



# Eighth Notes

News and Views of Eighth District Democrats & Independents

Issue 1 • March 2005

## Democracy Takes Hold in The Eighth Congressional District

*Supporters of Status Quo Surprised, Chagrined*

by Nancy Shepherdson, Chair, EDDI

Nearly five years ago, when EDDI was born, one party was in complete control of the Eighth Congressional District. Phil Crane had been “representing” the district since 1969. No Democrats held office – few bothered to run. And precinct committeepeople were awfully thin on the ground. Everything was fat and happy on the Republican side of the ballot.

We all know how things have changed since then. Two years ago, in 2002, Melissa Bean stunned Phil Crane by gaining 43 percent of the vote. And in 2004, she proved what few Republicans were prepared to

admit: Phil Crane could be beaten. Her victory was no squeaker, either. Melissa Bean became our new representative with an authoritative 52 percent of the vote.

Beyond even Melissa’s delightful victory, though, has been the resurgence of Democratic and progressive candidates throughout the District. Sharyn Elman’s near-victory against Bob Churchill in the 62nd District State Rep race was completely unexpected by the powers-that-be. She ran a well-organized campaign, raising an impressive amount of money, gaining widespread endorsements statewide and motivating an army of volunteers. In the end, she gained 47 percent of the vote and the desire to run again in 2006.

In fact, all of the state legislative positions in the Lake and McHenry portions of the 8th District were contested, with most of those candidates garnering significantly more than the baseline Democratic vote in their areas. All county board seats in Lake County were contested as well. Among county board candidates on the Democratic side in the 8th District, Terry Wilke had the best showing, coming within 30 votes of winning. He plans to run again in four years – and has solid strategies for winning.

At the same time, ongoing efforts to recruit precinct committeepeople (precinct captains in Cook County) have continued to bear fruit. Several of our townships are completely staffed now, including Schaumburg Township, headed by Rocco Terranova. EDDI’s Recruitment and Infrastructure Committee will be spending 2005 filling the remaining slots with enthusiastic people who will work for the election of Democrats and other progressive candidates. The committee will be providing training for new committeepeople as well. (Go to [www.lakedems.org/cmteemen.asp](http://www.lakedems.org/cmteemen.asp) for a list of Lake County committeepeople and township chairs.)

The upshot of all this? All sorts of Democrats are

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### Candidates Among Us

Michael Bond, school board, Woodland Elementary  
Gale Cohen-DeMarco, trustee, Lake Barrington  
Chuck Crowley, school board, Warren Township  
High School

Amy Edwards, trustee, Grayslake  
Larry Feigen, school board, Wauconda  
Ryan Finley, trustee, College of Lake County  
Bill Gentes, mayor, Round Lake (incumbent)  
Jeff Henkin, trustee, Grayslake Library board  
Rene Hernandez, trustee, Round Lake Beach  
Michael Jacobs, school board, Woodland Elementary  
Al Pino, trustee, North Barrington  
Steve Skinner, mayor, Round Lake  
Nick Wennerstrom, trustee, Gurnee Park District

All candidates have been endorsed by the Illinois Committee for Honest Government on our recommendation.

If you’d like to help any of these candidates in the last weeks of the campaign, please contact [illinoiseddi@hotmail.com](mailto:illinoiseddi@hotmail.com). Help them win! Good luck to all!

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# New website launched, New brochure available

**O**n March 15, the new EDDI website was launched. It can be found at our web address: [www.illinoiseddi.com](http://www.illinoiseddi.com). The content of our site has changed a great deal since the 2004 election – for a good reason. Gone is “Phil Crane Watch,” our regular catalog of our former Representative’s more outrageous moments. We are now trying to keep up with Rep. Bean’s coming and goings in the district. It’s amazing how hard it is to keep up with her. Keep up the good work Melissa.

The new web site design and logo were created by Sean McMahan, a very talented designer. Sean also created our new brochure, which will be available at our meetings beginning in March. Sean is a member of the

technology committee and has also taken over the production of our newsletter. He is our new committeeperson in Fremont 116 as well. A big thank you to Sean for taking on one of the most important jobs in our organization. Anyone who wants to help Sean is welcome to contact him at [s\\_mcmahan@sbcglobal.net](mailto:s_mcmahan@sbcglobal.net). Or contact the Technology committee at [larrygarascia@hotmail.com](mailto:larrygarascia@hotmail.com).



## Help EDDI Succeed!

**T**he election of 2004 made us all realize how much more there is to do as we head into 2006 and 2008. In fact, unlike past election cycles, there has really been no breather, no let up in our efforts to change the course the nation is on. Social Security is only one of the areas, of course, that show how misguided the current Administration is. We know the country needs us and it is amazing how many people are willing to give of their time and effort, even in what has traditionally been an “off” year.

EDDI has relaunched our committee leadership structure and monthly Strategy meetings. All interested Democratic and independent voters are invited to become involved on a committee and attend our monthly Strategy meeting. All township chairs and committeepople are also invited to attend.

### EDDI Committees

- Recruitment/Infrastructure: Recruit, train and motivate strong candidates and precinct committeepople.
- Finance: Financial planning and

fundraising – a vital function to get people elected.

- Marketing/Media: Promote EDDI to the public and the press; issues research and letters to the editor.
- Program: Arrange public programs and training for activists.
- Technology: Manage voter and volunteer databases, email and website.
- Administrative/Membership: Manage membership recruitment; help other committees work efficiently.
- Nominating: Recommend candidates for executive board elections.

If you want to get involved, please contact [illinoiseddi@hotmail.com](mailto:illinoiseddi@hotmail.com) or call 847-550-8631. We need your energy—the more we have, the closer we are to electing Democrats and Progressives across the board!

### EDDI Meetings

**Next Program meeting:** May 10 – A workshop on “Don’t Think of an Elephant,” a new book that shows how to change our way of talking about issues to make our positions the winning ones. Place: TBD.

**Strategy meetings:** 1st Wednesday of each month, Fremont Public Library, Mundelein

**Program meetings:** 2nd week of every other month (March, May, July, September, November)

**Talking Politics:** A free-form discussion of politics every other month (April, June, August, October)

Program meetings and Talking Politics will take place at various places throughout the 8th District to give everyone a chance to have a meeting nearby at some point. If you are not receiving notices about our meetings, please send your name and address to [illinoiseddi@hotmail.com](mailto:illinoiseddi@hotmail.com).

# ISSUE: SOCIAL SECURITY

## Facts Behind the Social Security 'Crisis'

by Tom Boyd

President Bush has recently embarked on a campaign to push his agenda regarding Social Security. He is traveling to various parts of the country in order to win support for his plan to introduce private accounts which he and his supporters would rather refer to as personal accounts. The President's reason for this campaign is his claim that the Social Security system is facing a crisis. Is there really a crisis? The short answer is NO—Absolutely not!

Let's first review the facts about Social Security. The present system is the result of FDR's proposals to Congress in the mid 1930s to protect older Americans from the ravages of poverty. In 1935, Mr. Roosevelt and Congress enacted the legislation, which contained separate provisions to achieve this result, one provision being the payroll tax-funded system of monthly benefit payments, and another which provided block grants to the states to protect the then existing elderly poor. The payroll tax system (FICA) is what survives today and it has always been used to pay current benefits, or otherwise known as a pay-as-you-go system.

There have been, over the many decades since then, many adjustments to the system, none of which could be described as major structural changes. For example, in 1983 the Congress and the Reagan administration enacted a provision recommended by the Greenspan commission that increased the payroll tax to create a trust fund in anticipation of the baby boomer generation's retirement. Since 1983, more money has gone into the system than has been paid out in benefits. This excess funding has been invested in government bonds that pay interest, thereby creating an interest accumulating trust fund.

Because of future demographics (more retirees drawing benefits and fewer workers per retiree), this imbalance is predicted to end in 2018. Are we broke then? Benefits reduced? No, because of the trust fund. Remember? The trust fund is predicted to help pay (along with the payroll tax) full benefits all the way through 2042 (as computed by the Social Security Administration). The Congressional

Budget Office is predicting the trust fund won't be exhausted until 2052. Even when the trust fund is exhausted, the existing payroll tax will be able to pay anywhere from 73% to 82% of benefits.

What does Bush want to do to solve this so-called "crisis"? He wants to create individual private accounts for future recipients by diverting as much as one-third of the worker's FICA tax into them, to be invested in various equity funds. The major problem with this is that one-third of the funding of the current benefit obligations as well as the trust fund would immediately disappear into these private accounts. The Bush administration's answer to this lack of cash would be to just borrow the money (trillions according to Vice President Cheney). So the Social Security funding "crisis" will be made worse by actions of the Bush administration.

Remember the 2018 date that Bush mentioned being the first warning of the impending "crisis" (more money going out than coming in)? Well, the date that would happen under Bush's plan is the very day the Bush plan actually went into effect. When this was pointed out, the Bush administration admitted that their privatization plan won't solve the "crisis." One might be tempted to say that Dr. Bush has a cure for the disease that his patient doesn't really have now but might have in either 2042 or 2052, and admits that his cure will immediately give the patient something unhealthy, but still insists that it's a wonderful cure.

*First in a series*

*Is there really a crisis? The short answer is NO—Absolutely not!*

### Calling All Writers

If you have a burning issue you want to write about, or if you'd like to contribute news to the EDDI Newsletter, contact Tom Boyd at [tboyd08@comcast.net](mailto:tboyd08@comcast.net).



*Brett Smiley (above) and Brian Herman (above right) discuss the winning tactics behind Melissa Bean's 2004 election campaign at the January EDDI meeting. Andra Medea (right), author of "Conflict Unraveled" discusses verbal tactics employed by extremists at EDDI's March meeting. Please see next month's EDDI newsletter for more information on Medea's discussion.*



## Democracy Takes Hold

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beginning to believe that we can be elected to public office. Eighty-seven Democratic voters are running for municipal and township offices in the Lake County portion of the 8th District alone. That includes 17 of our EDDI group who are candidates. (See sidebar.) And two people have already come forward to run for state representative against Ed Sullivan, Jr. (Neither of whom are me.) Maybe we'll even get some primaries this time. Melissa Bean had a primary in 2004 and it helped attract both attention and money to the race. Primaries are both a symbol and source of strength.

I have told many people that I got involved in politics in the 8th District because, when I moved here six years ago, there was only one party to vote for. And it wasn't the Democrats. We should congratulate ourselves for bringing democracy to the 8th District in a big way. It is unlikely that things will ever be the same again around here. Thank goodness.



**Eighth  
District  
Democrats  
& Independents**

Responsive & Responsible  
Government in Illinois

[www.illinoiseddi.com](http://www.illinoiseddi.com)

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