



"Proud to be a Democrat"

Democratic Party of Door County

September, 2007 Newsletter

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September Meeting to Close Out Film Series

The September 27th membership meeting will feature the last of our six part film series: "CRUDE IMPACT". Offering an inspirational vision for change, the film examines oil, human rights, indigenous cultures, economies and the fate of the planet. Winner of several film festival awards. This film will start at 7:15 following a short membership meeting at 7:00 PM, at the **Woodwalk Gallery**, 6746 County Road G, Egg Harbor.

On September 20th, the film will be "THE OIL FACTOR", a critical analysis of foreign policy, military base placement and our insatiable need for oil, with an emphasis on the Iraq occupation. Interviews and on-location in Iraq are featured. This film will also be shown at the Woodwalk Gallery at 7:00 PM.

Robert B. Reich:

What Happened to Labor Day?

A young person asked me not long ago - only half in jest - whether Labor Day was named in honor of natural childbirth. Most young people today have no memory of a time when Walter Reuther of the UAW and John L. Lewis of the United Mine Workers were household names, when presidents jawboned labor to prevent agreements from causing wage-price inflation, when productivity gains pushed wages up, and when more than a third of the American workforce was unionized.

Now fewer than 8 percent of America's private sector workers are in unions, median wage gains have fallen far behind productivity gains, and for most of us Labor Day means a long weekend.

What happened? Some say it started in the early 80s after Ronald Reagan fired the nation's air-traffic controllers for striking - something they had no legal right to do - and thereby legitimized a wave of corporate union busting. Others blame it on a more pervasive "greed is good" aggressiveness that engulfed corporate suites starting right about then.

There's no question that, ever since, and with ever greater alacrity, companies have fired workers for trying to form unions, even though that's illegal, and have used or threatened to use permanent replacements if workers go on strike - which is legal but was rare before the 80s.

But don't blame Ronald Reagan or corporate greed. Blame us - you and me. You see, starting about 30 years ago and with increasing efficiency, technologies have given us consumers a world of choice - low priced goods and services that often depend on low wages here and elsewhere.

Four-lane federal highways and long-haul trucks linking non-unionized manufacturers in the South to the rest of us. Container ships and cargo planes linking us to foreign producers. Big-box retailers using computers to find the best deals anywhere around the world. And now the Internet letting us find the best deals for ourselves from anywhere, too.

We as a nation have traded off lower priced goods and services, in place of a unionized workforce with the bargaining clout to get higher wages. So now, a lot of us get good consumer deals and lousy paychecks.

No one trumpeted this choice. It's happened gradually. But is it the right choice? That's what we ought to be asking ourselves - at least once a year, on Labor Day.

(Editor's note: This was reprinted from "Common Dreams", 8/30/07. Dr. Reich was the Secretary of Labor in the Clinton Administration.)

Upcoming Events and Announcements

Documentary film showing: "The Oil Factor", Thursday, September 20, 2007, 7:00 PM at the Woodwalk Gallery, 6746 County Road G, Egg Harbor. See announcement on page 1.

DPDC September Meeting, Thursday, September 27, 2007, 7:00 PM at the Woodwalk Gallery, 6746 County Road G, Egg Harbor. The film, "Crude Impact" will be shown at 7:15. See announcement on page 1. The Executive Board will meet at 5:30.

Fall Fest Parade, Saturday, October 13, 2007, 11:00 AM Sister Bay. The DPDC will have a van in the parade and will be handing out literature. Please join us to make a powerful presence there. Assemble at 10:15 at Woodcrest Ave. and Cty ZZ.

DPDC October Meeting, Thursday, October 25, 2007, 7:00 PM at the VFW Hall, 744 Delaware Street, Sturgeon Bay. See announcement below.

October Meeting to Feature Local Union Issues

Representatives from four of the major unions at Bay Shipbuilding Corporation will participate in a panel discussion of union issues at the Thursday, October 25th membership meeting at 7:00 PM at the VFW Hall, 744 Delaware Street, Sturgeon Bay. The discussion will feature issues faced by our local unions as well as on the national scene (see the article by Robert Reich below), and how the DPDC and our local unions can work together to effect change. Come and contribute to the discussion and help formulate plans for action.

"Backwards Bush" Countdown

As of this writing there are 488 days, 10 hours, 12 minutes and 51 seconds left in the Bush presidency. You, too, can 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 September 27th 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.



Letter from Senator Feingold

Dear Wisconsin Progressive,

I'm writing today to give you a brief update on the issue that continues to be on everyone's mind – Iraq. Back in their home states this summer, my colleagues in the Senate heard again and again from their constituents that the American people want to end the misguided mission in Iraq. Thanks to you, that's a message I've brought to Washington for years, and one I heard again, loud and clear, in every Listening Session I held last month.

We all know that it is far past time to begin re-deploying U.S. troops out of Iraq. However, the spin from the White House has already begun. President Bush and a handful of Republican stalwarts in Congress are pointing to 'new progress' since the troop surge began in April. They're saying that 'we just need a little more time.'

But what they fail to admit—and what you and countless other Americans have known for some time—is that the time has come for Congress to end what can only be described as the worst foreign policy mistake in our nation's history. President Bush's reckless drive to war, his botched handling of the reconstruction, his mismanagement of the occupation, and his escalation of U.S. troops in Iraq has been a complete disaster. The President's war in Iraq has actually made us less safe as a nation, not safer. And our occupation of Iraq has been a costly distraction from the real war on terror, and it has turned much of the world against us.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and I have introduced a bill that uses Congress's "power of the purse" to begin safely redeploying our troops out of Iraq in 2008. The Feingold-Reid bill requires the President to begin to safely redeploy troops from Iraq within 120 days from enactment. Our legislation would end funding for the war and establish a set of very specific restrictions upon which President Bush could spend any money in Iraq.

I am going to continue to push my legislation, and other measures in the Senate, forward to end the war and safely redeploy our brave men and women in uniform. I sincerely appreciate all of your support. ***Please continue to write letters to the editor of your local papers and talk to your friends and family to let them know exactly where you stand.*** Every voice added to our effort brings us one step closer to our goal.

With high hopes,

Russ Feingold
United States Senator
www.russfeingold.org



Message from the Chair:**Become an Agent for Change, Renew Membership Now**

If you are reading this column, you are among the 260 or so members who paid nominal dues (\$25 per person or \$35 per couple, or \$10 hardship) to the Democratic Party of Door County for 2006 and/or 2007, and we are asking you to renew your membership *now* for 2008. In addition, we are asking you to participate in our new membership drive designed to double our members to 500!



**Estella Lauter,
DPDC Chair**

Why is membership in the Democratic Party of Door County important? Our new brochures, included in this mailing, give specific reasons—among the most important that *Democrats* need money to attract and support candidates for local and state offices, and *you* deserve a way to amplify your voice for equality, justice, peace and freedom!

But why **now**, when everyone's attention is focused (prematurely?) on the national slate of candidates for President in 2008? Or on ending the War in Iraq? Or on Impeachment? It is because, ultimately, our strength lies in numbers. If this County Party doubles its numbers, it will be able to open an office earlier in 2008 than in 2006, offer better support for candidates, drop more literature on doorsteps, make more calls, get out more voters, elect more people who CARE about the preservation of a real democracy on all levels of government because we support the preservation of effective government!

The low rating our Congress received in public opinion polls this summer has many sources, but surely one of them is the fact that its power to represent the people has been systematically undercut by executive signing statements and other mechanisms, by the long term effects of three Congressional terms during which Congress met only three days a week and held as few oversight hearings as possible, and by the simultaneous systematic decimation of essential government agencies.

We hear a lot of grumbling by pundits about the inability of newly elected Democrats to turn things

around immediately, despite the barest of majorities on the federal level or split houses on the state level. But, I think that neither they nor we have faced the degree to which our democratic system of government and the concept of democracy has been trashed in the past six and a half years. Al Gore's book *Assault on Reason*, which formed the basis of this column in August, helps to put our achievements in perspective. Given the autocratic tendencies of the foreign policy imperialists, the Royalist supporters of supply side economics, and the Social Darwinists on the far-far right, we have an uphill battle ahead of us—one that requires serious energy from every one of us who still believes in our Constitution and Bill of Rights.

I am aware that some Democrats in Door County still keep their political affiliations under cover because they think it will hurt business. It has been a Republican County. But, more than half of the voters in 2006 voted for Democrats! And at the parades this summer, we received many thumbs up from residents and visitors alike. We have come out of the doghouse. The donkey was cramped in there, and is glad to work again in the open.

I am also aware that some would like to disavow both major parties and begin anew, but we learned with Ralph Nader in 2000 that a third party cannot yet gain sufficient traction in our system to win a national election.

Given our current condition, in my view, the Democratic Party is our last realistic hope for recreating a constitutional democracy in our children's lifetime. It will take a lot of people and a lot of work to repair the damage done by this administration.

You can help by renewing your membership in October for 2008; by serving as a captain or leader for your ward or neighborhood; by Party meetings (on the 4th Thursday of each month) and ward meetings as they are announced; by asking your friends to join the DPDC; and by participating in any of the activities that support local and state in addition to national candidates for office. And, if you can run for office, please let us know right away!

Join the growing numbers of Democrats who are working actively to recreate "public policy for public good"!

NOW IS THE TIME!

It is not too early to be working to elect Democratic candidates from local to national offices in '08. Join your fellow Democrats in making it happen - **GET ACTIVE, GET INVOLVED, GET COMMITTED**. Grass roots effort will win elections. **We** are the grass roots. Participate by renewing your membership in the DPDC, getting active, and recruiting new members. Renew now and your membership will carry through 2008. Renewal forms are in the brochures accompanying this newsletter.

William H. Perloff, M.D.

Did You Know? "SCHIP" is a "Litmus Test" for Good Government

The United States is the only industrialized country without some form of universal access to health care. The consequence is that approximately 47 million in the U.S., of which 9 million are children, are without health insurance and access to routine health care. Most of these are the "working poor", without health benefits on the job, but with incomes too high to qualify for Medicaid, and who cannot afford private health insurance.

Why is this so important? Because access to routine, preventive health care is a major factor in giving kids the opportunity to develop, learn and succeed. Studies show that:

- Uninsured children receive fewer immunizations and preventive health services, less regular care for chronic diseases, and are less likely to get their medication prescriptions filled than those with health insurance. Health conditions that can affect a child's development, school performance and life chances, are more likely to go untreated when children are not insured. Access to routine preventive health care leads to healthy children who are more likely to become healthy adults.
- Many acute illnesses can be treated easily and inexpensively in the outpatient setting if addressed early. Uninsured families often defer care until the illness becomes so severe that the child is brought to an Emergency Room. Potentially avoidable hospitalizations occur more often among uninsured individuals because of delayed treatment. As a pediatric intensive care physician for 20 years, I saw many examples of the serious consequences of delaying treatment because of lack of coverage. Furthermore, more than 75 percent of the cost of uncompensated care for the uninsured is borne by taxpayers.
- Uninsured pregnant women receive fewer prenatal care services than those with insurance, and have a greater incidence of premature low-birthweight infants, higher neonatal mortality and adverse developmental outcomes.
- A single significant illness or injury is often financially catastrophic for a family with uninsured children. Medical bills are a factor in nearly one-half of all bankruptcy filings.

In recognition of the fact that we all have a stake in the life-success of our children, the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) was created in 1997 as a bipartisan effort to provide insurance coverage for the "working poor". Today, about 6 million children are covered by SCHIP, 91 percent of whom come from families with income

below 200 percent of the federal poverty level (the FPL is \$20,300 for a family of four). The success of SCHIP shows that, when adequately funded, children do get health care coverage. The 9 million children still uninsured make it clear that we need to do better.

In Wisconsin, Governor Doyle is not waiting for the federal government to get its act together. He has proposed BadgerCare Plus, which will make insurance coverage available to virtually all children in the state, the first such program in the U.S. This proposal, which would be budget-neutral, depends upon the continuation of SCHIP. However, the legal mandate for SCHIP will expire on September 30th.

Congress has passed bills reauthorizing and expanding SCHIP to cover another 3-5 million children. The strongly bipartisan Senate bill would more than double SCHIP expenditures to \$12 billion per year, funded by an increase in the cigarette excise tax to \$1 per pack. The president has threatened to veto the bill, despite entreaties by Republican governors and senators, because he favors private over public health insurance. He has recommended less than \$1 billion per year for SCHIP, an amount that would not even maintain the current number of covered children.

SCHIP is an example of an efficient, well-run government program that fulfills its objectives and gives states the opportunity to develop their own implementation. This is a paradigm of good government.

President Bush would prefer to use government subsidies to prop up Medicare Advantage private plans even though they cost the taxpayer more than the traditional Medicare public plan, while underfunding children's health insurance. As Robert Borosage has commented: "faced with a choice of providing children with health care or protecting the profits of private insurance companies, the president chooses the latter." This is bad government.

Support of the health of our children can be considered a "litmus test" for good vs. bad government. There is little doubt where our current administration falls. We need to pressure our legislators to agree on a bill that will generate veto-proof majorities in both houses of Congress, so that good will prevail. It is especially important that the Republican members of the WI delegation to the House of Representatives hear from their constituents, because the Senate already has a veto-proof majority supporting their bill.

(Did You Know? is a monthly informative and opinion column. Submissions are invited. Please contact us at DCDems@dcwis.com.)