



Democratic Party of Door County
"Public policy for public good"

"Proud to be a Democrat"

Democratic Party of Door County

October, 2013 Monthly Newsletter

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Upcoming Events

NOVEMBER

Nov 14 **DPDC Executive Board meeting**, Sturgeon Bay Library (**note location**), 107 S. 4th Ave., 6:00-7:30 PM. **Current** (2013) DPDC members are welcome.

Nov 21 **DPDC monthly membership meeting**, Sturgeon Bay Library, 107 S. 4th Ave., upper level, 7:00 PM. See article below about the program.

DECEMBER

Dec 7 **Annual Pie Party**, Bertschinger Community Center, Egg Harbor, 3:00-5:00 PM. **Senator Kathleen Vinehout**, speaker. See article p. 2.

Dec 12 **DPDC Executive Board meeting**, Sturgeon Bay Library (**note location**), 107 S. 4th Ave., 6:00-7:30 PM. **Current** (2013) DPDC members are welcome.

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Need to renew your membership? Simple. Just go to our website: www.doordems.org and on the right side of the page, click on the Door Dems donkey where it says "Join Door Dems". Then follow directions to print out the membership form.
THANK YOU!

Update on Strategic Communications Plan Featured at November 21st Membership Meeting

One key feature of the evolving Door Dems strategic plan, is an aggressive communication outreach plan. This involves, among other strategies, employing social media (i.e., Facebook, Twitter) to convey a hard-hitting message about our current legislative representatives.

We have engaged 3W Media to provide the initial media program, and to teach us how to conduct followup outreach. At our November 21st membership meeting, Barbara Luhning of 3W Media will present the initial outreach plan. This is a hard-hitting attention-getter that could "go viral." You won't want to miss her presentation. It starts at 7:00 PM at the Sturgeon Bay library, upper level.

You may have already received a letter from Allin Walker, chair of our special fundraising campaign to support the media outreach program. If so, you know that we cannot keep running the same election campaigns as in the past and expect a different result (winning). So when you receive Allin's fundraising appeal, please contribute generously. Your Board has already pledged more than \$2,000.

Authorized and paid for by the Democratic Party of Door County

To reach us: DCDems@me.com, on the web at www.doordems.org, or PO Box 863, Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235

Sen Vinehout to Speak at 8th Annual Pie Party, December 7th

Come one, come all to the Door Dems 8th Annual Pie Party at the Bertschinger Community Center (7860 Hwy 42), Egg Harbor on Saturday, December 7th, 3:00 - 5:00 PM. Admission is \$10/person (\$25/family of 3 or more) **and** a pie per family.

What happens at a Pie Party? You can select from a huge assortment of pies, with or without ice cream; seconds or thirds are encouraged. Elegant pies from premier Door County Bakeries will go home with the lucky winners of bag raffles.

There will be fun and fellowship and resolve facing the challenges in preparing for 2014.

State Senator **Kathleen Vinehout** will be the featured speaker. She is a brilliant and articulate exponent of progressive politics and common sense, and a fiery orator.

She has been mentioned as a possible candidate for the Democratic nomination for governor. Presumably we will learn more about that at the Pie Party.

We will also present the Bernie Connelly Volunteer of the Year award. See 'ya there.



Serving Pies at the Pie Party last January

Message from the Chair:

From Where I Sit

I am sure you will agree this last month has been most frustrating. We had to watch the Tea Party-led congress quibble over Affordable Care Act (as approved by the Supreme Court!) to the extent that they have caused the GNP to lose 75 million dollars per day by shutting down the USA for 16 days! (Per the Government Accounting Office) This was due to the Republicans holding a gun to President Obama's head—and then accusing him that he won't negotiate over the budget!



Chair Garrett Cohn

That is like a pyromaniac who wants to burn your house down and you say "No"—then he offers to just burn just the first floor and you say "No". He counters with "Alright we will just burn your second floor." After you say "No" again he shouts "You won't negotiate! It is not my fault—it is yours because you won't negotiate!" This is the same Tea Party mentality recently adopted as the Republican Party banner. And I bet we will experience this again in the first quarter 2014 when the next

Congressional Sequester budget committee concludes.

How long can we and our economy be held hostage by Republicans who remold facts to fit their convoluted version of history? Over the past three years the depth and pace of federal spending has reduced growth by 0.07 percentage point equaling over \$300 billion in lost output and roughly 2 million fewer jobs than would otherwise been the case. (Government Accounting Office) Speaking of the Republicans and their platform—keep in mind their negative stance on women's' rights, their continued objection to the immigration bill debate, not to mention their continual out of step positions on gay rights.

And now this last week we witnessed a losing candidate in a West Virginia who claimed "we sent a message to Washington" as if his Tea Party stance had won when in fact he lost by several percentage points. What logic is this?

It is our responsibility as Democrats to continually remind the independent voters of the differences between Democrat and Republican platforms and their effect on each one of us in Door County.

My take on it, by Estella Lauter:**Why Might You Want to Be a Poll Worker**

Poll workers are the people who sit at the table in your polling place to check your name off on the list of qualified voters from the time the polls open on each election day until after closing time, when they help or witness the Clerk in

**Estella Lauter**

the process of counting the ballots. They are paid (as much as \$12.00 an hour) for this service. As Gerri Friedberg says later in this article, there are other satisfactions as well. Please contact Garrett Cohn immediately if you can serve! We ask only that you maintain your DPDC membership (for as little as \$10.00) while you serve.

Only in November of an odd-numbered year with no federal election, the two major political parties are asked to nominate poll workers. Municipal clerks are obligated by state law to accept our nominations unless they already have sufficient workers from our party. In most cases, Door County municipalities do NOT have the requisite number of Democrats in these positions.

There are many understandable reasons for the relative lack of Democratic Party members who serve as poll workers. For many years, Democrats seemed to be a minority in the county and kept their heads down. Wisconsin does not require voters to identify a party affiliation in order to vote in a primary election.

Clerks have had a ready supply of residents whose family members have been active in local government, some of whom may have voted for a Democrat on occasion. These workers have often served well into their eighties, so most clerks did not call on the DPDC to fulfill its responsibility to nominate others. There was no apparent need for concern about the political allegiance of poll workers.

However, several changes in the political climate of WI and the nation suggest the need for more careful attention to the balance between Democratic and Republican poll workers in all voting places. The most obvious change is the polarization of the two parties and the efforts of Republican operatives to curtail the voting rights of students, people who are between jobs or residences, those who have not registered before election day, and of course those who have no identification with an official photo.

These efforts disproportionately affect the young and the old, the poor and those with disabilities, and one hopes that they will be judged unconstitutional, but until that day, we need to be more vigilant. Although it is not the poll worker's job to quarrel with a clerk over the rights of a voter, the presence of workers from both parties acts as stimulus to fair treatment. (We will probably see increasing numbers of volunteer poll watchers across the country in the 2014 election.)

Gerri Friedberg serves as a Democratic poll worker in the Town of Egg Harbor, and I recently asked her some specific questions about the nature of the work, the time commitment and her experience to supplement my conversations with clerks and other sources.

The number of election days differs from year to year because of primaries and special elections, but there are always at least two election days. Once these dates are established and published, they do not change. Each clerk has workers in reserve in case one is unavailable on a certain day.

Training for the job may consist of a formal session conducted by the clerk or you may simply be asked to read the Voter's Guide.

Gerri is at her polling place on voting days by 7 a.m. and she is usually excused after the vote tally checks out, somewhere between 9:30 & 11p.m., depending on everyone's agreement. Since she is likely the only Dem, she co-signs each ballot with another worker, putting it in a folder and (as needed) directing the voter to the machine or booth.

Everyone brings sandwiches, but the clerk often orders veggie & fruit plates to supplement these. In the lulls between voters, workers may read, chat, stretch, exercise, etc.

Brief official conversations occur, especially when a voter isn't listed at the proper/current address. If voters don't have proper identification, they are urged to return, and when they do, their vote is expedited if needed.

Gerri says it is interesting to observe/overhear other workers (many of whom are women who've worked together for decades) talk about voting for people or issues which she believes are against their interests. "Still, one has to respect the decades of hard work and sense of personal caring between these many-generation farm families who know virtually every person in the precinct"!

(Continued on page 4)

Be a Poll Worker?, Continued from Page 3

In response to my question "Why is this a good thing to do?" Gerri answered "One has the opportunity to help assure that the process is fair and legal, to gain an idea of how voters rate the importance of candidates/issues, to learn in depth more about fellow workers/neighbors, and to feel one is a more active participant in democracy." Gerri is convinced that there is no opportunity for voting fraud given the verification poll workers provide.

So, if YOU (whatever your age beyond 18, gender, education, etc.) want to earn a few extra dollars, or keep your eye on how democratic processes are faring at the local level, or provide a valuable service to your community, contact Garrett Cohn (gucohn@gmail.com, 920-559-2557) right away and ask to be nominated in your municipality. Although we should have until the end of December to make our nominations, the clerks will begin to finalize their lists in mid-November.

Here's What Getting Covered Sounds Like

The disastrous rollout of the government website for Americans to register for a health insurance exchange has been well described and documented in the media.

Less well publicized are the benefits accruing when one (finally?) registers successfully.

In the November 4, 2013 email update from the White House are accounts from four individuals who succeeded in getting coverage. The website claims that these are real people and real stories, and that "Here's what getting covered sounds like." One can only hope that millions more will have such experiences as the website becomes functional. Read on:

Lucy from Texas:

"I signed up at Healthcare.gov and I'm going to save \$2,300 a year on my premium alone -- and more, because my deductible will drop from \$7,500 a year to \$3,000 a year. It's still Blue Cross insurance, and I don't have to change doctors, either. I had a choice of over 30 plans and several different companies."

Larry from California:

"HealthCare.gov directed me to Covered California. My new plan gives me better coverage than what I've had with the same insurer and will cost \$188.00 a month less. That's why it's important for others to check it out. In California I experienced some glitches at first and I would check in every few days and things kept getting better."

Mark from Idaho:

"Yes, the website had some problems, but saving roughly \$2,500 next year (in premiums alone!) seems well worth a little extra patience. Having coverage that actually protects me from financial ruin if I, or my son, get sick or injured? I don't think you can put a price tag on that..."

Margaret from Washington:

"My responsible, hardworking niece was laid off from her job four years ago and lost her insurance. She became a nursing aide for the elderly and has been carrying a "catastrophic" insurance plan for which she was paying over \$300 a month, with very limited coverage and a \$1300 deductible. She had no trouble signing up for ACA insurance with much more extensive coverage for \$150 a month. She said she feels like she can breathe again."

Vulnerable WI Families to Receive Less Food Assistance

[Editor's note: The following article is largely excerpted from a brief by the Wisconsin Budget Project, an ongoing activity of the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, a non-partisan educational and advocacy organization. The full report can be found on the web at:

www.wisconsinbudgetproject.org/vulnerable-wisconsin-families-to-receive-less-food-assistance/

Nearly 900,000 people in Wisconsin will have a harder time putting food on the table starting in November, when a temporary boost to FoodShare, Wisconsin's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), ends.

SNAP (formerly known as Food Stamps) is a federally funded program to provide financial assistance for purchasing food for low-income people, administered by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), though individual states distribute, and set requirements for, benefits.

The across-the-board cuts in November will reduce the food assistance by \$89 million for struggling Wisconsin families in fiscal year 2014 alone. Cuts of that magnitude will cause significant pain for low-income families and hurt Wisconsin's economy.

In July 2013, 860,000 people in Wisconsin received help from SNAP, about 1 in 7 people.

The average SNAP benefit is relatively low, but it can make a big difference in helping to put food on the table. In Wisconsin, SNAP benefits average about \$115 per person per month, or roughly \$1.30 per meal. Starting in November, a family of three will have its benefit cut by \$29 a month.

Children make up a large share of those who get help from SNAP in Wisconsin. Statewide, 452,000 children, or one out of three, were enrolled in or participated in SNAP in 2012. All these children will be hurt by this cut.

In addition to helping feed hungry families, SNAP is one of the fastest, most effective ways to stimulate a struggling economy, because benefits are immediately spent on food at local grocery stores. Every \$1 increase in SNAP benefits generates about \$1.70 in economic activity, according to the non-partisan Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

The coming reduction in SNAP means that families will spend less in their communities, adversely affecting local businesses. Door County families and businesses will lose \$263,000 between November, 2013 and September, 2014.

Policymakers at state and national levels have said they want to cut the program even more.

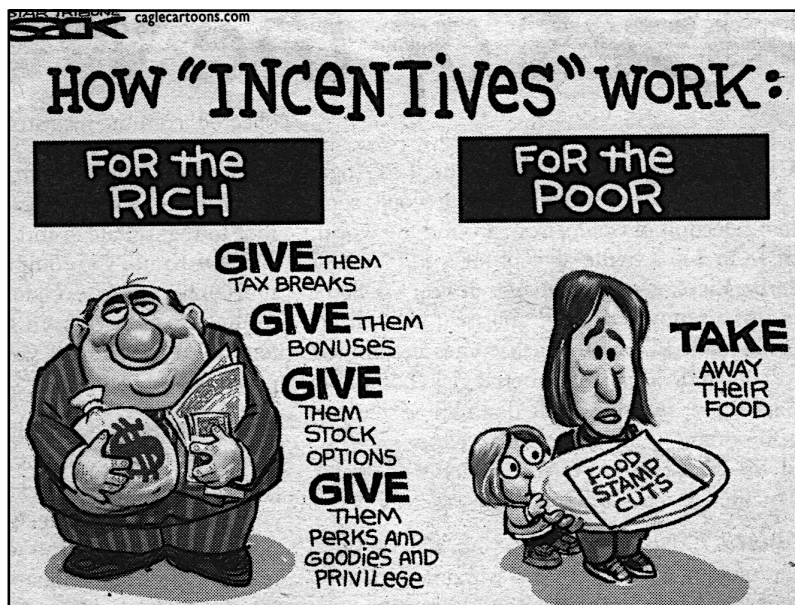
At the state level, legislators imposed new work rules that will reduce the number of people receiving benefits by an estimated 31,000, according to the Legislative Fiscal Bureau. Governor Walker has advocated for asset limits for people receiving SNAP benefits, which would further limit eligibility.

At the national level, House Republicans have passed a bill that would slash additional billions of dollars from the SNAP program.

Reducing SNAP benefits is shortsighted given the slow economy and lackluster job growth, particularly in Wisconsin. Poverty and joblessness often mean families can't put food on the table. One in nine Wisconsin households is affected by food insecurity, according to a recent report from the USDA.

SNAP is a powerful tool that helps low-income Wisconsin families. The current cuts in benefits, changes in eligibility, and proposed further reductions by House Republicans only widens the gap between the rich and the rest of us.

Thanks to *Funny Times* and Sack for the cartoon below.



Sen. Kathleen Vinehout: Don't Roll Back Local Protections

[Editor's note: The following article by State Senator Kathleen Vinehout from the Cap Times, November 1, 2013, is quoted verbatim. It addresses Senate Bill 349 that endangers all of us.]

"Our aim when drafting the ordinance was not to stop mining in the town of Cooks Valley but to protect the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of our town," said Town Clerk Victoria Trinko.

She recently testified at a public hearing about Senate Bill 349, a bill to roll back locals' ability to protect citizens.

The bill, introduced by Sen. Tiffany, would overturn a unanimous 2012 Supreme Court decision supporting a local ordinance to protect the health and safety of residents residing in the town of Cooks Valley in Chippewa County.

Specifically at issue is the ability of local government to pass an ordinance to protect citizens from frac sand mining. Cooks Valley is an unzoned township. The town followed the law and adopted local police powers that gave them authority to enact a frac sand mine ordinance. Tiffany's bill would take this power away.

But SB 349 goes much further. It takes away any ability of counties, towns, cities or villages to protect health and safety with regard to water, air and blasting unless this authority is expressly given to locals in another part of the law. The bill strikes down part of the law granting police powers and home rule as authority for sand mine ordinances. If the bill becomes law, it would prohibit local rules related to not only protecting but even monitoring air or water.

It became clear during the hearing that eliminating local power to protect health and safety was the intention of the bill.

Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce testified in favor of the bill. The group said local rules to protect the environment, health or community "simply add confusion and stifle responsible growth and business." WMC's lobbyist testified local standards were "based on political not health" concerns.

In sharp contrast, Trinko from Cooks Valley listed by date the environmental problems with the Chippewa Sands mine located a half-mile from her home. She spoke of dust billowing from the mine. Over a year period she was diagnosed with asthma and installed expensive home air filtration. She said she must "wear a protective mask when I am outside for any length of time." While on vacation her symptoms completely disappeared only to reappear when she returned home.

Health and safety is also a worry of residents near Arcadia in Trempealeau County. Rep. Chris Danou joined me to testify about concerns we've

heard from many constituents. The residents, including many children, living in two subdivisions are surrounded by five sand mines within 5 miles of their homes. These residents expressed so much anxiety to the Trempealeau County Board that supervisors unanimously passed a one-year moratorium against further sand mines and ordered air monitoring to be done near the mines and the subdivisions.

In my discussions with legislative attorneys, I learned if SB 349 becomes law, it is likely the Trempealeau Country moratorium could be overturned and monitoring could be stopped.

The state should not tell locals to stick their heads in the sand when the lifelong health of children is at stake.

Over 100 citizens got up at dawn to travel from western Wisconsin to testify at the hearing. They listened all day as lobbyists — none of whom lived near the mines — spoke about the benefits of the bill. Many locals testifying against the bill were forced to wait until late to testify — by that time folks riding the bus had to leave.

One traveler was Nan Horton from Ettrick. She was prepared to tell the committee the bill "ignores the need for citizens to have a voice in decisions affecting their own health, safety, property values and general welfare."

Similarly, Heather Anderson from Chippewa County wanted to ask, "Who has spoken to the parent who set a birthday party picnic table only to find the plates were dusted with sand in a short period and had to bring the picnic inside?"

Shortly after the hearing, Sen. Dale Schultz [Rep-17] released a statement declaring, "After hearing from constituents and listening to local elected officials in my district I cannot support Senate Bill 349."

I urge more lawmakers to listen to their constituents and do the same!



Thanks to *Funny Times* and Sale