

# The Township Democrat

The Official Newsletter of the Winfield Township Democratic Organization

Volume 6, No. 1

[www.winfielddems.org](http://www.winfielddems.org)

Spring 2012

## Conversations With The Township Chair

By Susan M. Lubonovich

WTDO Chair & Committeeman, Pct 014

I welcome all of you to our Twelfth issue of The Township Democrat, the Newsletter of the Winfield Township Democratic Organization.

We are able to offer this Newsletter for your consideration because of your generous contributions to our "Kick in for the Quarter" program. Your continued support of this publication is deeply appreciated and we are profoundly grateful for the opportunity you provide us. Thank you.

We have an election that is fast approaching - a Primary election in which nominees will be chosen from both political parties for various County, State and Federal offices. These eventual nominees will spend the next few months persuading us that they have the skills and ideas to lead us into a future that will be better than our recent tumultuous past. And while our participation as voters in this process is voluntary, it is no less mandatory that we exercise this right as citizens of our Republic - as citizens who fully expect to be part of defining who we are as a people, as a society and as a nation.

As we approach this election, we must keep in mind that our government is "We the People". Our government is us. We must remember that our government, just as its people, is capable of true greatness, real nobility and majestic triumphs. Our government has historically and actually worked very hard to be a force for good in the human history of not only our own people, but also the world's.

And this is why the upcoming General Primary Election is so important and requires our full attention and participation.

Most of us have suffered in the recent Great Recession and its continuing aftermath. Most of us realize that our economic disaster was a perfect storm of morally ambiguous decisions made by an entire class of financial elites and their Republican political allies who now fervently clamor against the modest Wall Street reforms enacted under President Obama. We also know that Union membership and Union political participation are not inherently evil; that Social Security is not an entitlement, but an earned benefit; that our environment and climate change are very real concerns; that it is right and good for parents to aspire to send their children to college and that women's healthcare requires more than an aspirin, wherever it is located.

Values matter. Our Democratic values matter. And we protect and maintain and defend our Democratic values by voting and by voting in such numbers that we not only clearly demonstrate our confidence in our President, Barack Obama; but we also definitively reinforce our belief in the value of our American Dream. We are proud Democrats and we fully and willingly support the deeply held ideals, values and the narrative that constitutes and grows our American Dream for all Americans.

We are indebted to past generations of Americans and aspiring Americans who built with their hands, backs, minds, blood, sweat, tears, courage, integrity and passion our United States. It is our duty as recipients of their labor and efforts on our behalf that we as citizens of these United States build the Dream forward. Enjoy the privilege of citizenship - VOTE Tuesday, March 20th and nominate those candidates who will defend and protect and maintain our Democratic values not only for us, but also for our children and grandchildren. It is our solemn responsibility as citizens.

## CALENDAR

**TUE. MAR 20, 6:00AM-7:00 PM**

GENERAL PRIMARY ELECTION  
INFORMATION: 630-407-5600

**WED. MAR 21, 7:00 PM**

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

**WED. APR 18, 7:00 PM**

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

**WED. MAY 16, 7:00 PM**

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

**WED. JUNE 20, 7:00 PM**

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

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT  
OUR WEBSITE::

**[WWW.WINFIELDDEMS.ORG](http://WWW.WINFIELDDEMS.ORG)**

OR CALL:

**630-771-5551**

OPINIONS EXPRESSED WITHIN ARE NOT  
NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE  
WINFIELD TOWNSHIP  
DEMOCRATIC ORGANIZATION

## **The True Meaning of Conservation**

**By Leslie Coolidge**

*Candidate for Congress, IL-6th District*

Teddy Roosevelt must be rolling in his grave. This staunchly Republican president is rightly hailed as a great conservationist because he used the power of the presidency to set aside 150 million acres of forests and create 50 wilderness areas and five national parks. Even Richard Nixon, no champion of liberal causes, felt compelled to sign the National Environmental Policy Act, which created the EPA. As he signed the bill into law, he said "the 1970s absolutely must be the years when America pays its debt to the past by reclaiming the purity of its air, its waters, and our living environment. It is," he said, "literally now or never." (The Guardian: "Origins of the EPA," Spring 1992.) Roosevelt and Nixon understood that the fundamental principles behind the conservatism they espoused required them to protect the resources we have for future generations.

If either of those conservation pioneers were still around, they would be shocked to see the extent of the assaults on our environment that Congress has tried to enact in the name of making business more profitable. (Thank heavens for the Senate standing in their way.) Neither Roosevelt nor Nixon would stand a chance of winning a Republican primary today, which is a measure of how thoroughly Republicans have lost sight of what they once called conservatism, derived, of course, from the concept of conservation. It has gone so far that an alleged conservative named Joe Walsh, my own current representative in Congress, can advocate "a revolution in government" without seeing any contradiction in terms.

When I began campaigning for Congress, I assumed that this election would be about economic issues: how to get people back to work, how to get our housing industry back on its feet, how to get banks to lend again, how to make sure everyone pays their fair share of taxes. And these problems remain important because Republicans in Congress have done almost nothing to address any of them. They have been too focused on things that are the very opposite of the conservatism that many voters thought they were voting for, as Congress tries repeatedly to dismantle the EPA, destroy the social safety net, and undermine all regulations.

But in the past few weeks, it has become increasingly evident that we are heading into an era when even battles we thought were won, with the help of sane conservatives in the 1960's and 70's, are going to have to be fought again if we want to protect reproductive freedom, the environment and even voting rights.

Congressman Peter Roskam, for instance, asserted recently that churches should be able to refuse insurance plans that cover contraceptives to preserve "religious freedom." The question here should be: whose freedom? Just because certain religious groups prohibit their members from using contraception, does that mean that employees who do not follow those precepts should not have access to preventative health care? For people who claim to want small government, Republicans in Congress are actually promoting a highly intrusive form of government that would impose a single set of religious beliefs on those who just happen to work for institutions connected to religious organizations. Just in case their true goals were not yet abundantly clear in the reproductive rights fight, Republicans in Congress laid their true agenda on the table in February with the Blunt Amendment on health insurance coverage that they planned to attach to the Transportation Bill. (Yes, the transportation bill.) It said that any employer can deny any type of insurance coverage to employees based on the employer's religious or moral beliefs. This is so broad it would even deny vaccinations to kids if the employer believed they were morally wrong. But we know what the amendment is really aimed at, don't we?

Belief in religion of another kind also colors the actions of many in Congress with regard to the environment. Worshipping at the altars of big business and small government, Republicans, such as Peter Roskam, have voted several times already to defund the EPA and weaken the Clean Air and Clear Water Acts because they impose costs on polluters. And, because of the short-term cost, apparently, Congressman Roskam also voted against funding an initiative to help keep Asian carp out of Lake Michigan, where they are almost certain to destroy an entire ecosystem and the commercial fishing industry in the Great Lakes to boot. (The amendment to fund this initiative, thank heavens, passed without his help.)

Voting rights are also under assault by these alleged conservatives. A study released by the NAACP in

(See Coolidge, p. 11)

## **Benefactors Become Beneficiaries of Illinois' Social Service Agencies**

**By Corinne M. Pierog, MA & MBA**

*Candidate for IL State Senate, 25th District*

"Our non-profits have been hit by a perfect storm," states Diane O'Connor, the Director of Community Impact at the United Way of Elgin. "Funding has been cut by the state, corporate foundation support has been reduced and the individuals who once supported our agencies have become our clients. Illinois non-profits are in triage."

According to Illinois Partners for Human Services in the newly redrawn Senate District 25 there are 47 social service agencies that annually serve an estimated 212,000 people. The United Way of Elgin sponsors 18 of these agencies and supports 24 special initiatives ranging from after-school programs, early childhood literacy, prescription discount drug cards for seniors to workforce development." In 2011, one of every three Elgin residents has used some form of assistance.

As the pressure on the District's non-profits to provide a wide array of services increases, funding to our social service has been slashed. In the past three years addiction treatment has been reduced by 69%, youth services by 41% and mental health by 36%. In 2011, 1123 Elgin children were diagnosed with mental health issues; only 60% of those screened were able to obtain in-patient care. This year an additional 640 more children have already been diagnosed. "Suicide is the third leading cause of death for children under 16; what will be the impact upon our youth if this depression is met with fiscal deficit? What will happen to these children who cannot receive help, what is going to be the ripple effect upon our community," asks O'Connor?

The State, who contracts with human service agencies, has a backlog of unpaid bills totaling over 5 billion dollars at the end of 2011. Individuals, who have never used services provided by non-profit agencies before, are calling looking for help; and the service providers are turning to the state asking for relief, while the state stares right back at them. At many agencies, there has been a complete depletion of reserves, maxed-out lines of credit and staff burnout that may not be able to be remedied any time soon as agencies fear for their health and for the clients they are not able to serve.

A recent study by the Urban Institute demonstrates just how dire the situation is for nonprofits in Illinois. Of the Illinois agencies participating in the study, 59 percent responded that government payments do not cover the full cost of contracted services. That ranks Illinois third worst in the country, ahead of only Maine and Rhode Island of percentage paid to cover actual costs. Illinois also has the abysmal record of being the last state in the nation when it comes to late payments to its nonprofit contractors. Fully 60 percent of Illinois nonprofits in the Urban Institute study reported a "big problem" with government sending payments later than was agreed in their contracts. In Illinois, 72 percent of nonprofits regularly experience late payments versus 41 percent nationally. In the Economic Outlook 2011 survey, 46% of nonprofits reported payment delays in 2010—up from 36% a year earlier. By December, 80% were still owed back payments, ranging from less than \$1,000 to more than \$1 million, with a median of \$100,000 in payments due.

The Donor's Forum, a Chicago agency that advocates for non-profits, recent 2011 economic forecast indicates that 61% of nonprofit agencies report having only three months of cash reserves on hand and 46% plan on eliminating positions through staff reductions or by leaving vacant positions unfilled. To make up for not being able to hire new staff, agencies are reaching out to their volunteers, looking for creative ways to provide services. "There is not a shortage of compassion," says a concerned O'Connor "but the Elgin Community will never be able to financially replace what is being taken away by the state."

Typically, the general public does not become interested in social service agencies until the need for their services affects them personally. A taxpayer cares once their mother requires a home care assistant to cook and do housework so she can stay in her house rather than go into a nursing home or when their disabled adult child needs a place to go during the daytime so they can work. With Illinois' unemployment rate for January hovering at 9.4% and a foreclosure rate of one in every 369 households, this is not the time to cut funding for these organizations

O'Connor comments that they want to be of help; but with 100% of her United Way partner agencies reducing their staff, she does not know how. "When someone reaches out to us for the first time, all of

(See Pierog, p. 4)

## **Dirk Enger, DuPage County Board 6 – Proven Leadership: Our Very Own**

**By Dave Werle**

*Committeeman, Pct 026; Vice Chair WTDO*

Wow, campaign season is upon us and this cycle is especially exciting with the new legislative map and all the great Democrats that are up and down the ballot. Most importantly is our opportunity to re-elect our friend and long-time supporter Dirk Enger back to the County Board in the Sixth District. Although we have four qualified candidates on the primary ballot, the clear choice is Dirk Enger. With his proven record and effective leadership, he has always been there working tirelessly on behalf of all his constituents.

Since elected, he has demonstrated he can work with the whole County Board and get things done. Of all the board members, he has the best attendance record. He works tirelessly on his multiple committee assignments and is the Chair of the Public Transit Committee, a testament to his leadership. For example, it was his foresight to make it easier for development in the under utilized DuPage Technology Park. This will help provide the jobs and opportunities that the County and District Six are reaching for.

Dirk's fiscal record leads by example his belief that elected officials, not paid lobbyists, should be representing us here in the County and Downstate. His refusal of a county pension and taking a pay cut are examples for all county board members.

Dirk is out in the community; sacrificing time with his wife and four sons to meet the needs of his District. His attendance of hearings, forums, municipal and

organization meetings helps keep Dirk well informed and on the pulse of the district. He does this to serve more effectively, on his own time and with his own dime. A few years ago the district was hit with floods. Dirk was there working with public safety officials. He rolled up his sleeves; got dirty, helping residents protect their homes from the rising waters. Now that's commitment!

Finally, Dirk's meritorious service in the United States Marine Corps, his extensive work on veterans' issues and his co-founding of the Midwest Shelter for Homeless Veterans illustrate his honor for our Country and those who fight for our freedom. As a union ironworker, Dirk knows how to work hard; it is what he does and who he is. When we re-elect Dirk, he will continue to be the voice on the County Board for all working people. On March 20, 2012, there can only be one clear choice – Vote: Dirk Enger. Please join me.

(From **Pierog**, p. 3)

their pride and dignity has been swallowed to make that phone call. We can refer them to another agency, ask them to be proactive and put them on a waiting list; but when we finally can help them, it may just be too late. The phones are ringing at United Way's office in South Elgin, "We are planning on speaking to our local state legislators about the proposed cuts in funding, but the hardships are so great that we do not know where to start," laments O'Connor.

We are listening Diane and we hear you.

### **Kick In for the Quarter**

Show your support for WTDO, your LOCAL Democratic organization and our Democratic candidates. WTDO has regular expenses for meetings, maintaining our website, printing and postage for *The Township Democrat*, campaign materials and other organizational costs. We hold candidate forums, appear in several Township parades (with candy!) 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 is 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@winfelddems.org](mailto:info@winfelddems.org))

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

## **Enger Management “We the People”**

**By Dirk Enger**

*Committeeman, Pct 004*

*DuPage County Board Member, District 6*

These words are not just the start of what this country was founded on. It is what separates our country from so many others. A nation that stands as a beacon of hope and promise for all who live within her borders and for those thirsting to be a part of her. As precious as our freedom and quality of life is here, it seems that those we have elected to represent us do not cherish this privilege. On both sides of the aisle we see party politics put in the forefront and the basic needs of those they are supposed to represent put on the backburner. We have seen a Congress that promised change and no longer “business as usual”. We got a taste of that Congress and seen it almost default twice. They passed the least amount of bills and tied up more bills in subcommittees than any other Congress ever has. This Congress has dictated to the President of the United States when he could speak to Congress.

I could go on and on, but my point is this: since being elected to the DuPage County Board, we have shown the opposite of our Congress. We have shown that by working together with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle we have kept all of our services with no layoffs and have kept a balanced budget. You may ask, “Why can’t Congress do this?” My personal feeling is this Congress only cares about party politics. They are looking out for what is best for them and not for those that they represent. It is also our fault for not holding them accountable for their lack of action. Keep in mind there are 435 members of Congress and only one President of the United States. The President works 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Congress works barely 125 days per year in Washington, DC. So, who would you say is working for the people? Perhaps we need to bring some morals back to our Congress and have them listen to and practice the words of John F. Kennedy: “If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it surely cannot save the few who are rich.”

Our President has asked us to put down the remote control, get off the couch, dust off our boots and boot those strangling the middle class out. That being said, I ask you to research every

candidate before you decide to work for them, let alone vote for them. Ask yourself this, “Are you better off than you were one year ago with this Congress?” I know that my family is not. It is time for those in the middle class to make a stand and fight for our nation’s future. Elect people not by their label or promises. If they are incumbents, look at their record and what they have done for you. I can proudly say that I have kept all of my campaign promises and helped to balance the budget for three years in a row. It can be done if “We the People” work together and stand united as one.

Get involved. Your voice and your vote counts. Now it is time to act on it. Please remember to say a prayer for our troops fighting and dying on the battlefield everyday. Also say one for their families suffering each day just to exist. The only thing Congress seems to agree on is a cut in the Defense budget and to delay a vote on Veterans’ bills that help the wounded.

United we stand, divided we fall.

God bless you and yours.

**“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**

## Where Has Honesty Gone?

By Dennis Anderson

Candidate for Congress, IL-14th District

One of the most disturbing aspects of political discourse today is the apparent devaluation of honesty. Political speech has always been colored by hyperbole, but it seems that now we have gone beyond exaggeration and entered the world of willful misinformation. This misinformation campaign, and I do believe that it is a campaign, is not only accepted, but is encouraged by responses from those who know the truth but choose not to share it. Our elected representatives bear a responsibility to engage in honest discussion of the issues; and too often, they are failing in that responsibility.

If a constituent were to say "I'm opposed to 'Obamacare' because of the death panels." the honest representative would tell that constituent "But there are no death panels. Be my guest and check it out." If that revelation changes the constituent's position on the issue, that change should not only be accepted but welcomed, founded as it is in a better understanding of the issue.

If a constituent were to say "Obama is a Muslim." the conscientious representative would respond "There is no reason whatsoever to believe that, but what if he were? The Constitution guarantees freedom of religion, and there is no religious test for holding office in the United States." Is not that affirmation of constitutional principles preferable to allowing a misperception and a lack of understanding of the Constitution to persist?

"Obama wasn't born in the United States," should be met with a simple "Yes he was." Any other response, including silence, perpetuates the myth.

If we cannot rely on our representatives to deal forthrightly with us on such issues as given in these simple examples, how can we know that they will deal honestly on the complex issues that actually affect us in our daily lives? How can it be that requiring employers to offer insurance that covers contraception constitutes a "war on religion," while blocking the construction of a mosque does not? How can it be that proposing higher tax rates on those with higher incomes is "class warfare" but cutting programs that aid the poor is not?

Public policy should never be formed on the basis

of misinformation, much less deliberate misinformation. Good government cannot thrive when honesty is absent from public discourse. In an age in which we are subject to a barrage of information from a multitude of sources, some accurate, some distorted and aimed at spreading doubt and fear, it is important that each and every one of us think critically about what we hear, that we question, and that we take the time to seek out opposing views. Paying attention only to those who affirm our already-held beliefs is easy, and it can easily lead us astray. It takes time and commitment to be an informed citizen; but only through that commitment, can we be the citizens that a democracy deserves and requires.

**"One of the most important things in life is what Judge Learned Hand described as 'that ever-gnawing inner doubt as to whether you're right.' If you don't have that, if you think you've got an inside track to absolute truth, you become doctrinaire, humorless and intellectually constipated. The greatest crimes in history have been perpetrated by such religious and political and racial fanatics, from the persecutions of the Inquisition on down to Communist purges and**

## What Does It Mean To Be A Democrat?

By Shannon Burns

Committeeman, Pct 025; Candidate, Forest Preserve, District 6

Last summer, I was having dinner with two friends, Annie and Lindsay. Annie asked if I were planning to run for the Forest Preserve Board again in 2012; I said I was. Then I made a comment about being one of the few Democrats in DuPage County, which prompted Lindsay, who is 11, to ask what the difference is between a Democrat and a Republican.

I don't remember exactly how I answered Lindsay's question but, when I finished, Annie, who is 9, summarized for me. "Let me get this straight," she said. "If you like buildings and money, then you are a Republican. If you like trees and people, then you are a Democrat. Right?" Yep. In that one comment, Annie summed it up nicely.

A few weeks later, I had the opportunity to talk with Gene Callahan, former aide to U.S. Senators Paul Simon and Alan Dixon, and former lobbyist for Major League Baseball. Gene is in his 70's now, and retired, but happy to talk about his career in politics. So I asked Gene the same question Lindsay asked me: "What is the difference between a Democrat and a Republican?"

Gene thought for a minute and then told me that the real question was not about party differences. The better question, he said, was "what does it mean to be a Democrat?" We talked for about 90 minutes on the subject of what it means to be a Democrat. Our conversation was an insightful mix of stories, philosophies, strategies and insights about his observations on "being a Democrat". When Gene was done speaking, I understood what it means to be a Democrat. His insights are worth sharing, so here, with his permission and in no particular order, is a summary of Gene Callahan's comments.

A Democrat:

**Knows the people.** Consequently, Democrats win elections by going door-to-door.

**Is inclusive.** Democrats understand that wealth and social status are mandates to share what we have, not entitlements to rule.

**Is loyal.** Democrats do not publically support the other party - ever. If you want to support a Republican, quit being a Democrat. It is good to work with other parties, but a Democrat is always supportive of his (or her) own party.

**Understands that people come before politics.** After winning an election, a Democrat sets party politics aside and works for everyone.

**Puts team over personality.** If there is a bum in the party, get him (or her) out. One bad apple really can ruin the whole bunch. One person in the party who is working against the common goal will hurt everyone else until no one wins.

**Leads toward equality.** No one is better – or less – than anyone else. Everyone is equal and that is what Democrats strive for in Government.

**Is prompt and respectful.** Return every phone call the same day it is received, even if only to say that there is no time to talk right now. If a constituent feels strongly enough to make a phone call, then that person deserves the respect of a prompt reply. (In today's world, this also applies to email.)

**Is gracious.** In politics, being blunt or brutally honest is an expensive luxury that cannot be afforded.

**Knows what is right.** If something is not right, fix it. If it cannot be fixed, quit and move on. There will always be other campaigns and other opportunities, but there is never a second chance to maintain a good reputation.

**Is tolerant of diversity.** The Democratic Party is a party of discussion, open dissension, and sometimes controversy, but everyone is always welcome.

**Never gives up.**

Gene Callahan's comments on being a Democrat certainly offer something to think about. Some of his comments did not fit with my experience of being a candidate in the 2010 race for Forest Preserve Commissioner. At first, I thought maybe Gene's age was a factor; that he is from another era, when politics were simple and when running – and winning – an election was more straightforward than it is today. Or maybe Gene's comments were just a touch naïve in the way that nostalgia sometimes simplifies memory.

But Gene is an interesting guy; he tends to stick in a person's mind. I found myself thinking about what Gene had to say until, eventually, I discovered that Gene had it exactly right. Over a lifetime of political work, Gene had, in his relaxed, straightforward manner, distilled the basic tenants of what it means to be a Democrat.

Given the list above, am I a perfect Democrat? Nope. But I am not giving up. Some lessons are easily spoken but take a lifetime to learn. But they can be learned! And, as my friend Annie says, if I care about people and trees more than I care about money and buildings, I am on the right track. How about you?

## **Labor Time Warp in Aurora**

**by Vince Hardt**

*Committeeman, Pct 029*

Has the calendar jumped back to 1919? Jim Armbruster, President/CEO, and Paul Carr, COO, of ATMI Precast in Aurora, manufacturer of concrete precast panels, seem to believe it has.

The situation at ATMI was less-than-ideal even prior to November, 2011. With rare exceptions, the labor force was all Hispanic and management all Anglo. The company used a combination of permanent employees and temporary workers from Minute Men. Workers put in long hours for pay well below average for this hard, dangerous work. Two years ago, the workers accepted a 20% pay cut.

On November 14, the company locked out the permanent workers, trying to run production with temps only. This was unsuccessful as most of the added temps just could not do the job. At the end of November, when Teamsters Local 673, who had been representing the workers, withdrew, the company called the workers back with a 5% pay increase; but that left them making less than before the wage rollback. The local told them they really had only two options, accept or strike.

Northern Illinois Jobs with Justice (NIJwJ) and Chicago Workers Collaborative (CWC) showed an interest in the situation. (Full disclosure: I serve on the steering committee of NIJwJ). On December 1, the two groups, together with one ATMI employee who had taken a personal day off from work, and family members of others, marched through the center of Aurora to the factory. We held a rally on the public sidewalk across from the plant, with speeches by the ATMI employee, family members, Occupy Elgin, Occupy Aurora, as well as the two sponsoring groups. Plant security came out to watch and listen, reminding us to stay off their property and taking photographs. Shortly after that, ATMI fired four workers, most for rather dubious reasons that had not been enforced previously, such as changing shoes before punching out. Not surprisingly, the employee who had spoken at the rally was one of them.

December 2 was a first Friday, the day on which unemployment statistics come out. NIJwJ holds a rally on these dates, generally outside "too-big-to-fail" banks, to comment on the statistics and urge full-employment alternatives to current policy. That day, we held the rally in front of the Minute Men office in Aurora that was supplying workers to ATMI. The manager declined to dialogue with us.

Other activities, including a brief leafleting and door-to-door collection for the fired workers in the blocks surrounding Jim Armbruster's house, an attempt to do the same at the Arts Festival at West Aurora High School on February 4 (until prevented by the school), were intended to keep up the pressure. Finally, we marched through Jim Armbruster's neighborhood on February 12, with a pause for speeches in front of his home.

That march generated controversy when Aurora Alderman Rick Lawrence questioned whether targeting the residence violated a local ordinance. Interestingly, years ago, when an abortion clinic was the target, he had offered an opinion that the same ordinance was unconstitutional. In any event, we have to thank Alderman Lawrence for the extra publicity this brought to the event and the underlying issue. I have mixed feelings about targeting a residence. On the one hand, there is the First Amendment right of assembly, and on the other, the right to quiet enjoyment of one's personal residence.

Meanwhile, Laborers International Local 681 petitioned to represent the workers. The NLRB scheduled an election for February 17. In the lead-up to the election, ATMI terminated more workers, especially strong union supporters. In these cases, the typical scenario was to change a worker from one job to another without training, and then find them unproductive. The election was a resounding success, with the workers voting by an overwhelming margin of 78-9 for the union.

All is not over yet. One of the union demands will be reinstatement of the fired workers. It remains to be seen whether ATMI will negotiate in good faith with the new union. One thing is certain; we will be watching and taking action as needed.

## Homeless Republicans

By Frank Malley

*Precinct Committeeman, Pct 015*

On July 2, 1862, Abraham Lincoln—in a sense the first Republican—signed into law the Morrill Act, creating our land grant college system. The nation was embroiled in the Civil War, but Lincoln knew that the war would come to an end at some point and that America would have to look to building its future—a future that was indisputably founded on education.

Theodore Roosevelt loved America and sought to conserve much of its natural vitality in the park system he founded. Also, he read Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* and, as a consequence, oversaw the creation of the Food and Drug Administration, a powerful regulator of matters pertaining to the health and wellbeing of all Americans.

Prior to his hapless presidency, Herbert Hoover was revered as a great humanitarian who saved millions of Europeans from starving to death at the end of the First World War.

Where would these Republicans go today? The Republican Party of 2012 would not be a home to these men, not even the early Hoover.

Would these men not turn to the Democratic Party? Republican leaders crack wise about the "failed" stimulus program--that kept tens of thousands of teachers in place in American classrooms. Even some 2012 Republicans find it hard to criticize the Administration's Race to the Top program pushing for academic excellence.

2012 Republican leaders want to drill, drill, drill for oil on our beloved, popular seashores and in our matchless parks. Disingenuously they gloss over the reality that the barrels of oil already produced in America are not reserved for US use but are instead sold on the international market to the highest bidders.

In the regulatory world, Dodd-Frank has restored many essential regulations for the financial industry. Meanwhile, in 2011, the much maligned Affordable Health Care Act permitted young people across the nation to remain on their parents' health insurance,

rather than be left unprotected by health coverage. On January 1, 2012, millions of seniors on Medicare saw the Affordable Health Care Act remove 50% of the "doughnut hole" in their Part D drug coverage. Soon, Americans will not be denied coverage because of pre-existing medical conditions, lifetime health coverage caps will be eliminated, and tens of millions of hitherto uninsured Americans will have medical coverage.

A couple of years ago Republican leaders hooted that under President Obama "GM" would be Government Motors. Now the American auto industry is vibrant and profitable and passing on the wealth to working men and women who are in its profit-sharing programs.

One million households have been helped by the Administration's programs to modify the terms of their mortgages. Unemployment figures are steadily moving downward. The 2012 Republican leadership has offered nothing, except tongue clucking about the need to quicken the pace of improvement.

For the US and for the world at large, President Obama signed an historic arms reduction treaty with Russia. And, yes, he approved the risky Navy SEALs raid to bring bin Laden to justice.

There is a home for Independents and for Republicans who no longer recognize their party.

**"We establish no religion in this country, we command no worship, we mandate no belief, nor will we ever. Church and state are, and must remain, separate."**

**Ronald Reagan,  
October 26, 1984**

## National Service Renewal

By Barry Dredze

Committeeman, Pct 018

Alarming statistics are increasingly published suggesting that our nation is in danger of creating a military caste in this country, if we have not already created one.

“Only about 1% of Americans have been touched directly by these wars. As a result, the nation faces what former Defense secretary Robert Gates called ‘the dilemmas and consequences that go with having so few fighting our wars for so long’...” (USA Today, November 11, 2011).

When we consider that roughly 1% of American households have been directly affected by US military combat commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan over the past decade, it becomes difficult to accept the possibility that American foreign policy is or even can be conducted in any genuinely democratic sense. As anti-government rhetoric reaches new levels of prevalence in our national discourse, it becomes increasingly important to respond with appreciation for national service as an investment in the broader public interest.

The grim prospects for democratic societies that reject broader public participation in the institutions of national service are rich in historical precedent. In her monumental post-war book *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Hannah Arendt examined the impact of the Dreyfus affair on the French Republic. Alfred Dreyfus, a captain of the French General Staff was privately tried and convicted of espionage for Germany in 1894. Sentenced to life imprisonment on the infamous Devil’s Island penal colony, Dreyfus was eventually cleared of the charge. But the Dreyfus affair exposed the corrosive element of an insular military class within the French republic and aggravated the destructive tensions between loyal republicans, such as Albert Clemenceau and Emile Zola, and its conservative aristocratic elite.

“In contrast to the shifting and fluid cliques of society and Parliament,” Arendt wrote, “where admission was easy and allegiance fickle, stood the rigorous exclusiveness of the army, so characteristic of the caste system. It was neither military life, professional honor, nor *esprit de corps*

that held its officers together to form a reactionary bulwark against the republic and against all democratic influences; it was simply the tie of caste. The refusal of the state to democratize the army and to subject it to the civil authorities entailed remarkable consequences. It made the army an entity outside of the nation and created an armed power whose loyalties could be turned in directions which none could foretell.”

In the broadest terms of our national discourse, the idea of compulsory service compels us to put our ideology where our mouth is. Either liberals genuinely believe that a popular government has a legitimate role to serve the public interest or it does not. Conversely, either conservatives genuinely honor service to the country they profess to love or they do not.

In March 1978, Israel launched Operation Litani, invading Lebanon in retaliation for an attack on Tel Aviv by the then-Beirut-based Palestine Liberation Organization and only four months after Egyptian President Anwar Sadat addressed the Israeli parliament in Jerusalem in a gesture of potential national recognition and ultimate normalization. 348 officers, soldiers and reserves of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) signed an open letter to Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin protesting the invasion and concerned by the lack of reciprocity from Israel to Sadat. The letter became the founding document of the highly effective organization in the Israeli peace movement, Peace Now.

“We are aware of the security needs of the State of Israel,” the letter stated, “and the difficulties facing the path to peace. But we know that true security will only be reached with the arrival of peace. The power of the IDF is in the identification of its soldiers with the path of the State of Israel.” While the Israeli peace movement has yet to enjoy a breakthrough in the political dynamics of the Israeli-Arab conflict, the impact it has had upon the Israeli national discourse is arguably profound. The fact that military service in Israel remains compulsory for both young men and women can hardly be neglected as a factor in the level and quality of foreign policy debate in that country. More than ten years of war in Iraq and Afghanistan have revealed an alarmingly insular subculture

(See Dredze, p. 11)

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

within a vital segment of American national society.

“The Iraq and Afghan campaigns represent the first protracted, large-scale conflicts since our Revolutionary War fought entirely by volunteers,” Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates said in a speech September 2010. “Indeed, no major war in our history has been fought with a smaller percentage of this country’s citizens in uniform full-time, roughly 2.4 million active and reserve service members out of a country of over 300 million, less than one percent.”

Iraq War Marine Veteran Brett Friedman on the website of the *Marine Corps Gazette* wrote about the erosion of discipline and leadership in the Corps, citing examples of the hazing death of Lance Corporal Harry Lew and the display of a Nazi SS flag by a Marine Corps scout sniper unit. “We have fostered a culture that takes perverse pleasure in enforcing irrelevant standards while simultaneously ignoring or enabling true misconduct. We’ve fostered a generation of Marines who will look at the picture of the scout snipers and see facial hair, unbloused boots, and hands in pockets before they notice Nazi propaganda. They will quickly condemn failures in appearance but will enable and defend moral failings. They will ignore and allow a Lance Corporal to be hazed and ostracized. They will join in with the desecration of bodies. These are our priorities. But at least the grass around the battalion CP will remain undisturbed by feet clad in identical socks,” Friedman concluded. “Fix it.”

This year, AmeriCorps Week takes place from Saturday, March 10 through Sunday, March 18. With the American military commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan winding down and a potential renewal of appreciation for civic engagement, the time may be ripe to discuss the wisdom and manner of reinstating compulsory national service, including non-military options.

We may begin the discussion by considering how much more difficult it may have been to sell the American people on the 2003 invasion of Iraq if our Armed Forces were less insulated and the nation’s electorate had been more personally invested in our armed forces.

(From **Coolidge**, p. 2)

December documented that 14 states, many with the largest minority populations, have already taken steps to restrict the franchise through voter ID requirements and the like, with more to come unless something is done. Democrats in Congress have begun to work to extend voting rights protections. Rep. Corrine Brown of Florida introduced the Easy Voting Act (HR 3317) in October that would have required early voting periods in every state, prohibited laws requiring the showing of state ID to vote and required same-day registration. Of course, Easy Voting died in committee without action by the Republican House.

How did we get to this place? Is it all the fault of Tea Party Congressmen like Joe Walsh? I don’t think so. I believe that they are merely a symptom of a belief system that puts the interests of the powerful first. Looked at in a certain way, it is easy to understand the actions of our current Congress. We just need to learn to filter them through the lens of corporate and religious fundamentalism, both of which teach them that exploiting our earth for man’s purposes is, in fact, virtuous.

This type of conservatism bears almost no resemblance to the thinking of Republicans like Teddy Roosevelt and Richard Nixon, who felt we had to preserve the resources we were given, or even make things better. Democrats must now fight to conserve the progress we have made in women’s health, environmental protections and voting rights in the face of a radical Republican revolution.

**CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS**  
Letters, opinions, jokes  
(keep’em clean, folks!)



**WTDO**  
PO Box 224  
Warrenville, IL 60555-0224  
[info@winfielddems.org](mailto:info@winfielddems.org)

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

Return Service Requested

## Right to Work?

By Doug May  
*Committeeman, Pct 001*

Just prior to the Super Bowl, Republicans in Indiana, passed legislation making the state the nation's 23rd "Right to Work" state. To most casual readers seeing this in a headline would think it's a good idea. After all, more rights are always a good thing. In this case, you have to dig a little deeper to find the truth.

Essentially, right to work laws do nothing to insure any right to work. They do however, allow workers to refuse to pay union dues. Under the law, employees receive the benefits of unionization without having to pay for it. Unions must represent non-payers in all disputes with management without receiving any compensation for that work in the form of dues. The obvious goal is to get rid of the Union. No organization can survive for long without sufficient revenues.

When pursuing this type of legislation, proponents often tout it as a way to "create jobs" by being more "competitive" with other states. Only one other state (Oklahoma), has passed this type of law, since the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and other free trade agreements. With the advent of these treaties, companies are allowed, and in some cases, encouraged to relocate to other countries in search of cheap labor. In Oklahoma after 10 years as a "right to work" state, the results are not very impressive. According to a recent study by the Economic Policy Institute:

"Rather than increasing job opportunities, the state saw companies relocate out of Oklahoma. In high-tech industries and those service industries "dependent on consumer spending in the local economy" the laws appear to have actually damaged growth. At the end of the decade, 50,000 fewer Oklahoma residents had jobs in manufacturing."

Furthermore, in comparing states with right to work laws, the conclusion was: "It will not bring new jobs in, but it will result in less wages and benefits for everybody including non-union workers."

Clearly, there is no evidence that "Right to Work" result in job creation, rather it is more of a Right to Work for Less!

### What's going on with the Postal Service?

Chances are if you are reading this newsletter, it was delivered by the Postal Service. There have been many news stories about how the Internet has destroyed the Postal Service, and the billions of dollars that have been lost by that agency. What you probably did not hear is that Congress created this situation by requiring the USPS to prefund their retiree health benefit account for the next 75 years in a 5-year timeframe. The payments required under this legislation are about \$5.5 billion per year. Again, this sounds good on paper, but there is more to the story. First off, no other government agency is required to do such an aggressive prefunding. It is not required or done by any private sector business. Second, absent the prefunding requirement, the USPS would not have "lost" money in the last several years. The Postmaster General's plan to deal with it is to close thousands of Post Offices and processing centers, eliminate a day of delivery, reduce delivery standards so mail that was once delivered the next day would take 2-3 days, and cut 200,000 jobs. Sounds like a recipe for success to me. Instead of trying to generate more revenue, he would cut service, obviously resulting in less people using the mail. Let's not forget about the Bush recession that drove down business across the board and is primarily responsible for the declining mail volume. Remember, that the concept of a universal Postal Service is enshrined in the Constitution; and that over the years, Americans have built it up to be the world's best Postal system. It would be a shame to throw it all away.

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

