



# *The Democratic Voice*

*Securing a Future for all Kansas Families*

**Newsletter for Sedgwick County Democrats– April, May, and June 2005**

## **BATTLE FLAG**

**Kelly W. Johnston, Chair**

“Million Dollar Baby” won the Oscar recently for Best Picture, and it was a well deserved approbation. Hillary Swank and Morgan Freeman gave superb acting performances, and Clint Eastwood displayed a sterling talent as the director. But “Baby” did not deserve the criticism it has received for supposedly advocating euthanasia.

Instead, “Baby” is about self-determination. It is about ordinary people taking charge of their lives, and about how our lives and our successes can be enriched and empowered by love. Hillary Swank shows up at Clint Eastwood’s boxing gym, and wants him to train her to be a boxer. He dismisses her as unworthy of his attention because she is a woman, then begins to give her some tips out of exasperation, and finally notices her talent and work ethic. She quickly becomes successful as a pro.

Later in the movie, Hillary Swank is paralyzed in a boxing accident. She eventually tells Clint Eastwood that she doesn’t want to live immobile for the rest of her life, and asks Eastwood to help her die. Eastwood agonizes, but eventually gives in because he knows she can’t make it happen herself, though she desperately tries. Eastwood also complies because he loves her. The artists who created “Baby” were showing us that Hillary Swank took control of her death just as she had taken control of her life.

As Democrats, we appreciate the values of self-reliance, working hard for a just reward, and helping those we love strive for high goals. We don’t want hand-outs, but we want the opportunity to play in the game and give it our all. We wish to determine the course of our lives without interference from meddling outsiders, and government red tape. Some Republicans feel the same way, but many others only pay lip service to these values, like those in control of Congress and the White House.

In the case of Terri Schiavo, Congressional Republicans and President Bush have shown their true colors. They have proven themselves to be hypocrites, and exploitative of the helpless. Twenty judges or appellate authorities have agreed that Terri Schiavo had advised her husband that she would never wish to live in a vegetative state, and would wish to be allowed to die. For fourteen years, Mr. Schiavo has tried to help his wife determine her own destiny without taking the law into his own hands.

Congressional Republicans and President Bush have seized upon this personal family tragedy for political purposes. They are exploiting Terri Schiavo, as evidenced by a one-page, unsigned memo circulated among Senate Republicans that characterized the Schiavo situation as “a great political issue” that had the potential to energize their “pro-life base.” As soon as this memo was leaked,

Senate Republicans began disavowing any connection to it. They are ashamed to admit the truth. What else is new? A new poll indicates that 70% of Americans believe that Congress has no place at the bedside of Terri Schiavo. I hope that 70% of Americans also understand that Congressional Republicans have no true empathy for this family.

The exploitation of this family by Congressional Republicans and President Bush is hypocritical in several ways. It is hypocritical because of their pretended allegiance to the axiom that “less government is better government”. How many times have we heard that refrain? We heard that refrain in connection with deregulation of the savings and loan industry, deregulation of the commercial airline industry, and deregulation of the energy production industry. Huge debacles followed each of these Republican-sponsored efforts. President Bush specifically is a hypocrite because, while Governor of Texas he signed the Advance Directives Act of 1999, which gave hospitals the right to remove life support in cases where there is no possibility of revival, and when the family cannot pay, no matter what the families’ wishes are in the matter. What pray tell has changed his mind since then? Is President Bush trying to give Florida Governor Jeb Bush a launching pad with the irreligious right for a 2008 presidential campaign?

Congressional Republicans and President Bush are hypocritical also because they are not displaying the loyalty to family values that they so often parade when campaigning. I cannot think of a more agonizing decision for a family than whether to withdraw life support. I accept that Terri Schiavo’s parents sincerely do not want to see their daughter die, but courts time and again have ruled that Terri Schiavo’s husband is the proper person to make these decisions, and to serve as guardian. In passing the legislation giving federal courts jurisdiction over this controversy, Congress has wantonly intruded in this family dispute and decision, has trampled on their privacy rights, and has aggravated their emotional distress. It is also hypocritical how fast neo-conservatives run to a courtroom with their political causes when they desire a court-ordered solution to a problem they can’t solve with strong-arm political tactics.

What are the limits to this arrogance of power? Will federal legislation be offered that will nullify the decisions of families and guardians to allow a doctor to write a DNR order? Will Congress intervene in the future in cases where not every family member agrees on how the guardian appointed in a Living Will chooses to make health care decisions? The problem is that the neo-conservative wing of the Republican party controls the U.S. Senate, the U.S. House of Representatives, and the White House. Absolute power corrupts absolutely.

## MONTHLY DEMOCRATIC LUNCHEONS FOR APRIL, MAY, AND JUNE

If you are interested in getting to know other Democrats and learning more about relevant political issues, join us on the last Friday of every month for our Ambassador's Club Democratic Luncheons. We have three exciting programs planned in the coming months.

**Rev. Dr. Samuel Muyskens**  
*Homelessness in Wichita*  
**Friday, April 29th @ 11:45 a.m.**

**Speaker and Program Details TBA**  
**Friday, May 27th @ 11:45 a.m.**

**Speaker and Program Details TBA**  
**Friday, June 24th @ 11:45 a.m.**

*Italian Garden Restaurant, 3920 W. Douglas, Wichita.*  
*Please note: A buffet is available for \$10.*  
*Price includes beverage and tip.*



### Democrats On-line

The Sedgwick County Democratic Party has a new website under construction. This will be a valuable tool of communication in the coming campaign season. We intend to post important information and regularly update the content. All Democrats are encouraged to use this resource. The web address is [www.sedgwickcountymocrats.com](http://www.sedgwickcountymocrats.com).

The local party also sends out regular updates about events, volunteer opportunities, and campaign activities to our e-mail list. If you are not receiving e-mails from us and would like to be more informed about what Democrats are doing locally, please e-mail Jason with your name and e-mail address—[scdphq@hotmail.com](mailto:scdphq@hotmail.com).



## Legislative Recess Reception Fundraiser

The Sedgwick County Democratic Party's annual Legislative Recess Reception

Fundraiser will be held on **Saturday, April 23** from 5:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. at the home of Jim and Mary Ann Lawing. Everyone is invited to join us for an evening of good food and fun. If you have never attended a fundraiser for the Democratic Party, this is a great time to start! Area legislators will be giving an update on activities and legislation that have come up during the session in Topeka. Attendees will also be able to visit with their Democratic lawmakers and share their thoughts and concerns. This event is a critical part of the local party's fundraising. Without generous donations from individuals, the party can not continue its operations. The cost to attend is **\$25** per person. *If you are unable to join us, please consider sending us a donation-P.O. Box 1736 Wichita, KS 67201.*

### Democratic Women's Club to Feature Author Robert Beattie

Wichita author Robert Beattie will be the featured speaker at the April 14 meeting of The Sedgwick County Federation of Democratic Women's Clubs. Beattie will be talking about his recently published and fast selling book, *Nightmare in Wichita: The Hunt for the BTK Strangler*. Books will be available for purchase and attendees will have a chance to get their copies autographed.

The meeting will start at 6:00 p.m. and will be held at West Side United Methodist Church in Wichita. The cost for the dinner is \$10 per person. If you would like to make a reservation, please call Democratic Headquarters at 262-7534. Everyone is welcomed and encouraged to attend!



Thank you for your generous financial contributions!

\* Sedgwick County Democratic Party Executive Committee Members

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## Phill Kline an Embarrassment to Kansas

*By: Charles Pearson*

When it comes to disrespect for the Constitution, it's hard to beat Phill Kline.

Our attorney general is so consumed by his anti-abortion zealotry that he is trying to seize the medical records of about 90 women and girls in the state's two abortion clinics in the hope that his fishing expedition will catch some illegal operations.

Never mind the right to privacy, or, for that matter, doctor-patient confidentiality. To Kline and his fanatical kind, such considerations are of no importance in their reckless pursuit of their political ambitions. If he can achieve his obvious goal of shutting down the state's two abortion clinics, he thinks that will give him a leg up on his climb toward the governor's office. Apparently, it is this vaulting ambition that has led him into an act that any real lawyer must know is inappropriate.

His intermediate aim seems to be to frighten away women who are seeking legal abortions and intimidate doctors who perform those operations. Such an outcome doubtless would delight the Christian right that is Kline's constituency, however much it might appall the rest of us, including the Remnant Republicans who are all that is left of the party that

once claimed moderation as its by-word.

It's not that any of this is unexpected. Kline has always been this way. He's a lawyer who surrendered his license to practice. He's an attorney with no appreciable courtroom experience who had the gall to expect the people of Kansas to elect him to the post of chief law-enforcement official. Unfortunately the people obliged, due mostly to the unflagging efforts of Kline's far-right supporters, who salivate at the prospect of suppressing anyone who disagrees with them. Kline is not disappointing them.

He used his position to elbow his way into the BTK press conference, grabbing as much press as he could, talking longer than any of the people who actually had something to do with the arrest, and delivering a wholly uncalled for sermon. It will be hard enough to get a jury in so exhaustively publicized a case without the state's chief law enforcement official muddying the water in so gratuitous a way.

The fact is, Phill Kline is a further embarrassment to a state whose image already has suffered much at the hands of his mossback partisans. We're stuck with him until his term expires, and can do little now except try to control the damage. But all Kansans who respect the law and love the Constitution should resolve to remove him from public office at the next election.

**DEMOCRATIC EVENTS IN SEDGWICK COUNTY – April, May and June 2005**

DATE	EVENT	TIME	PLACE	CONTACT
April 25 May 23 June 27 (Fourth Monday)	<b>South Sedgwick County Democratic Club</b>	6:00 PM – dinner 7:00 PM – meeting	Mike’s Steakhouse 2131 S. Broadway , Wichita	Bette McCart –684-5538
April 14 May 12 June 9 (Second Thursday)	<b>Sedgwick County Federation of Women’s Democratic Clubs</b>	6:00 PM	West Side United Methodist Church 1313 Lydia, Wichita <i>(2 blocks north of Pawness &amp; Seneca intersection, 1 block west off of Seneca)</i>	Diane Britton– 942-5896 <b>(Reservations required)</b>
April 29 May 27 June 24 (Last Friday of the Month)	<b>Democratic Ambassador’s Club Monthly Luncheon</b>	11:45 AM-1:00 PM	Italian Garden Restaurant West 3920 W. Douglas, Wichita	Jason Dilts– 262-7534 scdphq@hotmail.com <b>(Reservations requested)</b>
April 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 May 7, 14, 21, 28 June 4, 11, 18 ,25 (Every Saturday)	<b>Saturday Morning Breakfast with Democrats</b>	9:00 AM	Emilia’s Restaurant 784 N. West Street, Wichita	Jason Dilts –262-7534 scdphq@hotmail.com
May 20 (Third Friday)	<b>Democratic Lawyer’s Luncheon</b>	12:00 NOON	Italian Garden Restaurant West 3920 W. Douglas, Wichita	Jason Dilts– 262-7534 scdphq@hotmail.com <b>(Reservations requested)</b>
April 16 May 21 June 18	<b>Sedgwick County Progressive Caucus Meeting</b>	1:00 PM	Peace & Social Justice Center of South Central Kansas 1407 N. Topeka, Wichita	David Cook– 708-2702 davidcookc21@sbcglobal.net
April 9 (Saturday)	<b>Kansas Federation of Democratic Women’s Club 4th District. Convention</b>	8:30 AM	First United Methodist Church 801 N. Main, Newton	Barbara Stout– 316-283-2150 stoutbar@wmconnect.com
April 23 (Saturday)	<b>Legislative Recess Reception Fundraiser</b>	5:00 PM-8:00 PM	The Hone of Jim and Mary Ann Lawing 115 N. Crestway, Wichita	Jason Dilts– 262-7534 scdphq@hotmail.com <b>(Reservations requested)</b>
June 1-5 (Wednesday-Sunday)	<b>The National Federation of Democratic Women 2005 Annual Convention</b>	TBA	Hilton Garden Inn 520 Minnesota Avenue Kansas City, KS	Helen Knetzer– 612-9709 helenknetzer@sbcglobal.net

**Demogem:** Buddhists are reminded “*Treat not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful*” Udana-Varga 5.18

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**LEGISLATIVE RECESS RECEPTION FUNDRAISER-  
SATURDAY, APRIL 23rd  
INVITATION ENCLOSED!!**