



"Proud to be a Democrat"

Democratic Party of Door County

December, 2012 Monthly Newsletter

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Upcoming Events

JANUARY

Jan 10 **DPDC Executive Board meeting**, Sturgeon Bay Library (**note location**), 107 S. 4th Ave., 6:00 - 7:30PM. **Current** (2013) DPDC members are welcome.

Jan 26 **7th Annual Pie Party**, in lieu of Membership Meeting, Bertschinger Community Center, Egg Harbor, 4:00-6:00 PM. See article below.

FEBRUARY

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

Feb 28 **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-elect.** Garrett Cohn asks "Where and How are We Headed", and proposes some goals for the next biennium.

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- **Poem of the month - Personification**

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Save the Date: 7th Annual Pie Party, January 26th

Come one, come all to the Door Dems 7th Annual Pie Party at the Bertschinger Community Center (7860 Hwy 42), Egg Harbor on Saturday, January 26th, 4:00 - 6:00 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 be available to take home for the lucky winners of bag raffles.

There will be fun and fellowship celebrating our election successes, and resolve facing the challenges in preparing for 2014. We have invited State Senator Jon Erpenbach to update us on current and upcoming legislative issues, as our governor continues to "stick it" to the people of Wisconsin.

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



Serving Pies Last Year

New Officers and Board Elected at December Membership Meeting

At the December 13 membership meeting new DPDC officers and executive board were elected for the 2013-14 biennium. The slate of officers and board presented by the nominating committee was elected unanimously.

Officers are elected at-large. Executive board members represent geographic regions of the County. The new officers and board members are:

Chair - Garrett Cohn*

Vice-Chair - Bill Perloff

Secretary - Terry Bobbe

Treasurer - John Franz

Past-Chair - Allin Walker

Executive Board -

Northern Door

Wayne Kudick

Naomi Rowley*

Sturgeon Bay

Rod Bohn

Valerie Boyarski*

Ron MacLean

Southern Door

Dean Hoegger

Mary Horn

At-Large

Sam Carmen*

John Harris

The new officers and board will be sworn-in at the January 10th meeting of the executive board.

Preceding the election, retiring Chair Allin Walker and Bill Perloff gave a brief discussion of lessons learned from the election. Much of that discussion was published in the November 2012 DPDC newsletter, though some new thoughts emerged.

It was evident that voters split their votes, with the top of the ticket (President and Senate) benefiting from the coordinated campaign more than Congressional and Assembly candidates.

Analysis of the vote differential between the Democratic candidates for President and State Assembly identifies a group of persuadable voters who can be targeted for persuasion activities in the next election cycle.

Over the next few months, we will have brief profiles of our new officers and board members (denoted by an asterisk). They, and all the officers and board members, have accepted a significant time and energy obligation to our Door Dems and upcoming Democratic campaigns. Please help them by saying "yes" when you are contacted to volunteer for an event or activity.

* Newly elected to office or board position

Message From the Chair-elect:

Where and How are We Headed?

Movement without effort is like a dog sticking his head out the car window—feeling of movement but without effort. We all know the goal of movement without intent will not get us to where we want to go; we must plan our course.



Chair-elect Garrett Cohn

After successful county victories in the Presidential and Senatorial elections, we could feel we aren't faced with any immediate challenges on the horizon. NOT TRUE. Through Allin's board's tireless efforts we have built our membership to nearly 300 dues paying members throughout 2012. This was reached with the help of clear goals

in sight—the Presidential election along with the ongoing controversy attached to our governor.

Now we must set new goals for 2013-2014. Retain and build the current membership base? Energize the membership by stimulating the committee structure? "Sell" the idea to enough members for them to step forward to become candidates for county offices that have been uncontested for years? *Or are there other targets?*

And of course the next question is, what part can you do? We have the opportunity not to fall to hubris which easily can happen after a victory. Diligence must be continued by staying true to our values.

Let me know your intelligent thoughts and commitments.

My take on it, by Estella Lauter:**What do Americans Mean by “Freedom”?**

Is there anyone among us during this holiday season who has not been distressed by news of the so-called “fiscal cliff” on which the majority of our Representatives have apparently set up camp, and the far-fetched ideas about gun control in the wake of the tragic deaths in Newtown, CT? Can anyone see a way to get us on the same page long enough for a reasonable discussion of either issue to take place?

**Estella Lauter**

I have no crystal ball, but as the opinions have swirled around the air waves with increasing speed, I have begun to see at least one way that the two issues (how to limit the federal debt in the next decade and how to prevent killing sprees) are connected. They both depend on the way one interprets the idea of freedom. I doubt that we will reach satisfactory resolutions of these issues until we address our more basic disagreements about the idea of freedom.

During the Bush II era, it was fine to run up the national debt for two unbudgeted wars and Homeland Security, the most extensive federal agency in U.S. history, while giving tax breaks to the super rich. This appeared to result from a belief in the freedom of individuals to earn as much money as possible without a concomitant responsibility to support the system that made their wealth possible—at least this is the only way I can make sense of the historical facts.

Likewise, gun control became an issue of individual freedom instead of public safety when the NRA underwent an internal revolution in the Seventies!

The idea of freedom that proponents of fiscal austerity and the right to bear arms for self-defense share has been called “negative freedom” by philosophers. When it is stated philosophically, as “freedom from unreasonable external constraints on action” (entry for political freedom, www.Wikipedia.com), it sounds fine. But everything depends on the interpretation of what is “unreasonable.”

In the last decade, Republicans have typically argued that taxes are an unreasonable external constraint on both individuals and corporations, while Democrats (at least in WI) have argued that taxes are an investment in and the price of a civil

society, and that those who make more money must pay their fair share.

On the issue of gun control, Republicans have introduced “concealed carry” laws in every state and have refused any restrictions on ownership except in cases where the proposed owner has a criminal record or a known mental illness. Democrats, on the other hand, have found the Brady ban on automatic weapons highly reasonable, and we have argued for more complete background checks by gun dealers regardless of the venue for sales (gun shows should not be exempt from these rules). We would probably accept the principle that operates in the UK, whereby one can carry a gun (or a knife) only if there is a good reason to do so and only with a certificate.

On both issues (taxation and gun control), Dems have many other successful developed countries on our side, and our own history supports both increased taxes on the wealthy and rules (such as licensing for drivers and hours for selling liquor) to ensure public safety.

Our Constitution gives Congress the authority to raise the money and to make regulations necessary to ensure that citizens are able to pursue the ideals of “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” for which the Republic was founded. Liberty in that context meant political and religious liberty from oppression rather than an individual’s right to do or have whatever he wants; although the Founders privileged white men who owned land, they were also profoundly concerned with political unity or polity.

However, This authority is based on another idea of freedom that also comes into play in taxation and gun control. Philosophers call it a “positive” concept of freedom” that enables an individual or group to realize its potential or exercise its rights, capabilities and possibilities for action. It has evolved to mean “freedom from want”—from poverty, starvation, treatable disease, oppression, force and coercion (Wikipedia, as above).

This interpretation makes it impossible for most Democrats even to consider the possibility of a country that does not provide public access to education or that makes people dependent on the unpredictable generosity of donors for their daily bread or shelter. One prominent philosopher, Alasdair MacIntyre, understands freedom primarily in terms of social interdependence.

(Continued on page 4)

“Freedom” Continued from Page 3

There is something wrong with this picture. It is the absence of any sense of responsibility toward others-- toward a community, a public, that consists of people who are not exactly like one in their backgrounds, values, color, class, and so on. In the absence of this most basic societal value, neither a negative nor a positive construction of freedom makes sense.

Another philosopher, Nikolas Kompridis, contrasts two ideals of freedom: the first stresses autonomy and independence; the second posits the ability to initiate a new beginning, cooperatively. Amartya Sen has developed the second ideal in an economic theory that works to create a larger set of choices for everyone.

As I have listened to the arguments about the fiscal cliff and gun control this holiday season, I

have found the famed American commitment to autonomy less and less attractive.

In relation to these issues and many others, we need to insist on the freedom to initiate a new beginning, a more cooperative discussion, based on a clearer understanding of potentially shared values such as freedom instead of on unexamined slogans.

The House has the capacity to dump the ill-considered agreement that was made when the debt ceiling was raised last year. The NRA has a history of concern for public safety to balance its obsession with ideology of an individual's right to bear arms. Let's encourage our government and other institutions to start over again on these issues in the new year. As Socrates said, "the unexamined life is not worth living."

Meet Our New DPDC Chair, Garrett Cohn

For the next several months we will have brief feature articles to introduce our new officers and executive board members to our membership.

Garrett Cohn is the newly elected Chair of the Democratic Party of Door County for the 2013-2014 biennium. He previously served as a member of the Executive Board. His photo accompanies the "Message from the Chair-Elect on page 2.

Garrett and his wife of 45 years, Myrna, have had a summer residence in the County since 1976, and have lived here full-time since 2002.

While in college at the University of Iowa, he acquired an international perspective by spending his junior year in Aix-en-Provence, France. Since college Garrett has worked in marketing and sales, mostly in his family's promotional advertising business. In the early 1970's he took a division of the family business public. He was profiled by *Money Magazine* in the 1980's. In retirement, Garrett bakes pies at Sweetie Pies in Fish Creek during the tourist season.

Community activities include serving as President of the Unitarian Fellowship for two years. He is also a charter member of the Rotary Club of Northern Door. Garrett considers his most notable achievements to be his 45 years of marriage, his four children, and five grandchildren.

His vision for the Door Dems is outlined in the "Message from the Chair-Elect" above.

Poem of the Month by Estella Lauter

[Editor's note: Each monthly membership meeting is opened with an original poem by one of our members. Estella Lauter opened the December meeting with the following.]

Personification

A rhetorical figure or species of metaphor; an imaginary person conceived as representing a thing or an abstraction.

– *The Oxford English Dictionary*

It's usually the kind of speech that makes American eyes glaze over with boredom, so irrelevant to the world of markets and finance, rugged individuals and high stakes. If speech is not money, it is nothing.

So how do we explain the recent burst of poetry in the high Court that re-created the paper on which corporations are chartered as persons allowed to spend unlimited money while the rights of humans

with mothers and fathers are limited? And what about the proposal to raise fertilized eggs to personhood while those who breathe must verify their birth with two pieces of paper issued by the state?

What a victory for poetry! Poof. A figure of speech is now a person, while the human being who made it is paper. No more need for real children. The leftover eggs on ice will be perfect descendants for paper people.

(Published in *Verse Wisconsin* 110, October 2012
www.versewisconsin.org)

Patty Myers:**“Hey Alan, Let’s Get a Few Things Straight!!!”**

[Editor’s Note: Retired Senator [Alan Simpson](#), co-chair of President Obama’s National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, is quoted as calling senior citizens the “Greediest Generation” as he compared Social Security to a milk cow with 310 million teats.

[Patty Myers](#) a retired school teacher from Montana, following a 39 year career during which she was named Montana teacher of the year, was so enraged by Simpson’s remarks that she penned the following, somewhat intemperate (!) but to-the-point, letter to the Senator quoted below:]

1. As a career politician, you have been on the public dole (tit) for FIFTY YEARS.
2. I have been paying [Social Security](#) taxes for 48 YEARS (since I was 15 years old. I am now 63).
3. My Social Security payments, and those of millions of other Americans, were safely tucked away in an interest bearing account for decades until you political pukers decided to raid the account and give OUR money to a bunch of zero losers in return for votes, thus bankrupting the system and turning Social Security into a [Ponzi scheme](#) that would make Bernie Madoff proud.
4. Recently, just like Lucy & Charlie Brown, you and "your ilk" pulled the proverbial football away from millions of American seniors nearing retirement and moved the goalposts for full retirement from age 65 to age 67. NOW, you and your "[shill commission](#)" are proposing to move the goalposts YET AGAIN.
5. I, and millions of other Americans, have been paying into [Medicare](#) from Day One, and now "you morons" propose to change the rules of the game. Why? Because "you idiots" mismanaged other parts of the economy to such an extent that you need to steal our money from Medicare to pay the bills.
6. I, and millions of other Americans, have been paying income taxes our entire lives, and now you propose to increase our taxes yet again. Why? Because you "incompetent bastards" spent our money so profligately that you just kept on spending even after you ran out of money. Now, you come to the American taxpayers and say you need more to pay off YOUR debt.

To add insult to injury, you label us "greedy" for calling "bullshit" to your incompetence. Well, Captain Bullshit, I have a few questions for YOU:

1. How much money have you earned from the American taxpayers during your pathetic 50-year political career?
2. At what age did you retire from your pathetic political career, and how much are you receiving in annual retirement benefits from the American taxpayers?
3. How much do you pay for YOUR government provided health insurance?
4. What cuts in YOUR retirement and healthcare benefits are you proposing in your disgusting deficit reduction proposal, or as usual, have you exempted yourself and your political cronies?

It is you, Captain Bullshit, and your political co-conspirators called Congress who are the "greedy" ones. It is you and your fellow nutcase thieves who have bankrupted America and stolen the American dream from millions of loyal, patriotic taxpayers. And for what? Votes and your job and retirement security at our expense, you lunk-headed leech.

That's right, sir. You and yours have bankrupted America for the sole purpose of advancing your pathetic, political careers. You know it, we know it, and you know that we know it.

And you can take that to the bank, you miserable son-of-a-bitch. NO, I did not stutter.

P.S. And stop calling Social Security benefits "entitlements". WHAT AN INSULT!!!!



Membership Matters

If your membership in the DPDC is due to expire at the end of December, the email to which this is attached will indicate that fact. If such is the case, please renew your membership using the form below.

We need your involvement, your ideas, your time and energy, and your dues.

We receive 45% of your dues. The bulk of the remainder goes to support the State Democratic Party, and a small amount supports the 8th Congressional District Democratic Party.

Our share of your dues supports the office, the cost of campaign materials, media advertising, and direct contributions to Democratic candidates.

This year we were able to contribute to Pat Veeseer's Assembly Campaign, Jamie Wall's Congressional Campaign, and Tammy Baldwin's Senatorial Campaign.

We are keeping the office open and staffed in 2013 to maintain the positive momentum we developed during the 2012 General Election.

None of these activities would have been possible without **your** participation as members of the Democratic Party of Door County. By being members you do so much more than to simply vote for Democratic Candidates. You can think of your membership as an effect multiplier.

So do renew your membership. Remember that no one is denied membership for financial reasons. If the Senior/student/limited income category doesn't work for you, call and we can work out a satisfactory arrangement. For membership questions please call Bill Perloff at 920-838-5052.

Thank you for renewing your membership. See you at the Pie Party, January 26th at the Bertschinger Community Center, Egg Harbor, 4:00 - 6:00 PM.



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

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