



"Proud to be a Democrat"

Democratic Party of Door County

June/July, 2015 Newsletter

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Upcoming Events

JULY

July 9 **DPDC Executive Board meeting CANCELLED.**

July 23 **DPDC monthly membership meeting**, Sturgeon Bay Library, 107 S. 4th Ave., upper level, 7:00 PM. Speaker will be **Martha Laning**, newly elected Chair, Democratic Party of Wisconsin. See article below.

AUGUST

Aug 13 **DPDC Executive Board meeting**, Sturgeon Bay Library, 107 S. 4th Ave., 6:00-7:30 PM. **Current (2015) DPDC members** are welcome.

Aug 29 Annual DPDC Picnic, Sawyer Park Pavilion, west end of Oregon St. bridge, 5:00 PM. **Senator Russ Feingold** will be guest speaker. See article page 2.

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Martha Laning, DPW Chair, Speaking at July Meeting

The July 23rd membership meeting will be an opportunity for Door Dems to meet and hear from Martha Laning, the newly elected Chair of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin.

Martha will share her dynamic vision of what is on the horizon for Door County and Wisconsin's Democrats.

An exponent of inclusive leadership, Ms. Laning will outline her plans for:

- Improved messaging
- County Party Grant initiatives, and
- Midterm election reforms

She will address our concerns and will be listening how DPW can help to make our County Party more effective.

The meeting will be at the Sturgeon Bay Library, 107 S. 4th Ave., upper level, at 7:00 PM. Be there and meet our new DPW Chair.



Martha Laning

Senator Russ Feingold Featured at August 29th Picnic

Former and future U.S. Senator, Russ Feingold is the featured speaker at the Door Dems annual Picnic Saturday, August 29th.

Feingold served three terms in the Senate earning a reputation as a principled populist. Among his notable achievements were co-authorship of the McCain-Feingold Campaign Finance Reform Bill, and the only senator to vote against the Patriot Act.

He was the recipient of the John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award.

He advocated for a single-payer health care system, women's reproductive rights and same-sex marriage at a time when these were radical



Senator Russ Feingold

ideas. He fulfilled his campaign promise to hold a "listening session" each year in each of Wisconsin's 72 counties.

Russ lost his Senate seat to a tea-party favorite in the Republican tsunami of 2010, and is determined to win it back in 2016.

Here is our opportunity to meet Russ face-to-face and hear his plans for the upcoming election.

The picnic is on Saturday, August 29th, at Sawyer Park Pavilion (at the west end of the Oregon Street bridge), starting at 5:00 PM. Admission is **\$7 per adult, \$2 children** 12 and under, age 3 and under, free, and **a salad or dessert dish to pass** per family. We will provide hamburgers, hot dogs, veggie burgers, condiments, and soft drinks.

We expect a large crowd and are encouraging early reservations. A separate notice with information about making reservations will be sent.

If you would like to be a "Sponsor" to show your support, please contact Garrett Cohn (aucohn@gmail.com, 920-559-2557).

Message from the Chair:

Another Strike Against WI by the Governor

The *New York Times Sunday Magazine* (June 14) had an extensive 6 page report "Fate of the Union" covering Scott Walker and his labor relations history.

It outlined his anti-labor positions all the way back to his Milwaukee County initial foray in politics through his current four plus years campaign to break union's power as Governor. It is his base for his yet- to- be declared Presidential campaign.

But the article didn't explain his reasoning for "Article 10" which cancelled collective bargaining for all public employee unions, other than "we are broke". Let alone he never mentioned, nor promised or identified this catastrophic economic move during his election campaigning.

He now blames this necessity on the state of Wisconsin's finances—"the state is broke" he reiterated too many times to count over the last eighteen months.

It is speculated he wants a strong conservative plank to stand on for his presidential aspirations. There are other speculations about his plans regarding abortion rights, Milwaukee stadium, college budget cuts, debt repayment to name a few.



Chair Garrett Cohn

Walker's whole political underpinning is based on his falsifying budget numbers. And this is not speculation but myths from Walker that are outright fabrications—not twists, not spins but falsehoods.

"This budget is smaller than the last"—at \$74.7 billion it is \$4.76 more than the last.

His "it is cheaper for us to keep them" regarding the Buck's new stadium program—and although the taxpayers of the state will layout over \$100 million for the cheapest plan he is proposing.

He doesn't mention the cost of borrowing this money nor the impact on canceling Affordable Care Act and the High Speed rail between Madison and ultimately Chicago Twin Cities and Milwaukee nor, not raising funds for transportation repair funding nor what this \$100 million could do for the state colleges versus the Bucks stadium--all contributing to Wisconsin's financial plight!

Meanwhile, he is not answering legitimate concerns nor recognizing that Wisconsin taxpayers require straight answers. He continues to chase presidential fund raisers and ignoring the real needs of his taxpayers.

There is not enough room to continue to list his additional ruinous financial actions on the citizens of Wisconsin. He will not (or can not) understand how these actions negatively impact Wisconsin's future.

My take on it, by Estella Lauter:**Walker and the “New World Order”**

A savvy friend warned me a few weeks back that if we don't want Walker to keep winning, we had better at least try to understand why he appeals to roughly half of the voters in Wisconsin.

My first response was that it is too painful to do so. Who would vote for someone whose campaign practices are tainted with six convictions of close associates? Have we reached the point where our citizens care nothing for fairness, honesty and integrity?

It doesn't make sense that pundits are saying that honesty will be an issue for Hilary Clinton but ignoring the many black marks on Walker's record.

My friend replied that maybe we have reached the point, however, where people are so upset by the idea that someone else has more security than they do (in the form of insurance and a pension, for example) that they will vote for anyone who takes it away!

Or they may think that our financial system is so corrupt that anyone who can game it is to be admired. Or they may be convinced that winning is all that matters, so winning by kow-towing to big money is as good as any other way.

These values make hash of democracy as I understand it. Then I read a book by David Ranney, *New World Disorder* (Charleston: CreateSpace, 2014), a summer resident of Washington Island who is retired from the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Ranney's overview of US economic history since the 80s goes a long way toward explaining why and how we find ourselves with an emperor whom we think is wearing no clothes and a citizenry that supports him.

Ranney begins with the observation that this is not the first time our economic system has experienced “churning and flailing.” We all know that the great depression produced a radical change in economic priorities such that the post-war period became a golden age for the middle class.

That began to change in the 70s, however, with the Viet Nam war, the energy crisis, and the invention of the credit card. By the 80s, the values (or “common sense”) of a “new world order” had emerged. It was based on three pillars: American supremacy across the globe; the search for cheaper labor to increase profit; and the creation of phantom financial “products” (credit, bets on “futures,” debt, derivatives, etc.).

All of these pillars are now crumbling, and we have the opportunity once again to seek a more sustainable basis for capitalism—or to modify it to better serve “all the people.”



Estella Lauter

The dangers of our time are apparent. “American exceptionalism” can be used to justify all sorts of practices that we thought were the product of fascism, as we saw in the Bush administration's approval of torture.

Just as perpetual debt is no solution to our economic crises, so perpetual hunger is also unacceptable.

We have to create a system that sustains “all the people.” The impasse between “tax and spend” and “cut and starve” along with the constant campaigns for re-election keep us from understanding that the new world order has proved unsustainable.

There are no more phantom “products” that will create wealth without harming real people. (As a recent article on why people want to go to Mars observed, we can't solve our problems by leaving planet Earth—the new version of going West—because we take our germs with us wherever we go.)

So the relevant question for us as Democrats is how to revise the common sense that has developed since the Eighties in time to stop people like Walker from perverting democratic values further.

Maybe if more citizens understood the extent to which our economic system *depends* on taking ever more profit at the expense of ALL workers, voters could see why “all of us” need to be concerned about wages, working conditions, health care and education, and that freedom in any meaningful sense cannot exist in an atmosphere of radical inequality, corruption and distortion of the role of government.

Just as the Old South depended on slavery, our system depends on workers to accept less and less of the spoils. Surely that awareness could awaken a latent sense of fairness and equality that would make “winning” an election look trivial and winning it by cheating look reprehensible.

It remains to be seen, however, if our media can serve the role of watchdog for these values. It is in the interests of big money to keep our attention focused on dogfights rather than providing a searching analysis of the system as a whole. I hope we will hear more from Dr. Ranney.

Revised Figures Paint Much Less Rosy Picture of Wisconsin's Fiscal Health

[A recent blog by Jon Peacock of the "Budget Project", an arm of nonpartisan Wisconsin Council on Children and Families sheds disturbing light on the long-term implications of the legislature's budget choices. The article is somewhat technical, but worth reading to appreciate the shell game played by our Governor and legislature. The text is reproduced in its entirety below. Other Budget Project publications can be found at www.wisconsinbudgetproject.org. Ed.]

The state's fiscal health isn't nearly as strong as the Governor and a number of other lawmakers asserted in the spring. While the Governor was courting GOP support in South Carolina for his upcoming presidential campaign, he said: "At the end of the budget we're debating right now for our next two years in my state, we will end with a structural surplus of \$499 million."

Unfortunately, the latest figures from the Legislative Fiscal Bureau (LFB) show that we need to change that plus sign to a minus sign, because the Governor's optimistic assertion was off by about \$1 billion.

A July 7th memo from the LFB projects that Wisconsin will start the 2017-19 biennium with a structural deficit of \$490 million. In other words, the 2015-17 budget developed by the Joint Finance Committee (JFC) puts the state in a position where lawmakers would need to use the first \$490 million of revenue growth during the 2017-19 biennium simply to maintain the spending commitments assumed in the second year of the 2015-17 budget.

And a closer review of the LFB memo reveals that the fiscal pain that will be felt in 2017-19 is likely to be far greater than the structural deficit calculation indicates – thanks to unrealistic assumptions about the amount of funding agencies will lapse to the state treasury over the next four years.

There are two general reasons why the previously estimated structural surplus has turned to a deficit. First, legislators have yielded to public pressure to ease some of the spending cuts the Governor recommended. Kudos to the JFC and other legislators for that.

However, while they were scaling back some of the spending cuts, they also cut taxes more than the Governor proposed, and they accomplished those two things by using unsustainable revenue or savings.

Another very significant factor in changing the state's apparent fiscal health is that the JFC rejected one of the arbitrary and unrealistic assumptions the Governor made about spending in the 2017-19 budget. His budget made the the

convenient and rather strange assumption that school aid would be cut by \$142 million per year in the 2017-19 biennium, and that unrealistic assumption added \$284 million to the "structural balance."

The JFC rejected the Governor's very unrealistic and unpopular premise that school aids would drop by \$284 million during the 2017-19 biennium.

Although the projected \$490 million gap between the new spending base and the base level of revenue is smaller than many of the structural deficits the legislature has faced in the past, there are a couple of reasons why we shouldn't take much solace from that.

First, the gap often grows over the course of a biennial session, when legislators find short-term funding sources and use them to initiate long-term tax cuts or spending increases.

Second, and more importantly, the new budget continues to make assumptions that disguise the fact that the 2017-19 budget will be extremely challenging – far more so than the estimated structural deficit figure suggests.

A significant problem with the structural deficit methodology is that it treats lapses of money to the General Fund the same as cuts in the base level of spending, even though lapses aren't intended to be permanent.

The 2015-17 budget bill approved by the Joint Finance Committee (JFC) is balanced by assuming that state agencies will lapse more than \$1 billion to the General Fund, including \$716 million in the second year of the biennium.

Because the structural deficit calculation works from that 2016-17 base level, it in essence assumes agencies will continue to lapse the same amount in each year of the 2017-19 biennium – bringing the total in lapses from July 2016 through June 2019 to almost \$2.15 billion!

As I explained in a previous blog post, lapses are typically on the order of \$250-\$300 million per year. Although the state has sometimes lapsed as much as \$600 million in a year (during a period of extreme fiscal distress), there is no precedent for continuing to have huge lapses for three consecutive years.

The prospect that it might actually be necessary to lapse more than \$2 billion over three years should be setting off alarm bells, not causing anyone to claim credit for the fact that the projected structural deficit for 2017-19 is "only" \$490 million.

The bottom line is that state lawmakers keep telling us that they are creating a strong fiscal foundation for future budgets, but the tax policy choices they have been making keep setting us up for new rounds of substantial spending cuts.

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



Thanks to Tom Tomorrow



Thanks to Taylor Jones

Whoa! Get a Look at this Headline

Scott Walker is a giant fraud: Reagan worship, bizarre religious beliefs, and the real story of his long crusade for 2016

This dramatic headline and the accompanying story by Jud Lounsbury appeared in the May 28, 2015 online issue of *Salon*, a progressive online news, opinion and investigative journal.

This is a very provocative article with some penetrating insights about Walker's previously unreported behavior.

The complete article can be found at: www.salon.com/2015/05/28/scott_walker_is_a_giant_fraud_reagan_worship_bizarre_religious_beliefs_and_the_real_story_of_his_long_crusade_for_2016/.

It is well worth the effort to read about some of Walker's more unsavory and bizarre activities.

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.

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