



"Proud to be a Democrat"

Democratic Party of Door County

October, 2007 Newsletter

Executive Board

Estella Lauter, Chair
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
Ann Johnson
Dave Murphy

Committees:

Communication:

Jim Adams, Board liaison
Ame Grail
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
Ann Johnson, Social Events
Board liaison
Dave Murphy, Social Events
Board liaison

Membership:

Ame Grail, Chair
Bill Perloff, Board liaison
Allin Walker, Board liaison
Chris Wendler

Issues, Resolutions, Survey:

Phil Hansotia, Board liaison

Budget and Fundraising:

Barb Perloff, Chair
John Franz, Board liaison

October Meeting to Feature Union Panel

Members of local unions will join with Door County Democratic Party (DPDC) members at the October 25th membership meeting to explore ways in which we can work together to use the political process to address common problems. Representatives from Bay Shipbuilding local unions: Boilermakers, Carpenters, Electricians, and Pipefitters will participate in a panel discussion. Also participating will be representatives from the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), and WEAC, the Teachers Union.

Our membership will have the opportunity to learn about employer-related issues that affect the union members' ability to function effectively on the job, provide for their families, and manage the personal crises that occur inevitably to everyone. The letter-to-the-editor from Warren Demmin, Secretary-Treasurer of the Bay Ship local Boilermakers' Union and member of the DPDC Executive Board reprinted below illustrates just one set of such issues.

The meeting will be held at the **VFW Hall**, 744 Delaware Street, Sturgeon Bay, **Thursday October 25, 2007 at 7:00 PM**. Each panelist will make a brief presentation about the issues confronting his/her union, and offer suggestions about how the DPDC can help. These will be followed by Q&A and then group discussions developing concrete plans. Come, participate and learn how we can better serve some of our key constituencies, union members responsible for the growth in our industrial productivity, the efficient maintenance of our civil society, and the education of our children for the future.

Congressman Kagen Will Headline "Pie Party" Fundraiser

Mark the date: **Thursday, December 6, 2007, at 7:00 PM**. That is the date when Congressman Steve Kagen will be in Door County to help the DPDC celebrate the First Annual Pie Party Fundraiser. The tentative location is the Bertschinger Center on Route 42 in Egg Harbor. Come prepared for an evening of fun, fellowship, and the chance to hear the "inside scoop" about what is happening in the Congress. You will have a chance to chat with Steve and have your concerns and questions addressed in person.



Steve Kagen discussing issues with constituents

The party will feature a wide assortment of home made Door County pies with plenty for taste test comparisons, plain or à la mode. The evening will serve as a fundraiser for both the Door County Democratic Party and the re-election campaign of the Congressman. We are fundraising to be prepared to provide active and vigorous support to local, state and national candidates in the upcoming election (only a year away). News accounts suggest that the republicans are targeting Steve, and that his opponent will be very well funded by the bottomless coffers of the RNC.

Admission will be \$15 per person, or \$30 per family, for the DPDC. There will also be an opportunity to contribute to the Kagen campaign. We must start now if we want to win in '08!

Upcoming Events and Announcements

Great Lakes Forum with Congressman Steve Kagen, Saturday, October 20, 1:00-3:00 PM, Kress Public Library, 333 N. Broadway, De Pere. Dr. Kagen will discuss the many issues facing the Great Lakes, and how to address the problems. Sponsored by the Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters, the Sierra Club, the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, and the Healing Our Waters Coalition. For more information or to RSVP contact Jessica Garrels at Jessica@conservationvoters.org, or (608) 661-0845.

Democratic Party of Kewaunee County 2007 Annual Fundraising Dinner, Sunday, October 21, 2007, CJ's Restaurant, Kewaunee. Social 6:00 PM, Dinner 6:30. Congressman Kagen will speak. Cost is \$25 per person. For more info, contact Phyllis Benz (920) 845-2749.

October membership meeting, Thursday, October 25, 2007, 7:00 PM, VFW Hall, 744 Delaware Street, Sturgeon Bay. See the article on page 1 for details. The Executive Board will meet at 5:30.

"Wisconsin Way" Forum, Tuesday, October 30, 2007, 7:00-9:00 PM, Meyer Theatre, 117 Washington, Green Bay. Details are in the article on page 4.

November membership meeting, Thursday, November 15, 2007, 7:00 PM, Sturgeon Bay Library basement (Note the early date due to the Thanksgiving Holiday). See the article on page 3 for details.

Pie party fundraiser with Congressman Kagen, Thursday December 6, 2007, 7:00 PM, Bertschinger Center, Route 42, Egg Harbor. Details are in the article on page 1.

Time for Membership Renewal

October is the month to renew your membership in the Democratic Party of Door County (DPDC). If you have not yet renewed from 2006, you can renew now for 2007 and your membership will automatically extend through 2008. 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.

You should have received two brochures about our DPDC with the September newsletter. Both of them have a copy of the membership renewal form. Renew now, and please feel free to make a generous donation to the local Party, in addition to your membership dues (which we must split with the State Party). Thank you!

Did You Know?

Help Needed to Honor George Bush

Your editor recently received an email from Tom Hermann, a former Chair of the DPDC, who wrote, "I was asked by a very good friend to please forward this message. I hope you can help." We were moved by his entreaty and have published the message below. Please contact Tom to contribute.

Dear Friends,

I have the honor of being named to the committee to raise \$5,000,000 for a monument to George W. Bush. I am contacting you in the hope you will be willing to contribute to this noble cause.

But first, a little about what the committee has been doing to date. We originally wanted to put him on Mount Rushmore until we discovered that there was not enough room for two more faces.

We then decided to erect a statue of George in the Washington, DC Hall of Fame. We were in a quandary as to where the statue should be placed. It was not proper to place it beside the statue of George Washington, who never told a lie, or beside Richard Nixon, who never told the truth, since Bush could never tell the difference! We finally decided to place it beside the statue of Christopher Columbus. Columbus left not knowing where he was going; and, when he got there, he did not know where he was. He returned not knowing where he had been, decimated the well-being of the majority of the population while he was there, and did it all on someone else's money. As you can see, these two men have a great deal in common.

Thank you for your support.

George W. Bush Monument Committee

P.S. The Committee has raised \$1.35 so far, so please be generous.

"Backwards Bush" Countdown

There are now 458 days, 23 hours, 51 minutes and 14 seconds left in the Bush presidency. If you don't wish to support the G.W. Bush monument, you may want to keep track of this ever decreasing number with your "Backward Bush" keychain that is counting down to Bush's permanent return to his pickup on the Crawford ranch. Available at www.backwardbush.com, there will be some of these great mementos for purchase at the October 25th membership meeting. Buy one, help support your local Party and relish the diminishing time available for the Bush administration to do more harm to the country.



Message from the Chair:**Behind the Scenes**

What is the function of a local Democratic Party organization in the current political climate? This question has come up in DPDC Executive Board meetings as we make plans for the coming election season, and it will be addressed by the county chairs at a retreat in February. I would like to hear your ideas on this topic. Here is some background for thinking about the question.



**Estella Lauter,
DPDC Chair**

It used to be axiomatic that the primary function of political parties was to raise money for candidates, and everything else followed from that. But now that candidates raise their own money through PACs or through direct solicitation of individuals via e-mail or phone banks, that function seems relevant only to local races. Further, since national candidates are constantly in search of money, even outside their districts and states, raising money for local candidates has become more difficult.

While more Party members once meant more influence, on voters, candidates and elected officials, now influence seems to depend more on polls, lobbyists, pundits and the loud, annoying sounds of squeaky wheels.

State Party members participate in the Nominating Conventions and in the Electoral College. Those who give a lot of money or work very hard in campaigns are sometimes rewarded with a position in government. How do local parties fit into these changed and changing patterns? Should we fit in?

In *The Assault on Reason*, Al Gore raises red flags, not only about a government far too heavily weighted toward the executive branch, but also about the loss of an informed citizenry that is able to identify its own needs amidst so much disinformation, and about the loss of genuine dialogue between citizens and elected officials. Tops on his list of required actions are required public financing for elections, a policy of net neutrality that allows equal access to information on the Web, and a reassertion of our attachment to the Constitution of the United States. His hope for a rebirth of democracy depends on us—"as Lincoln put it, 'even we here'" (page 270).

In our programs on a wide variety of local and national issues, the DPDC Board has been exploring ways to create meaningful dialogues that will attract both members and candidates. Our year-end report in December will indicate other steps we have taken. But the October membership meeting offers an opportunity to address the issue of our mission directly in relation to an important Democratic constituency: labor.

You are invited to join this ongoing discussion!

"November Meeting Speaker:**Shirene Hansotia, Author of *Don't Crash My Party!***

The November 15th membership meeting will feature a presentation by Shirene Hansotia, author of the recently published *Don't Crash My Party!*, a scathing assessment of the performance of our political parties over the past several years.

Hansotia says that while a great deal of the blame for America's recent foreign policy blunders and domestic policy failures must be assigned to the radical Republican leadership in power for the past decade, Democrats must accept responsibility for their inability to provide viable alternatives for the pressing problems facing our nation today.

She asks why does there continue to be such a dearth of Democratic Party leaders who are willing to speak up for what is right, rather than simply for what is politically expedient? Their silence has been deafening for Democrats across the nation who are thirsting for principled leadership and starving for a dose of enlightened idealism.

It is only after winning back the confidence of a majority of Americans fed up with a political envi-

ronment rife with corruption and dominated by demagogues will Democrats be able to address big-picture issues such as solving our health care dilemma, bringing about an acceptable solution to the quagmire in Iraq, funding a Manhattan project for alternative energies, and adequately educating our children.



Shirene Hansotia

Shirene earned undergraduate degrees in journalism, political science and African studies from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and a master's degree in public policy analysis from Michigan State University. She has worked as a newspaper journalist and at the Central Intelligence Agency as an intelligence analyst focusing on counterterrorism issues, and continues that work as an intelligence consultant today.

“Wisconsin Way” Initiative Comes to Green Bay

Our current system of financing K-12 education, child welfare programs and other local services in Wisconsin largely by residential property tax, faces serious and growing problems.

In the early 1990s, for example, there was a narrow gap of less than \$1,850 between Minnesota and Wisconsin citizens' per capita incomes. Today, Wisconsin per capita income lags a little less than \$4,000 behind Minnesota. Had we stayed competitive with Minnesota, our tax base would be nearly \$13 billion a year larger than it is now.

With slightly more than one in four of our citizens holding a bachelor's degree, Wisconsin ranks 27th in the nation and fewer than 4 percent of our population is employed in any “high-technology” job.

There are clear indications that Wisconsin loses its recent college graduates to other states and that we are not growing the higher paying jobs we need as rapidly as we need them.

The percentage of our population entering or enjoying their peak earning years is declining, and three out of four adults agree with the statement, “I love this place, but I don't know how much longer people like me can afford the property taxes we have to pay.”

Coming up with an effective and politically viable alternative will require innovative thinking and a broad-based public dialogue about sustainable ways of financing local government. Fortunately, a diverse set of partners (*The Wisconsin Counties Association, the Wisconsin Education Association Council, Wisconsin Realtors Association, Wisconsin Transportation Builders Association and Wood Communications Group*) has come together to launch such a non-partisan effort, called the Wisconsin Way.

The Wisconsin Way initiative is hosting a series of 12 public forums across the state to engage Wisconsin residents in a conversation about how to make taxes fairer and reduce the property tax burden without sacrificing the quality of public services that make Wisconsin a special place to live and work. The forum in Green Bay will be **Tuesday, October 30**, at the Meyer Theatre, 7:00 PM.

The more citizens who participate and contribute ideas, the more likely it is that we will succeed in finding fair and effective ways to distribute the tax burden necessary to produce the services we value.

To learn more about the Wisconsin Way, and register for a forum go to www.wisconsinway.org, or call (800) 919-3012.

Letter-to-the-Editor from Warren Demmin

This letter is in regard to the unfair treatment of employees at Bay Shipbuilding in Sturgeon Bay. I have been employed there for some time now and it is very sad to see the decline in the treatment of its employees. Earlier this year we had two employees that announced they were going to get married. One had no vacation left because he used this to plan for the wedding. When he applied for a leave of absence he was denied. The company says you have to use your vacation before they would consider approving a leave of absence but when we asked why he was denied we were told he shouldn't have used all of his vacation.

The other employee had three days of vacation left when he applied for his leave of absence. He was also denied and when we asked why we were told he had to use all of his vacation first. Confusing?? We told Human Resources that he wanted to keep the days because his fiancé recently had a mastectomy during her battle with breast cancer. But still he was refused. Unbelievable!!!

Another employee, who was away from work for the first 3 months of the year dealing with cancer, was recently told by his doctor to come in for another biopsy. He used up his Family Medical Leave (both State and Federal). So his options were to try to get off for 8 days to qualify for Short Term Disability or apply for a leave of absence. HERE WE GO AGAIN!! When he spoke with Human Resources he was told there was nothing they could do for him and he was going to get an occurrence (10 occurrences= Termination) and something about company policy.

In the same breath Bay Shipbuilding talks about how they are trying to retain employees but then they are not taking care of these employees. Don't they understand that if you treat your employees decently that they will be happier and in turn they will produce more? I think the term that should be used to describe Bay Shipbuilding is Inhumane.

The three employees I mentioned above all got into occurrence trouble because they took the time off. When they were called into human resources they were disciplined for having too many occurrences and warned if they got to 10 they would be terminated. None of the three were asking for a lot of time off, at the most a week. We bust our butts for this company and this is the thanks we get. If I was to write about all the employees affected by this I would have to write a novel. THANK YOU BAY SHIPBUILDING FOR TAKING CARE OF YOUR EMPLOYEES.

(Warren Demmin is the Secretary-Treasurer of the Boilermakers' Local Union at Bay Shipbuilding in Sturgeon Bay)