle class and the poor.

Much damage already has been done. Thanks to policies that fueled the housing crisis and permitted the outsourcing of American jobs, the American dream is now out of reach for the vast majority of Americans. But the perpetrators, the right-wing extremists driving the radical Republican agenda, are still hard at work, attempting to unravel, one bill at a time, every remaining safety net, social program, and consumer protection designed to make our country a bastion of decency, fairness, and opportunity.

### **Subsidize Agribusiness and Ignore the Hungry**

Just last month the Republican-led House of Representatives passed a farm bill, full of subsidies for agribusiness, but stripped of the food stamp program and related school lunch programs. This marked the first time since 1973 that these vital food assistance programs, programs that ensure nutrition for millions of children, elderly, unemployed, and underemployed, were not included in a farm bill. According to *The New York Times* editorial board, the Republican House’s one-sided bill “reflects the contempt of the far right for anyone desperate enough to rely on the government for help to buy groceries.” (<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/12/opinion/in-the-house-a-refusal-to-govern.html>).

### **Protect Banks and Abandon Students**

Several days later, Senate Republicans, with help from Illinois’ junior senator, Mark Kirk, who has the gall to brand himself a “moderate,” succeeded in filibustering a vote to lower the interest rate on student loans. The Democratic proposal would have retroactively reinstated the 3.4 percent interest rate on subsidized Stafford student loans that doubled to 6.8 percent on July 1 when Democratic efforts to

extend the low rate for another year failed. Stafford loans are provided to moderate- and low-income undergraduate students. The bill, which needed 60 votes to advance, failed with 51 Republicans voting against it, including Kirk.

Many policy makers, including the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, the Federal Reserve, and the Treasury Department, have warned that rising student debt has the potential to reduce consumption and impede economic growth over the next several years. Student debt repayment is predicted to crowd out household spending, auto and home purchases, and savings.

As lawmakers continue to seek a compromise on Stafford loan interest rates, they are weighing several different proposals, including one from the White House, that would link these interest rates to market rates. One measure, the Bipartisan Student Loan Certainty Act, which is expected to pass in the Senate before this newsletter goes to press, proposes that all newly-issued student loans carry a fixed rate based on the U.S. Treasury 10-year borrowing rate (plus 1.85 percent for graduate loans), with a rate cap of 8.25 percent. The rate on undergraduate loans issued this year is estimated to be 3.86 percent. The rate at which loans are offered in subsequent years will adjust with the bond market and are estimated to climb to 7.25 percent by 2018.

Consumer advocates like Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren strongly oppose a market-based approach to setting interest rates on student loans, saying it’s wrong to turn students into a government profit center. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that the U.S. government will rake in \$51 billion in net profits from this year’s student loans, effectively reducing our nation’s deficit on the backs of students. “The government is making obscene profits on these loans,” Warren said. “This is just plain wrong.” This is why, back in May, Warren introduced the Bank on Students Loan Fairness Act, which would charge students the same interest the Federal Reserve Bank charges big banks. This rate is currently about 0.75 percent.

As one student told the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* in July, rather than generate revenue, “[t]he Federal student loan program should...better our country by giving students the means to be educated and become productive and contributing members of society.” This is precisely what the U.S. government did starting in the 1960s. The result was decades of prosperity and a higher standard of living for all Americans. Tragically, today’s Republican Party, with Mark Kirk’s full participation, is pushing policies designed to achieve exactly the opposite result. **TD**



## Intern Summer

*continued from page 1 (column 2)*

Sunday evening. At the event, we had the privilege and excitement of meeting prominent leaders—keynote speaker Congresswoman Gwen Moore, Rev. Jesse Jackson, and 10th District Congressman Brad Schneider, among others—and community members, like Abrianna Matus, a student who won the Community Connection Poetry Contest.

The interns have also become a part of current events through our work. On July 3, the Tenth Dems staff and interns attended a bill signing with Governor Pat Quinn at Stevenson High School, where Quinn signed into effect a new law that will grant some 17-year-olds the right to vote in primary elections. The law was first proposed and crafted three years ago by our peers, with the help of their teachers, and now it is proof that our work eventually does make a difference.

We also had the opportunity to attend a Highland Park City Council meeting where a local assault weapons ban was considered and adopted—a timely and controversial issue.

Interns' other projects range from doing political and environmental research in the Northfield Township and Palatine Democrats offices, to caring for the Community Connection vegetable garden in Waukegan.

Upcoming events with the opportunity for intern participation include an evening at Ravinia with Illinois State Senator Julie Morrison, and the Dawn Clark Netsch Public Policy Forum at the Illinois Women's Institute for Leadership. **TD**

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## Pat Lind *continued from page 6*

In case Pat missed her former students too much, she ran into some of them at Tenth Dems. Marissa Bohrer, who is in charge of the interns, is a former student of hers. And so is one of the Democratic congressional candidates in 2012, Ilya Sheyman.

"I saw him at that first event, and I thought, 'Ok, I know this kid.' And I found out he was one of the candidates," Pat said. "Marissa, I had seen her, but I didn't recognize her. I was in another room, and I heard her voice, and it was her voice that linked me to the past."

Despite Pat's characterizing herself as a supporting player, Tenth Dems Chair Lauren Beth Gash sees Pat as a quiet leader.

"Pat is one of our most valuable players. She is a leader in our organization because she helps deal with whatever is going on," Lauren said. "She can help with the seemingly most mundane things (which are so valuable and needed -- and what those of us in leadership spend most of our time doing) to the most publicly important ones. She even helps manage our other volunteers. And she is always pleasant and tons of fun to work with."

Besides Tenth Dems, Pat volunteers for Wheeling Palatine Democrats and for the Northwest Community Hospital Mammogram Department. She also occasionally observes Cook County Board meetings for the Cook County League of Women Voters and puts out her neighborhood association's newsletter. **TD**

## Obamacare *continued from page 1*

- ✓ **195,000 individuals** in the district—including **48,000 children** and **78,000 women**—now have health insurance that covers preventive services without any copays, coinsurance, or deductible.
- ✓ **186,000 individuals** in the district are saving money due to provisions of the law that prohibit insurance companies from spending more than 20 percent of their premiums on profits and administrative overhead. Because of these protections, over **16,800 consumers** in the district received approximately **\$3.8 million in insurance company rebates** in 2012 and 2011—an average rebate of **\$52 per family in 2012** and **\$380 per family in 2011**.
- ✓ **246,000 individuals** in the district now have health insurance plans that, starting in 2014, cannot impose lifetime or annual limits on coverage.
- ✓ **90,000 individuals** in the district who now lack health insurance will have access to quality, affordable coverage without fear of discrimination or higher rates because of a preexisting health condition.
- ✓ **45,000 individuals** who currently purchase private health insurance on the individual or small group market will have access to more secure, higher quality coverage and many will be eligible for financial assistance.

Starting October 1, 2013, you can sign up for new health insurance options at [www.HealthCare.gov](http://www.HealthCare.gov) or 1-800-318-2596.

For an animated explanation of Obamacare, visit <http://kff.org/health-reform/video/youtoons-obamacare-video/> **TD**

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## Interns: Who We Are *continued from page 3*

**Keely Ward** will be attending her second year at Emmanuel College as an English major and political science/religious studies double minor. Something Keely hopes to gain from her internship at Tenth Dems is the ability to apply what she has learned in the classroom to a real-life setting. Keely's political philosophy is that she does not believe that success can be completely achieved individually until it is collectively achieved as a country. After she graduates, she hopes to continue her education by attending law or graduate school.

**Nathan Whiteman** will be a sophomore at Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin. He majors in economics with a minor in history. He works for Tenth Dems to learn how the country works in order to make it better. Nathan says being a Democrat fits best with him because of its political philosophy. He says a nation does better when it helps those who need it the most. He is still undecided about what he wants to do professionally. **TD**

# Community Connection Hosts Open House

by Carolyn Rivers

On a beautiful, breezy evening in mid-July, Community Connection opened its doors as part of ArtWauk, a summertime community event staged by Waukegan to bring pedestrians to the downtown area. Community Connection, or “ComCon,” is located in Waukegan at 118 North Genesee Street.

From late afternoon, a cardboard Obama stood in ComCon’s entrance, beckoning strollers inside. Passersby were encouraged to pose for a photo with the President, as did several of the Tenth Dems volunteers. President Obama’s life-sized form stood its ground even in the throes of the billowing lake breeze, emblematic of his determination and dedication to the American people.

Tenth Dems believes that politics should be about more than just elections—about making our communities better places to live. Tenth Dems established ComCon to enhance our community by connecting people with politics and government. The open house activities on July 20 during ArtWauk reflected these ideals.

During ArtWauk, Waukegan’s downtown was flooded with people enjoying the festive activities that spanned several city blocks. To encourage passersby to come into the office and learn more about what Community Connection has been doing since opening its doors in 2011, Tenth Dems volunteers served refreshments along

with its literature. In addition to cookies, lemonade and iced tea, and vegetables and dip, the offerings included a green salad tossed with lettuce harvested that afternoon from ComCon’s plot in the Waukegan Community Garden. The garden is located only a few blocks south on Genesee Street.



In addition to raising vegetables in the Community Garden, ComCon conducts an annual Poetry/Prose contest for local high school students that culminates in young writers reading their works at a “slam;” conducts workshops to help ex-offenders and other hard-core unemployed prepare for job interviews; and serves as a source of referrals to community resources. During elections, Tenth Dems stages volunteers from the ComCon office to help Democratic candidates in the northern part of the 10th District.

During the ArtWauk open house, Tenth Dems volunteers also obtained over 100 signatures on a petition to support legislation to reduce gun violence. **TD**



Some of the many volunteers who planned and staffed the open house pause for a photo. Back row, l. to r., Joe Dubaniewicz, Barbara Altman, Carolyn Rivers, Nathan Whiteman, Frank Pettis. Center row, Jim Neal, Lauren Beth Gash, Bonnie Berger-Neal. Front row, Karen Singer, Marissa Bohrer.



Barbara Altman poses with some guy.

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