

In This Issue:

March TDUs.....	1	Guns in Public.....	4
SOTU gathering.....	1	How to Win.....	5
Capitol Steps.....	1	Affordable Care.....	6
Brad's Dem Values.....	2	Need Slam Volunteers	6
Brad on Immigration ...	3	On Citizenship.....	7

For information or to volunteer:
 Email us at newsletter@tenthdems.org
 Or visit our website at www.tenthdems.org
 Or call us at 847.266.VOTE (8683)
 Or write to Hon. Lauren Beth Gash, Chair,
 Tenth Dems, P.O. Box 523, Deerfield, IL 60015

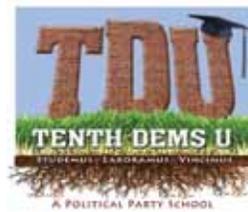
Editor: Barbara Altman
Editorial Staff: Joan Attenberg,
 Lauren Beth Gash, Adrienne Kirshbaum,
 Steve Sheffey, Allan Sperling
Contributors: Matt Flamm, Steve Gan,
 Jane Goldenberg, Eleonora di Liscia,
 Mark Rosenberg, M.D., Steve Sheffey,
 Karen Singer
Design: Charles Troy
Distribution: Ravi Ganapathy, Glenn Stier
*The opinions expressed are those of the writers,
 and not necessarily endorsed by Tenth Dems*

March 10 TDU Features State Rep. Sam Yingling on Marriage Equality

March 19 Post-Primary Let's Talk Politics Led by Political Analyst Paul Green

In March, Tenth Dems will present two stimulating Tenth Dems University (TDU) programs.

State Representative Sam Yingling of Lake County made history when he was elected as Illinois' first openly LGBT legislator outside of Chicago. Running on a platform of fiscal accountability, and promising to fix the state's broken property tax system, Yingling, 33, is part of a new generation



of elected officials. Yingling handily defeated an entrenched incumbent who was against marriage equality and afraid to stand up for women's reproductive rights,

positions Yingling believes revealed that she was out of touch with her constituents. "I won because my constituents knew I would fight for their interests, not because I'm gay," says Yingling.

Once he was in office, being openly gay gave Yingling significant influence with his colleagues in the struggle for marriage equality. At an upcoming Tenth Dems University forum on marriage equality, Representative Yingling will talk about shifting social attitudes and how his having a seat at the table helped accomplish one of the most important social

continued on page 3



Tenth News

www.tenthdems.org

MARCH 2014 Illinois Tenth Congressional District Democrats Newsletter Volume 11, Edition 3

A Warm Reception on a Frigid State of the Union Night

By Karen Singer

On January 28, a sub-zero Tuesday evening, the BBQ Pit in Highland Park was packed with enthusiastic Democrats who



gathered to watch President Obama's 2014 State of the Union address. The well-attended event was a wonderful way to take in what the President had to say, while enjoying a satisfying meal in the company of congenial people who share Democratic values.

Elected officials, volunteers, other Tenth Dems members, and friends made up the capacity crowd. Congressman Brad Schneider, who was in D.C. and heard the President live from the floor of the House of Representatives, addressed the Tenth Dems gathering via a recorded message.

Energetically applauding whenever the President's remarks resonated with them, all present found points of connection throughout the speech. Many also took advantage of the opportunity to purchase eye-catching buttons and merchandise and to join Tenth Dems or renew their memberships. ■

Political Humor Provides Tenth Dems Much-Needed Warmth on a Snowy Sunday Afternoon

By Steven Gan

On Sunday, January 26th, a large contingent from Tenth Dems braved the snow and cold to attend a performance by the political satire troupe, the Capitol Steps. Fortunately, not all comedy lovers are as intrepid as Tenth Dems; we were able to accommodate all comers even though we sold out our original block of tickets.

This was the first time I'd ever seen the Capitol Steps. Although some people describe me as a serious person who doesn't laugh very much, that afternoon I was cracking up at the hysterically funny jokes delivered by the talented performers.

A large part of the Capitol Steps' routine consists of quick, clever, pithy political digs made by creating new lyrics for well-known Broadway musical scores. Two numbers in particular stayed with

continued on page 5

SEE PP. 2 AND 3 FOR TWO PERSPECTIVES ON WHY IT IS CRUCIAL THAT WE RETURN BRAD SCHNEIDER TO CONGRESS IN NOVEMBER.

The Smart Money Backs Brad and Democratic Values

By Steve Sheffey

For the second quarter in a row, Rep. Brad Schneider (D-IL) raised more money than his 2014 challenger, ex-Congressman Robert Dold (R-Kenilworth). Brad beat Dold in 2012 despite being outspent by Dold 2-1. This time, the smart money is on Brad, and even if Dold ultimately outraises Brad, it won't be 2-1, because Dold is too out of step with the 10th District. No amount of money can hide that fact.

When he was in office, and supposedly representing our 10th District, Dold voted like a Tea Party Republican. His poor record on jobs, immigration reform, choice, the environment, the minimum wage, and human rights proved that he does not share our values.

Dold's recent purchase of a home in Kenilworth that is five miles outside our Congressional district speaks volumes about his alienation from the concerns and needs of 10th District residents. If 10th District voters focus on Dold's record rather than his rhetoric, they will reject him again in 2014.

Dold is not pro-choice.

In 2011, Dold voted for the "Let Women Die" Act. That's not its real name, of course, but that's what the pro-choice community called H.R. 358, because that's exactly what it would have done by placing draconian limits on women's access to abortion services.

Perhaps even worse, Dold voted against an amendment to this bill that would have fixed the provision that allows hospitals to refuse abortion coverage when a woman's life is in danger. Also in 2011, Dold voted for the **anti-choice H.R. 3**, which would have banned tax subsidies for any private health insurance plans that include abortion as a covered service and would have prevented citizens from deducting abortion as a medical expense unless it was the result of rape or incest, or was necessary to save the life of the mother. If enacted, this legislation would have empowered the Internal Revenue Service to investigate how women who had abortions became pregnant.

No wonder JACPAC and NARAL Pro-Choice America endorsed Brad over Dold in the last election. And remember, lest anyone tell you that these organizations backed Brad because he's a Democrat, both organizations backed Dold's Republican predecessor.

Dold has a poor record on the environment.

The Sierra Club and the League of Conservation Voters (LCV) both endorsed Brad in the last election. Dold received an "F" on a water issue report card from the Sierra Club. The League of Conservation Voters gave Dold a miserable 34 percent rating.

In their endorsement of Brad, the League of Conservation Voters said that "Congressman Dold consistently sided with the Tea Party to eliminate protections against carbon pollution, air and water pollutants, mercury emissions, airborne gases like sulfur dioxide, and would allow pollutants, like arsenic and mercury, in drinking water to go unregulated." And remember, lest anyone tell you that these organizations backed Brad because he's a Democrat, both organizations backed Dold's Republican predecessor.



Dold opposes equal rights for all Americans.

Dold is against marriage equality. Brad supports marriage equality. Dold is opposed to ENDA, proposed legislation that would bar employers from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. Brad supports ENDA. Dold does not realize that legal discrimination against people based on who they are and who they love is wrong and immoral. That's why the Human Rights Campaign endorsed Brad in the last election.

And remember, lest anyone tell you that the Human Rights Campaign backed Brad because he's a Democrat, the Human Rights Campaign backed Dold's Republican predecessor.

Dold opposes giving workers a living wage.

In a 2010 radio interview, Dold opined that "if we lower the minimum wage more people will go back to work." In fact, according to the Economic Policy Institute, "Increasing the federal minimum wage to \$10.10 by July 1, 2015, would raise the wages of about 30 million workers, who would receive over \$51 billion in additional wages over the phase-in period... Across the phase-in period of the minimum-wage increase, GDP would increase by roughly \$32.6 billion, resulting in the creation of approximately 140,000 net new jobs... over that period."

Dold's Tea Party voting record is out of step with our values.

In 2010, *The New York Times* identified Dold as a Tea Party candidate, and in 2012 *The Washington Post* listed Dold as one of 111 Tea Party-endorsed candidates. Dold calls himself "independent," yet he voted with Republicans in the House more than 80 percent of the time. No wonder *The Hill* listed Dold as one of "Boehner's 100 loyal soldiers."

The Republican and Democratic parties have starkly different visions for America.

The 2012 Republican platform called for repealing the estate tax, adopting a Constitutional amendment requiring a super-majority for any tax increase, and adopting a Constitutional amendment restricting marriage to unions of one man and one woman; supported prayer in public schools, a human life amendment to the Constitution, and legislation to explicitly apply the Fourteenth Amendment's protections to unborn children; opposed federal

continued on page 6

The Brad Beat: Immigration Reform

By Eleonora di Liscia

Whenever I've spoken with 10th District Congressman Brad Schneider, I've gotten one overwhelming impression: Brad cares.

Brad cares about a lot of things. He cares enough to call a constituent to make sure her questions are addressed. He cares about working families and the unemployed. He cares about the environment. And he cares about the 10th District's substantial population of immigrants: people who came here hoping to make a better life for their families in a dream they dreamed called America.

In Brad's America, there is room for everybody.

Last year, Brad was inspired by a naturalization ceremony he attended in which 53 people from 19 different countries took the Oath of Citizenship. "Experiencing the incredible feeling of hope and achievement at that ceremony and understanding the indisputable economic benefits of real improvements to our system, I had no doubt whatsoever about the absolute need for comprehensive immigration reform legislation," Brad said in a January 27, 2014 blog post.

To put a face on the need for reform, Brad was one of five members of the Illinois Congressional delegation to invite a DREAMer as his guest to President Obama's 2014 State of the Union address. Estefania Garcia from Highwood was born in Mexico but brought to America at age seven. Under the deferred action program, she obtained a two-year reprieve from deportation. Last year, she graduated from Lake Forest College and is now working with Mano a Mano, a nonprofit that provides services to immigrants and other

underserved families.

Brad fights for Estefania and others like her by cosponsoring the comprehensive Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act (H.R. 15), which would provide a path to citizenship for the undocumented while strengthening border security and increasing visas for skilled workers. The bill is currently pending before a House subcommittee.

As with many other issues, Brad takes a pragmatic approach to immigration reform. He knows that immigration reform is not only a humanitarian issue, but also makes good economic sense. "As long as our system continues to push some of the most talented and brightest young minds to leave or stay away, we will be at a disadvantage," Brad said on October 13, 2013.

Similarly, in a January 27, 2014 post, Brad wrote, "Simply put: comprehensive immigration reform is a win-win proposition. We'll be able to attract the world's most gifted STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) minds to our schools, train them and then encourage them to stay here and help us achieve 21st Century success. Our economy will be injected with the talent and skills it needs to thrive. And 11 million people will pay taxes and become fully engaged in our democracy for the first time."

To promote the Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act, Brad, with Rep. Tammy Duckworth, hosted a roundtable discussion with the Illinois Chamber of Commerce to discuss why comprehensive immigration reform makes good economic sense. In a second roundtable, Brad and Senator Dick Durbin met with a cross-section of community leaders to explain the importance of the bill and to hear their perspectives. ■



Above: Before the State of the Union address, Rep. Schneider and other members of the Illinois Congressional delegation gather with their guests in Rep. Bill Foster's office. L. to R: Ameya Pawar, Rep. Mike Quigley, Rep. Bill Foster, Maria Torres, Estefania Garcia, Rep. Schneider, Rep. Jan Schakowsky, Rudy Lopez.



Rep. Schneider with Estefania Garcia

Tenth Dems University (TDU)

continued from page 1

victories of our time.

Join us the evening of March 10, as Rep. Yingling shares his unique perspective.

Then on March 19, join Tenth Dems as Paul Green leads a Let's Talk Politics discussion of the March primary results and provides valuable insights into the upcoming November elections. Green is Director of the Institute for Politics and Arthur Rubloff Professor of Policy Studies at Roosevelt University. He is also the Political Analyst for WGN Radio, guest columnist for Crain's Chicago Business, and the author of several books and articles on Illinois and Chicago politics. ■



For more information about these events, or to RSVP, go to tenthdems.org/tdu or call 847-266-VOTE (8683).

Now They're Calling Carrying Guns in Public a "God-Given Right"

By Steven Gan

I was watching Piers Morgan's show on CNN back on Jan. 27th and happened to catch an interview with Nathan Dahm, a Conservative Republican State Senator for the 33rd District of Oklahoma. Senator Dahm is a passionate gun rights advocate.

On the show, Senator Dahm said that in order to protect the Second Amendment rights of all Oklahomans he has introduced a bill entitled, the "Piers Morgan Constitutional Right to Keep and Bear Arms Without Infringement Act." This legislation, also known as Senate Bill 1473, would allow anyone to carry a firearm without a license. Places where guns are currently prohibited, such as schools and government facilities, would continue to be off limits for firearms, but the proposed legislation would allow Oklahomans to carry firearms anywhere else, provided they are visible in a holster or sling.

During the first couple of minutes of the interview, I heard Senator Dahm state that "the right to bear arms is a constitutional right that is enshrined. It's a 'God-given,' but Constitutionally-protected right." When I heard the words, "God-given," my backbone straightened up. And then it straightened even further when, after a few more minutes, Senator Dahm repeated his view that "the right to bear arms is a 'God-given' right enshrined in our Constitution."

When I heard the words "God-given," I was confused, dismayed, and befuddled. When did God suddenly get involved in granting Second Amendment rights, or any other Constitutional rights, for that matter? When our founding fathers were discussing the Second Amendment back in 1791, did God come down from the heavens with two pistols in his holster and an AK-47 on his shoulder, take the pen out of their hands, and write the Second Amendment? Is the Second Amendment part of the Ten Commandments?

And whose God is giving us this Second Amendment right anyway? An Islamic God? A Jewish God? A Buddhist, Shinto, or Hindu God? I believe it's a White, conservative, male God that Senator Dahm probably had in mind.

But I have trouble conceiving of any God that would endorse Senator Dahm's idea of how to make our country a safer place, which is that Americans should carry a gun pretty much wherever they go.

Well, Senator Dahm, let me tell you a story about what can happen when everyone has a gun.

My 87-year-old mother and I enjoy going to the same coffee shop near our home almost every morning for an espresso and croissant. We've been going to this coffee shop for almost eight years now and have come to know the staff, the managers, and many of the other customers. Everyone in the cafe likes my sweet mother.

So just a few days before the Piers Morgan interview with Senator Dahm, we were sitting in our neighborhood café, enjoying our coffee and croissant, when a middle-aged gentleman sat down at the table just behind my Mom and began talking very loudly on his cell phone. His voice reverberated throughout the coffee shop, as if from a boom box.

My Mom turned around and politely asked the gentleman to please lower his voice. In response, he glared at her and dropped an F-bomb.

I immediately stood to confront him, and our war of words escalated by the nanosecond. How could any decent person talk to an elderly woman like that? To my Mom? It was beyond infuriating. I was practically out of my mind. Oh yes, if I had had a gun on me, who knows what would have happened. His brain could have ended up being part of the shop's decor.

Thank God I didn't have a gun. Instead, I appealed to the shop manager, who at once escorted this moron out of the shop.

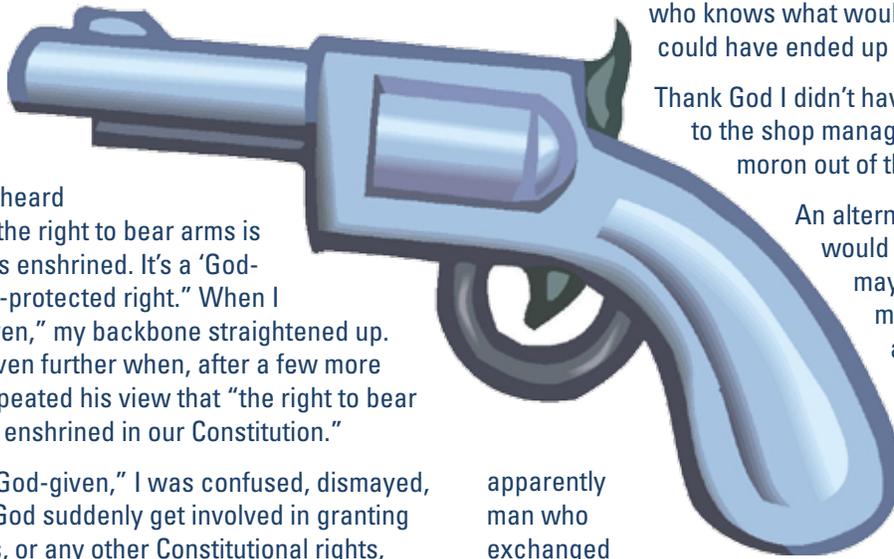
An alternative ending to this story would not be far-fetched. As you may know, just a little more than a month ago, two men got into an argument at a movie theatre in Florida. One's texting during the previews irritated the other. The texter was disrespectful to the other. The texter asked him to stop. They words. The texter may have The aggrieved party, a retired law enforcement officer, took out his gun and shot the texter dead.

apparently man who exchanged thrown popcorn.

When I heard about this terrible incident, I thought about how enraged I'd been at the man who cursed at my mother. Who is immune to rage? Under the right set of circumstances, couldn't almost anyone lose it and lash out? And what if everyone had a gun? Having a gun empowers, enables, and enfranchises the bearer to have the last word. "I'll show you!" "I'll teach you a lesson that you'll never forget!!" Bam, bam, bam..... "Now how do you like them apples?"

And what if the movie theatre texter had also had a gun and the two antagonists had begun shooting at each other? Now imagine everyone else in the theatre shooting at the antagonists, trying to protect themselves. What a bloodbath that would have been.

So, I say to Senator Dahm and those who share his philosophy, if you think that carrying guns is a God-given right enshrined in our Constitution, I'm sorry, but I just don't get your God or your rationale. It seems to me that keeping deadly weapons out of public places is the far more sensible way to create a society where we can all be safe from random acts of violence. ■



How to Win Local Elections: Lessons from the Obama Campaigns

by Matt Flamm

After working on many local campaigns, I was honored to be an organizer for President Obama in his 2008 and 2012 campaigns. Those campaigns were among the most successful in history, and there are lessons we can learn that will help us win local races. The motto of the Obama campaigns was “Respect. Empower. Include. Win.” I will discuss each of these concepts, and a few more of my own.

Respect

Campaign leadership emphasized respect for other volunteers and staff, for other Democrats, and even for Republicans. Voters are tired of the cynicism and negativity of modern politics. We shouldn't hesitate to attack the policies and positions of our adversaries, but we need to show respect if we want to improve the political process.

Empower

The Obama campaigns gave remarkable autonomy to local staff and volunteers. They trusted the people who worked on the campaign. If you encourage people to think for themselves, it's amazing what they'll do.

Include

Young and old, women and men, volunteers and staff worked together. There was remarkably little distinction based on different ranks or roles. People were valued for their skills and work. Some canvassed, some made calls, some entered data. There was a meaningful role for anyone who wanted to participate. We all felt that we were part of a community of shared values and actions.

Believe

Too many campaigns reflect a cynical, politics-as-usual attitude. Campaign staff often lose sight of the reasons why people care and get involved in politics. If candidates and organizers show that they believe in progressive policies and how they can help achieve those goals, volunteers and voters will follow.

Measure

The Obama campaigns measured everything: calls, contacts, supporters, etc. They set goals and measured themselves against those goals. This helped volunteers understand how their efforts contributed to the campaign's success.

Combine technology with humanity

The 2008 campaign created a state-of-the-art website and social media environment, which allowed supporters to organize their own groups. The 2012 campaign was far more advanced in computer modeling that allowed organizers to target persuadable voters and those who vote only sporadically. All technology, however, must be a means to an end. Otherwise, technology just aggravates the control of politics by professionals.

Win

Above all, everyone must focus on the goal--winning. We've all seen campaigns where staff focused more on their own power or future prospects than winning the election.

We've seen campaigns where people felt entitled to win and others where staff and volunteers didn't believe they could win. A successful campaign needs everyone to work together toward that single goal of winning the election. ■



Capitol Steps

continued from page 1

me for hours afterwards. A troupe member portraying Vladimir Putin sang a hilarious rendition of “Puttin’ on the Blitz.” Later, a very harmonious trio depicting Marco Rubio, Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto, and an undocumented immigrant named Juan performed “Juan Singular Sensation” from *A Chorus Line*. I couldn't get the music from either of these songs out of my head.

Also priceless was the skit featuring embattled New Jersey Governor Chris Christie. Here's a sample of the dialogue:

Question: Are you going to run for president in 2016?

Answer: I'll close that bridge when I come to it.

The show also featured a skit built entirely of spoonerisms. A spoonerism is an error in speech, or a deliberate play on words, in which corresponding consonants and vowels are switched between two words in a phrase. For example, “A Nunch of Butts,” “Nibble Down Some Scrotes,” and “This Must be My Ducky Lay” all figured into a ten-minute stand-up comedy finale that had us all laughing our “ear rends” off.

Afterwards, many of us gathered in a private space for some drinks and appetizers and the opportunity to share some of our favorite lines and laughs of the show.

My body actually ached the next day from the side-splitting laughter. Especially for me, a person who doesn't usually laugh that much, the show was priceless. ■

What You Do Not Know About the Affordable Care Act (and Need To)—Part III: Determining Best Practices

By Mark Rosenberg, M.D.

You may recall certain politicians talking about “death panels” after the passage of the Affordable Care Act in 2010. While there was absolutely no truth to the rumor that the Affordable Care Act had anything to do with “death panels,” the idea made good fodder for the opponents of the legislation and, indeed, for those opposed to healthcare reform in general. The rumor of “death panels” also preyed on the vulnerabilities of seniors depending on Medicare for their healthcare.

In fact, the Affordable Care Act’s primary goal is to improve the healthcare furnished to everyone in the United States. The legislation provides funding for the Innovation Center, which is charged with determining how best to provide healthcare by evaluating the medical evidence with regard to effectiveness and best practices. The idea is to understand what interventions yield the best results so that healthcare choices are driven more by science than by economics.

It is still too early for the anticipated goals of the Innovation Center to have been achieved. Most of the funding for Innovation Center research so far has gone to demonstration projects, rather than to the types of randomized clinical trials that are the cornerstone of any effectiveness research. So far, many studies have been hindered by the inability to accumulate large enough control groups for such clinical trials. For example, in a recent *Tenth News* article, I referred to Medicare coordination of care as one area covered by the Affordable Care Act. A control group would provide the necessary comparison to determine whether patient care was improved by better coordination of care.

In another example, one underlying assumption of the Affordable Care Act was that once uninsured individuals had healthcare coverage, they would use emergency rooms less; but so far, that has not turned out to be the case. In fact, there has been increased



emergency room usage among the previously uninsured. This anomaly may be due to shortages of access to primary care physicians, or it may be due to poor education about the role of emergency care. That is, many of the long-term uninsured may have become accustomed to accessing hospital emergency departments for their primary healthcare, and it may take more time for this behavior to change.

Good research requires control groups, and conclusions take time. We can look forward to more report cards comparing the care of various institutions and Accountable Care Organizations (see *Tenth News*, February 2014). While these report cards may not provide a perfect measure, they will place pressure on the healthcare organizations to meet certain standards of best practices, a far cry from the fictitious “death panels.” And as more of the newly insured become accustomed to accessing wellness care at no out-of-pocket cost, these individuals may develop relations with primary care physicians and stop visiting emergency rooms for all of their healthcare concerns. ■

Congress Watch

continued from page 2

funding for embryonic stem cell research; talked about reining in the EPA and about saving Medicare by “modernizing” it (I’m not making this up); and, of course, called for repealing the Affordable Care Act.

That’s the Republican Party. That’s the agenda a vote for Dold would empower. Don’t let anyone tell you party labels don’t matter. There is no better predictor of how a member of Congress will vote than party affiliation. Maybe that’s not the way it should be, but that’s the way it is.

Voters in the 10th District rejected Dold in 2012, despite his huge fundraising advantage, because of his voting record and because they saw in Brad Schneider the promise of what a Congressman should be. That’s why JACPAC, NARAL Pro-Choice America, the Human Rights Campaign, the Sierra Club, and the League of Conservation Voters all endorsed Brad over Dold in the last election.

Congressman Brad Schneider is living up to his promises. Brad’s agenda is our agenda, and that’s why Brad will win in November. ■

Volunteers Needed for Community Connection Poetry/Prose Contest and Slam

Help us reward young writers from high schools in Waukegan, North Chicago, Zion, and Warren Township with cash prizes and the opportunity to read their works in public. We need help soliciting contest entries (due March 17), coding them for anonymous evaluation by our judges, publicizing the April 10 live reading, helping out during the slam, and more. If this project interests you, send an email to volunteers@tenthdem.org or call 847-266-VOTE (8683).

We the People

Article 1

On Citizenship: An Introduction to a Series of Profiles

By Jane Goldenberg

We in the United States tend to see ourselves as democracy's great proselytizers, using our muscle in the cause of promoting democracy around the world. But often it seems as if many American citizens have forgotten what democracy means. Certainly, our form of government is not for the faint-hearted or mercurial, since while it bestows great benefits on its citizens, it also requires much in the way of responsibility. For a democracy ceases to function very well if its citizens become complacent, uninformed, oblivious, uninvolved—or dependent on the sword.

Unfortunately, we live in an era in which many of our fellow citizens—some of them members of Congress—are on a crusade to demonize the government as some “beast” to be starved or dismantled. It's not hard for the tenets of good citizenship to become lost in the hubbub of shouts, accusations, exaggeration, and misrepresentation from pundits and bloggers who want to undermine our government rather than contribute to making it better. These negative messages have resonance, and fewer than half of us even vote in non-Presidential elections.

Those of us who participate in the full range of democratic activities are essential to the workaday grind of bringing democratic ideals to life. Most readers of this newsletter believe we have potency in the public square and know we can truly have an impact on what happens in the next election, or in the halls of a legislative body, or in an executive office—at the municipal, state, or federal level. That's because we know how to form associations, make a case for a position, participate in elections, and encourage others to vote. Good citizens recognize that government is not some awful “other,” lording it over the people but, rather, that “we the people” are the government and that it is up to us to get the government we want.

So to celebrate the numerous examples of good citizenship in

our midst, we embark on a new series in which we will profile some of those among us who bring our democracy to life, the folks in the trenches at all levels of civil society, from town halls to schools, from food banks to voter registration drives, from petitions to referendums to community organizing events. These are the selfless folks who see a problem and decide to do something about it, whether it's a simple matter of an intersection in need of a stoplight or the injustice of a defendant not getting access to adequate legal representation at trial. These are the people who help our communities become better places to live.

Part of what motivates this series is frustration with the trend in our society of media outlets magnifying the polarizing controversy of the day, hogging both airtime and living room conversations. And with access to media for sale, what seems to get the most attention at election time these days are the mega-millionaire neophyte politicians who win primaries, only to go down in flames in the general election, to whit, former eBay CEO Meg Whitman and Michael Huffington (ex-husband of Arianna) in California, and Linda McMahon, of World Wrestling Entertainment, who spent \$100 million on her two races for the U.S. Senate in Connecticut. The latest incarnation of this phenomenon in Illinois is Bruce Rauner.

A real functioning democracy requires a big middle, the worker bees of engaged citizens to generate the historical tide, transmitting the great ideas of the age to power government of the people, by the people, and for the people. Or what do we become? A veritable monarchy with an inner circle of “landed gentry” vying to put forward as policy whatever personal bugaboo he or she cares about the most, be it access to abortion, prayer in public schools, fortress-like borders, a gun in every pocket.

We seek also to celebrate style. That is, civility and respect for one's fellow citizen.

And as we celebrate the doers, those who elevate their ideas and put their shoulders into the work, we have a feeling we'll learn much about what binds us together as a society. ■