



"Proud to be a Democrat"

Democratic Party of Door County

July-August, 2013 Monthly Newsletter

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Upcoming Events

AUGUST

Aug 29 **DPDC monthly membership meeting**, Sturgeon Bay Library, 107 S. 4th Ave., upper level, 7:00 PM. Review of DPDC Strategic Plan. **CURRENT (2013) MEMBERS ONLY. Note change from usual meeting date.**

SEPTEMBER

Sep 12 **DPDC Executive Board meeting**, Sturgeon Bay Library (**note location**), 107 S. 4th Ave., 6:00-7:30 PM.

Sep 26 **DPDC monthly membership meeting**, Sturgeon Bay Library, 107 S. 4th Ave., upper level, 7:00 PM. Program TBA.

Digest of Contents

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- **Message from the Chair** - Chair Cohn reflects on the hectic summer schedule, and our work ahead.
- **Review of the Annual Picnic**
- **Page 4: Back to Basics** - Estella Lauter hits hard at our society that allows so many of its citizens to struggle for survival.

Page 5: The ACA is Working for Wisconsin - Though yet to take full effect, the ACA is already benefitting Wisconsinites. Here's how.

Page 6: Membership Matters. We need you.

Due to renew your membership?
Please do so now (see page 6).
Thank You!

August 29th: Members Only Review of Proposed Strategic Plan

The August DPDC membership meeting is significantly different from our usual practice in three important respects. First, due to numerous schedule conflicts it will be held on the 5th Thursday, August 29th.

Second, the main business of the meeting will be presentations by Board members of the newly developed proposed DPDC strategic plan. This is the outgrowth of three lengthy meetings in which nominal group process, guided by an experienced mentor, was employed to develop strategies to win local, state and national elections. The process and its results will be presented for the members' consideration.

Thirdly, in contrast to our usual open invitation to the public, this meeting will be open only to current (August, 2013) members of the Democratic Party of Door County. For those members who need to renew membership, this can be done either by sending the form on page 6 to our PO Box, or by renewing at the meeting.

The meeting will be at the Sturgeon Bay Library, 107 S. 4th Ave, upper level, at 7:00 PM. For questions, please call or email Garrett Cohn (gucohn@gmail.com, 920-559-2557) or Bill Perloff (wperloff@me.com, or 920-839-9282)

Message from the Chair:

From Where I Sit

July and August are upon us which means many Door County activities, lots of family visits thus few unscheduled nights and days.



Chair Garrett Cohn

The picnic historically (for us Dems) is a highlight of summer political activity. This year we had two assembly visitors Eric Genrich, 90th Assembly District and Evan Goyke from Milwaukee. Jered Vogelantz, Democratic Party of Wisconsin Northeast Regional Director, and Allin Walker, previous Door County chair offered comments.

As I said in my brief intro to Eric's remarks we must pay particular attention to what he has to say, as he won his first candidacy with a 60% vote after many years of Republican rule. Evan Goyke spoke briefly about the Governor's decisions and their impact. Neither speaker felt the Governor's perspective represented the main stream of Wisconsin voters.

The opening poem by Gary Jones was a striking indictment of the Governor and was enthusiastically welcomed.

There were many helper/hosts this year headed by Mary Horn, Barbara Perloff, Francha Bernard and Valerie Boyarski, to name a few who made this picnic a success.

Special thanks go to our sponsors, who with their \$50 contributions ensured that the picnic was a financial success as well.

We had over 50 attendees with the Obama's watching over the crowd and the good food. We were blessed with excellent picnic weather.

Door County also had a visit by State Senate Minority Leader Chris Larson and his family to the Party office during picnic week.

This month there has been over 100 hours of concentrated effort by Board members and others led by Wayne Kudick, John Harris and Brett Bicoy as moderator in drafting a proposed Door County Strategic Plan which will be presented to the Board August 8 and to the general meeting August 29 (see article on page 1).

This is just a brief overview of our stuffed summer schedule. I also am "suffering" from out of town family, Ann Egan Center, Birch Creek, Peninsula Players, TAP (just a few of the summer offerings) not to mention time for my struggling golf game.

Annual Picnic a Success

The Annual DPDC picnic July 11 took place in perfect weather, and left the 50 attendees well-fed, stimulated and energized.

Hamburgers, hot dogs, and an amazing display of salads and desserts ensured that everyone was satisfied, with second (or third) helpings available.

The event ran smoothly, thanks to the great organization of Mary Horn, Francha Barnard, Valerie Boyarski Barb Perloff, and a dozen volunteers.

Our \$50 sponsors graciously supported the costs. **A heartfelt thanks to Garrett and Myrna Cohn, Wayne Kudick, David and Lois Murphy, Barbara Perloff, Lisa Van Laanen, and Allin Walker.**

Gary Jones began the program with a poem composed for the occasion. He prefaced the poem with the following:

"The food allergies of today seemed to have passed me by – lactose and gluten intolerance, peanut and shellfish hypersensitivity – I can eat just about anything! But then I realized that I do have one thing I can't stomach."

**Diet for Good Health
by Gary Jones**

I am Republican intolerant
and determined to live GOP free:
I do not want them anywhere near my borders,
I do not want them picking on my gay and lesbian
friends,
and I do not want them probing the vaginas of
anyone I know.
I want them to pay their fair portion of taxes,
I want them to separate church and state,
and I want them to learn how to share.
I have signed a pledge
not to make coffee for my conservative brother-in-
law,
nor grind beans for the right-wing husband of my
daughter.
Until they wake up and smell the coffee,
let them drink tea!
It's what the doctor ordered.

(Continued on page 3)

Picnic, continued from page 2

Representative Evan Goyke, from the 18th Assembly District (Milwaukee), was a welcome visitor, who spoke briefly about the poor choices made by the Governor and legislature.

The main attraction of the evening were the remarks by Representative Eric Genrich, from the 90th Assembly District who reemphasized the deficiencies in the recently passed budget and stressed the importance of electing Democratic

Assembly and Senate representatives in the 2014 elections. He pointed out that we must recognize the need for change in order to alter the outcomes of recent Assembly and State Senate elections.

These points were emphasized in brief remarks by Jered Voegtanz, Democratic Party of Wisconsin NE Wisconsin Regional Director, and past-chair Allin Walker.

Some vignettes are shown below.



John Harris staffing the grill



Gary Jones reading his poem



Violet Boyarski showing Dad the President and Mrs. Obama's T-shirts (we have a few left)



Rep. Eric Genrich



Rep. Evan Goyke



The serving line, with Rep. Genrich greeting Ruth Kelsen

My take on it, by Estella Lauter:**Back to the Basics**

It is summer in a “non-election year,” yet our e-mail accounts are still crammed with short-term messages of victory and defeat, ecstasy and crisis—all combined with urgent requests for funds. Very few of these messages, however, concern the most basic issues we face as a state, a nation and a world: how to make life more livable for all the people who are already on the planet while we also keep the planet habitable for future generations.

**Estella Lauter**

Such big problems, so little time. The challenge of democracy has never been so clear. While our House of Representatives remains locked in its adolescent fight with the President, our state legislatures pass bills to benefit the few at the cost of the many, and each political action group focuses on its own issue, “the people” are on our own to address the basics. These are often called “the commons” –clean air and water, food and shelter at the very least, but now also preservation of species (think of bees but also “human” beings) that are essential to life as we know it.

The Hightower Lowdown (V. 15, #6, June 2013) makes an excellent argument for turning our attention to poverty at this critical moment in our history. According to US Census Bureau data, the percentage of people living in poverty has risen from 11.3 in 2000 to 16.1 in 2010. The latest official count in 2011 showed 18.1% of children and 15.5% of working adults lived below the official poverty line (c. \$11,000 a year for an individual, c. \$15,000 for a single parent with one child, c. \$23,000 for a family of four—counting non-cash benefits such as food stamps, tax credits, school lunches).

The number of poor in the US has now reached 50 million, and an additional 51 million people are classified as “near poor.” In a nation of c. 300 million people, over 100 million are poor or near-poor. That is one-third of our population. “Only 58.6 of us are employed; . . . more than one out of five American families report that, last year, not a single family member had a job” (p. 4).

Hightower berates Republicans for the current focus on austerity measures to reduce the deficit primarily by abandoning the poor, not just because the strategy is cruel but because it fails to respect

what these million people could be contributing: “In other words, just as the poor need us, we need them—our society urgently needs their intellect, creativity and productivity” (p. 2).

Even Wall Street analysts are alarmed by the effects of austerity on economic growth (p. 3). The Great Recession was not caused by public employees or “moochers.” It was caused by irresponsible actions in the financial industry. Cuts in food stamps, Meals on Wheels, health care, Head Start, assistance to veterans and so on do not benefit the economy; they simply make human lives poorer and create problems that are even more expensive to solve.

In addition, a “third of our states allow collection agencies to sue and local judges to jail people” for credit card debt or traffic fines, in defiance of a Supreme Court ruling that makes such actions unconstitutional (p. 3). This focus on punishment, like the British debtors’ prisons made famous by Charles Dickens, takes both earners and consumers out of the economy! In addition, Georgia has privatized the supervision of such misdemeanors, so a defendant not only has to pay the debt and a fine but also a monthly “supervisor fee,” making it even harder to become solvent again.

Hightower comments, “People fall between the cracks because there are cracks” (p. 1). Our task is to fix these cracks, not to punish people who fall into them. It does not make sense on any level to abandon a third of our population to poverty, and especially not to abandon children. The effects of policies that allow such conditions to persist are likely to be much worse than the deficit.

No nation can afford to lose a generation of productive people in the work force. Hightower quotes a pediatrician who writes that poverty defines “many children’s life trajectories in the harshest terms : poor academic achievement, high dropout rates, and health problems from obesity and diabetes to . . . substance abuse and mental illness” (p. 4). There is no way to make up for the losses in brain development that occur in the lives of the 25% of children under five who live below the federal poverty line!

Democrats need to do far more than simply “swat down the meanest efforts to hurt the poor” (p. 1). As FDR said in his 1944 State of the Union address, “True individual freedom cannot exist without economic security and independence. People who are hungry and out of a job are the stuff of which dictatorships are made.”

(Continued on page 5)

Back to Basics, continued from page 4

We have far too many children for whom the school lunch is the only meal of the day; young people who are unable to find jobs that fit their training and education; middle aged people who have lost good jobs and cannot find employment; public employees who have seen their income shrink as a result of politics; seniors who live in fear that Social Security will be cut or the stock market will crash. While it may be true that there will always be people who cannot thrive in any society,

when the poor number one out of six and in certain categories one out of four, there is almost surely something wrong with the society.

We do not lack money, despite all the fuss about the deficit. Our citizens and corporations have trillions of dollars in banks and off-shore accounts. What we do with that money in the next few years may determine how we are regarded in the annals of history—assuming that human beings survive the coming changes in our climate.

The ACA is Already Working for Wisconsin

[Editor's note: the following is excerpted from the Democratic Party of WI with data provided by www.whitehouse.gov/healthreform.]

Did you know that the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is **already** working for Wisconsin families, saving money and improving access to essential health care services?

Under the just-passed Walker budget, Wisconsin taxpayers will pay \$120 million **more** to provide health care to 84,700 **fewer** people. By contrast, the ACA is now helping to improve health and lower costs **in Wisconsin**. Here's how:

- **Cheaper prescription drugs for those on Medicare:** \$37,919,307 total savings for 59,345 seniors, averaging \$639 saved per person in 2011.
- **Free preventive services:** 1,111,000 people and 647,617 seniors with Medicare get preventive services for free, including mammograms for women and wellness visits for seniors.
- **No more lifetime limits on care:** 2,142,000 people no longer are subject to a lifetime limit on care.
- **Health insurance on your parents' plan:** 27,511 more young adults under age 26 now have insurance on their parents' plan.
- **Better value for your premium dollar:** 1,536,000 people protected by the 80/20 rule that requires insurers to spend at least 80% of premiums on care and quality improvement. (8.5 Million Americans have already received rebates from insurance companies that spent more than 20% on administrative costs.)
- **Covered by pre-existing insurance plan:** 1,000 people, previously uninsured because of a pre-existing condition now have coverage. As of

January 1, 2014 **no one** can be denied coverage or charged a higher rate because of a pre-existing condition.

- **Building affordable insurance exchange:** \$38,757,139 to help states develop new marketplaces where consumers will have the same kind of choices as members of Congress. Despite the Governor's refusal to develop the Wisconsin insurance exchange, the federal government will ensure that there is a functioning exchange. In fact, Door County residents will have five insurance companies competing for subscribers via the insurance exchange starting October 1st (Citizen Action of WI, Wisconsin Health Coverage Option Report). Between now and then, additional insurance companies may offer policies in Door County, or some of the current five may withdraw.
- **Improving public health:** \$18,600,000 in grants to improve public health.
- **Community health centers:** \$13,800,000 to support and expand community health centers.
There is more to come as the law is fully implemented.
- **Tax Cut:** In 2014 18 million middle class people and families will receive a tax cut averaging \$4,000 to help cover the cost of health insurance.
- **Closing the "donut hole":** By 2020 seniors with traditional Medicare will save nearly \$4,200. Those with high prescription drug costs will save even more due to elimination of the Medicare Part D coverage gap (closing the "donut hole").

The gains described above are only the beginning. It is time to focus on implementing the law in a smart and non-political way that works to ensure near universal access to a "medical home" and effective ongoing medical care.

Membership Matters

Your Door Dems have been working hard this summer to prepare ourselves for the upcoming 2014 elections.

Despite the typical summer Door County whirlwind of activities, many of our members have been meeting to develop a strategic plan for our County Party (see the article on page 1).

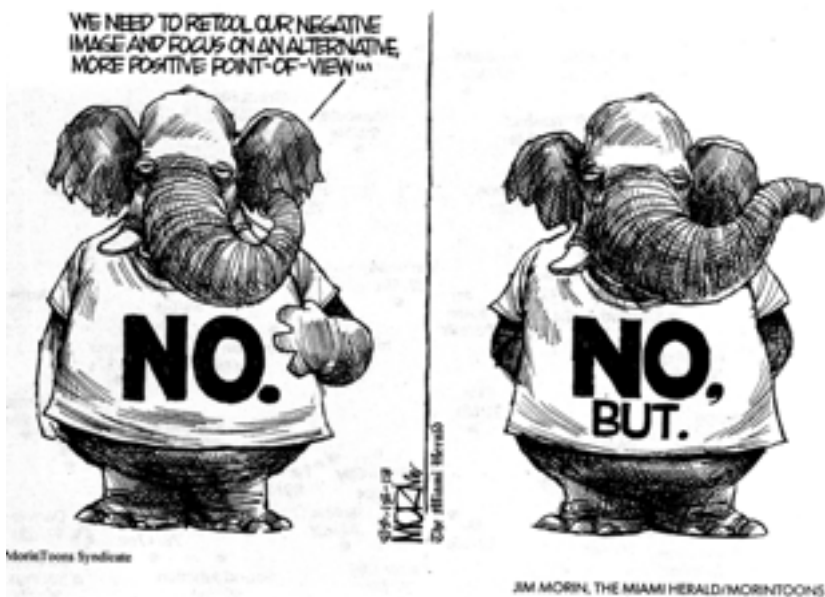
The challenge will be to implement the findings of the strategic plan, and reach key voters. With Governor, Senate, Congressional, State Senate, and Assembly along with local County campaigns to support, we need active committed members to volunteer.

That's where our renewing and new members come in. We can't win elections without you doing what you do best volunteering.

Thanks to our 172 members as of August 26th. To those who need to renew, and those who haven't yet joined, now is the time.

We know that the Republican candidates will be well funded by the Koch brothers and similar oligarchs. We have to counter their dollars with the hard work of dedicated volunteers.

So while it is fresh in your thoughts, print the form below, fill it out and send it to our PO box. Alternately, bring it with out to the meeting this Thursday (August 29th), THANK YOU!



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
- \$20 Two seniors/students/limited incomes
- \$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:

- American Indian Caucus
- Black Caucus
- Latino/Hispanic Caucus
- LGTB Caucus
- Rural Caucus
- Veterans' Caucus
- Women's Caucus

Return to: **Democratic Party of Door County**
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