



"Proud to be a Democrat"

Democratic Party of Door County

May, 2013 Monthly Newsletter

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Upcoming Events

JUNE

Jun 5 **DPDC Strategic Planning Session #1.** Sturgeon Bay Library, 107 S. 4th Ave., lower level, 6:00-8:45 PM. Current members are welcome.

Jun 13 **DPDC Executive Board meeting,** Sturgeon Bay Library, 6:00-7:30 PM. **Current (2013) DPDC members are welcome.**

Jun 18 **DPDC Strategic Planning Session #2.** Sturgeon Bay Library, 107 S. 4th Ave., lower level, 6:00-8:45 PM. Current members are welcome.

Jun 27 **DPDC monthly membership meeting,** Sturgeon Bay Library, 107 S. 4th Ave., upper level, 7:00 PM. See article below.

JULY

Jul 11 **Annual DPDC Picnic.** Sawyer Park Pavilion (at the west end of the Oregon St. bridge), 5:00 PM. Speaker TBA.

Digest of Contents

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- Chair Cohn reflects on the Thomas Paine Event
- Brief obituaries of long-standing members

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June 27th Membership Meeting a "Focus Group"

"Who has a better than 50% chance of defeating Scott Walker in the 2014 gubernatorial election?" is the question posed to Democratic Party focus groups throughout the state by Morris Andrews, former Executive Director of WEAC. (WEAC is the Wisconsin Education Association Council, the major teachers union.) Andrews met recently in Sturgeon Bay with local Democrats in a continuing effort to identify strong potential Democratic candidates.

The first part of the June DPDC membership meeting (7:00 PM, Sturgeon Bay Library, upper level) will be devoted to sharing the results of that meeting, as well as similar focus groups devoted to identifying candidates for State Senate District 1 to replace Frank Lasee.

The majority of the meeting will provide a focus group experience for our members to identify and prioritize the issues candidates need to address in the 2014 campaigns. Bring your ideas and issues to the meeting!

Results of the group exercise will be incorporated into the DPDC strategic planning process currently under way, and will be shared with the State Party (of which we are a branch) and local and state candidates.

For questions, please contact Wayne Kudick, 868-2262 or wjkudick@charter.net.

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

Message from the Chair:

From Where I Sit

The last John Paine dinner was really an unusual affair. Truly.



It was not a hard core Democratic Party activity in that John Nichols was the speaker. He is a nationally known author but is not known as a Democrat. He is an independent monitor of the political scene.

He calls himself progressive and announces it proudly—often. This allows him to comment harshly, albeit with tongue in cheek humor, on both parties and individuals from each side of the aisle.

His most common question in his 60 plus minutes of challenging and entertaining words Thursday were “Where are the adults?” He asked this question regarding the world’s production of automobiles in quantities that are so large they over work the environment and its ability to absorb the toxic waste in the form of auto exhaust fumes.

He referred to traffic jams that last not hours or days but weeks around the globe. Where are the adults? he asks again. His answers were hard to hear. It takes brave souls to make the right (unpopular) decision and push the answers forward.

On another subject, while introducing Nichols I commented on my hope he had an answer to Governor’s Walker attack on the middle class.

Following Nichol’s speech, I suggested we Democrats of Wisconsin take up a collection for Walker—for his Presidential Campaign in 2016. This would help Walker announce for President and thus leave Wisconsin! A few Democrats offer me some funds for his presidential campaign chest!

Don’t forget FRIENDraising! Bring your friends into the Democratic Party! They can help us make a difference!

We Mourn the Passing of Long-Standing Loyal Democrats



Marcheta (Keta) Steeb

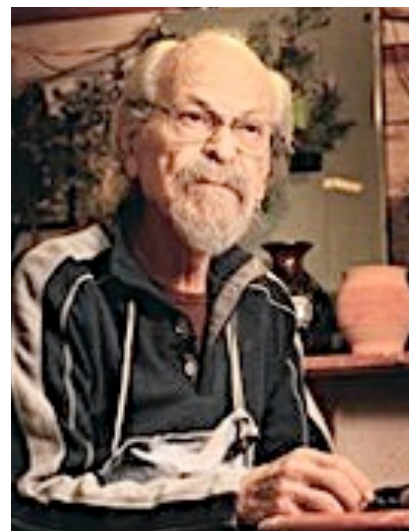
This month, Door County lost three stalwart members of our community, and long-standing loyal Democrats, who have been influential in shaping the character of Door County, Abe Cohn, Keta Steeb, and Lee Traven.

Keta was a feature writer for the Advocate for more than 40 years, often espousing her progressive views. Though physically fragile, she rode on the Democratic Party float in the BH July 4th parade last summer.

Lee, a Door County Native, retired to the County after a career as a corporate librarian. He



Lee Traven



Abraham (Abe) Cohn

served many charitable organizations, and was honored as the Door County Philanthropist of the year in 2011.

Abe Cohn was truly the dean of Door County potters, serving as mentor to many of the County’s pottery artists. He continued to create to the end of his life.

These three will be missed for so many reasons, not the least of which is their commitment to progressive causes, and concern for the disadvantaged among us.

Thomas Paine Dinner and Silent Auction a Great Event

More than 70 Democrats enjoyed fun, fellowship, a delicious dinner, a “gray donkey” silent auction, and a blockbuster speech by John Nichols at our 4th Annual Thomas Paine event.

At beautiful Bjorklunden, the evening began with a social hour and bidding on silent auction items. This was followed by a delicious buffet dinner provided by the Cornerstone Pub in Baileys Harbor.

The program started with a poem from Door County’s 2013 Poet Laureate, Estella Lauter, followed by readings from Thomas Paine by Allin Walker and Terry Bobbe.

John Nichols, Washington Correspondent for *The Nation*, and associate editor of Madison’s *Capital Times*, challenged us to adhere to core principles above partisanship. He talked about his

liberal grandfather who began as a Lincoln Republican, became a La Follette Progressive, and died as a Democrat, all without changing his core beliefs.

Nichols bemoaned the Supreme Court’s decision in *Citizens United*, allowing individuals and corporations to spend unlimited funds on political campaigns: “I fear that the American experiment has degenerated so far that we stand on the precipice of being not a democracy but a ‘dollarocracy’.”

Nichols concluded that a constitutional amendment to reverse *Citizens United* was needed, and was feasible.

The evening ended with closure of the silent auction. A few photos are below.



Enjoying dinner



John Nichols



Bidding at the silent auction

The April 25th Membership Meeting: The CAFO’s are Here!

Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO’s) are a reality for Northeast Wisconsin, with 16 such “farms” already in Kewaunee County.

These industrial operations house more than 1000 animal-units in a small space, and generate many millions of gallons of liquid manure that has contaminated surface and ground water. Now CAFO’s propose spreading liquid manure by center pivot spray irrigation, risking pollution of the air downwind.

At the April 25th membership meeting, Bill Ivins, Lynn Utesch, and Jim Olson from “Kewaunee Cares”, a committee of the Clean Water Action Council of Northeast Wisconsin (CWAC), described the Karst topography underlying much of NE Wisconsin.

This is fissured limestone or dolomite with very thin soil cover. Over time, the acidic rainwater seeps through the rock, dissolving it and leaving cavities within the rock and sinkholes providing

direct access for pollutants at the ground surface to penetrate to and contaminate domestic water supply aquifers. Indeed, this area may be



Bill Ivins, Lynn Utesch, Jim Olson

unsuitable for CAFO operations. Yet one CAFO is proposing a 76 million gallon liquid manure pit.

In addition to manure, these pits contain cleaning materials used in the barns, other waste matter, and a wide variety of bacterial and protozoan pathogens. Many of these pathogens have become resistant to available antibiotics because the cattle are given low levels of antibiotics, which selects for antibiotic resistance.

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CAFO's continued from page 3

Manure digesters are effective in removing 99% of the pathogens, but their concentrations are so high initially, that the remaining 1% is still a toxic concentration. Imagine the effects on people downwind of spraying these toxic materials.

In addition, the decomposition products include ammonia, hydrogen sulfide and methane, all potent greenhouse gases.

What can be done to prevent destroy the air and water on which we rely for our very lives?

Kewaunee Cares and CWAC are soliciting support from our legislators for controls to ensure that unsafe storage and disposal does not occur.

There are no CAFO's, by strict definition in Door County, but there are several large industrialized operations that keep the number of their cattle just below the limit. The potential effects are no less concerning, though there may not be enough land available in Southern Door County to make a CAFO profitable.

Wisconsin's Anemic Job Growth Directly Attributable to Walker's Policies

In an opinion piece in the April 1, 2013 JS Online, the online version of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Jack Norman wrote: "Yes, it's totally appropriate to blame the governor's policies for the slumbering condition of Wisconsin's economy."

As the former research director at the *Institute for Wisconsin's Future*, Norman has been studying the Wisconsin economy for some years.

The figure below shows private sector job growth in Wisconsin relative to national job growth. That is, if National job growth is 2% per year and WI job growth is 1% per year, then there is a negative 1% shown on the graph (ex. July 2012).

A 1% negative difference in job growth rate relative to the national rate corresponds to about 25,000 jobs per year that would be gained if WI jobs grew at the national rate.

We are now 44th in job growth in the U.S., and dead last among our neighboring states. Why is this a consequence of the Walker austerity budget?

Act 10, which took effect in July, 2011, sharply reduced the the take-home pay of the state's 350,000 public employees: the Legislative Fiscal Bureau estimated that an employee earning

\$50,000 lost over \$4,000, money drained out of the state's economy.

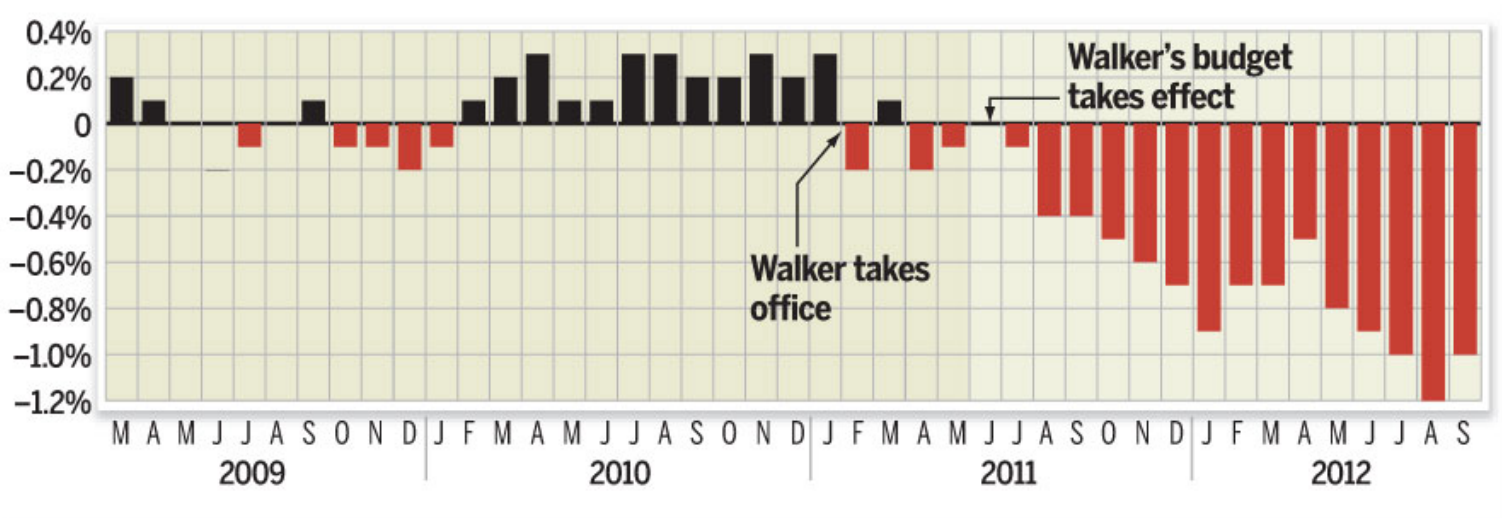
Norman estimates that in the first year of the Walker Budget public employees gave back over \$850 million in take-home pay. "This contracted the economy in every corner of the state, anywhere there's a public school teacher, garbage collector, county jail or public park."

Walker's budget cut spending in many areas, especially education, and state aid for local government. This, in turn led to lower spending at the county, municipal and school district levels.

There were also missed opportunities: nearly \$1 billion in federal funds for high-speed rail that Walker turned down, and more recently, some \$4 billion of federal funds to expand Medicaid and create 10,500 related jobs, also turned down.

Norman suggests that Walker has turned Wisconsin into a case study at the state level of the failure of austerity economics.

The complete article can be accessed at <http://www.jsonline.com/news/opinion/job-slump-is-walkers-fault-ci9cmke-200967701.html>



My take on it, by Estella Lauter:**How Best to Support Democracy in 2013**

Friends have been asking me what to do about the continuing flurry of requests for political contributions in this “off-year” for federal and state elections. I do not have a solid recommendation, but it seems like a good idea to begin a serious discussion of the problem.

**Estella Lauter**

Here are some alarming facts. According to *The Hightower Lowdown* 15, 5 (May 2013), the total tab for the 2012 federal elections was almost \$6.3 billion—roughly \$2.7 billion of that sum for the presidential election alone (more than twice the cost of the 2004 race). Only 3.7 million citizens (about 1% of the population) contributed \$200 or less to the presidential election in 2012; just 32 individuals gave \$4 million *more* than the 3.7 million did!

Four-tenths of a percent (13,295 individuals) gave 94% of the money to the Super-PACS for the combined elections. A handful of individuals (159) contributed 60% of all SuperPAC money; only 5 individuals gave about 30% of that. Just one corporate group (Karl Rove’s American Crossroads) spent almost the same amount as all the labor unions combined. Corporate interests had a 15/1 ratio over unions.

More than half (58.5%) of what was spent for TV ads was “dark money” from groups that did not have to identify their funding sources. The ratio of “dark money” spent on such ads was 7/1 in favor of Republicans. TV stations made \$38 billion more from political ads in 2012 than they did in 2008.

Interpretations of the role of money in elections will no doubt continue for some time, but two dangers loom on the horizon. First, the fact that Republicans did not win more legislative seats with such a strong financial edge may lead to complacency among those who say big money didn’t matter. Second, the fact that ordinary donors like us gave less than just 32 individuals may lead us to think that plutocracy is here to stay and we do not matter.

The burden of the various organizations that are currently asking for money along with signatures on worthy petitions is to convince us that we do matter. Indeed, if Trevor Potter, the Republican election

analyst who appeared on Bill Moyers’ show on 11/16/12, is correct, both big money and our continuing involvement in federal elections will matter a great deal in 2014 and 2016.

Potter was struck by the mischief “Citizens United” caused for Republicans in the 2012 election. Just two individual donors kept two of the candidates in the race until the very end of the Primary, depleting the Romney coffers when money was most needed to counter the President’s strategy of defining the opposition candidate in the media before he could define himself. Republicans will not be at such a disadvantage in 2014 or 2016. In 2016, Dems may be the ones with a contentious primary.

Despite complaints from big donors who felt under-appreciated, Obama was actually a determined fundraiser; he attended over 200 separate fundraising events in the year before the election (God forbid that candidates should have to continue to do this forever). We do not know if the next candidate will be as successful.

So the Republican monetary advantage may multiply in the next elections, and although it didn’t produce the results Karl Rove expected on the federal level in 2012, it did determine legislative and/or gubernatorial elections in several states—including Wisconsin where the rural areas that depend on TV ads for their contact with most candidates were definitely influenced by unequal spending.

Potter also noted that the Democratic advantage of “feet on the ground” may be diminished as Republicans learn to do the same steps, if Republican efforts to curtail voting are successful, and if the organization built by Obama supporters in 2008 and 2012 is allowed to fold. A lot is riding on the 2014 election.

If Democrats can stem the tide of Republican conversions in the states where decisions about voting laws are made and enforced, *if* we can elect a more reasonable set of Representatives to the House, and *if* we can continue to define our policies and beliefs positively instead of simply defending ourselves against outrageous accusations, we could conceivably give our President a functional legislature to enact the domestic policies concerning the economy, climate change, corporate regulation and civil rights that will improve conditions for millions of ordinary citizens.

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Supporting Democracy in 2013, continued from page 5

While I will continue to be engaged in political thinking and action as the needs and opportunities arise, I cannot contribute money every year to campaigns and causes at the level I did in 2012, so I will have to be far more selective.

The best I can do in 2013 is to contribute to the Democratic Party of Door County (which pays dues to the DPW) and to perhaps one candidate for public office, a couple of progressive groups that work on key issues such as public funding for elections, and a couple of causes (women's health, for example). My contributions will be smaller.

That is why I support the process DPDC is undertaking to develop priorities for the organization's time, energy and money in the coming months.

I wish that the national and state parties would engage in a similar exercise, and that the various progressive organizations would meet to do the same thing rather than proceeding helter-skelter to address every moment of crisis with the same intensity. We need a fully coherent plan to meet the coming challenges.

When I make my choices about what to fund this year, I am keeping close watch on what matters in Wisconsin, where the stakes in 2014 are particularly high.

Membership Matters

Many thanks to the 153 renewing or new members of the Door Dems. Your membership demonstrates your commitment to restoring Wisconsin values to our state administration and legislature. The upcoming elections for governor, congress, state senate, and assembly are just 16 months away, and will determine the course of our state for years to come.

That is why it is so important that the 117 former members whose memberships expired in 2012 or the first five months of 2013, renew memberships now. We need you to help keep Door County "blue"

and elect Democrats to state assembly district 1 and state senate district 1.

The regressive actions of the governor and Republican-controlled legislature are damaging to our state (see, for example, the article on WI job growth on page 5) and to our most needy citizens.

Our strength is in numbers and commitment. To those whose memberships have lapsed, please rejoin and help build our strength in support of Democratic values and Democratic candidates.

Just print the form below, fill it out, and send it to our PO Box (shown on the form). 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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