

Democratic Party of Door County

December, 2007 Newsletter

Executive Board

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Bill Perloff, Vice-Chair
Allin Walker, Secretary
John Franz, Treasurer
Ben Meyer, Past Chair
Jim Adams
Rod Bohn
Laurel Brooks
Warren Demmin
Phil Hansotia
Mary Horn
Dave Murphy

Committees:

Communication:

Jim Adams, Board liaison
Phil Hansotia, Board liaison
Bill Perloff, Board liaison
Lisa Van Laanen

Elections:

Chuck Lauter, Chair
Pat Miller
Nancy Skadden

Events:

Challoner Brown, Chair
Eileen Andera, Cty Fair Chair
Rod Bohn, Program Board liaison
Laurel Brooks, Social Events Board liaison
Norma Jean Ek
Dave Murphy, Social Events Board liaison

Membership:

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Allin Walker, Board liaison
Chris Wendler

Issues, Resolutions, Survey:

Phil Hansotia, Board liaison

Budget and Fundraising:

Barb Perloff, Chair
John Franz, Board liaison

Pie Party with Kagen a Huge Success

Democrats flocked to Bjorklunden on Sunday, December 6th to meet, eat pie and hear the latest from Washington from 8th CD Congressman Steve Kagen. Nearly 50 members and friends of the DPDC enjoyed a great selection of pies baked by members of the Executive Board, as they heard about progress in our County Party and the 8th CD Democratic Party from speakers preceding Rep. Kagen's talk.



Before the speeches, there was spirited discussion among the attendees, as shown in the upper photo, and plenty of opportunity to chat with Dr. Kagen.

Ben Meyer, Sturgeon Bay Alderman and former DPDC Chair gave a brief history of Bjorklunden, the beautiful meeting center hosting our event.



Dr. Kagen greeting Al and Cynthia Johnson

Bill Perloff described the DPDC membership campaign now underway, with 40 new members joining from our initial efforts.

DPDC Chair, Estella Lauter, spoke about the vitality of our County Party and how important it is to be involved in the upcoming election.

Steve Thiede, Chair of the 8th Congressional District Democratic Party, offered his time, energy and assistance to local Parties, with a goal of making the 8th CD a much more active resource than in the past.



Estella Lauter

Dr. Kagen gave a sobering presentation of the national political scene. Democrats have succeeded in raising the minimum wage, but many of the progressive bills passed in the House of Representatives have been thwarted by presidential vetoes (see the article on SCHIP on page 4) or senators, who can prevent a bill being brought to the floor. Republican senator Coburn is currently holding up 100 bills!



Steve Thiede

Kagen pointed out that the many committee hearings underway are revealing much malfeasance, and have even resulted in underperforming "no bid" contractors returning money to the government.

Further progress on a progressive agenda must await electing a president and expanding our majorities in the Congress in what may be the most important election of our lifetime in '08.

Taking back the WI Assembly by gaining three seats is also really important to progress on key issues. Dr. Kagen introduced Chris Baeb from Kewaunee, candidate for the 1st Assembly district seat, with a goal of making it one of the three.



Dr. Kagen and Chris Baeb

Message from the Chair:**A Note of Thanks and Invitation**

I want to thank each of you who attended a meeting of the Democratic Party of Door County in 2007, gave us a thumbs up in a parade, visited our booth at the County Fair, wrote a letter to the editor embracing Democratic positions or values, talked with a Republican about the need for good government to solve widespread problems like pollution, complained only about really unfair taxes, and/or sent money to Democratic legislators. These are all good Democratic actions, and there are many others that are relatively invisible but are still part of the Democratic effort to restore the sense that we are more than individuals acting independently; instead, "we all live downstream," so to speak. We are connected to each other in ways we have only begun to recognize, and in ways our government must begin to acknowledge.



**Estella Lauter,
DPDC Chair**

I particularly want to thank the members of the Executive Board and the Committees who have worked so hard all year to create a strong and effective organization. Most Board members have attended 36 meetings in addition to working behind the scenes on programs and events. The 11 elected members of the Board (Ann Johnson resigned when she moved to Illinois this fall) and our union liaison along with three committee chairs and a few

others totaling about 20 people have been the backbone of the Party. That is about 10% of our end-of-year membership count. Another 80 or so people have come to at least one event, and about 40 people will soon hold the title of ward or neighborhood leader. This is not bad for an off-election year. Some county parties only have a total of 30 members! But those 20 members who have done yeoman's service this year will need more support in 2008! For everyone's health and well-being, we must make sure that Steve Kagen is re-elected, and that the WI Assembly has a Democratic majority (we gained 8 seats in 2006, but we need 3 more).

So this is an invitation to the members who have not made the Party a high priority this year to *do more* in 2008. It doesn't have to be a lot more! Just make yourselves more visible. You might arrange a program, hand out brochures in a parade, take a turn at the County Fair booth, distribute literature for the candidate of your choice, talk your Democratic neighbors into running for office, attend a public hearing on health care or funding education and speak out as a Democrat, hold an event in your ward for a candidate, and attend more than one of our four fundraisers in February, May, August and October.

Watch the newsletter for opportunities to make a difference in 2008! We look forward to working with you for a government that is really *by, for* and *of* the people.

Upcoming Events and Announcements

January Membership Meeting, Thursday, January 24, 2008, 7:00 PM, Sturgeon Bay Library, basement meeting room. See article in adjacent column. The Executive Board will meet at 5:30.

8th CD County Chairs meeting, Sunday, January 27, 2008. Time and location TBA.

February Membership Meeting, Sunday, February 17, 2008, 7:00 PM, place TBA, Presidential Primary Mock Debate Fundraiser. Candidate "representatives" will participate on behalf of each of the candidates still competing at that time. **Note change in date from 4th Thurs.**

Democratic Primary Election, Tuesday, February 19, 2008. Be sure to vote.

March Membership Meeting, Thursday March 27, 2008, 7:00 PM, Nasewaupsee Town Hall, Democratic Convention Delegate training and vote on resolutions to be submitted to 8th CD.

January Meeting to Address Need for Change in School Funding System

The January membership meeting will feature a presentation by Thomas Beebe of the Institute for Wisconsin's Future (IWF) about the initiative to change the current school funding system.

Recognizing that school funding in Wisconsin is in crisis, and produces great disparities in the adequacy of school funding among districts, IWF and the Wisconsin Alliance for Excellent Schools (WAES) have promoted school funding reform based on four core principles: sufficient resources are essential; resources should be linked to high standards; funding should come from statewide sources; control of schools must remain local.

Mr. Beebe will discuss issues around school funding reform, and Wisconsin Senate Joint Resolution 27 which promotes the core principles of their program.

In Year-End Report, County Chair Lauter asks: "How are We Doing?"

Article VI of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin Constitution states the goals for county parties, and each year at this time, we give an account to our membership of what we have accomplished. If there is something you would like us to do or do better, this is an open invitation to you to step up to the plate!

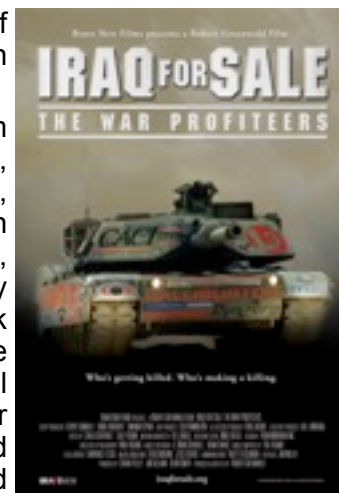
To develop the fullest possible membership in the county. Thanks to Membership Chair Bill Perloff's program for contacting former members and non-members, our numbers are significantly ahead of last year at this time. In the summer, the Board held coffees for former members. This fall, we have invited key members in each of our 39 wards to contact 10-20 non-members who may be interested in joining the Party. These ward leaders call potential members to ask if they are willing to receive information about the Party; if so, they send a packet that includes an invitation to join, two brochures, a newsletter, and a membership card. At the end of 2006, our list of members included 225 names of whom 41 had joined or renewed for 2007; this December, 85 of our 218 members have joined or renewed for 2008 so far. Our goal is to double our current membership during the next six months.

To hold regularly scheduled meetings. The Party met every month on the fourth Thursday night except November and December when the week was changed because of the holidays. Meetings alternated among the Sturgeon Bay Library and the VFW in Sturgeon Bay, the Nasewaupée Town Hall in Southern Door, and four locations in Northern Door--the Sister Bay Bowl, Bjorklundén, Woodwalk Gallery, and the Bertschinger Center in Egg Harbor. Programs and speakers or discussion leaders included:

- Ann Hippenstiel, The Natural Step; Resolution of Impeachment
- Film: The Ground Truth (on the Iraq War); Resolution in Support of Sen. Feingold's Iraq Redeployment Act of 2007
- Resolutions for the 8th CD Convention
- WI Sen. Jon Erpenbach on Health Care legislation in WI
- Roger Tepe, Door County Social Services Director
- John Hippenstiel, Wind Energy in Door County
- Assembly Rep, Tom Nelson from Kaukauna, Annual Picnic
- A powerful film series on the war, big pharma and big oil (see poster in right hand column)
- Mark Kerscher, Kathy Rhode, Jeff Kenous, Neil Rainford on Labor Unions
- Shirene Hansotia, author of *Don't Crash My Party*
- Rep. Steve Kagen, How to Be a Progressive in the Present Political Climate

Detailed reports of these programs are in our monthly newsletters.

Thanks to Jim Adams, Rod Bohn, Laurel and Dana Brooks, Challoner Brown, Warren Demmin, John Franz, Phil Hansotia, Mary Horn, Dick Kaiser, Chuck Lauter, Ben Meyer, Dave Murphy, Barb and Bill Perloff and Allin Walker for the role(s) they played in arranging and conducting these meetings.



First in our film series

In addition, the Executive Board met twice a month to conduct Party business concerning membership, fundraising, communications, recruitment of candidates, interface with other county parties and the state organization, and to promote the general interests of the Democratic Party.

To encourage Democratic candidates for elective office. Chris Baeb from Kewanee County is running against Garey Bies in the 1st Assembly District. We have stayed in close contact with Rep. Steve Kagen's and Sen. Russ Feingold's campaign organizations. Two members of the Elections Committee, Pat Miller and Nancy Skadden, continue to encourage Door County women to seek public office; Chuck Lauter, committee chair, has nominated individuals for office.

To form and maintain an effective campaign organization. Although there were no campaigns for partisan offices in the county in 2008, we invited the mayoral candidates from Sturgeon Bay to speak at our meetings and individual members supported Ben Meyer in his successful run for the City Council. Individual members organized an event for Linda Clifford, candidate for the WI Supreme Court. Plans for 2008 are under way; they are based on a thorough critique of our performance in 2006.

To make recommendations for the Party platform. Once again, six of the Resolutions passed at our March membership meeting were passed at the 8th CD Convention. Two others were adopted at the DPW State Convention. The Platform is changed only in even years. The DPDC was one of three parties that presented a resolution from the floor to bar the State Party Chair from also being a lobbyist.

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Year End Report, continued from Page 3

To promote the general interests of the Democratic Party. We were active in many civic functions throughout the county, including the County Fair (thanks to Eileen Andera) and seven parades from Brussels to Ellison Bay. Regular notices of meetings appeared in the Door County Advocate and on the radio stations due to Jim Adams's persistence; Jim also created a strong website: www.DoorCountyDems.org.

Warren Demmin, Secretary/Treasurer of the Boilermakers, now serves as a liaison between the Board and the unions in Door County; he took primary responsibility for our October program on unions.

Our newsletter has carried not only notices of meetings and events but also regular columns and articles on issues of concern to the Democratic Party and to Democrats, under the able leadership of Bill Perloff. Bill was also responsible for preparing two new brochures for distribution at events. As

noted above, the Party submitted resolutions concerning impeachment and redeployment to DPW Chairs throughout the state and to legislators and leaders in both houses of government. Several Board members have continued to send letters to the editors of the Advocate and the Press Gazette.

Our valuation: We believe 2007 has been a year of solid achievements for the DPDC, thanks to an excellent Executive Board and hardworking Committee Chairs and members. We welcome your thoughts and suggestions.

Our goal for 2008 is not only to expand the membership but to increase the number of people who are actively involved in planning and running campaign activities and events in order to elect Democratic candidates for local, state and national offices.

Never underestimate the power of feet on the ground in an election year! If we want good government, we will have to make it happen!

Did You Know? SCHIP Update: the War 1, Children 0

Earlier this month, the President vetoed a children's health bill for the second time despite strong bipartisan support in both houses of Congress. The bill funding the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) would have allowed the states to offer health insurance to about 10 million low income children and families, 4 million more than at present, at an annual cost of \$12 billion. The many benefits of SCHIP are detailed in our September newsletter.

Bush vetoed the measure as an example of his new-found fiscal conservatism, despite having spent nearly \$1.5 *trillion*, much of it borrowed from China, to prosecute a war based on false premises.

Especially disturbing about the President's veto is his unwillingness to work with his own Republican legislators to develop compromise legislation. This is another victory for ideology over good politics (and politics for the public good).

This veto is a particularly egregious failure to recognize that regular access to routine health care has a major beneficial effect on children's development, ability to learn in school, and ultimate productivity as an adult. It displays, for all to see, the huge divide in priorities between the Democrats and Republicans (the following article illuminates this divide further).

What will happen now? Congress will undoubtedly pass a stopgap measure continuing existing coverage for the next year, until a new president is in place.

What can we do? We must make certain that we elect a Democratic president and at least 60 Democratic senators in 2008 so that one Republican senator cannot block passage of legislation, and progressive legislation will not be blocked at the White House.

If we wake up the day after the 2008 election and these goals have not been achieved, it will be too late to say "I wish I had done more!"

Guest Editorial: U.S. in the Time of Empire

The following is an excerpt of an editorial from the Philadelphia Inquirer on Sunday, November 18, 2007. It is by Chris Hedges, Senior Fellow at the Nation Institute, and author of American Fascists: the Christian Right and the War on America.

All great empires and nations decay from within. By the time they hobble off the world stage, overrun by the hordes at the gates or vanishing quietly into the pages of history books, what made them successful and powerful no longer has relevance.

This rot takes place over decades, as with the Soviet Union, or, even longer, as with the Roman, Ottoman or Austro-Hungarian empires. It is often imperceptible.

Dying empires cling until the very end to the outward trappings of power. They mask their weakness behind a costly and technologically advanced military. They pursue increasingly unrealistic imperial ambitions. They stifle dissent

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Decay of the U.S. Empire, continued from page 4

with efficient and often ruthless mechanisms of control. They lose the capacity for empathy, which allows them to see themselves through the eyes of others, to create a world of accommodation rather than strife. The creeds and noble ideals of the nation become empty cliches, used to justify acts of greater plunder, corruption and violence. By the end, there is only a raw lust for power and few willing to confront it.

The most damning indicators of national decline are upon us. We have watched an oligarchy rise to take economic and political power. The top 1 percent of the population has amassed more wealth than the bottom 90 percent combined, creating economic disparities unseen since the Depression. If Hillary Rodham Clinton becomes president, we will see the presidency controlled by two families for the last 24 years.

Massive debt, much of it in the hands of the Chinese, keeps piling up as we fund absurd imperial projects and useless foreign wars. Democratic freedoms are diminished in the name of national security. And the erosion of basic services, from education to health care to public housing, has left tens of millions of citizens in despair. The displacement of genuine debate and civil and political discourse with the noise and glitter of public spectacle and entertainment has left us ignorant of the outside world, and blind to how it perceives us. We are fed trivia and celebrity gossip in place of news.

An increasing number of voices, especially within the military, are speaking to this stark deterioration. They describe a political class that no longer knows how to separate personal gain from the common good, a class driving the nation into the ground.

"There has been a glaring and unfortunate display of incompetent strategic leadership within our national leaders," retired Lt. Gen. Ricardo S. Sanchez, the former commander of forces in Iraq, recently told the New York Times, adding that civilian officials have been "derelict in their duties" and guilty of a "lust for power."

The American working class, once the most prosperous on Earth, has been politically disempowered, impoverished and abandoned. Manufacturing jobs have been shipped overseas. State and federal assistance programs have been slashed. The corporations, those that orchestrated the flight of jobs and the abolishment of workers' rights, control every federal agency in Washington, including the Department of Labor. They have dismantled the regulations that had made the country's managed capitalism a success for ordinary men and women. The Democratic and

Republican Parties now take corporate money and do the bidding of corporate interests. ...

The United States has gone from being the world's largest creditor to its largest debtor. As of September 2006, the country was, for the first time in a century, paying out more than it received in investments. Trillions of dollars go into defense while the nation's infrastructure, from levees in New Orleans to highway bridges in Minnesota, collapses. We spend almost as much on military power as the rest of the world combined, while Social Security and Medicare entitlements are jeopardized because of huge deficits. Money is available for war, but not for the simple necessities of daily life.

Nothing makes these diseased priorities more starkly clear than what the White House did last week. On the same day, Tuesday, President Bush vetoed a domestic spending bill for education, job training and health programs, yet signed another bill giving the Pentagon about \$471 billion for the fiscal year that began Oct. 1. All this in the shadow of a Joint Economic Committee report suggesting that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have been twice as expensive than previously imagined, almost \$1.5 trillion.

The decision to measure the strength of the state in military terms is fatal. It leads to a growing cynicism among a disenchanting citizenry and a Hobbesian ethic of individual gain at the expense of everyone else. Few want to fight and die for a Halliburton or an Exxon. This is why we do not have a draft. It is why taxes have not been raised and we borrow to fund the war. It is why the state has organized, and spends billions to maintain, a mercenary army in Iraq. We leave the fighting and dying mostly to our poor and hired killers. No nationwide sacrifices are required. We will worry about it later.

It all amounts to a tacit complicity on the part of a passive population. This permits the oligarchy to squander capital and lives. It creates a world where we speak exclusively in the language of violence. It has plunged us into an endless cycle of war and conflict that is draining away the vitality, resources and promise of the nation.

It signals the twilight of our empire.

Mr. Hedges illuminates the fundamental problem with stark clarity. We must formulate the solution: to return to the liberal values that made us strong and allowed us to lead by example. As Door County Democrats, we have articulated these values in "Door County Democrats Stand Together". The underlying theme is our Party motto: "Public Policy for Public Good". Please join with us in this critical effort.

Time for Membership Renewal

NOW is the time to renew your membership in the Democratic Party of Door County (DPDC) for 2008. If you have not yet renewed from 2006, you can renew now for 2007 and your membership will automatically extend through 2008. **If you have not renewed from 2006 and you choose to not renew, this will be your last DPDC newsletter.**

If your membership is current, renewing now will carry through 2008 and ensure that membership renewal doesn't fall through the cracks in the busy end-of-year period.

This is **really important** because the number of delegates from Door County to the Congressional District and State Party conventions is determined in part by the number of **paid-up** members for 2008.

The renewal form is on this page. Please print out the form and mail it to our DPDC P.O. box (the address is on the form). If you have received a renewal card from the State Democratic Party, please fill out the card and **return it to the Democratic Party of Door County at our P.O. box.**

Renew now, and please feel free to make a generous donation to our local Party in addition to your membership dues. We are required to split members' dues with the State Party. Donations to the DPDC stay in Door County. Thank you.

A special "thank you" to the 85 new and renewing members who have already renewed for 2008!

The Balloonist and the Fisherman: A Parable

A woman in a hot air balloon realizes she is lost. She lowers her altitude and spots a man fishing from a boat below.

She shouts to him, "Excuse me, can you help me? I promised a friend I would meet him an hour ago, but I don't know where I am."

The man consults his portable GPS and replies, "You're in a hot air balloon, approximately 30 feet above a ground elevation of 2346 feet above sea level. You are at 31 degrees, 14.97 minutes north latitude and 100 degrees, 49.09 minutes west longitude."

She rolls her eyes and says, "You must be a Democrat!!"

"I am," replies the man. "How did you know?"

"Well," answers the balloonist, "everything you tell me is technically correct, but I have no idea what to do with your information, and I'm still lost. Frankly, you're not much help to me."

The man smiles and responds, "You must be a Republican."

"I am," replies the balloonist. "How did you know?"

"Well," says the man, "You don't know where you are or where you're going. You've risen to where you are, due to a large quantity of hot air. You made a promise that you have no idea of how to keep, and now you expect me to solve your problem. You're in exactly the same position you were in before we met, but, somehow, now it's my fault."

Ain't it the truth!



Yes, I'll Join the Democratic Party and Help Democrats Win!

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City/State _____

Zip _____

Phone _____

This is a Cell Phone Home Phone

Email _____

County: Door

Sign me up for:

- \$10 Senior/student/limited income
- \$25 Individual general membership
- \$35 Pairs (includes 2 memberships)
- \$45 Activist family (includes up to 3 memberships)
- \$75 Family supporters (includes all family mem's)

I would also like to join:

- LGTB Caucus Black Caucus
- Latino/Hispanic Caucus American Indian Caucus

Return to: **Democratic Party of Door County**
PO Box 863
Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235