



"Proud to be a Democrat"

Democratic Party of Door County

April/May, 2015 Monthly Newsletter

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Upcoming Events

MAY

May 14 **DPDC Executive Board meeting**, Sturgeon Bay Library, 107 S. 4th Ave., 6:00-7:30 PM. **Current** (2015) DPDC members are welcome.

May 28 **6th Annual Thomas Paine Dinner**, **Mike McCabe is the speaker.** See the article below.

JUNE

Jun 11 **DPDC Executive Board meeting**, Sturgeon Bay Library, 107 S. 4th Ave., 6:00-7:30 PM. **Current** (2015) DPDC members are welcome.

June 25 **DPDC monthly member-ship meeting**, Sturgeon Bay Library, 107 S. 4th Ave., upper level, 7:00 PM. Program TBA.

SAVE THE DATE: Saturday, August 29, for the Annual Door Dems Picnic. Senator Russ Feingold will be the speaker.

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Want to be a sponsor at the Thomas Paine Dinner? See the article on page 2

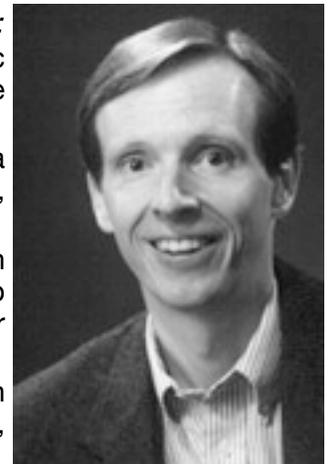
Mike McCabe To Speak at Thomas Paine Dinner

Mike McCabe, author of *Blue Jeans in High Places: The Coming Makeover of American Politics*, and dynamic speaker will be featured at the annual Thomas Paine dinner on May 28th.

His resume includes a farming background and a professional lifetime of experience in politics, journalism, public sector management and nonprofit leadership.

He served as executive director of the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign, a non-partisan watchdog group that has gained the attention of major national media for its ability to "follow the money".

In his latest book, he spares neither political party in showing how our political process has become diseased, and how to cure it.



(Continued on page 2)

Mike McCabe

Thomas Paine Dinner, Continued

The annual Thomas Paine Dinner honors the memory of the American Revolution's most articulate true progressive. **"These are the times that try men's souls."** This simple quotation from Paine's *The American Crisis* not only described the beginnings of the American Revolution but inspired passion as he communicated the ideas of the Revolution to common farmers as easily as to intellectuals. His prose stirred the hearts of the fledgling United States.

Where: The Door County Fire Company (former Ladder House), elevator-accessible upper level, 38 South Third Avenue, Sturgeon Bay.

When: Thursday, May 28th. Social hour at 5:30, dinner at 6:30 (gluten free selections available).

Cost: \$27.50 for reservations accompanied by check made out to Door Dems **up to May 21st**, sent to Door Dems, c/o John Franz, PO Box 618, Sister Bay, WI 54234. After May 21st, and at the door, the cost is \$35. Early reservations are recommended as seating is limited.

Bonus: Copies of *Blue Jeans in High Places: The Coming Makeover of American Politics* will be available for signing by Mr. McCabe.

Sponsors: We are seeking a few generous Democratic supporters as \$100 sponsors to help make this event our premier fund raiser of the year. Please contact Bill Perloff (wperloff@me.com, 920-839-9282) to volunteer or for further info about sponsorship. Thank you!

Questions: Contact Naomi at nrowley@itol.com or 920-839-2444

Message from the Chair: Another Strike Against WI by the Governor

The Governor's budget actually cuts programs that protect the state's waterways, disproving his administration's oft published commitment to reduce runoff pollution.



Chair Garrett Cohn

Green Bay's dead zone, (virtually nothing lives) was gone after 4 days in 1990. In summer of 2014 it lasted 43 days. This summer it is forecasted to be of longer duration and a larger area.

The dead zone results mostly from fertilizer phosphorous runoff and other nutrients that wash off farms and industrial developments into rivers, and eventually Green Bay. It creates oxygen-deprived stretches in the bay. It is not just a farm problem, but farms are less regulated than industrial facilities. Sewage plants combined with farm runoffs are a major identifiable part of the problem.

Walker's budget cuts \$5.7 million from the DNR budget. Since 1997, state funding for county land conservation staff (boots on the ground to monitor and protect) has fallen 38% to \$8 million for the biennium.

Since Walker's budgeteers have failed to give the DNR their trumpeted protection of our waterways with adequate financial support, it's up to Walker and his legislature to provide these promised necessary funds.

Good luck on this help from presidential wannabe Walker.

(Sources: Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, [Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation](#) Association report, DNR Secretary Cathy Stepp)

Penny Bernard Schaber: Keys to Winning Elections

At a sparsely attended membership meeting, Penny Bernard Schaber talked about winning elections.

She has won three of the five electoral contests she has entered, representing the City of Appleton for three terms in the Assembly, losing one Assembly and one senate race.

She emphasized four keys to winning elections:

(1) Conduct a grass roots campaign by knocking on doors, meeting lots of voters. (2) Be respectful of the voters when they differ with you. (3) You



Penny Bernard Schaber

must have an economic message. (4) Make people know what we stand for.

To run for state Senate, one must start at least one year in advance, attend government meetings, get to know farmers and local elected officials.

In the race, one must push back against negative ads, filing with the District Attorney when negative ads are lies.

Penny is currently a candidate for DPW first vice-chair, running with Jason Rae, the candidate for Chair.

My take on it, by Estella Lauter:**Who's Afraid of Scott Walker (and Why)?**

My good friend and mentor Bill Perloff asked me to write about Walker's abysmal budget proposal for this newsletter, but I find it so universally counter-productive to the health and welfare of the state that I can't decide which part of it to tackle.



Estella Lauter

Since the legislature will not listen to anything we say, let's just give it a raspberry and move on to arenas where we may be able to have an effect. Let's ask why no one in the esteemed mainstream media has yet raised questions about Scott Walker's record, and then let's get busy informing them of their oversight.

Last weekend, Walker presented himself as an "Everyman" candidate by contrast with other known contenders!

This is the man who would destroy every program Wisconsin has built for the public since the beginning of the 20th Century: a first-rate university system, a fine public school system, an enviable system of public parks, exemplary state-wide public radio and television stations, the best public employee retirement system in the country, a superb inter-library system, Badger Care and an excellent array of groundbreaking social service programs like the Aging and Disability Resource Center.

I could go on for pages about the NGOs that are affected by Walker's cuts to the state budget, beginning with Planned Parenthood. Almost anything that benefits the public is on his hit list.

So who is "everyman" exactly? Not school children or university students, pre-schoolers or senior citizens; no readers or fans of classical music, jazz or folk, but not workers either—not even the underlings who run state offices for him. And certainly not women who need reproductive health care.

So who is left? We all know the answer. White collared men (and a few women) who earn more than \$350,000 a year or who have inherited sufficient wealth to be in the top 1/10 of 1% financially. They can always go elsewhere, or buy the services they need.

Why has no one in the mainstream media noticed this discrepancy between image and reality?

Joan Walsh asks exactly this question in the Monday (4/20) Salon.com (not exactly mainstream but at least national) about a recent scandal in WI. It seems that the state "overbilled" two family planning clinics (one of them in NE Wisconsin) by millions of dollars—after shutting down five Planned Parenthood clinics. The clinics sued and the bills were adjusted, but not without high costs.

Walsh also mentions that cuts to the University will cost 400 jobs, leading to 320 fewer courses, affecting 9,000 students. At the time of her posting, neither of these points had made the national news. Instead the wires were humming with the Koch Brothers' endorsement of Walker as the best GOP nominee for President.

What is going on here? When Chris Christie seemed to be behind a traffic jam on a bridge across the Hudson River, the media couldn't get there fast enough. Is it that nothing in the Midwest is important enough for reporters to investigate?

Or does the money trail from the Brothers Koch extend into the media to control what questions are asked or how they are answered? Let's not wait to find out. Let's get the word out everywhere we can by whatever means possible. How about an ad in the NY Times (or at least the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel)?

The same day Walsh posted her article, Eric Stern, the Deputy Secretary of State in Montana posted "Kochs Defeated in Montana: 6 lessons the country can learn from this rural Western state" about the vote to expand Medicaid.

The gist of his article is "turn over every rock" and "speak the right language." Supporters of the expansion enlisted doctors and hospital administrators and showed how it would improve the bottom line in real communities.

"Former Gov. Brian Schweitzer, a rancher, wrote a letter to his local newspaper pointing out that Koch Industries owns a ranch in Montana that has taken \$12 million in public grazing subsidies while spending their fortune to prevent someone who makes \$11,000 a year from getting public help for medical care."

Apparently a lot of people who should be speaking out ARE afraid of Scott Walker. We need to know why.

Proposed Tax Cuts Favor the Wealthy and Shortchange the Poor

[Two recent studies by the Budget Project, an arm of the nonpartisan Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, illuminate the destructive effects of the dozens of tax cuts enacted by the legislature in the past few years. The following consists of excerpts from “Governor Doubles Down on Tax Cuts as Strategy to Fuel Growth” and “A Tale of Two Tax Credits: Lawmakers’ Priorities for Property Tax Cuts Favor the Wealthy”. The full reports can be found at www.wisconsinbudgetproject.org]

In a misguided attempt to encourage job growth, Wisconsin lawmakers have passed dozens of tax cuts in the last few years. Those tax cuts have a poor track record: they have not done much to improve the lives of Wisconsin’s families, and the Wisconsin economy continues to create significantly fewer jobs than the national average.

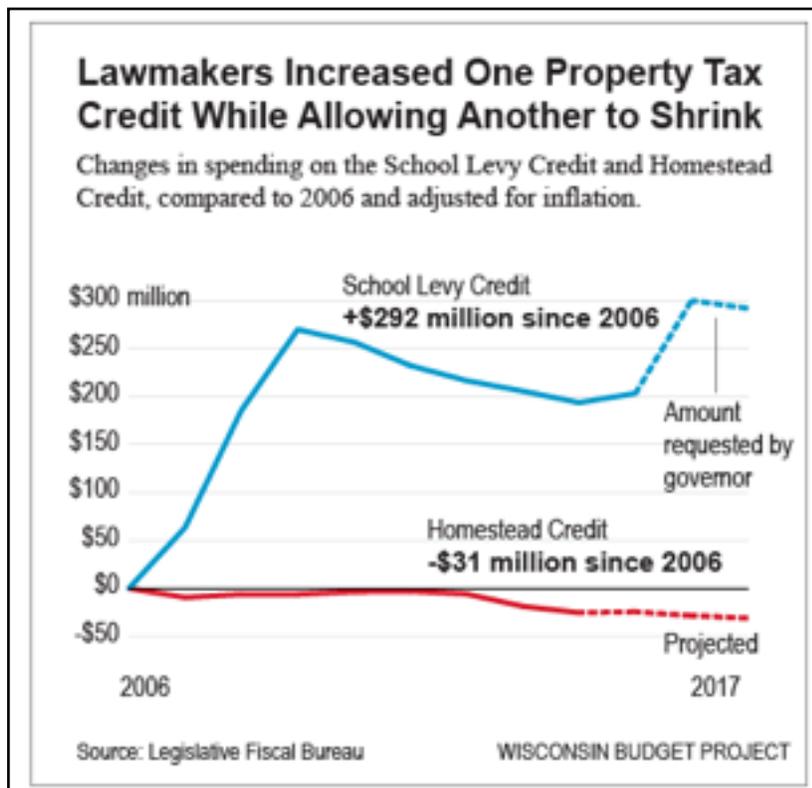
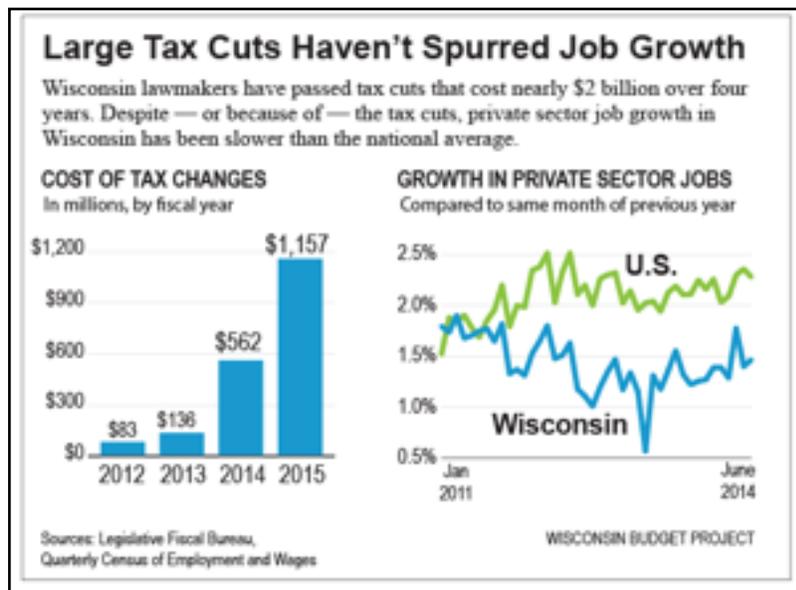
Governor Walker has overlooked the failure of tax cuts to boost Wisconsin’s economy, choosing instead to double down on a strategy that has made it harder to make investments in Wisconsin’s schools, workforce, and communities. His budget proposal includes more than \$300 million worth of new tax cuts, as well as deep cuts to the University System and public schools to pay for the proposed tax cuts and ones in the past.

That tax cuts have not benefited the WI economy is illustrated in the upper figure which shows, on the left, the cost in revenue resulting from tax cuts from 2012 through 2015, and on the right, the slow job growth compared to the nationwide average.

The Governor has proposed cutting property taxes in the next budget period by increasing state spending on the School Levy Credit by \$211 million over two years. Money for this tax credit goes to municipalities and is then passed through to individuals and businesses as a credit on their property tax bills. It must be passed through, and cannot be spent on schools.

Spending for the School Levy Credit has risen significantly over the last decade, as depicted by the blue line in the lower figure. If lawmakers follow Governor Walker’s recommendation, they will have increased the School Levy Credit by \$283 million over its 2006 level when inflation is taken into account. That’s an increase of 52%.

The School Levy Credit reduces property taxes for all owners of Wisconsin property, without regard to need. Owners who live out of state benefit, as do owners of commercial and industrial property. In fact, just 51% of the School Levy Credit goes to reduce property taxes for Wisconsin homeowners on their primary residences.



Tax Cuts Favor Wealthy, continued from page 4

That means that approximately \$103 million of the governor’s proposed increase in the credit would go to boosting the bottom line of businesses and corporations, reducing property taxes for owners of second homes, cutting taxes for people who live outside of Wisconsin.

Among the homeowners who benefit from the School Levy Credit, the largest credits go to the owners of the most expensive properties within a municipality. And on a per-student basis, the credits enjoyed by the property owners in the wealthiest school districts are almost seven times larger than the ones received by property owners in the poorest districts.

Meanwhile, lawmakers have allowed a more targeted property tax credit to shrink. The Homestead Credit benefits people who struggle with high property taxes relative to their incomes, like seniors who depend mainly on Social Security to make ends meet.

The credit is paid directly to residents, and is calculated using a formula that takes account of

the person’s income and property tax amount. In contrast to the School Levy Credit, the Homestead Credit cuts taxes for people with incomes of less than about \$25,000, providing targeted property tax relief for people with low incomes.

The value of the Homestead Credit has declined in recent years – by \$32 million between 2006 and the projected amount for 2017. That’s a decrease of 23% from the credit’s 2006 value. This is shown as the red line in the lower figure. The decline is exacerbated by the requirement that the formula to calculate the credit is frozen to not include increases in the cost of living.

In fiscal year 2013, the number of Wisconsin residents who benefited from the Homestead Credit was the lowest in a decade: 223,000.

Rather than increasing a property tax credit that provides larger benefits to the wealthy and to profitable companies, lawmakers should prioritize tax cuts aimed at Wisconsin residents who struggle to pay high property tax bills relative to their incomes.

Membership Matters

If the issues discussed in this newsletter are important to you, then we need you to help us elect progressive Democrats at local, state and national levels.

Membership in the Democratic Party of Door County is one way to join with others to multiply the effect of your single vote. Members meet monthly, often with an informative speaker.

Your membership in the Door Dems also makes you a member of the Democratic Party of WI, and enables your voice to be heard at the state level.

Joining is simple: just print and fill out the form below, and send it to our PO Box. Concerned about the cost? Call Bill Perloff, 920-839-9282, and we will work out a suitable arrangement. 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 memb’s)

I would also like to join:

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

I would like to volunteer. Please contact me.

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