

The Township Democrat

The Official Newsletter of the Winfield Township Democratic Organization

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Spring 2011

Conversations With the Township Chair

By Susan Lubonovich

WTDO Chair & Committeeman, Pct. 014

I welcome all of you to this, our Tenth issue of The Township Democrat, the Newsletter of your Winfield Township Democratic Organization. I can hardly believe we have reached such a milestone and; please be assured, we could not have accomplished this remarkable feat without your unstinting support. Your commitment to The Township Democrat has permitted us to explore issues and concerns through thought provoking articles written from diverse Democratic points of view and brought together in one local publication for your consideration. We are very grateful for this opportunity.

And now, here we are in the aftermath of the Great Recession - or so we are told. I can not tell yet. We do not hear much lately about how Wall Street's shenanigans tanked our economy in the first place - and made a small number of people bodaciously rich. We do not read much about our Captains of Industry and Banking sitting on unprecedented trillions of dollars in profits and reserves because they are so fearful and need incentives to invest in our economy and our recovery. Not too fearful to invest in bonuses, though. And of course, the incentives include lower taxes, relaxed environmental and safety regulations and breaking and diminishing our labor unions. Nobody is talking about the proverbial elephant in the room. That for some, high income individuals, large banks and major corporations, a significant recovery has already occurred. It is the rest of us, small businesses, a large part of the labor force and retirees living on virtually non-interest earning savings, who are stuck and struggling.

America has always had a ruling class. Usually one who had a rudimental understanding that their good fortune imposed an obligation on them toward the

rest of us. At crucial moments, the American establishment has had an understanding that individual happiness is inextricably linked to social well being. Social decency is in their own self interest. A reasonably fair society is a more stable society and the ruling elites' wealth and influence are preserved by that very stability. An enlightened ruling class understands that it will grow richer if prosperity is broadly shared.

Not today. Today our ruling class is completely obsessed with wealth and has no concern regarding the health of our society as a whole. Since 1993 the top 400 taxpayers have seen their effective tax rate decrease by 40 percent, from 30 cents on the dollar in 1993 to 16.6 cents on the dollar today. And still they are not satisfied. When it comes to governing, the ruling class is completely devoted to its self-involved lobbying. Why are we wondering where the deficit has come from? And to top things off, the flotsam of the wingnuts have gotten themselves elected. The ideologues in the House seek to starve the federal government to such an extent that it will no longer be able to fulfill its constitutional duty to promote the general welfare. That's us, folks.

What to do? For starters, we can demand some backbone in the Democrats who remain as our Representatives and Senators. We can stop kowtowing to Republican threats. Bipartisanship was never in the cards with this bunch. The art of the possible is a dead negotiating tool. Democrats need to realize that the middle ground will never be found if the center moves increasingly to the right. The Right will always demand more and threaten cataclysmic harm if they do not have their way. Well, all right then; let's test it. Instead of collapsing at the first sign of bullying, let's stand up to their threats. After all, we are still the Party of Roosevelt, Truman and Kennedy that believes our government can and should be a force for good. We still adhere to Lincoln's exhortation that we are a government of the people, by the people and for the people. Let us stand strong for the general welfare of us all.

CALENDAR

WED., MAY 18, 7:00 PM

WTDO MONTHLY MEETING
WINFIELD PUBLIC LIBRARY
0S291 WINFIELD RD, WINFIELD

WED., JUNE 15, 7:00 PM

WTDO MONTHLY MEETING
WINFIELD FIRE DEPARTMENT
27W530 HIGH LAKE RD, WINFIELD

SUNDAY, JULY 3, ~5:30 PM

WARRENVILLE FOURTH OF JULY
PARADE

SUNDAY, JULY 10, ~1:00 PM

WEST CHICAGO RAILROAD DAYS
PARADE

JULY-AUG - No WTDO

MONTHLY MEETING
HAPPY SUMMER DAYS

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT
OUR WEBSITE:

WWW.WINFIELDDEMS.ORG

OR CALL:
630-771-5551

Opinions expressed within are not necessarily those of the Winfield Township Democratic Organization

The Soul of Politics

By Ben Lowe

Committeeman, Milton Twp., Pct. 035

Forty-three years ago to the day that I am writing this, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was murdered while standing outside his hotel room in Memphis, TN. He was in Memphis in support of the black sanitary public works employees, who were striking for fair wages and racial justice. Rev. King was a weak man called by a strong God to courageously proclaim truth to entrenched power. In the face of evil and injustice, he became a prophet for love and peace. And because of this, he was killed.

His murder was tragic, but it was not unforeseen. Rev. King himself accepted the risks and acknowledged that he might one day pay for the good news he was championing with his very life. But this did not deter him. Though he was killed, the movement he was part of could not be stopped; and its vision that he helped articulate continues to rise up in the hearts and minds of every new generation.

One of the reasons that Rev. King was so effective is because he correctly understood and addressed the heart and soul of the matter. To him, the struggle was not simply a tactical challenge with technical or policy solutions. Yes, the laws needed to be fixed by the government and then the courts needed to uphold them. But it ran far deeper. It was a moral issue: a matter of right versus wrong. For Rev. King and many others, this meant that it was also a spiritual issue of love versus hate, hope versus fear, and good versus evil. This was the soul of the matter and the reason he invested so much of his energy persuading and inspiring his listeners on this level.

We could stand to learn from Rev. King here. Partly disillusioned by the Religious Right's wrong-headed alliance with the Republican Party, the Democratic Party has often struggled to understand and affirm values and faith within its proper place. We live in a pluralistic society where freedom of religion (including freedom from religion) is a celebrated and guaranteed right. The *separation* of church and state is part of the genius behind the success of the American

experiment; but too often it is misinterpreted to imply the *exclusion* of faith from politics. This has handicapped us.

Let me explain. We often refer to our problems as being broken systems and structures: a broken immigration system, broken energy systems, broken educational and healthcare systems, and the list goes on. But these are more accurately understood as the symptoms of our problems, not the source. The real sources of these problems are things like greed, selfishness, fear, hate, pride, and so on. And these cannot be solved by politics alone.

For many Americans, and indeed for many humans, such issues of morality are really issues of spirituality. The deepest and most defining influences on who we are and how we live come down to what we believe. This is a reality that has often been abused throughout the years. But just because the proper interaction between faith and politics has been messy does not mean we can ignore it; it means we must try to do it better.

What is the bottom line? The political issues we are dealing with all have moral and spiritual roots and, as such, they also require moral and spiritual solutions. Let us strive to more intentionally understand and embrace this as we work together for a way forward that address both the symptoms and the sources of what ails us.

Ben Lowe was the 2010 Democratic candidate for US Congress, IL-06.

"I am but one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. What I can do, I ought to do - and what I ought to do, I will do."

**Margaret Burroughs
Founder, DuSable Museum**

It's Un-American: Suppressing the Vote

By Jill Morgenthaler

Co-President, Illinois Democratic Women

Every two years, like clockwork, Republicans devise massive hysteria over voter fraud that study after study shows does not exist. A 2007 study by the Brennan Center for Justice found that "an American is more likely to get struck by lightning than impersonate another voter at the polls". This year the Republicans are joined by Tea Party members in crying outrage about upcoming widespread voter fraud – regardless that there is virtually no basis in empirical reality. So, why the brouhaha over something nonexistent? Tea Partiers and Republicans want to suppress your vote - if you are students, African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, or Native Americans. This year they have even offered up a bounty. The Minnesota-based group Election Integrity Watch, a coalition of conservative organizations that includes the Northstar Tea Party Patriots and the Minnesota Majority, aired an ad that essentially puts a \$500 bounty on the head of a fraudulent voter. Talk about encouraging harassment at the polls.

Minorities have been targeted nationally. In Illinois, documented on audiotape, Senator Kirk funded the largest "voter integrity program" in "South and West sides of Chicago, Rockford, Metro East, where the other side might be tempted to jiggle the numbers somewhat". He used these tactics to keep away the large African-American populations.

A group aired an ad in Nevada telling Hispanic voters not to vote. The president of Latinos for Reform, Robert Desposada, a conservative political consultant and political analyst for Univision, explained that by not voting, "It's the only way for Hispanics to stand up and demand some attention". Huh?

Republicans also fear the student vote. Republicans are working very hard to prevent students from voting in New Hampshire. The legislature is considering a bill that would "take away students' right to vote in their college town unless they lived there before enrolling and intended to stay". Republican William O'Brien, the New Hampshire Speaker of the House and a noted critic of student voting, explains that he fears that students are "basically doing what I did when I was a kid and foolish, and voting as a liberal".

Wisconsin is employing these tactics and much more. To suppress both minority and student voting, the Wisconsin Tea Party and Republican Party were caught on tape agreeing to the following plan:

- The Republican Party of Wisconsin will use its "Voter Vault" statewide voter file to compile a list of minority and student voters in targeted Wisconsin communities.
- Americans for Prosperity will use this list to send mail to these voters indicating the voter must call and confirm their registration information, and telling them if they do not call the number provided they could be removed from the voter lists.
- The Tea Party organizations will recruit and place individuals as official poll workers in selected municipalities in order to be able to make the challenges as official poll workers.
- On Election Day, these organizations will then "make use" of any postcards that are returned as undeliverable to challenge voters at the polls, utilizing law enforcement, as well as attorneys trained and provided by the Republican Party of Wisconsin, to support their challenges.

A PowerPoint presentation details Michigan State GOP website operations on Election Day to include sending 3,666 challengers to the seventeen counties that poll less than 35 percent Republican.

This is all on top of the fact that when there are ugly campaigns, people stay home. I predict that 2012 will be one of the ugliest campaigns in our nation's history. I can only conclude that the Republican Party and the Tea Party do not believe in the democratic process, the American people, or Abraham Lincoln's belief of government of the people, by the people, for the people.

What Can You Do? Get the vote out. Encourage everyone to vote regardless of the barriers and tactics. Volunteer to be an election judge.

If you are challenged, call the Election Protection hotline at 1-866-OUR-VOTE. Many who find their vote challenged also have the right to cast a "provisional ballot".

The American Way -- every eligible American citizen must be able to exercise their right to vote, and have their vote counted.

Jill Morgenthaler was the 2008 Democratic candidate for US Congress, IL-06.

Priorities

By Dirk Enger

*Member, DuPage County Board, District 6
Committeeman, Pct. 004*

Like so many other Americans, I am grateful that Congress voted to keep our government working and not shutting down. The only problem is I do not agree where they want to make the cuts. Instead of improving the system (pay out in Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security and Defense which is 40% of the budget) they want to cut or eliminate programs for the middle class and the needy. Programs such as Human Services and Grants make up only 3% of the budget. I do not understand why they would chose to go after the middle class (those fighting to exist) instead of working to eliminate overpaid medical bills and over billed defense contracts to pay back money borrowed from Social Security. This will be devastating to the many people who will lose these programs and services.

We deserve better! We deserve elected officials to do what is not politically correct; but instead, do what is morally correct. The middle class, seniors and needy should not be the ones that suffer from the cuts. The facts show that for every dollar spent by the government on programs such as grants, food stamps, Medicaid, etc, saves the taxpayer \$4 in the long run. All of the figures can be found in the Congressional Accounting Office Report.

I am asking you to contact your House and

Senate Representatives (Peter Roskam, Randy Hultgren, Judy Biggert, Mark Kirk and Dick Durbin). Tell them that the middle class of DuPage has lost 12.5% of their income over the past three years. This is an income loss of roughly \$11,000 per household, per year.

I am proud to announce that for the third year in a row DuPage County has given \$1 million dollars in human service grants to numerous charity organizations throughout DuPage.

President John F. Kennedy said it best when he stated: "If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it surely cannot save the few who are rich".

Thank you for giving me the privilege to represent and serve you on the County Board.

**"I like paying taxes.
With them I buy
civilization."**

**Oliver Wendell
Holmes, Jr.**

Kick In for the Quarter

Show your support for WTDO, your LOCAL Democratic organization and Democratic candidates. WTDO has regular expenses for meetings, website cost, publication and postage for The Township Democrat and meeting notices, campaign material and other publicity. We hold candidate forums, appear in several township parades and other events to inform the public. We try to reach Democratic voters throughout the township in many ways, but none of them are free.

Support YOUR Winfield Township Democratic Organization with a donation each quarter. "Kick In for the Quarter" is a regular gift. You choose the amount. Making a regular gift allows the board to budget spending annually.

Return to:

Winfield Township Democratic Organization
PO Box 224
Warrenville, IL 60555-0224

Here's my gift to WTDO of \$_____ for this quarter

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

____ Please send me meeting announcements via email
(or send email to info@winfielddems.org)

WTDO will not sell, exchange or use your email address for anything other than official WTDO mailings.

Acting Locally

By Kim Savage

Trustee, College of DuPage Board

Chairing a Township Central Committee is an honor and a privilege. It is also an awesome responsibility. Being elected to represent the Precinct Committeemen (PCs), who represent their Democratic voters, confers the obligation to work in good faith on behalf of the voters. Some of the routine tasks that a Chair performs are recruiting volunteers and election judges, organizing voter contact and registration activities, and getting the Democratic message out. The Chair must also be a strong motivator who can encourage the members to plan party-building activities to support the local party.

As the local leader for Democrats, traditionally, the Democratic Party has embraced the role of the Township Chair to spearhead the development of PCs and other volunteers into a viable operation to educate voters and get them to the polls. Statewide and local campaigns also choose to contact the Township Chairs to disseminate

information through their established networks.

It is often difficult to recruit and retain PCs for a variety of reasons. The experienced Chair creates an extended network of volunteers and supporters who perform vital tasks in support of the PCs. Building the organizational structure is an ongoing process as people move away or as life circumstances interfere with the needs at hand. Familiarity with volunteers, as well as sensitivity to the individual level of commitment that can be expected, is important to assembling a working team. Since we do not enjoy the ability to offer our PCs government jobs, we must rely on their affinity with the organization.

While partisan enthusiasm is not always high, there is much hope for success in electing more Democrats locally. Township and county leaders must remain cognizant of the fragile nature of the volunteer network to "Win the Future".

Kim Savage is Chair of the Downers Grove Democratic Organization & Committeeman, Downers Grove Twp., Pct. 067.

"A blind and ignorant resistance to every effort for the reform of abuses and for the readjustment of society to modern industrial conditions represents not true conservatism, but an incitement to the wildest radicalism."

Theodore Roosevelt, 1908

Youth Movement

By Griffin Hardy

WTDO Volunteer

In today's culture, many young people remain uninformed and indifferent when it comes to political issues. Most of them feel this way about politics because they don't see how it relates to them and their lives. This thought pattern is hopelessly counterproductive for everyone because many issues affect America's young people in ways that can and do have a connection to their daily lives. In a political system in which the people elect the lawmakers, politics should be a thought on everyone's minds. In America, we elect the people who decide what laws we will have to follow and how we will have to follow them. This is a huge connection to the lives of everyone, not just young people. As a high school student myself, I see that what happens in Washington and Springfield does matter and can have a profound impact on my life.

After carefully observing the many facets and groups in the political scene, I chose to become involved in the Democratic Party a few years ago. In recent days, this choice has been reaffirmed to me many times over. In 2010, the Democratic congressmen and congresswomen in Washington passed the Affordable Care Act. This act protects the rights of all American citizens to be able to have health insurance that they can afford. Since then, opposition such as the Republican Party and the Tea Party has continually attacked Democrats about this issue, but Democrats have not backed down on the issue. I admire the drive shown by Democrats in the continuing battle over health care. Illinois Democrats passed a law allowing same-sex couples to enter into civil unions in 2010 and the bill was signed by Governor Quinn this year. This grants all people in Illinois the equality under the law that is guaranteed to them in the Constitution. President Obama has also advanced this civil rights issue by ending enforcement of the Defense of Marriage Act, also advancing the cause of civil rights in the federal realm. There is still room for improvement in these areas, but progress is moving as can be seen in these actions. Further, Democrats in the

federal congress are working tirelessly to keep a government shutdown from occurring. If a government shutdown were to occur, countless people would be left without the services that they need that are normally provided by the government.

There are also many policies of the Republican Party that confuse me and have led me to oppose many of their policies. In observing Republicans discussing life issues, a stark hypocrisy is apparent to me. Most Republicans are opposed to abortion rights, believing that all life is sacred. However, many Republicans also support the death penalty which deliberately ends a human being's life in an unnatural manner. Republicans also claim to represent the middle class and the ordinary citizens of the U.S. However, in a strict party-line vote earlier this year, Republicans attempted to repeal the Affordable Care Act. The Act protects the health of many of the ordinary citizens that the Republicans claim to represent. In reality, it seems that the Republican Party represents the corporate interests in the U.S. and abroad. In the Supreme Court decision in *Citizens United vs. FEC*, all of the Republican justices ruled to allow corporations to make unlimited donations to political campaigns. It seems to me that the Republicans truly represent those with large sums of money, not the ordinary citizen.

The biggest factor in my choice to become active in the Democratic Party as a young person is the fact that I feel my voice is heard as a Democrat. I don't need to hire an expensive lobbyist or to make large campaign donations to see my ideas and beliefs enacted by Democrats. The Democratic Party supports and defends the common American citizen, which is where I and most young people fall. Therefore, by supporting the Democratic Party, I am really supporting my own interests. This is how politics is supposed to work. Young people must become more involved and begin to understand how politics can have a huge impact on their lives if they want to live in prosperity as adults. I believe that if the Democrats can highlight all the mutual interests between the candidates and young people in upcoming elections, Democrats can be successful in elections and lawmaking for a long time to come.

The Truth About No-Bid Contracts

By Shannon Burns

Committeeman, Pct. 025

In the last election, no-bid contracts were a hot topic. Democratic candidates for the Forest Preserve Board, myself among them, criticized the Board for awarding no-bid contracts. We further criticized the Board for awarding these contracts – some for hundreds of thousands of dollars – to firms that contributed heavily to the campaigns of current Board members.

The Forest Preserve Board, in turn, criticized candidates for not understanding the nature of professional service contract laws in Illinois. Citing the Illinois Professional Services Act, Forest Preserve Commissioners and President claimed that the Board is specifically prohibited from seeking bids when hiring engineers, architects, and attorneys. According to the current Board, all taxpayer dollars spent on these services must - by state law – be in the form of no-bid contracts.

In fact, these statements by the current Forest Preserve Board are not true. The Professional Services Act does allow no-bid hiring of professional services but does not specifically prohibit the bidding process. Local governmental bodies have the option of seeking proposals – or not – when services are needed.

The spirit of the Professional Services Act is obvious: To allow for fast action by governmental bodies when services are needed. The Act was never intended to absolve elected officials from their obligation to comparison shop when spending our tax dollars. Further, the Act does not prohibit a public body from establishing its own ordinance to outline specific criteria that must be met before a professional service contract can be awarded.

Rather than justify no-bid expenditure of tax dollars by hiding behind a misinformed interpretation of State law, the Forest Preserve (and other) Boards would do well to seek a solution that allows for competitive bidding when services are needed.

One option for creating a fair and transparent bidding process for public bodies is the Responsible Bidder Ordinance. The purpose of such an ordinance is to specify certain criteria that must be met by contractors in order to be awarded a contract. Such ordinances protect both taxpayers and elected officials from awarding contracts to contractors who do not have proper training or who practice unsafe construction methods. Responsible Bidder Ordinances create a fair and level bidding field for everyone. Such an ordinance also helps to reduce the number of costly change orders (a chronic problem at the Forest Preserve) often involved in construction projects.

The notion that awarding professional, as well as construction, contracts in a manner that allows for responsible use of taxpayer dollars is not a unique concept. The City of Aurora, Joliet Junior College, Cook County, the State of Illinois have all passed Responsible Bidder Ordinances. The Village of Downers Grove – to name just one example – passed an ordinance that allows for proposals, as well as bids, for professional services. In fact, the DuPage County Board, along with the Forest Preserve Board, appear to be the only public bodies that have refused to consider the option of making the bidding process fair and ethical.

Accountability to the public in the form of a solution to the no-bid issue is not just a trumped-up campaign issue. For all of our sakes, I hope that Citizens in DuPage County, especially Democratic Citizens, will become more involved in holding our elected officials accountable on the issue of no-bid contracts. You have already started to do your part by reading this article! Now, learn more by reading about the bidding options on the Internet. Start talking to your elected officials: Insist on transparent and fair bidding practices when your tax dollars are being spent. We - all of us! - CAN make a difference in the bidding process.

***Shannon Burns** was the 2010 Democratic candidate for Forest Preserve District of DuPage County, District 6.*

A Lesson in Zoology

By Frank Malley

Committeeman, Pct. 015

I suppose that I would not be raising the bar very high if I said that we human beings do pretty well, given the fact that we are just a bunch of mammals.

When a situation calls for logic, we bring emotion. We persist in taking the events of our lives personally, rather than factually. When we might best compromise and work together, each of us seeks to control. When we might listen respectfully, we are busy thinking of the next crushing remark to make. As one commentator recently said, today we are not so much trying to win as to make sure we do not lose. We need conflict. We view acceptance and patience as signs of weakness.

When I say these things, I am not speaking with contempt. How can I? Regarding myself in the mirror, I find that I am a human being too.

Sometime ago my wife and I vacationed in Charleston, South Carolina. Since we love to immerse ourselves in the history of any place we visit, we toured Fort Sumter and the other forts and historic sites in the metropolitan area. I came away with a souvenir, a paperback edition of *Great Speeches—Abraham Lincoln*. Recently I took it off the shelf and was caught up in antebellum America and Civil War America.

Lincoln does not speak old-fashioned English. His vocabulary and phrasing sound familiar. Supposedly, when he was young, his rough-hewn father sometimes beat him for being such a dreamer, but in his speeches we hear a consistently intelligent, practical man.

As we follow Lincoln from year to year addressing the issues of mid-nineteenth century America, we see a young nation of idealistic and industrious people who

backed into a calamitous civil war. Lincoln had to address people's need for self-justification, which was thick with rationalization and endlessly inventive euphemism. He had to address distrust and paranoia.

Rather than lasting a few months, the Civil War ground on for four years. There were in excess of 10,000 military engagements and 1,030,000 casualties, which included 620,000 deaths. Yes, hundreds of thousands of deaths. We were not fighting a foreign invader. We killed *ourselves*, in battles that were butchery. Visiting one Union camp, Walt Whitman walked by stacks and stacks of amputated arms and legs.

Here we are today, speaking glibly of culture wars and class warfare, debating whether the government is us or somehow a threat to us, praising on the one hand a spirit of community and on the other hand a noble vein of rugged individualism. All the while, no one wants to "flip flop". I, however, agree with Alexander Pope, who said, "A man should never be ashamed to own he has been in the wrong, which is but saying, in other words, that he is wiser today than he was yesterday".

I do believe we are just a bunch of mammals, but let's aspire to be the best damned mammals we can be. We may not have the brilliance of a deity, but if we pause and detach from multiplying words, we do have enough self-knowledge to recognize when we are transparently playing games with words or when we are speaking from less than noble motives.

Santayana claimed that if we do not study history, we are doomed to repeat it. Honestly, I think his view is rather condescending to our ancestors. When you are living in the middle of history, it is not the few selected events and forces that are recorded by the writer of history. It is complex and stressful. Again, however, we can pause and then make good choices. The times call out for good choices.

Free Markets Aren't Free

By Doug Henk

Committeeman, Pct. 007

I would like to begin by telling a story. This is about my grandfather, although there were many others with the same story. My grandfather bought a farm in southeast Missouri in the early 20th century. Like many immigrants of the day he worked and saved to put the money together to purchase the farm. The man who owned the farm was not an honest man; he did not pay his taxes. Not because he did not have the money, he had a plan. Sell the farm, don't tell the buyer about the taxes and wait. The sheriff puts the land up for tax sale and the man buys it back for the taxes owed.

This story has a happier ending than some, my grandfather was told of the tax sale and managed to pay the taxes and keep the farm. Missouri has changed the rules and you can no longer sell or buy property without clear title. Rules and government are part of a "free market". For any market to exist, there must be agreement. If the agreement is corrupt, the market is corrupt. Corrupt markets do not last; they collapse from the weight of the inequality.

We cannot go forward without paying the bill; those who ran up the debit for the last ten years need to pay up. We need to settle this before we cut social programs, before we make new agreements. No one can look at what has gone on and honestly say cutting taxes has had a positive effect on the American economy. No one can say allowing the financial institutions to make their own rules had a positive effect on the markets. The insurance companies are not self governing and allowing them to act as if they were is folly. Healthcare providers with a profit motive find ways to make money, not ways to deliver Healthcare. All of these are too important to leave to something as vague and ill-defined as a free market. These require careful examination of what works and what does not.

The promises of the New Deal are not the problem with today's economy; they are also

not the answer. Too much time has been spent already deconstructing these programs. A rational look at what is working and what is not is long overdue. We have a President who is capable of this analysis, if we are willing to listen. We have an opportunity to move forward despite the setbacks to real progress suffered in the last election.

The Republican Party has sold us the farm without paying the taxes. We have put them back in charge of the Congress and they are once again screaming for us to pay the bill. We need for them to take responsibility for what they owe and then we can discuss whether we have a spending or a revenue problem.

“The great enemy of the truth is very often not the lie - deliberate, contrived and dishonest, but the myth - persistent, persuasive and unrealistic. Belief in myths allows the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought.”

John F. Kennedy

The Cynical Exercise of False Equivalence

By Barry Dredze

Committeeman, Pct. 018

On September 20, 2007, 22 Democratic senators voted in favor of an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 that condemned an advertisement by the group MoveOn.org referring to General David Petraeus as "General Betray Us". As much as the censure may appear to be misguided political theater, it revealed a genuine effort to sustain serious discourse over hyperbolic rhetoric; especially in retrospect of and in contrast to the reactions surrounding the election of President Obama and the advancement of the Affordable Care Act in particular, arguably the signature legislative accomplishment of this administration so far.

Democratic Arizona Representative Gabrielle Giffords, herself a victim of a recent assassination attempt, described the targeting of her House seat in a fundraising ad by 2008 Republican Vice Presidential nominee Sarah Palin's SaraPac in an interview on March 25, 2010 during MSNBC's "Daily Rundown" following her vote in favor of health care reform legislation. "The way that she [Sarah Palin] has it depicted has the crosshairs of a gun sight over our district," Giffords said. "When people do that, they have got to realize there are consequences to that." A year later, Giffords is recovering from a gunshot wound to her head during a January town hall event in Tucson where six other people were killed.

Rebecca Mansour, a spokesperson for SarahPac, defended the crosshairs imagery on conservative commentator Tammy Bruce's talk radio show. "We never imagined, it never occurred to us that anybody would consider it violent," Mansour said. "We never ever, ever intended it to be gun sights." But Palin herself defended the imagery with her now-famous rallying cry, "Don't retreat. RELOAD".

Giffords' 2010 Republican congressional opponent Jesse Kelly certainly was not bothered by the crosshairs imagery and the "reload" rhetoric. During his campaign, the former Marine held a fundraising event where contributors could shoot a fully automatic M-16

assault rifle with Kelly. "Get on Target for Victory in November," Kelly's promotion of the event stated. "Help remove Gabrielle Giffords from office. Shoot a fully automatic M-16 with Jesse Kelly." Not a single conservative leader or Republican Party official went on the record to condemn the stunt.

Following the Tucson shootings, Pima County Sheriff Clarence Dupnik said, "When you look at unbalanced people, how they respond to the vitriol that comes out of certain mouths about tearing down the government, the anger, the hatred, the bigotry that goes on in this county is getting to be outrageous".

"Journalists and pundits should not manufacture a blood libel that serves only to incite the very hatred and violence they purport to condemn," Sarah Palin, the same person who described end-of-life counseling in health care reform as "death panels", said in a statement.

When conservative politicians aren't speaking presumptuously in the name of the American people, when Bill O'Reilly isn't bragging about the ratings of FoxNews and when liberal ideas and individuals are not being targeted with incitement, conservatives can usually be found straining for examples of false equivalences of liberal hyperbole while the mainstream news media is often all too willing to dismiss the consequences of conservative vitriol.

(See **Dredze**, p. 11)

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Letters, opinions, jokes
(keep'em clean, folks!)



WTDO

PO Box 224

Warrenville, IL 60555-0224

info@winfielddems.org

(From **Dredze**, p. 10)

Days after the Tucson shootings, New York Times columnist David Brooks asserted that "the evidence before us suggests that [shooting suspect Jared] Loughner was locked in a world far removed from politics as we normally understand it", rejecting as "vicious charges" the notion that the gunman "unleashed his rampage because he was incited by the violent rhetoric of the Tea Party, the anti-immigrant movement and Sarah Palin". *Washington Post* columnist George Will denounced the "political opportunism" of "charlatans" who subscribe to the "superstition that all behavior can be traced to some diagnosable frame of mind that is a product of promptings from the social environment".

This narrative is not humble but dangerous, as the images of weapons at anti-government Tea Party rallies, the constant barrage of violent rhetoric and gimmicks like the M-16 fundraiser by Gabby Giffords' congressional opponent Jesse Kelly pass for acceptable discourse.

Jim David Adkisson walked into the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church in Knoxville during a children's musical performance on July 28, 2008, firing a shotgun and killing 61 year old Linda Kraeger and 60 year old Greg McKendry. According to the affidavit requesting to search Adkisson's home, the suspect told investigators that liberals should be killed because they were ruining the country. "He felt that the Democrats had tied his country's hands in the war on terror and they had ruined every institution in America with the aid of major media outlets," the affidavit said. Searching Adkisson's home Knoxville Police found brass knuckles, empty shotgun shell boxes, a handgun and copies of *Liberalism is a Mental Health Disorder* by radio talk show host Michael Savage, *Let Freedom Ring* by radio and television talk show host Sean Hannity and *The O'Reilly Factor*, by television talk show host Bill O'Reilly.

In a story published August 31, 2010, Philadelphia Inquirer reporter Will Bunch interviewed Eddie Perkovic, a close friend of Richard Poplawski, who killed three Pittsburgh policemen who were called to his mother's home on a domestic disturbance report. "Rich, like myself, loved Glenn Beck," Perkovic told Bunch.

Last July, Byron Williams went on the warpath against the American Civil Liberties Union and the liberal philanthropic Tides Foundation, a frequent target of Beck's conspiracy theories, but ended up in a shootout with California Highway Patrol officers on his way to San Francisco. Williams and two officers were wounded in the shooting. Media watchdog organization Media Matters for America reported that Beck had attacked the Tides foundation 29 times on his FoxNews show within the 18-month period leading up to Williams' attempted attack. "I would have never started watching FoxNews if it wasn't for the fact that Beck was on there," Williams said. "And it was the things that he did, it was the things he exposed that blew my mind."

In March, 2010, while threats and vandalism were being reported against Democrats like Rep. Giffords who voted for the health care reform bill, Republican Congressman Eric Cantor of Virginia called a press conference with news of a bullet fired at his Richmond office. A news release from the Richmond police, however, reported that the bullet had been fired into the air and hit the front window of a building housing Cantor's campaign office. The round landed on the floor of the office a foot inside a broken window pane.

Beside the lack of a single existing liberal militia group, there are simply no examples of equivalent violence or violent incitement on the liberal end of the American political spectrum. Meanwhile, there remain only a few parties that still think it is acceptable to show off their guns at public rallies, including Shining Path, Hezbollah and Republicans.

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Fighting for Workers Rights

By Doug May

Committeeman, Pct. 001

As anyone who has seen the news lately knows, there is a huge battle in Wisconsin being fought over the ability of public-sector workers to bargain for their pay, benefits, and working conditions. Newly elected Governor Scott Walker and his goons in the Wisconsin Legislature attempted to pass a bill to address the state's financial situation, but it was a scam. Instead of plugging budget holes (largely caused by his giveaway of hundreds of millions of dollars in tax breaks for corporations), this bill essentially removed collective bargaining rights from state workers. For several weeks, activists protested outside and inside the Capitol in Madison, bringing newfound energy to the labor movement nationwide. The AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka has called the struggle in Wisconsin the best union recruiting tool he has ever seen. Energy will be needed to survive the assault on public workers that is happening in states all over the nation. At least 12 states have "Right to Work" legislation pending. These laws make it difficult or impossible for a union to organize membership or to function in general as an advocate for the workers. What is true of the states that have enacted RTW are lower wages, longer hours and fewer workers covered by health insurance. Here in Illinois, with Democrats holding solid majorities, the chance of RTW legislation is slim. We still need to be vigilant, as I am sure that a Republican will attempt to insert language curtailing workers rights into an unrelated bill. That's just what they do.

Nationally, workers are under the gun as well. From a report prepared by the *Democratic Staff Committee on Education and the Workforce*:

Wisconsin's bill to strip public sector workers of their collective bargaining rights is just the tip of the iceberg in the attack against workers' rights.

More than a dozen states have introduced bills to eliminate or restrict public sector employees' right to collectively bargain. Other states are considering legislation to roll back prevailing wage laws, prohibit project labor agreements, impose right-to-work-for-less laws, and otherwise make it difficult for workers to effectively organize.

Republican measures in Congress have also promoted a radical rollback of the rights of American workers.

Three amendments that would have crippled workers' rights and wages were defeated after Republicans tried to attach them to their Continuing Resolution, H.R. 1:

- Closing the National Labor Relations Board, which enforces private sector workers' right to organize and collectively bargain.
- Cutting construction workers' pay on government projects.
- Banning federal project labor agreements.

Although these amendments were rejected, the Republican majority was successful in pushing through the House the underlying bill and its deep cuts to programs that support students, workers and middle class families.

(The full text of this report can be found at: <http://twu514.org/files/2011/03/House-Info-Packet-Assault-on-Workers-Rights-w.pdf>)

Doug May is a member of *The National Association of Letter Carriers Branch 825*.

