



# Political Papers

SEPTEMBER 2008

## CALENDAR

Sept 26, 2008 - House  
Target Adjournment

Nov 4, 2008 - Election

Jan 3, 2009 - Beginning of  
111th Congress

Jan 20, 2009 - Inauguration

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## ICGA Travels to Washington DC For YOU!

Over the past year, the ICGA Board of Directors has made several trips to Washington, DC. The purpose of these trips is to talk about upcoming issues and act as a resource for our Illinois Congressional Delegation.

Most recently, food and fuel has been on the minds of our elected officials. ICGA Board Members were able to provide our delegation with talking points and information proving that corn played a minimal role to skyrocketing food prices.

We have also discussed needed appropriations for the Water Resources Development Act and have thanked them for their vote to authorize the funding for lock upgrades in the first place. The final authorization vote was a



**ICGA thanked our Illinois delegation for passage of the Water Resources Development Act and the 2008 Farm Bill. Pictured left to right: Garry Niemeyer, Mark Degler, Congressman John Shimkus, and Andy Goleman.**

historical occasion; it was only the 107th presidential veto override in our nation's history!

Additionally, the board has worked with elected officials to  
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## PAC Fundraiser Exceeds Expectations!

The Illinois Corn Growers Association Political Action Committee completed our first fundraiser event on August 19 and ended the evening with an additional \$9000 to spend during the coming election and next year!

Raffle winners were Jeff Scates, Shawneetown, who won a \$1000

gift certificate for GSI; Steve Pigg, Bushnell, who won five bags of Pioneer seed corn; and Yvonne Fitchhorn who won a \$1000 gift certificate to Sloan's Express.

Fitchhorn then donated her winnings back to the PAC and the Sloan's Express gift was auctioned to Ken Greene, Durand,

resulting in an addition \$1000 cash donation to the PAC!

The evening also featured a live auction where Bears tickets for this fall and a long weekend at Martin Barbre's Kentucky home were sold.

In addition to raising extra  
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# Political Action Committee 101



Bill Christ hosted a fundraiser for Aaron Schock on August 29.

PACs have become a legitimate and important part of the political landscape. Donating to a candidate or elected official sends a signal that you want that individual in office. Because you have shown support, the candidate or official is therefore more likely to listen to your point of view or vote the way that you would like.

The ICGA PAC is set up to only match member contributions. This allows us to respond to member requests.

As an example, if there is an election for a federal office in your area and you would be willing to give \$200 to that candidate and host a formal event, the ICGA PAC would match your contribution and the contributions of those attending, thus doubling your support for the candidate, creating a personal relationship between you and the candidate, and encouraging your political involvement.

In this way, ICGA becomes more effective. When we are

looking for a key vote, if your candidate (now in Congress) can vote in our favor, ICGA and YOU have access to that Congressman and can express our desires and thoughts on the vote.

Your contribution to the ICGA PAC really does make a difference in how effective your organization can be for you on a legislative level. That PAC constantly creates relationships that help us gain votes in Washington, DC.

*“From my perspective, a great event. Great discussion, great people, great time.”*

*Pat O’Brien,  
Congressman Phil Hare staff*

*Congressman Phil Hare (far right) and Rob Elliott (middle) visit with other contributors at Elliott’s farm.*



## Candidate Events Held Statewide

The PAC has been more active than ever during this 2008 election season. Several federal offices are up for election and the PAC has been involved in each of the races.

Remember, the ICGA PAC responds to member interest when determining which candidates to support. If we have membership that wish to contribute on both sides of a race, ICGA PAC will match those contributions.

Colleen Callahan (D) and Aaron Schock (R) are vying for the 18th Congressional District. Bill Christ of Metamora hosted an event at his home for Schock on August 29 and John Kuhfuss of Mackinaw hosted an event at his farm for Callahan on September 9.

Illinois Senator Debbie Halvorson, running for

Jerry Weller’s empty seat in the 11th Congressional District was present at an event on September 9 hosted by Jim Robbins at his farm in Peotone.

Jim Rapp hosted an event for Marty Ozinga, running against Halvorson in the 11th District, on September 17 in Princeton.

All events have been well attended and much appreciated by the candidates.

Additionally, the PAC has been active with our current Congressional Delegation as well. On August 13th, Rob Elliott hosted an event for Phil Hare at his farm in Cameron. Feedback from the event was very positive, with all contributors



**Left to Right: John Kuhfuss, Ross Pauli, Colleen Callahan, and Kent Kleinschmidt discuss the upcoming harvest and predictions for 2008 yields.**

feeling that they developed a good communication with the Congressman.

If you are interested in scheduling an event for your Congressman, please let us know. The minimum requirement for an event is five ICGA members that are willing to give \$200 or more. ICGA PAC will then match total member contributions up to \$2000.

# PAC Fundraiser Success (cont.)

money for our association PAC, current and former board members were getting to know each other, renewing friendships, and celebrating the progress that ICGA has made to the corn industry in Illinois.

Thanks to all who participated and joined us for this exciting event!



**PAC Chairman Steve Ruh congratulates District 15 Director Jeff Scates on winning a \$1000 GSI gift certificate from the PAC raffle held on August 19, 2008.**

**“The most likely movement toward a different future stateside will occur with the selection of a new President of the Senate.”**

## For Illinois: Who - and What - Might Change?

Focusing on the who issue first, shows us little change in the make-up and membership of the Illinois General Assembly.

Of Illinois 59 current senate members, 19 are not facing reelection this year, 19 others have no opponents on the ballot and all but three of the remaining 21 are currently ahead in their reelection efforts.

A glance at the 118 current house membership shows 57 incumbents have no opponent, leaving them with a free ride to reelection and as many as 41 of the remaining 61 districts appearing to offer minimal probability of change.

Control of either chamber is unlikely to switch, although there could be a shift in numbers within the ranks of either party.

Federally, unlike the lineup for statehouse races, only one of our 19 congressional incumbents, Congressman Phil Hare (D – 17th) has

an unopposed ride to reelection. Of the remaining 18 races, eleven are considered ‘safe’ seats for the incumbents despite opposing candidates on the ballot – leaving seven races to watch. At least two of this grouping could see a change of party representation.

The ‘watch’ category of contests includes incumbents Peter Roskam (R-6th), Melissa Bean (D-8th), Mark Kirk (R-10th) and Judy Biggert (R-13th), all of whom are favored at this time to return to Washington DC for another term. As is Bill Foster (D-11th) who previously won a special election to replace retiring former GOP Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert. Foster is facing perennial GOP hopeful Jim Oberweiss.

Changes in party representation are possible in the cases of retiring Illinois Congressman Jerry Weller (R-11th), where political demographics indicate potential shifts to

democrat Debbie Halvorson (Illinois Senate Majority Leader ) over GOP challenger Martin Ozinga and, in the race to succeed Ray LaHood (R-18th), where GOP’s Aaron Schock (currently serving in the Illinois House) is presently favored over democratic challenger Colleen Callahan.

As far as what might change – there are numerous possibilities.

The most likely movement toward a different future stateside will occur with the selection of a new President of the Senate. Jones has been the primary ally of Democratic Governor Rod Blagojevich who has spent the bulk of his recent years in a combative state with the general assembly.

And, since most members of both chambers are tired of the ongoing gridlock, it is highly

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**State Senator John Sullivan and Garry Niemeyer, Auburn, IL**

## Illinois Corn Growers Association

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## ICGA in DC (cont.)

ensure that the Renewable Fuels Standard remained intact. After a request from Texas Governor Rick Perry, we had a lot of work to do, educating Congress that waiving the RFS would be counter productive.

It is your PAC dollars given to elected officials that gain us access to tell this story!

Of course, after the historic passage of the WRDA bill and finally getting a Farm Bill 2008 passed, we have also spent a lot of time thanking our Congressmen and Senators. During election time, it is good to take an opportunity to thank them, express our grati-

tude that they have listened to what is best for Illinois farmers, and continue to provide educational tools so that they might always back up the decisions they have made.



**President Art Bunting and Senator Durbin, along with other members of the board, discuss flooding concerns in March 2008.**

## Change (cont.)

unlikely the next senate leader will be anyone with strong attachments to Gov. Blagojevich. This will open the flow of legislative productivity (which, in itself could be argumentatively good or bad). But, it would be a major change.

And, of course, one can never underestimate the power of the Presidency - especially if the next President is from our state.

History has shown greater reception favoring programs, incentives and spending flows to those states from where the sitting President resides, meaning potentially greater impact from energy, environmental, transportation, social and agricultural sectors and representatives.

Still, change is in the eye of the beholder and requires action on the part of the voter!