



**"Proud to be a Democrat"**

# Democratic Party of Door County

## February, 2009 Newsletter

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## DC Dems Celebrate President Obama's Inauguration

Door County Democrats joined together at the Ladder House at 11:00 AM on Tuesday, January 20<sup>th</sup> to watch and celebrate the inauguration of Barack Obama as our 44<sup>th</sup> President.

Though the crowd appeared subdued, emotions ran high as members reveled in the realization of the sea change brought about by the efforts of so many Democrats in our corner of Wisconsin and across the country.

At least one of our Party members, Patti Podgers, was at the inauguration and will discuss her experience at our February 26<sup>th</sup> membership meeting.

Those of us at the ladder house broke into spontaneous applause

when the President completed the oath of office. Even as we reflected "how sweet it is", we were sobered by the fact that our president faces a daunting set of challenges left by his predecessor.

Our tasks here in Door County, are to elect progressive candidates at all levels, to ensure the re-election of Chief Justice Abrahamson to the WI supreme court, and to help elect Dr. Tony Evers as Superintendent of Public Instruction (see the message from Co-Chair Lauter on page 3). Rest is not an option. The change has only started, and must be continued.



**President Obama taking the oath of office**



**Door County Democrats watching the inauguration**

Authorized and paid for by the Democratic Party of Door County

To reach us: DCDems@hughes.net, on the web at [www.DoorCountyDems.org](http://www.DoorCountyDems.org), or PO Box 863, Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235

## Upcoming Events

### FEBRUARY

- Feb 12 **Executive Board meets**, Party office (62 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave.) 6:00 PM. DPDC members welcome to attend.
- Feb 19 **Congressman Kagen listening session on health care**, Fellowship hall, 1<sup>st</sup> United Methodist Church, 501 Howe St., Green Bay, 6:30 PM.
- Feb 26 **February membership meeting**, Sturgeon Bay Library, upper level, 7:00 PM. Patti Podgers will present a first-hand view of the presidential inauguration.
- Feb ?? **"Frost/Nixon" Private Showing Fundraiser**, Sturgeon Bay Cinema, 1820 Alabama St., See adjacent article.

### MARCH

- Mar 12 **Executive Board meets**, Party office (62 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave.) 6:00 PM. DPDC members welcome to attend.
- Mar 22 **8<sup>th</sup> Congressional District Fundraiser**, Riverside Ballroom, 1560 Main St., Green Bay, 1:00 PM. Details to follow in the March newsletter.
- Mar 26 **March membership meeting**, Sturgeon Bay Library, upper level, 7:00 PM., Local candidates in contested races have been invited to make brief presentations. We will also select resolutions to be forwarded to the 8<sup>th</sup> CD convention.

### APRIL

- Apr 9 **Executive Board meets**, Party office (62 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave.) 6:00 PM. DPDC members welcome to attend.
- Apr 19 **8<sup>th</sup> CD Convention**, The Casino in Carter, WI (Forest County). Registration opens at 9:00 AM. See adjacent article.
- Apr 23 **April Membership meeting**, Program and location TBA.
- Apr 25-26 **Democratic Leadership Institute**, Devil's Head, WI.

### MAY

- May 14 **Executive Board meets**, Party office (62 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave.) 6:00 PM. DPDC members welcome to attend.
- May 28 **May membership meeting**, program and location TBA.

### JUNE

- June 12-13 **Democratic Party of Wisconsin Annual Convention**, Radisson Hotel, Green Bay. Hold the date, details to follow.

## "Frost/Nixon" Fundraiser is Coming (We Hope)

It now appears that "Frost/Nixon", the movie version of the award-winning Broadway play, will be available the last week in February for a private showing for Door Dems.

Based upon the dramatic interview of ex-president Nixon by David Frost, in which he discusses "Watergate", it reminds us of the seductive nature of power. The showing will be at the Sturgeon Bay Cinema, 1820 Alabama St. Although a fundraiser for your DPDC, admission will be only \$10 per person and will include a soft drink and popcorn (less than the cost of a public showing plus refreshments). Come out, join your fellow Dems and see this first-run drama!

We will send out a notice as soon as we know a definite date. In the meantime, you can prepare for this by viewing the original actual interview of Richard Nixon by David Frost three years after Nixon resigned as president. It is truly a remarkable interview. Also entitled Frost/Nixon, it is available on DVD from Netflix, and probably other sources as well.

## 8<sup>th</sup> CD Convention Coming Soon

The 8<sup>th</sup> CD Convention will be held at the Casino in Carter, WI (Florence County) on Sunday, April 19<sup>th</sup>. Registration opens at 9:00 AM.

Election of officers, adoption of resolutions and updates from our Democratic legislators will be featured. This is your chance to influence policies in our CD and throughout the state. All may attend, but to be a delegate, you must be a paid-up (2009) member of the DPDC. Contact Estella Lauter (839-2741) if you wish to be a delegate.

A block of rooms has been reserved for those who wish to spend (not a pun) the weekend.

## Chief Justice Abrahamson to be in Door County on March 15<sup>th</sup>

Want to learn more about the upcoming election for Wisconsin Supreme Court? Here is an opportunity to meet Chief Justice Shirley Abrahamson and have your questions answered face-to-face. Some information about the Justice is in the "Message from the Co-Chair on page 3.

The Chief Justice will be at a "meet and greet" gathering at the Ladder House, upper level, Sunday, March 15<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 PM. For still more information about Justice Abrahamson, her campaign and broad support, access her website, <http://abrahamson2009.com/>.

**Message from the Co-Chair:****Change We Can Believe In: Two Elections in February and April!**

Don't neglect to vote in the February 17th primary and the April 7th election! Aside from the contested races in Door County, which are certainly important enough, please consider two crucial statewide elections: the five-way primary among nominees for the Superintendent of Education, and the election of a Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice. If you will be away when these elections are held, please get an absentee ballot! (Information about how to vote absentee is provided on p. 4 of this newsletter.)



**Estella Lauter,  
DPDC Chair**

The Superintendent of Schools is far more than a figurehead in the state's educational system. S/he represents the K-12 system in the legislature, to the Governor, and to the US Department of Health, Education and Welfare. S/he negotiates with the teachers' unions and with the local Superintendents of Schools. The job requires an understanding of the school system that is broad and deep, practical and academic. It requires a vision that goes beyond any particular political agenda (such as "Intelligent Design"). It requires maturity, long-term commitment and well-honed leadership skills.

Endorsements for the current Deputy Superintendent from WEAC and AFSCME (the union of public employees) make an excellent case for Dr. Tony Evers. He has served for 34 years at all levels of the Wisconsin school system, from teacher of gifted and talented students to local superintendent to state administrator, and recently at the national level, as president of the deputy superintendents. He has been a national auditor for school curricula. He is concerned both about the way our schools are funded and the quality of our education, and he hopes to improve our graduation rate so that our students are among the best prepared in the country. He is running against others who do not have this level of experience and qualifications. Although the Democratic Party does not normally endorse candidates in a primary, we would be wise in this case to pay attention to what these professional organizations have said!

As for the April election, the situation on the WI Supreme Court has become alarming. The past two elections have gone to ethically challenged judges who were supported by Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce, which received funding from radical conservative groups. Although the WMC has said it will not endorse a candidate in the April election, no one is quite sure what satellite organizations may fill in for them. Present law

allows a great deal of latitude for the funding of "issue ads"--a problem that will be addressed in our legislature as soon as possible. The current challenger, Jefferson County Circuit Court Judge Randy Koschnick, is playing the same tunes we heard in the past two elections--namely that he is a "conservative" judge who believes in a strict construction of the state Constitution. He attacks incumbent Chief Justice Shirley Abrahamson for being an "activist judge."

But this is a false dichotomy--a basic error in logic. Every judge must interpret the law. If all laws were transparent, there would presumably be no need for higher courts to interpret them. Justice Abrahamson is no more or less "activist" than any judge who serves on such a court. "Activist" has become a code word for decisions that do not favor "Conservative" social and religious beliefs. The implication is that Justice Abrahamson favors "liberal" beliefs. But a fair analysis of her work on the Court does not support that view. Certainly she has never been beholden to any group comparable to the WMC! She has been endorsed by business, law enforcement and political leaders on both sides of the aisle. Her reputation for fairness and judicial wisdom extends beyond the state to the nation, where she is the president of the Conference of State Supreme Court Chief Justices.

This controversy is rooted in a basic misunderstanding of the role of the state Supreme Court, which does not exist to try individuals for criminal or civil misdeeds but rather to resolve conflicts that arise when a party contends that the law has not worked properly in a lower court. Thus, in 2006, Judge Butler's early work on a criminal case before he served on the Supreme Court should have been irrelevant to the election; only in the crucible of the 30 second ad could it be made to seem legitimate. On the other hand, Annette Ziegler's failure to recuse herself from cases where she had a clear conflict of interest were relevant to the higher court, because they indicated a severe problem in interpreting the law.

The Chief Justice has said that we are privileged in Wisconsin to elect our judges, but in recent years, the turnout for these elections has been so low and the amount of money spent on ads by partisan organizations has been so high that the privilege is called into question. At a minimum, we need to restrict the funding for such elections. We will have at least one opportunity to hear from Judge Abrahamson in Door County on March 15th on these and other issues.

The change President Obama promised will not happen unless we involve ourselves in our own government. Here are two excellent opportunities to make a difference right here in Wisconsin.

## Time for Membership Renewal

**NOW** is the time to renew your membership in the Democratic Party of Door County (DPDC). 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 2009. Also, if you wish to be a delegate at either the 8<sup>th</sup> CD or State Party conventions, you must be paid-up for the current year.

We are proud that **our 294 members in 2008 made us the largest County Party per population base in WI.** Let's not rest on our laurels, but continue to grow. Our new membership committee chair is Olivia Lowery (920-562-1772, [olivia.lowery@gmail.com](mailto:olivia.lowery@gmail.com)). Please contact her for membership questions.

The renewal form is below. Please print out the form and mail it to our DPDC P.O. box (the address is on the form). When you join the DPDC, you are also automatically a member of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin. So, If you have received a renewal card from the State Democratic Party, you can use that card, but please be sure to **return it to our P.O. box.** We will forward it to the State Party.

Renew now, and please feel free to make a generous donation to the local Party in addition to your membership dues. We must split membership dues with the State Party, but can retain contributions in their entirety for our local Party.

A special "thank you" to the 104 new and renewing members who have (re)joined for 2009!

## Can't be Here for the Election(s)? Vote Absentee; It's Easy to Do

Winter travels and other commitments may make it difficult or impossible to be at the polls on primary election day, Tuesday, February 17<sup>th</sup>, or general election day, Tuesday, April 7<sup>th</sup>.

Don't despair. It is easy to vote absentee and ensure that your voice will be heard and counted in the important upcoming elections (see the "Message from the Co-Chair" on page 3).

Sid Vineburg, 8<sup>th</sup> CD Chair, has advice about how to vote absentee (you can only do this if you are already registered to vote). The information is paraphrased and updated below:

1. You can verify your registration at: <https://vpa.wi.gov>
2. Get the application form for an absentee ballot and directions for filling it out. You can pick this up at the clerk's office, ask the clerk to send one by mail, or print the form from this site: <http://elections.state.wi.us/docview.asp?docid=13378&locid=47>
3. Fill out the form and sign it. Return it to the clerk. If you do this by mail, they must receive your request by the Thursday before the election. If you take it in person, you can take it as late as 5:00 PM the day before the election.
4. The clerk will give (or send) you the absentee ballot. Fill it out and have a witness sign that you have done so (the witness does not see how you vote, only that you **have** voted).
5. You fold the ballot, seal the envelope and return the ballot to the clerk, either in person or by mail.
6. If you do the entire process in person, it takes about 20 minutes. And the best part is you feel really good for having done it!

or Renew



**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**