On my mind this month...

Last night I dreamed that a mama grizzly went on a rampage and attacked a rather large pink elephant. After a night of feasting, Mama set out looking for a donkey. The donkey was backed into a corner by the roaring, gun-toting grizzly. It looked as if the donkey was a goner until a group of JAC members strode in and chased off the grizzly.

When I woke up in the wee hours, I knew what my unconscious was trying to tell me. No matter how upset we are with politics and the slow pace of change, no matter how we want to sit out this election and catch up on our novels, no matter how much we do not want to write another political check, we have to.

This year even entrenched incumbents are in trouble. An angry out-of-work voter, with no more unemployment benefits, is not a reasoning voter. She forgets the past and blames the present on whoever is currently in office. Pretty soon the sound bytes begin to make sense and she votes against her own interests.

Many of our JAC friends are in deep trouble. Some like Gabby Giffords and Patty Murray successfully defeated antiabortion foes on health care; others like Loretta Sanchez fought ed antiabortion foes on health care; Buzzhardt, the two leaders have agreed to a one-year time table to discuss the entire range of issues. This is the first direct negotiations have taken place in 20 months.

The United States- Israel relationship has expanded over Obama’s first term, through increased military cooperation. The Wall Street Journal’s Charles Levinson recently wrote an in-depth analysis of this intensified partnership. “This month, about 200 US Marines joined a battalion of Israeli soldiers for an all night march through the Negev desert, the culmination of three weeks of joint drills.” In October, more than 1,000 US soldiers conducted a missile defense exercise when Turkey pulled out of planned exercises following the flotilla episode. Two joint US-Israel committees have become strengthened with the appointment of senior US officials. President Obama has worked furiously for the tougher Iranian sanctions through the UN and especially here in the US.

A senior US official was quoted as saying, “President Barack Obama felt the increased military support is necessary to assure Israel’s security against mounting regional threats, including Iran and its allies; Syria, Hamas and Hezbollah.”

For the first time in a decade, American military leaders, including the chairman of the joint chiefs, Adm. Mike Mullen visited Israel 4 separate times. The Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak has come to Wash DC more than other Israeli defense minis
The leader of Reclaiming Oklahoma for Christ, Pastor Paul Blair, said he was within his constitutional rights when he sent out an e-mail titled “RALLY FOR SALLY” for Republican st. Legislator Sally Kern. “We haven’t done anything, we haven’t endorsed, we didn’t underwrite. We did nothing. It was just an information piece.” In 2008, Blair told his congregation that he would be voting for John McCain. “The first amendment guarantees my right as a pastor to proclaim truth in here and not have IRS has not taken action against Blair’s church. Blair says if the IRS were to take away the church’s tax exempt status, he would “continue to preach harder and harder.” Americans United for the Separation of Church and State feels Blair stepped over the line in the ‘08 Presidential race and has done so again.

There is a duel of billboards in western North Carolina. An atheist group has erected six billboards with the phrase “One Nation Indivisible,” leaving the words “Under God,” from the Pledge of Allegiance. A church group was outraged and responded by putting up a dozen billboards featuring the phrase “One Nation Under God.” The billboards went up just before the July 4 weekend in Asheville and five other North Carolina cities along the Interstate 40 and Interstate 85 corridors. Rev. Ralph Sexton, Jr., pastor of the Trinity Baptist Church in Asheville says he is offended by the “One Nation Indivisible” sign, “We were established as a Christian nation, so don’t try to rewrite history and sanitize it to write out God.” Jennifer Lovejoy, a retired Army noncommissioned officer and an atheist, says the Constitution bans prayer in public schools and the GOP has used that to drive up enthusiasm of their conservative base. He looks like a future Democratic star that we can’t afford to lose.

Steve Kagen (WI-08) - Steve Kagen was a longshot winner in ‘06 and again in ‘08. He represents a northern Wisconsin district that favors Republicans. Wisconsin’s primary is not until September 14, so Kagen doesn’t know who is opponent will be. None of the four candidates is pro-choice and all talk about repealing health care reform.