



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

"Proud to be a Democrat"

Democratic Party of Door County

February, 2014 Monthly Newsletter

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Events:

Mary Horn

Elections:

Allin Walker

Issues and Programs:

Membership:

Bill Perloff

Officers:

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Upcoming Events

FEBRUARY

Feb 27 **DPDC monthly membership meeting**, Sturgeon Bay Library, 107 S. 4th Ave., lower level, 7:00 PM. Program: Arnie Johnsrud, AD 1 candidate. See article below.

MARCH

Mar 13 **DPDC Executive Board meeting**, Sturgeon Bay Library, 107 S. 4th Ave., 6:00-7:30 PM, upper level. **Current** (2014) DPDC members are welcome.

Mar 27 **DPDC monthly membership meeting**, Sturgeon Bay Library, 107 S. 4th Ave., upper level, 7:00 PM. Program: Finalizing resolutions to be submitted to the 8th CD Democratic Party convention.

Digest of Contents

Page 2:

- **Review of Mary Burke visit to Door County**
- **Chair Cohn reviews the current state of the Burke campaign**, and concludes we have no time to waste.

Page 3: **Estella Lauter** examines the deficiencies in our current energy policy, and ways in which we could, and should be more efficient.

Page 4: **Bill Perloff** reviews the Governor's proposed tax reductions, and who are the winners and losers.

Page 5: **Invitation from Door County Clerk, Jill Lau** to apply for a position on the County Board of Canvass.

Page 6:

- **League of Women Voters candidate forums**
- **Membership Matters**

Assembly Candidate to Highlight His Campaign

To date (2/20/14) Arnie Johnsrud is the sole Democratic candidate for Assembly District 1, including Door County, who has filed the appropriate forms with the Government Accountability Board.

Arnie has lived most of his life in Kewaunee County, and has recently retired from teaching Agriculture and metalworking at Kewaunee High School. A Vietnam veteran, he maintains a family farm.

Come and hear the Arnie's view of the issues and plans for his campaign. As other candidates emerge, they will also be invited to address a membership meeting.

Following Arnie's presentation and Q&A, Rod Bohn, a member of the State Democratic Party Platform Committee, will discuss the process for submitting resolutions to be considered by the platform committee. Resolutions from last year, and the 2014 draft platform will be posted in the March DPDC newsletter. Members may submit additional resolutions for consideration at the March 27th Membership Meeting, where the membership will select 10 resolutions to forward to the 8th Congressional District Democratic Party Convention, April 27th.

We will meet at the Sturgeon Bay Library, lower level, 7:00 - 8:30 PM.



Arnie Johnsrud

Mary Burke, Wisconsin's Next Governor, Impresses Door County

An overflow crowd of more than 100 responded enthusiastically to Mary Burke's call for a change in direction of our state government.

She promised to fight every day for the people of Wisconsin rather than out-of-state corporations and moneyed special interests. She said, as Governor, she would say:

NO to out-of-state mining companies rewriting our environmental laws and YES to local control of air and water quality;

NO to unaccountable voucher schools siphoning funds from our public education system;

NO to requiring a photo ID to vote, or restricting hours for voting;

NO to Madison politicians interfering in a woman's control of her reproductive health; and

YES to raising the minimum wage.

As a successful businesswoman, Ms. Burke has been a job creator. When she was Secretary of



Mary Burke

the WI Department of Commerce, there were 84,000 more jobs in Wisconsin than there are today.

As a powerful exponent of fundamental Democratic principles, Ms. Burke energized the attendees in the Q&A that followed her talk.

Message from the Chair:

From Where I Sit: No Time to Waste

Scott Walker argues that independent voters do not want Republicans to move to the center.



Chair Garrett Cohn

It is the lesson he draws from the unusual 2012 electoral year in Wisconsin. In June he won his recall election by 7 points. A few months later Mr. Obama carried Wisconsin by the same 7 points. The governor calls these "Obama-Walker voters," independents who voted for both.

Ms. Burke, has a different view of the Obama-Walker voters: they lean Democratic but thought Mr. Walker deserved to complete his term. "We're fair-minded in Wisconsin," she said. She argues that his claims of rebuilding the state's job market are smoke and mirrors. "The fact is we've actually been creating jobs at a slower rate than all of our neighbors," she said.

Walker's job-creation claims are being turned against him as he promised 250,000 new jobs his first term, compared with about 100,000 to date. Walker insists that his focus is on 2014, but he seems to gain in stature each day that enthusiasm for Gov. Chris Christie, ebbs.

Mr. Walker has polarized Wisconsin. A Marquette University Law School poll last month

showed his job approval reaching a (new) high — of just 51 percent.

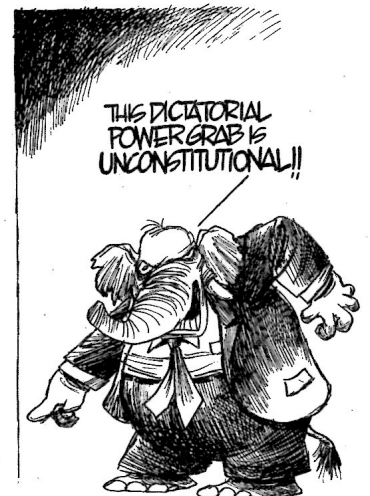
Ms. Burke rivals the governor on business credibility (she has met payrolls, managed and built a profitable business--has Mr. Walker?) and presents a stark contrast on social issues. In the most current poll, Ms. Burke trails by 6 points.

*The day (02/14/14) I edited this from **The New York Times** and other places, we had 998 days 'till election day 2016...and 263 days until election day 2014. **We must hurry!!***

PRESIDENTIAL EXECUTIVE ORDERS

HARRY TRUMAN	907
DWIGHT EISENHOWER	484
JOHN F. KENNEDY	214
LYNDON JOHNSON	325
RICHARD NIXON	346
GERALD R. FORD	169
JIMMY CARTER	320
RONALD REAGAN	381
GEORGE H.W. BUSH	166
BILL CLINTON	364
GEORGE W. BUSH	291
BARACK OBAMA	168

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JIM MORIN, THE MIAMI HERALD

Thanks to Jim Morin and The Miami Herald

My take on it, by Estella Lauter:

The Energy Challenge: Another Fundamental Issue

The recent brouhaha over propane availability, delivery and cost is a wake-up call for us to pay more attention to the policies and practices that govern the use of energy in the US and Wisconsin.



Estella Lauter

As a recent explanation by WI Sen.

Kathleen Vinehout, "Some Cry Foul Over Rapidly Rising Propane Prices" makes clear, our "crisis" was a result of "structural flaws in the industry" and the policies that govern it. It had to do with decisions about the amount of propane that could be exported; the pipelines for transporting propane to the Midwest; the number of trucks needed to pick up the fuel; the number of people needed or the kind of technology needed to keep track of actual levels of propane usage in temperatures like the ones we experienced this January and February.

Despite the hype for fracking that resulted from this debacle, there is no absolute shortage of fossil fuels—not propane, not oil. The US has access to sufficient quantities of fossil fuels "to cook us."

The latter observation came from Steven Chu, Nobel Laureate and Secretary of Energy from 2009-2013, at the annual meeting of the largest scientific organization in the world, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, in Chicago last weekend (www.aaas.org, see Plenary sessions). In his talk "How Discovery and Innovation Can Meet the Energy Challenge,"

Chu began with the science of climate change, arguing that although we may not be able to predict the future with complete accuracy, we already know that the average land temperature of the planet increased almost a degree in the last century, and at our current rate of energy use, it is reasonable to predict that it could increase by 4 degrees! Since it takes centuries to observe the effect of carbon on environments as complex as our oceans, we cannot wait for all of the data to come in before we act.

Although conservatives regularly argue not only that we do not need to change our energy policy but also that we cannot afford to do so, Chu presented many counter examples to both arguments. He examined progress in efficiency of energy use as a result of new standards for appliances and found that they have actually decreased prices. The progress on developing more efficient batteries for cell phones and cars has been extraordinary and will likely be improved

5 times in the next 5-10 years. But the electricity that will be required to service electronics by 2050 will increase from the current 2% to 20% of available resources. "Doing nothing is not an option."

There are many things that we and our businesses can do that we are not doing for many of the same reasons that oil companies did not prepare for the propane "shortage." For example, many of us have "black boxes" for our television reception. They consume 30-50 watts of energy when they could be run on the equivalent of a watch battery (1-3 watts), but cable companies choose to use old equipment that costs each household \$130. per year.

We could easily set a price on carbon because the technology exists to measure emissions and oil companies already carry a reserve on their books for a charge of \$50.00 a ton for carbon sequestration (which could apply to non-bio-degradable plastics as well). The cost of wind generated energy is approaching that of a new natural gas plant. The cost of solar could be \$.50 a watt in 2020 (it is now \$5.50 a watt in the U.S. but \$2.50 in Germany!).

The deterrents to solving the problem of energy often lie in the "soft costs" (installation, licensing, inspection, fees, over which the people should have some control) AND/OR in the active resistance of energy companies. Chu recommends that electric companies get behind the new technologies by borrowing an old plan from Ma Bell. They could offer to install rooftop solar energy with an in-home storage battery that would be owned and maintained by the company as phone companies used to do. This would result in lower rates for electricity, 10 KW of local storage that would provide 1 week of blackout resistance, better reliability at the ends of the distribution system, smaller batteries, storage in a controlled environment, and so on, solving a number of major problems with the current grid.

Problems like the ones we faced this winter will continue to occur as long as companies refuse to look beyond the profit motive and legislators refuse to act until they have 100% proof that change is necessary.

Chu ended his talk with a video clip from YouTube, "The Pale Blue Dot" narrated by Carl Sagan. Everyone should hear and see it. This earth seen from space is just "a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam," but it is the only home we have ever had, and there is nowhere else for us to live. We all have a moral responsibility not only to conserve the energy we use but also to do whatever we can to change the attitudes that are inhibiting further discoveries and innovation.

Bill Perloff:**Governor's Tax Policy Promoting Greater Inequality**

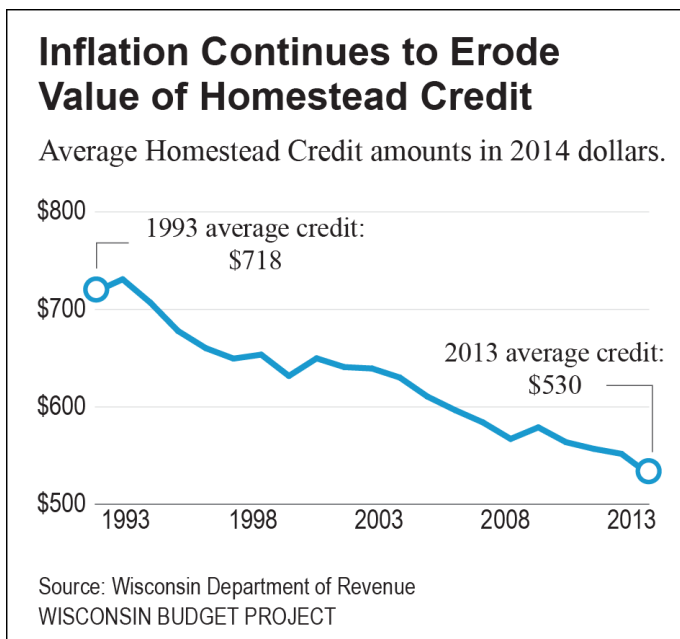
[Editor's note: The article below is a follow-on of the discussion on pages 4-5 in the January DPDC newsletter, where some of the ongoing assaults on Wisconsin's citizens and institutions were discussed. In this article the focus is on the Governor's new tax proposals in response to the projected state income surplus. Much of the article is excerpted from reports from the non-partisan Wisconsin Budget Project.]

EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT/HOMESTEAD TAX CREDIT

The projected Wisconsin budget surplus in 2015 is the result of massive reductions in support of public schools, tech colleges and universities, greater than anticipated tax revenue, and a variety of reduced support of other programs.

Two important changes in the 2011-2013 budget that adversely affected low-income citizens were reductions in the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and elimination of the cost-of-living adjustment to the Homestead Tax Credit (HTC). The effect of these changes is to increase the tax paid by low-income families.

This is illustrated in the graph below which shows how the HTC declines in value when not adjusted for inflation.



This is especially important to the senior population. In 2012 nearly a third of those receiving the credit were 63 years old or older, more than 80,000 Wisconsinites.

The lack of indexing has significant consequences for those living on fixed incomes. A person living on Social Security in WI has paid a total of nearly \$12, 500 more in property taxes over

the last 20 years than s/he would have if the HTC formula had been adjusted to keep up with the cost of living.

It would take only \$7 million out of the proposed tax cut of \$406 million to index the HTC for inflation. And, nearly every other part of the tax code is so adjusted.

Cuts in the EITC hit families with three or more children the hardest. A single mom with three children making the minimum wage will lose \$519 per year (21 percent of her current credit).

Thus it is ironic, but not surprising, that the property and income tax reductions proposed by the Governor benefit the wealthy far more than the poor.

PROPOSED INCOME AND PROPERTY TAX REDUCTION

The distribution of proposed tax cuts is shown in the two graphs at the top of page 5 which come from an analysis by the Institute for Taxation and Economic Policy. They found that the top 5% of Wisconsinites, who made \$161,000 or more in 2013 will get 18% of the tax cuts.

By contrast the bottom 40% get just 15% of the benefit.

Dividing taxpayers by income into five groups, the left graph shows that the bottom fifth, making less than \$21,000 per year would get an average tax cut of \$39; the right hand graph shows that this group (lowest 20% income) would receive only 5% of the tax cut.

Conversely, the top fifth, with incomes over \$88,000 would garner 44% of the tax cut, an average of \$308 per taxpayer. The top 1% of earners, with incomes of \$380,000 or more would enjoy 7% of the tax cut, an average of \$951.

ALTERNATIVE MINIMUM TAX

The Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT) is designed to ensure that affluent individuals with large deductions that would wipe out any tax liability still pay some tax. The federal AMT was established in 1969, and the Wisconsin version in the mid 1980's.

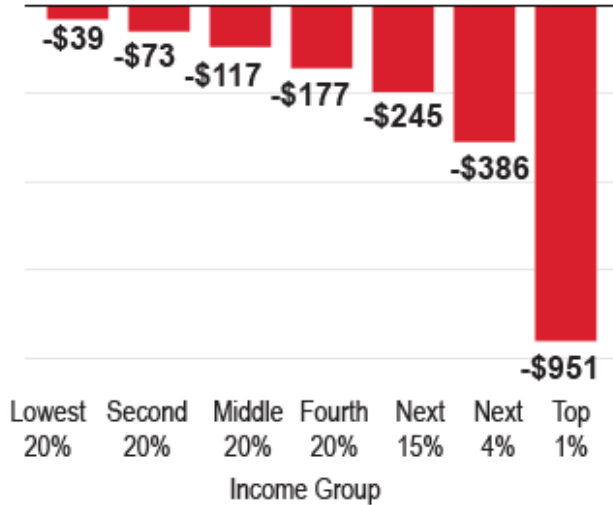
As a result of the huge tax cuts for investors in manufacturing and/or agriculture, in 2015 there will be about 30,000 individuals subject to the AMT. The proposed changes in the AMT along with two smaller credits would lead to more than \$50 million reduction in tax revenue by 2016, almost all a saving for the wealthy.

The imbalance in tax relief depicted in the graphs below does not include the significant AMT benefit, which skews the share of tax reduction even further toward the affluent.

(Continued on page 5)

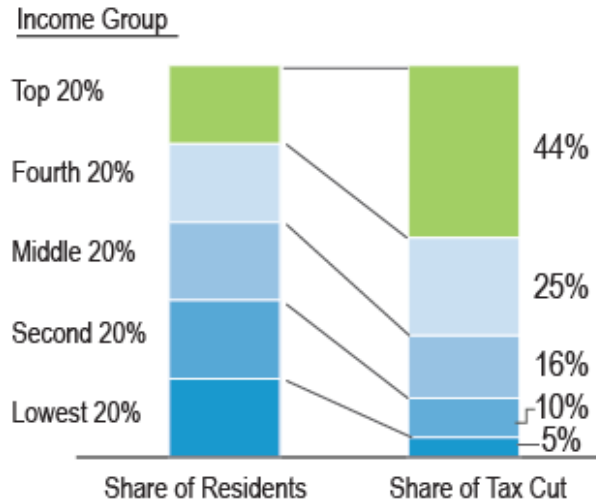
Largest Tax Cut Would Go to Highest Earners

Average tax cut by income group, for the income and property tax cuts proposed by Governor Walker.



Source: Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy

Share of tax cut by income group.



WISCONSIN BUDGET PROJECT

Another serious concern about the proposed tax cut is the structural deficit of about \$825 million looming on the horizon in 2015. The Governor has chosen to give tax cuts, primarily benefiting the wealthy rather than restoring the disastrous cuts in

funding our public schools or rather than repaying some of our public debt.

The Governor has made a crystal clear commitment to support an affluent minority at the expense of the middle- and low-income majority.

Invitation to Apply for the Door County Board of Canvass

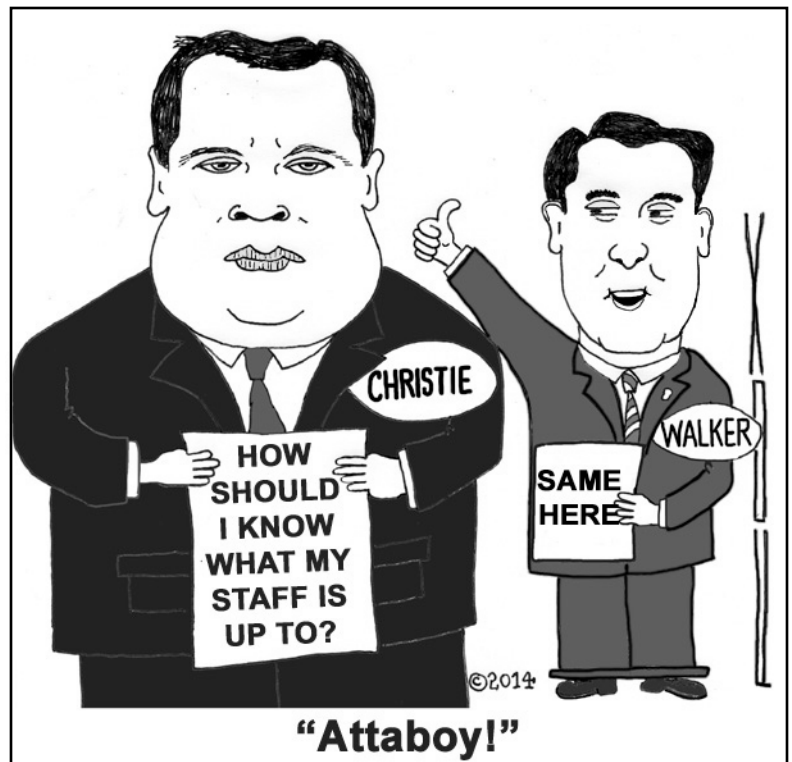
We have received an invitation from Jill Lau, Door County Clerk to submit names of members of the Door Dems willing to serve on the Door County Board of Canvass (DCBOC).

The DCBOC canvasses results of all County, state and Federal elections.

In 2014 the Board will meet in April, August and November. The canvass is generally no more than 1 to 4 hours, and consists of reviewing and verifying election results. BOC members are paid for their time, plus mileage reimbursement.

This is an opportunity to interact with County leadership and learn more about how our County government works.

If you have an interest in applying, please contact DPDC Chair Garrett Cohn, at 920-559-2557, or gucohn@gmail.com.



Thanks to John Fox

League of Women Voters Candidate Forums

In keeping with their long-standing tradition, the Door County League of Women Voters is sponsoring candidate forums for local and County-wide elections. They have announced two forums in March.

DOOR COUNTY SUPERVISOR DISTRICT 16

Saturday March 8, 10:00 AM
(Snow date Thursday March 13, 7:00 PM)
Candidates: Randy Halstead
Dale Wiegand
Location: Jacksonport Town Hall
3365 Cty Hwy V (in the fire station)

LIBERTY GROVE TOWN BOARD SUPERVISOR

Saturday March 22, 10:00 AM
(Snow date Tuesday March 25, 7:00 PM)
Candidates: Lou Covotsos
Gary Farber
Hugh Mulliken
Location: Liberty Grove Town Hall
11161 Old Stage Rd.
Sister Bay

Membership Matters

Thanks to the 152 members who have renewed their memberships for the 2014-15 year.

It seems as if each year is a "critical election year", but 2014 certainly fulfills that definition. The damage that Scott Walker and the radical legislature have done to cherished Wisconsin institutions has been well documented in these newsletters and many other places.

Removing Walker from office, and "flipping" the state senate to a Democratic majority are surely of the highest priority.

Door County is the key to winning the State Senate race for Senate District 1, one of the two wins needed to control the State Senate.

We cannot wake up on November 5th and say "I wish I had done more". What can we do? We can donate to the Democratic campaigns, we can volunteer, and we can renew membership in the Democratic Party of Door County. By doing so, you give us the resources to help our candidates.

So, if your membership has lapsed, please renew while it is fresh in your mind. Just print the form below and send it with your check to the address shown on the form.

If \$10 is beyond your means, contact Bill Perloff (920-839-5052) and we will work it out. We will not allow finances to prevent your joining or renewing. 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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