This story originnaly appeared in the New York Times on April 15, 2010.

When Mike Quigley returned to the United States House of Representatives from the Easter recess on Tuesday, he was armed with a couple of atypical vacation insights from his Congressional district: how to replace a 100-year-old water main and how to cook great French fries without a timer.

"Entertainment Tonight" and Politico.com please say hello to Mike Quigley, star of a self-produced "Undercover (sort of) Congressman." It's a nontelevised "reality show" in which a protagonist seeks to actually learn something, not merely avoid embarrassment and gain celebrity.

So while some constituents sought a spring-break tan, and too many others simply looked for work, Mr. Quigley, a Democrat, helped the City of Chicago lay a water main in Lakeview; went fishing for Asian carp with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources; hung out with Melrose Park police officers and River Grove firefighters; worked a counter at Connie's Beef in Elmwood Park; assisted a postal carrier in Roscoe Village; dressed a Chicago-style hot dog at a Superdawg at Devon and Milwaukee Avenues; and had a characteristically awful Chicago Public Schools lunch at my kindergartner's North Side elementary school.