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Hanukkah at the White House: After a Policy Briefing, a Festive Celebration

by Steve Sheffey

On December 17, my daughter Ariel (a Tenth Dems intern) and I attended the White House Hanukkah Party. It was an amazing event from start to finish. An unending supply of great food (including latkes and lamb chops, all kosher of course) and great company – who could ask for more?

We were lucky enough to be standing directly in front of the President and Michelle Obama when the candles were lit by kids from the Max Rayne Hand in Hand (*Yad B'Yad*) Bilingual School in Israel, which draws a diverse Jewish and Arab student body from throughout Jerusalem. This is the school where a fire was intentionally started on November 29.

The school made a special *hanukkiab* (Hanukkah candelabra) for the party. Watching Jewish and Muslim children from Israel lighting a *hanukkiab* in the White House as the President and First



Tenth Dems intern Ariel Sheffey chats with First Lady Michelle Obama at the 2014 White House Hanukkah Party

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Tenth News

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Tenth Dems Holiday Party an Occasion for Looking Forward

by Adrienne Kirshbaum

Bright lights twinkled on the trees, menorahs and crèches were on display, and Santa held court at the malls. It was holiday time in the 10th District. And on the evening of Monday, December 15, Tenth Dems celebrated the season by hosting our annual Holiday Membership Party at Trax in Deerfield. Despite the grim results of the November elections, partygoers seemed determined to have a positive outlook and to view future campaigns with anticipation. Armed with the knowledge we have gained from the past, and convinced that our party can provide a better life, Tenth Dems is committed to its goal of electing Democrats to every level of government.

Barbara Altman, one of the group’s vice-chairs and editor of our newsletter, *Tenth News*, welcomed the crowd of nearly 100 and urged those who were interested to take on leadership roles in the organization. She then introduced founding chair Lauren Beth Gash, who congratulated those courageous enough to run for office. Whether or not they won their races, all deserve our admiration.

Several elected officials took the microphone to speak. State Representative Carol Sente thanked Tenth Dems for its support and friendship during a tough race for reelection. Sam Yingling, also a reelected State Representative, appreciated Tenth Dems support,



See pages 2 through 6 for more photos from Tenth Dems’ Holiday Party.

as well. Pointing out some of the positive aspects of November’s election results, Rep. Yingling noted that western Lake County now has to deal with an aggressive Democratic Party.

State Senator Daniel Biss of Evanston talked about U.S. Congressman Brad Schneider’s loss to a much less qualified opponent. He said that Democrats were on the right side of the issues and reminded us that we have to spend the next two years explaining what we stand for.

When Brad Schneider stood up to address the crowd, he received

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Join Tenth Dems on Sunday, January 25, 2015 for an afternoon of political satire featuring the comedy troupe Capitol Steps. See p. 7 for details.

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warm and enthusiastic applause. He thanked everyone and said that he had worked as hard as he could on his campaign. He said that Tenth Dems made the last two years possible, and that it was an honor to serve the district. He echoed the idea that Democrats are on the right side of every issue, and that we need to translate those positions and tell voters that we will provide a better future for them and for their children. And we can't wait two years to push that message. We have to begin to do it now!

Nancy Chausow Shafer announced an upcoming Tenth Dems event. On Sunday, January 25, 2015, we are going to see the Capitol Steps at the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts in Skokie. The show begins at 2:00 p.m. If laughter is the best medicine, there will certainly be something therapeutic to be gained from this talented troupe that makes jokes about the absurdity of Washington politics. Tickets are going fast, and she urged those who wanted to join us to make reservations as soon as possible. See p. 7 for more details about the event and how to sign up.

On this rainy December evening, the weather couldn't dampen the mood. Inside Trax, the atmosphere was cheerful, the pizza was delicious, and the Democrats of the 10th Congressional District were optimistic. **TD**



A Message from the Editor: Join Us!

Republicans of all stripes already are declaring their intention to run for President. Mark Kirk has signaled his intention to run for reelection to the Senate. We may be tired, but we will never have as much time as we have today to work to elect more Democrats in 2016. And many of us will have the opportunity to elect Democrats to local offices in 2015, as well.

Tenth Dems needs more leaders to help harness the power of its many thousands of volunteers. If you are interested in helping organize a Tenth Dems event, like a "Let's Talk Politics" gathering, or the 2015 Poetry/Prose Competition for high school students in



Photos continue on next page

the Waukegan/North Chicago area, or a monthly ArtWauk open house; if you can help staff one of our offices on a regular basis or oversee student interns; if you are willing to write press releases or post other's content to social media; if you can help keep the Tenth Dems data base, Internet home page, and Facebook up to date; if you'd like to write for this monthly newsletter ... Tenth Dems wants to hear from you. Send an email to volunteer@tenthdems.org, or call 847-266-VOTE (8683).

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Join Us! *continued from page 2*

The road to victory in 2016 is long, but it will grow shorter with every passing day. And 2015 has important intermediate destinations along the way.

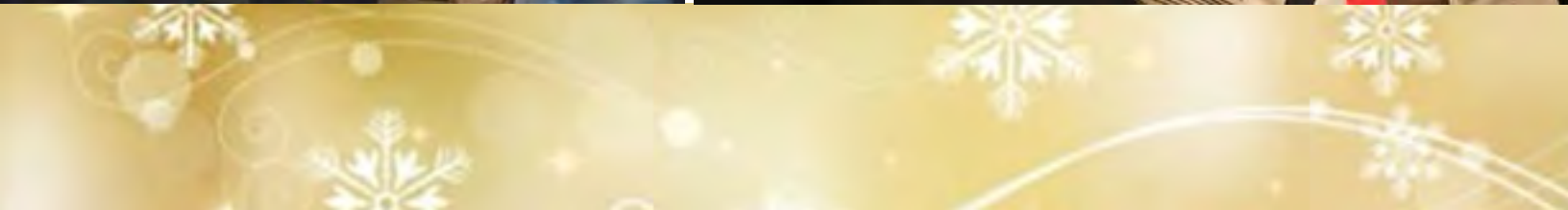
So don't delay. Make it your New Year's resolution to put your talents to work with Tenth Dems. With your help, we will accomplish our goal of electing Democrats throughout the 10th Congressional District in 2015 and 2016 – to local and county offices, to the Illinois legislature, to statewide offices, to the U.S. House of Representatives, to the U.S. Senate, and to the White House.

Happy New Year! **TD**

– Barbara Altman









Hanukkah at White House continued from page 1

Lady proudly looked on and the entire crowd sang the blessings for the lights, followed spontaneously by *Maoz Tzur* (“Rock of Ages”), a traditional Hanukkah song, was a moment I will never forget. Is there any country besides Israel where Jews are as welcome as in the United States?

President and Michelle Obama invited us into their home for a wonderful celebration of our heritage, culture, and religion. What a statement about Jewish life in America. Just a few hours earlier, some of us heard a very somber briefing about anti-Semitism in Europe. And then there we were in the White House celebrating a festival of freedom. Only in America.

Earlier that day, President Obama announced the release of Alan Gross from prison in Cuba. At the party, President Obama referred to the Jewish concept of *“pidyon shvuyim,”* redemption of captives. President Obama told us he spoke to Gross on his flight home and that “he was willing to interrupt his corned beef sandwich to talk to me.”

President Obama also talked about the changes to U.S. policy toward Cuba. Just ask Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, Bush, Clinton, and Bush how effective sanctions against Cuba were. They are out of office and Castro is still there. As Jeff Goldberg (who also attended the Hanukkah party) wrote, “After 50 years of trying one thing, and seeing that thing fail, and fail again, it was about time that the United States try something else.”

Prior to the party, a number of us also attended a White House Policy Briefing moderated by Matt Nosanchuk, Director for Outreach, National Security Council. Soon-to-be new ADL Executive Director Jonathan Greenblatt, currently Special Assistant to the President and Director of the Office of Social Innovation and Civic Participation, discussed social innovation. Ira Forman, Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, discussed growing anti-Semitism in Europe. And Phil Gordon, Special Assistant to the President and White House Coordinator for the Middle East, North Africa, and the Gulf Region, National Security Council, and Colin Kahl, Deputy Assistant to the President and National Security Advisor to the Vice President, discussed foreign policy.

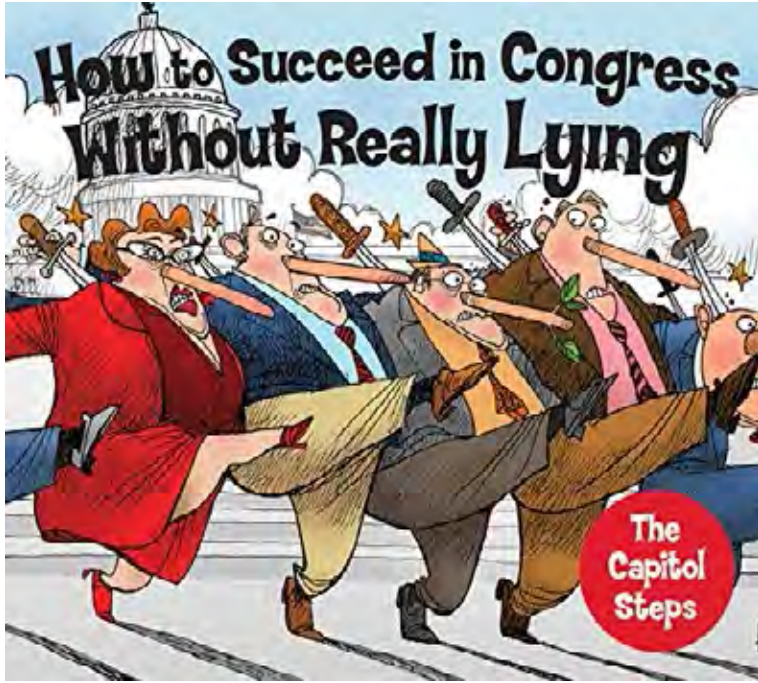
What follows are some of my take-aways from this briefing, focusing on foreign policy.

Iran’s breakout capacity. The term “breakout capacity” refers to the length of time required for Iran to create fissile material for a nuclear bomb. Additional time would be needed to weaponize such material and to make it deliverable. Some people have wondered why our goal is to reach an agreement that will prevent Iran from achieving breakout within one year. At first glance, an Iran only a year away from creating fissile material for a nuclear bomb does not seem too reassuring.

But think about it: Until the Joint Plan of Action went into effect, Iran had built about 3,000 centrifuges a year for the past several years. Given that there is no way to remove the knowledge that Iran has acquired, even if Iran dismantled and destroyed every single

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Tenth Dems to Spend an Afternoon *With (Not On) the Capitol Steps*



Join Tenth Dems on Sunday, January 25, 2015, at 2:00 p.m., at the Centre East Theatre in Skokie (North Shore Center for the Performing Arts, 9501 Skokie Blvd.) for a laugh-filled afternoon. It's time for our annual trip to the world of political satire featuring the comedy troupe Capitol Steps.

This year's show is called "How to Succeed in Congress Without Really Lying." Following the performance, stay for a Tenth Dems reception offering snacks, coffee, and conversation.

Individual tickets are \$50 and sponsorship levels are available at \$75, \$250, \$500 and \$1000. Purchase tickets and sponsorships here or send checks payable to "Tenth Dems" to P.O. Box 523, Deerfield, IL 60015. Tickets will be available at a table marked "Tenth Dems" by the box office. If you plan to pay by check, please call 847-266-VOTE (8683) or send an email to info@tenthdems.org in order to confirm availability.

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centrifuge it had, Iran would only be two years from creating fissile material because it can build centrifuges that quickly. In other words, the best we could conceivably hope for is a breakout capacity of two years, and that's not going to happen because Iran is not going to destroy every centrifuge.

One year is more than enough time to detect and prevent a move toward breakout. We would know within days, if not hours, if Iran started moving toward breakout, and that would give us a year to take appropriate military or economic action. Iran's breakout capacity has been about six months for the past five years, yet it has not made that move.

The Joint Plan of Action has allowed much greater inspections, and the key to any final agreement will be the most intrusive inspections possible. No one pretends that the Iranians are our friends or that we can trust them; that's why the right approach is not "trust but verify." The right approach is "distrust but verify."

But what if Iran has secret facilities? This is a common objection to diplomacy. What if the wily Iranians evade our inspection process? Shouldn't we bomb them just to play it safe? Think about that, too. If Iran is successfully hiding these facilities from us, we can't bomb them—we don't know where they are. The only way to reduce this risk is through intrusive inspections, and diplomacy is the only way to put inspections in place.

Remember also that the issue is not whether to impose sanctions. The administration supports sanctions. Iran would not be negotiating were it not suffering from the severe sanctions we have in place. The limited sanctions relief is just that—limited relief tied to compliance. Unilaterally imposing more sanctions now, especially while Iran is complying with the Joint Plan of Action, would not create additional leverage, but it could cause the international sanctions architecture to fracture or cause Iran to walk away from the table.

The relationship between the U.S. and Israel remains strong.

President Obama made a conscious decision to ensure that, regardless of any political disagreements between the U.S. and Israel, military and intelligence cooperation between the two countries, which is now at unprecedented levels, would continue unaffected. This is much more important than the soap opera aspect of the U.S.-Israel relationship that some people prefer to focus on. Yes, there are disagreements, but these are disagreements among family that do not affect our country's close relationship with Israel.

The U.S. continues to engage the Palestinians and the Israelis because negotiations provide an alternative to the tit-for-tat cycle of violence and counterproductive diplomacy that could spiral out of control.

A two-state solution will not solve all the problems in the region. The Israel-Palestinian conflict is not the most important conflict in the region. But normalization of relations between Israel and the Arab world, and a regional re-alignment that inures to the benefit of Israel and its neighbors, is impossible without resolution of the Israel-Palestinian conflict, and that is why a two-state solution is so important. ISIL actually presents a huge opportunity because opposition to ISIL is the one area where all states in the region agree and where cooperation in one area could lead to other areas of cooperation. But without a two-state solution, this opportunity will be very hard to seize.

And of course without a two-state solution, Israel will eventually lose either its Jewish or its democratic character. That is why the United States and those in Israel who support a two-state solution oppose additional settlement building.

*The author, a Tenth Dems Vice-Chair, adapted this article from his December 21 email update about pro-Israel politics. **TD***

Political Messaging With a Twist of Chile

by Eleonora di Liscia

One of my favorite political movies is *No*, a 2012 film about the 1988 plebiscite and the political campaign in Chile that led to the overthrow of dictator Augusto Pinochet.

Under pressure from the international community, Pinochet has been forced to hold an election to determine if his 15 years of military dictatorship will continue. A coalition of opposing political parties ranging from Socialist to Christian Democrat fuels the “No” campaign. Pinochet is the “Yes.”

This movie is a primer in political messaging. Many of the same issues that Democrats grapple with in the United States are at stake here. Do we campaign on hope or do we go with fear? Are we selling our principles by playing the political messaging game? Do we want to make a statement or do we want to win? Whom do we pitch to, the choir or the undecided?

Gael Garcia Bernal plays Rene Saavedra, an ad rep for a successful agency. (Rene is fictitious but many of the *No* commercials are real.) The movie opens with Rene pitching a soda commercial to a client, who wants to know why there is a “f---g mime” in the commercial. (The mime will return later.)

The meeting is interrupted when Rene receives a visit from the coalition leader who is seeking Rene’s help with the No campaign. The Yes and the No are each to have 15 minutes of TV time every night for 27 nights to reach voters.

When the coalition leaders show Rene their proposed ad filled with scenes about the missing, tortured, and executed, he asks “Is that all? There’s nothing else? Something a little lighter, a little nicer?”

Coalition leaders respond, “Do you think that what’s going on in Chile is nice?” To which Rene counters, “I think that this doesn’t sell. I want to know how you think this campaign will help us win the plebiscite.”

One group member worries, “Although we want to win the plebiscite, some of us just want to win, not really change Chile. We want another kind of victory.” Rene then asks whether the coalition thinks they can win. The answer is no. “Then why campaign?” he asks. “To raise awareness,” he is told.

But Rene wants to win. At an outdoor barbeque, the group discusses demographics. They need to appeal to young people and to old ladies. They need to bring in people who do not vote because of learned hopelessness after 15 years of oppression.

The group polls an older woman who they surmise is voting Yes. “Why?” they ask. She says, “I’m fine. My son is in college. My daughter works.” Is she not bothered by the torture? “It’s not that I don’t care about it,” she replies. “But those things are in the past.”

Rene produces a draft of the campaign, a video not unlike his soda commercial. Brainstorming about what is happy, he decides nothing is happier than happiness. The slogan becomes: “Chile,



happiness is coming.” And the video is filled with happiness: dancers, horseback riders, singers, and, yes, the mime. Rene asks a songwriter to create a jingle. Not an anthem. Not pop. Not rock. A jingle.

Upon viewing Rene’s video, some coalition members ask: “Is that all you have?” They complain the campaign is too much like a Coke commercial. Rene explains, “We’re doing something much more serious than that. We’re using advertising language that is universal, familiar, attractive, and optimistic to build a political concept behind it.”

But at least one coalition member is enraged and walks out. “This is a masquerade,” he says. “This is a campaign to silence what has really happened.” Others are not happy but go along with the message.

And it works. While the Yes campaign produces heavy-handed commercials of a baby nearly being run over by a tank and an old woman who can’t afford two tea bags because “the Communists” have taken over, the No campaign is witty and joyful. Yes tries to respond with humor, but its attempts fall flat. (The campaign wasn’t the only reason the No won. There was also a highly successful voter-registration effort.)

So what does this movie say? Well, do we want to win, or do we want to make a statement? Do we sell our principles to play the political messaging game? Do we fight against human nature, or appeal to it?

If witty and joyful jingles are what it takes to topple a Pinochet, or to ensure that Democrats win to protect all the things we value, my answer is an emphatic, “Yes. Let’s do it.” **TD**

Working Our Values

by Nancy Rodkin Rotering, Mayor of Highland Park

As a Democratic precinct committeewoman (Moraine 222), I know how difficult the November election was on many fronts. However, when we work for candidates, we are working for our values and not just the results on one election night. So, disappointed as we may be in some of the vote tallies, the Tenth Dems' motto that politics should be about more than just elections pushes us to continue to find ways to promote our shared values.

'The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members.'

— Mahatma Gandhi

We as Democrats share a core set of values. Meeting the requests of our most vulnerable community members is a priority at the federal, state, and local level. That's why we energetically promote dedication to human services, making impactful differences in the lives of so many.

As Mayor of Highland Park, reflecting the strong values and desires of our residents, I work constantly to identify opportunities and rally the City Council, staff, and volunteers citywide to meet the needs of our most vulnerable community members. The City's key priorities are fiscal stability, infrastructure investment, and public safety. Providing for human services falls under all three categories.

Most recently, the Highland Park Human Services Task Force (HSTF) was formed under the umbrella of the City's Human Relations Commission. My goal was to create a comprehensive approach to the provision of much needed human services. Tasked with four phases, the HSTF of over 250 volunteers between the ages of 17 and 85 worked together to: 1) assess the needs of five subpopulations: youth, seniors, immigrants, people with disabilities, and the economically challenged; 2) create an inventory of services available; 3) identify obstacles to access, gaps in services, and potential synergies; and 4) effectively communicate the availability of such services.

Through the needs assessment process, a number of opportunities rose to the surface. One in particular, accessibility to bilingual affordable legal services, is now underway through the creation of the Highland Park/Highwood (HPH) Legal Aid Clinic. Led by Kathryn Vanden Berk and located in downtown Highland Park,



we are seeking any and all interested attorneys (active or retired), paralegals, and other volunteers to join the effort to provide access to legal services to all who need them.

In the beginning, legal aid in three main subject matters will be provided: domestic abuse/violence, immigration, and housing. A coordinated effort with Prairie State Legal Services, H.A.C.E.S. (Hispanic American Community Education and Services), the Chicago Legal Foundation, Pro Bono Network, and the City of Highland Park, the goal is to bring our community together, meeting the needs of the vulnerable while providing an opportunity for those with legal skills to provide pro bono services close to home.

More than 40 people have shown interest in volunteering, and the group is eager to open its doors by mid-2015. With President Obama's new call to action to reform the immigration system, the legal aid clinic will provide, among other things, opportunities for citizenship training as well as administrative and legal assistance for immigrant families directly impacted in our community. While we as a nation work towards comprehensive immigration reform, through the HPH Legal Aid Clinic we will be addressing the need locally to integrate families into our great nation.

This project is one of many ways in which we can live our Democratic values. And we Democrats know and appreciate that feeling of purpose when action is called for and individuals come together to make a difference. **TD**

Joy to the World, or Other News from the Water Front

by Debra Shore, Commissioner, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Like many of you, I felt dismay and apprehension following the November 4 election in Illinois and nationally. But despair not! I am here to say that good things are happening at the local level and the people you send to serve in public office are changing things for the better. Take the old Chicago Sanitary District, for example, an agency that serves the equivalent of 10 million people treating sewage and managing storm water.

The 2015 budget stands at \$1.3 billion, but it supports an agency moving in a dramatically different direction than a decade ago. The back cover of the budget book states the bold new mission: Recovering Resources, Transforming Water. The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) is becoming a resource recovery agency. All those things that we used to consider waste have value and MWRD is seeking to capture and monetize that value. It's beyond exciting.

Food Waste to Energy

At the Calumet Treatment Plant on Chicago's far south side, the MWRD will divert 440 tons a day of food waste from landfills, convert it into a slurry and then feed that into the anaerobic digesters at the plant. This organic waste will increase the production of methane gas by 160 percent, some of which will then be scrubbed and sold into the natural gas network. This project alone will reduce MWRD's energy footprint by 40 percent.

Nutrient Pollution to Needed Fertilizer

With the sanitary district's reversal of the Chicago River more than 100 years ago, the resulting system of waterways conveys nearly all stormwater and wastewater discharge to the Gulf of Mexico. This means that all the phosphorus and nitrogen from the treatment plants adds to the algae growth in the Gulf and helps to cause the Dead Zone there.

Now, through a new process, the MWRD will be removing phosphorus from the treated water at its largest plant (Stickney) and turning it into a slow-release fertilizer that we can sell. Best of all, this product is not water soluble, so when it's applied to farm fields via injection into the soil, it won't run off and cause more nutrient pollution in streams and rivers. The MWRD will produce 10,000 tons a year of a vital resource—fertilizer—that can be used in the Midwest and that will generate revenue (perhaps as much as \$4 million a year). See Crystal Green for more info.



Water Reuse

Today, water users in Cook County withdraw more than a billion gallons a day from Lake Michigan, use it once in their homes and businesses, and then send it to the Gulf of Mexico after it's treated. It's not put back into the lake. How sustainable is that? Instead, why not use this valuable resource more than once? That's the idea behind efforts underway to envision a water-intensive industrial corridor in the vicinity of the Calumet treatment plant. Can we attract the water-intensive industries of the future to an area near the treatment plants where ample water can be provided for industrial use? Architecture students at the Illinois Institute of Technology are spending eight months in a design studio bringing their imaginations and creative energy to this very notion. The availability of fresh water is a strategic asset and an economic asset for northeastern Illinois. We must be poised to demonstrate good stewardship and provide opportunities for people and industries as they come here for water.

These are a handful of the new initiatives underway at MWRD. The agency has a plan to become energy neutral in a decade—this for an organization that used to spend \$50 million a year on electricity. So change is coming. You're a part of it. Be thankful, be glad. Have a wet and wonderful New Year! **TD**