

The Township Democrat

The Official Newsletter of the Winfield Township Democratic Organization

Volume 7, No. 1

www.winfielddems.org

Spring 2014

Conversations With The Township Chair

By Susan Lubonovich

WTDO Chair & Committeeman, Pct. 014

I welcome all of you to our Fourteenth issue of The Township Democrat, the Newsletter of the Winfield Township Democratic Organization. Although we have been on hiatus lately, we have never lost sight of our responsibility and our commitment to continue publishing our Newsletter, *The Township Democrat*. And here we are - back in business. Without a doubt, though, we would not have accomplished this remarkable restart without you, our readers, and your unstinting financial support. Your commitment to *The Township Democrat* has permitted us to explore issues and concerns in articles written from diverse Democratic points of view brought together in one local publication for your consideration.

We are very grateful that you have given us the opportunity to publish our Newsletter. Please continue your generous support of *The Township Democrat*.

So here we are: 2014, halfway through the President's second term, supposedly out from under the Great Recession of 2008, coping with Republican obstructionism as we implement the Affordable Care Act, dealing with a gerrymandered Republican House of Representatives who have no intention of governing, but are still stalwartly collecting their taxpayers' funded paychecks, even when they shut our government down, threaten default and cost the economy 26 billion dollars.

And here we are: watching the gutting of the voting rights of our fellow citizens in those "laboratories of democracy" controlled by Republican governors and

legislators; seeing food stamps cut, veterans' benefit bills defeated, long term unemployment benefits shelved, minimum wage increases stymied, unions demonized and excoriated, women's rights steamrolled and our environment repeatedly assaulted. And of course, our President of these United States relentlessly and unmercifully insulted, mocked, ridiculed, berated, scorned and threatened by an opposition who has no alternatives to offer other than their desire to repeal the 20th Century.

So, what do we do?

This is an off year election and Democrats have a notorious reputation for staying home. Let's not. Let's go to the polls this mid-term Primary election and support our Democratic candidates who are running for national, state and county offices. We know these candidates. They have come to our Township meetings, supported our Township organization, talked with us, listened to our concerns and goals, marched in our Parades and joined with us at our Holiday celebrations.

But, you say, our candidates are running unopposed; they will win their Primaries. Yes, they will - but numbers count. Strong numbers in the Primary attract volunteers, financial support, media attention and a better turnout for the General election, ultimately contributing to victory. Our candidates need you now to have a stake in their Primary election.

We have good, strong candidates who share our Democratic values, our ideals and who deeply support our Common Good and our Social Compact with one another. They deserve our support and our vote. For a change, fellow Democrats, let us confound the pundits and come out and vote in the March 18th Primary election for our Democratic candidates. Our American Dream depends on it.

CALENDAR

EARLY VOTING

MON., MAR. 3 - SAT., MAR. 15

INFO: DUPAGE COUNTY

ELECTION COMMISSION

630-407-5600

WWW.DUPAGECO.ORG/ELECTION

PRIMARY ELECTION-PLEASE

VOTE

TUE., MARCH 18, 6:00AM-7:00

PM

VERIFY YOUR POLLING

LOCATION

WTDO REGULAR MEETINGS

WINFIELD FIRE PROTECTION

DISTRICT, FIREHOUSE No. 1

27W530 HIGHLAKE RD,

WINFIELD

WED., MARCH 19, 7:00 PM

WED., MAY 21, 7:00 PM

WED., JUNE 18, 7:00 PM

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

Simon Recruiting Attorneys for Virtual Legal Clinics

By Lt. Governor Sheila Simon
Candidate for IL Comptroller

Hello Winfield Township,

As many of you know, I am hard at work on the campaign trail in my race for Illinois Comptroller. I still have a full-time day job as Lieutenant Governor, and I wanted to let you know more about my Virtual Legal Clinics.

We are always looking for talented volunteers! We are recruiting suburban attorneys to serve in my office's Virtual Legal Clinics in underserved parts of the state. The program connects domestic violence survivors in rural areas with lawyers in suburban and urban areas for a free legal consultation using webcams and high-speed Internet technology.

Legal topics for consultation include family law, child custody and visitation, marriage and divorce, elder abuse, immigration and property issues.

The Virtual Legal Clinics are a confidential and effective way to help domestic violence survivors

ensure their safety and the safety of their families. The legal system can seem overwhelming, but this service helps survivors take the next step toward safety and stability.

Participating shelters are located in Cairo, Freeport, Jacksonville, Rochelle, Rockford, Peoria and Pekin and serve counties in need. There are 47 counties in Illinois with no attorneys practicing family law. An additional 33 counties have five or fewer attorneys practicing family law. The need is great for volunteers.

Nationally, one in four women has experienced domestic violence in her lifetime, and in Illinois, nearly 40 percent of women will experience domestic violence by an intimate partner.

I hope there are some good volunteers out there looking to get involved in this project. To volunteer as an attorney or to request a clinic at your shelter, contact me at sheila.simon@illinois.gov or call 312-814-5250.

I also look forward to meeting many of you on the campaign trail between now and November 2014.

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)

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

Food Insecurity in America

By Dennis Anderson

Candidate for Congress, IL-14th District

Among the questions I was asked most frequently during my 2012 Congressional campaign was “Why are you running?” There were a variety of reasons for my entering the race and my response to the question may have varied around the edges from time to time, but the following were always a part of my explanation:

- the fact that 25% of American children live in poverty;
- the fact that some 50 million Americans live in “food insecure” households (i.e., households not having access at all times to sufficient food, per World Health Organization and USDA definitions) and;
- critical to the persistence of this state of affairs, that these issues are rarely heard in the national conversation.

We live in the richest nation on earth, a nation that produces more than sufficient food for its own citizens, with plenty to spare for export. So how can this hunger be explained?

- **Low levels of government assistance:** According to Feeding America, the average SNAP benefit per person per meal is under \$1.50, and our Congress has cut the funds for the program. Of the federal school lunch allotment of \$2.60 per meal, less than \$1.00, on average, is spent on food.
- **Access:** A large proportion of the poor population lives in “food deserts,” areas where fresh fruits and vegetables, for example, are often unavailable. In addition, only 1% of U.S. food subsidies go to fruit and vegetable production.
- **Waste:** Food is the largest individual type of waste buried in the Nation’s

landfills, and the EPA estimates that some 34 billion tons of food is wasted annually in the U.S. A decade-long study by Timothy Jones of the University of Arizona’s Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology found that roughly half of all harvest-ready food is never eaten.

Underlying the hunger problem is poverty. If adjusted for inflation, the federal minimum wage of \$1.60 per hour in 1968 would have risen to \$10.56 today. Sadly, it has been frozen at \$7.25 per hour since 2009, resulting in an effective shortfall of 31%. In theory, a minimum wage earner could earn \$15,080 annually but, unless their employer offers paid vacation and sick leave, they would need to work 40 hours every week of the year to do so. A family of four supported by one minimum wage earner will be left 35% below the federal poverty level of \$23,050.

I highly recommend a powerful documentary film entitled “A Place at the Table”, from Magnolia Pictures. The film addresses the facts mentioned above, with testimony from activists, elected officials, members of the volunteer community and, most importantly, from the people who live in that world of hunger. I urge you to see the film and, more importantly, to act on what you learn.

**“I believe that,
as long as there
is plenty, poverty
is evil.”**

Robert Kennedy

Bipartisanship: A Good Idea

By Shannon Burns

*Incumbent Candidate for Forest Preserve
Commissioner, District 6*

In 2010, when I first ran for election to the Forest Preserve Board, I did not realize how strong the Republican Party was in DuPage County. In my over-simplified, non-political world view, I believed that a hard working candidate, with the right credentials, could win. In 2010, I developed relationships with both sides, canvassing Republican and Democrat homes. I worked to develop a message that would appeal to everyone. I attended Forest Preserve Board meetings and made a genuine effort to listen to both sides of every argument. And I did not win.

When I did not win, some Democrats pointed to my loss as proof that a bipartisan campaign strategy was a waste of time. In 2012, when I ran for election to the Forest Preserve Board for the second time, people asked me if I planned to run a winning campaign by focusing my efforts on Democratic and swing voters. A few helpful Democrats carefully explained that I would not have a "snowball's chance in hell" of winning if I persisted in my beliefs about bipartisan government in DuPage County.

In 2012, I thought long and hard about what it would take to win a Democratic seat at the County level in DuPage. I eventually decided to stick with my original bipartisan campaign strategy, canvassing to Republican and Democratic homes. And I won.

Since becoming the first (and only) elected Democrat to sit on the Board of the DuPage Forest Preserve District, I have had a chance to put my beliefs about bipartisanship into action. Working with my fellow Board members, all Republicans, has given me a chance to see in actual practice our political differences. And I noticed something interesting: Our differences do not really exist.

Sure, we wear different "R" or "D" labels. We attend different political party events. We even tell different kinds of jokes. But when it comes to doing our jobs on the Board, we all share the same purpose: Serving the public in a way that ensures stewarding our land for future generations. Of course, we often disagree. And sometimes we argue. But we do get the job done.

We get the job done because each of us - as individuals - recognizes that we were elected to serve the public, not a political party. Of course, our political party labels have their place as we campaign for re-election. But they should have no place between elections, when we are actually doing our elected jobs that we worked so hard to get. Springfield and Washington would benefit from a little more of this understanding.

Am I proud to be a Democrat? You bet! Am I thrilled to be the first Democrat on the Forest Preserve Board? Heck yes! Am I planning to be the first Democrat to win a second term on the Forest Preserve Board in 2014? Yep. But even more than I am proud to be a Democrat, I am proud to be of service to every person in my District. I recognize that we all want the same thing: A good life, shared with people we love, in a safe environment. Next time you are disappointed with partisan politics, take a break. Go for a walk in one of our 25,000+ acres of Forest Preserve land. It will not take long to figure out what I am talking about.

*Shannon Burns also serves as Township
Committeeman, Pct. 025.*

**“A nation that
destroys its soils
destroys itself.
Forests are the
lungs of our land,
purifying the air and
giving fresh
strength to our
people.”**

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Term Limits: Legislation by Press Release

By Barry Dredze

Committeeman, Pct 018

As of this writing, the Republican primary for governor is Bruce Rauner's to lose. From his debut campaign ad, Mr. Rauner has been beating the drum for term limits in Illinois.

While elections themselves may arguably be considered a term limit by virtue of referendum on any given incumbent's performance, a 2012 poll conducted by the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute of Carbondale found that 78 percent of registered Illinois voters support term limits for legislators.

Governor Pat Quinn himself led an effort, back when he was state treasurer in 1993 called "Eight is Enough," to limit legislators to eight consecutive years in the General Assembly. Quinn's effort included the collection of approximately half a million petition signatures before the initiative was struck down by the Illinois Supreme Court as unconstitutional, because the ballot amendment failed to meet the legal standard "that ballot proposal generated by voter petitions must affect both the structure and procedures of the legislature."

Mr. Rauner has yet to provide any details of his plan, but we are not without examples among our fellow laboratories of democracy from which to draw on the merits of term limits. Meanwhile, Matt Dietrich, the executive editor at the RebootIllinois.com website, dedicated to "encourage citizens to retake ownership of our governments," reminds us that "It takes time to learn how to do any job well, and that's especially true of a job that involves navigating a bureaucracy like the Illinois government," Dietrich said. "And remember that lobbyists have no term limits."

In an environment where freshman legislators struggle to learn the ropes, it is not hard to imagine the temptation to rely on bills sponsored by private interests over the public interests these legislators were sent to their legislatures to serve.

An October 2009 report written by staff consultants for the State of California Assembly asserted that legislators had become more dependent than ever on the expertise of lobbyists as a result of term-limits, a consequence examined by a series of reports by the *San Jose Mercury News* in 2010.

"The analysis of the 2007-08 session identified outside sponsors for 47 percent of the bills introduced

by Assembly members serving their first term, compared with 40 percent of the bills from those who had served in previous sessions. On the Senate side, where almost every lawmaker had previous legislative experience, sponsored bills made up 35 percent of the total. Only one freshman senator was serving in his first state elected office, Alex Padilla, D-Van Nuys. Sixty percent of the bills he introduced had outside sponsors" [Karen de Sá, "Term limits shift balance of power to special interests," *San Jose Mercury-News*, July 17, 2010].

The *State Journal-Register* reported last November that Bruce Rauner had donated \$500,000 over the past five years to the Illinois Policy Institute, a conservative think tank. The *Chicago Sun-Times* cited state campaign records showing that the Illinois Policy Institute made two \$275 contributions to the Illinois Republican Party in 2008, and its CEO, John Tillman, has been a donor to several Republicans over the years, including GOP gubernatorial nominee Bill Brady in 2010.

On Tuesday, February 4, Scott Reeder, "journalist in residence" of Illinois Policy Institute, filed a federal lawsuit in Springfield claiming that his First and 14th Amendment rights had been violated by the legislative chamber's denial of his application for press credentials in mid-January. Both chambers distribute the credentials to media organizations like the *Chicago Sun-Times*, *Chicago Tribune* and Associated Press, among others. But since floor access gives print and television reporters access to state lawmakers when the House and Senate are in session, House and Senate rules bar floor credentials for those who lobby, such as the Illinois Policy Institute.

The *Mercury News* report also showed how turnover among legislative staff has more than doubled since Proposition 140 passed and that "many former longtime aides have become lobbyists themselves, moving to far more lucrative jobs with lobbying firms eager to draw on their insider access and experience."

It can then be no surprise when lobbyists end up writing many bills. The *Mercury News* report quoted University of Illinois Institute of Government and Public Affairs professor Chris Mooney, saying lobbyists tend to be the most knowledgeable people on their issues, making their expertise invaluable.

"I'd hate to have lawmakers writing these things," Mooney said. But it's hard to see how term limits would not expand the pool of lawmakers turned lobbyists.

Vote, Damn It!

By Frank Malley

Committeeman, Pct 015

Once again we are between a really important Presidential General Election two years in the past and an equally important Presidential General Election two years in the future. It happens that right now there will be in rapid succession two or three elections that are for congressional, municipal, and state offices. Already election judges are preparing craft projects and Nook reading selections to keep themselves awake between the occasional voters who will actively participate in these elections.

Please consider the following reasons to actually go to the polls and vote:

- **Fifty-three million dollars**—Year after year, election after election, a handful of voters in Dixon, Illinois elected the city council members who faithfully re-appointed their beloved city comptroller. Year after year, she embezzled from the Dixon city government more money than you would see in a lifetime. So much for the argument that only the Presidential elections involve the big bucks.
- **A brown-eyed soldier**—Every so often I look at a memorial photo of a young soldier who was blown up in Afghanistan fighting to protect the freedoms we have. He left behind a wife and two young children. How can we look into those brown eyes and say we would have gone to vote but it looked like rain—we were going to go vote but the election probably wasn't very important? Along with that photo I have another from the newspaper, which shows a South African black woman who did not have the use of her legs but crawled miles to the polls when the nation of South Africa first declared freedom for all.
- **Voters who have been too hurt to ever, ever vote again**—Some folks feel that they make a statement against the imperfections of the system when they choose not to vote. Somehow, however, when they deliberately stay home cocooned in perfection, someone still wins the election and takes over running the city, the county, the state, and the nation.
- **Keep it representative**—The newly elected school board decides that only dictionaries published by a tiny company in New Mexico

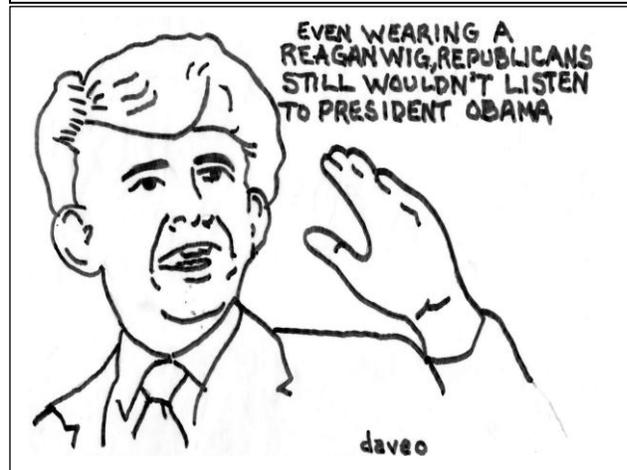
should be purchased by our schools. The dictionaries cost \$250 each and omit listing of the word "toothpick" because one board member feels it might offend dentists. The newly elected city council decides to float \$800 million in bonds for the construction of a combination sports stadium and puppet theater. The new head of the council happens purely by chance to be the brother-in-law of the president of the stadium construction company. The newly elected head of the county board moves that the county secede from the state and found a nation based on snake-handling and the love of root beer buttons. He is supported by the 150 members of his extended family who were the only voters to show up at the polls. The authors of our nation's and state's constitutions labored to create representative governments. Why don't we humor them and take a few minutes to vote?

- **Primaries just clean up the clutter**—People who only vote in the important elections—the Presidential elections—skip primary elections. They save their energy for the general election. It is odd then that they often complain that they don't care for the Republican candidate and Democratic candidate they are stuck with in the general election.

If you skip the small-time elections, consider the points above and think hard about voting in all of the elections. If you already vote in all or most of the elections, give a nudge to your neighbor and remind him of the importance of even the unimportant elections.

Mishigoss

By Dave Oliphant



Understanding Climate Change

By Richard Oram

Homewood, Illinois, USA

Before soil bacteria and fungi evolved that could consume cellulose, a lot of dead plant material accumulated: forming what we use as fossil fuels: coal, oil, and natural gas. When fossil fuels burn, they combine with oxygen to form carbon dioxide gas, or CO₂.

Infrared light is a kind of radiation that we cannot see, but we can feel it as radiated heat. When visible sunlight warms the ground, the ground radiates infrared light out into space.

The atmosphere is composed mostly of oxygen gas and nitrogen gas, or O₂ and N₂, with just a trace of CO₂. The amount of CO₂ in the atmosphere has increased since people started burning fossil fuels, around 150 years ago. O₂ and N₂ are transparent to infrared light, but CO₂ is not, so changes in the atmosphere's transparency to infrared light depend mostly on how much CO₂ is in it.

Now that the burning of fossil fuels has nearly doubled the amount of CO₂ in the air, the Earth has gotten a little warmer, because the air traps more of the infrared light than before. The area of arctic sea ice in the northern summer has decreased.

In the northern parts of Asia, and North America, the tundra is melting. Tundra is a kind of land that has a layer of ice just under the topsoil. As the tundra melts, it releases methane, or CH₄. Methane is also a gas that traps infrared light.

Since we are not going to stop burning fossil fuels very soon, the Earth is going to warm enough to release a lot of arctic methane. The combination of extra CO₂ and methane in the atmosphere, and the reduction of reflective sea ice will cause the average temperature of the Earth to increase more than just a little.

Higher temperatures will cause changes in wind and rainfall patterns that are more complicated than simply warmer temperatures, so we now refer to "climate change" instead of "global warming"; but rising average temperature is still the basic issue.

Changes in rainfall patterns will certainly cause crop failures in some areas, and floods in others. Many people will suffer. We cannot tell who will be affected more and who less.

Scientists do not know how serious the problems will be. There is a range of predictions. Practically none of the predictions are of minor problems. Some predict occasional heat waves that kill vast numbers of people and destroy plant and animal life over wide areas. Some predictions are very much worse. We don't know. We will never know, because most of the changes will happen after we are gone.

We do not have the right to impose these problems on the people who come after us. The seriousness of the problems caused by climate change depend on how much valuable fossil fuel we leave in the ground.

We can produce energy in other ways and conserve as much as we can. This will require sacrifices and cause problems for us. We will feel better about our sacrifices if we take pride in our compassion for the people who come after us.

Climate change is not simple. We can be compassionate toward people who are uncomfortable with complexity, too. Some will never accept the moral imperative of reducing the problems caused by the burning of fossil carbon. They must be gently defeated in the democratic process.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

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



WTDO

PO Box 224

Warrenville, IL 60555-0224

info@winfielddems.org

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

Return Service Requested

The Importance of Getting Involved

By Tom Garippo

Committeeman, Milton Twp. Pct. 073

Everybody has an opinion on government whether it be local, county, state or national.

Individuals call on others to fix problems when they can be part of the solution themselves.

People need to communicate in order to solve every day problems. We need to reach out to a neighbor and exchange ideas. No two people have the exact same outlook.

As much as we may be apathetic to the world around us, we need elected officials. It is important that each and every one of us vote in every election and try to encourage others to do to the same. The only way to make a difference is to get involved.

No one person can do it on their own. Only volunteering in your community can make this happen. Be part of the solution not part of the problem.

We get nowhere by sitting idle. You need to empower yourself and others around you. Sitting idle will only make matters worse.

People call on government to fix everyday problems, when they can be part of the solution themselves. Elected officials do not have all of the answers. They need input from their constituents.

The process can be as simple as going door to door and talking to your neighbor or even picking up a telephone and asking that individual, "Are you happy with the way things are?"

The end result is that people are better informed and government is more responsive.

"I believe that America must sail toward the shores of liberty and justice for all. There is no end to that journey, only the next great voyage. We know the future will outlast all of us, but I believe that all of us will live on in the future we made."

Ted Kennedy

