



Portage County DEMOCRAT

Getting Together, Moving Forward

June 2007

PORTAGE COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Executive Board

Gary Hawley, Co-Chair
 Lois Lawler, Co-Chair
 Corey Ladick, 1st Vice-Chair
 Mary Arnold, 2nd Vice-Chair
 Wes Halverson, 3rd Vice-Chair
 Betty Bruski-Mallek, 4th Vice-Chair
 Jack Allgaier, Treasurer
 Carol Gawlik, Secretary
 Mary Thurmaier, Statutory Chair
 Will Stites, 7th CD Representative
 Charlene Figge, Newsletter Editor
 Michael Baumann, Young Dems
 Dave Hanson
 Meleesa Johnson
 Michael O'Meara
 Jerry Uglund

Committees

Communications:

Mary Arnold, Chair
 Charlene Figge
 Cindy Chelcun
 Collene Ottum
 Henry St. Maurice

Events:

Corey Ladick, Chair
 Carol Gawlik

Fundraising:

To be established

Membership:

Lois Lawler, Chair
 Roberta Bie
 Robyn Van Laanen

Portage County Democratic Party

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Lois Lawler: 345-1371
 loislawler@charter.net

www.portagecountydems.org

MESSAGE from PARTY CO-CHAIRS

Dear Friends,

Are you selling your raffle tickets? Please do so, and contact either of us if you would like to have more to sell. And thank you!

Last month we were preparing to attend the 7th Congressional District Convention. Wood County (Marshfield) hosted the annual meeting. Our Portage County delegates had a great showing and we thank all who attended. The highlight of the day, of course, was our time with Congressman Dave Obey.

We will travel to Milwaukee June 29-30 for the Wisconsin State Convention. Again, we expect a good showing among the Portage County Dems. If anyone still wants to be a Delegate, you can contact us—soon!

We are now in the process of looking for a new place to hold our General Meetings. If anyone knows of a good location with a large meeting room, which is smoke-free and handicapped accessible, and that can provide food for various meetings, please let us know.



The Democratic Process...

Are you curious about the process used in the Democratic Party to select delegates, to caucus, and to attend the annual National DNC Convention? Do you want to learn how this all works? If so, you'll want to attend our General Meeting on June 12th (still at Little Chubbies) to hear our speaker, Melissa Schroeder. She's a member of the DNC, and has been since 2004.

We hope to see you June 12th, at the General Meeting!

Gary Hawley Lois Lawler

Gary Hawley Lois Lawler
 Co-Chairs, Portage County Democratic Party

Inside this issue...

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State Rep. Louis J. Molepske, Jr. hosted a listening session in Plover to discuss health care in Wisconsin.

"It is very important to me that the people of Wisconsin be able to voice their opinions and participate in government."



2007 Calendar

JUNE

- Tues, June 5 **Executive Board Meeting** at the County City Building, 1515 Strongs Ave., at 6:30 p.m.
- Tues, June 12 **General Meeting** at Little Chubbies (Former Blue Top) at 7:00 p.m.
- General Meeting/Updates of Elected Officials
 - Melissa Schroeder: "What Happens at Wisconsin Democratic Caucuses and Conventions leading to National DNC Convention?"
- June 15, 16, 17 MREA's Renewable Energy and Sustainable Living Fair in Custer, WI
- Fri-Sat, Jun 29-30 **The Wisconsin Democratic Party State Convention** in Milwaukee

JULY

- Tues, July 3 **Executive Board Meeting** at the County City Building, 1515 Strongs Ave., at 6:30 p.m.
- Weds, July 4 **4th of July Parade**: Downtown Stevens Point
- Tues, July 10 **General Meeting** at Little Chubbies (Former Blue Top) at 7:00 p.m.
- General Meeting/Updates of Elected Officials
 - Program: To be determined
- July 19-22 **Amherst Fair**: Thursday 19th to Sunday 22nd



Kudos to Mayor Andrew Halverson for the announcement of his intention to establish an Environmental Task Force for the City of Stevens Point.

Molly Ivins, newspaper columnist, political commentator and best-selling author, passed away January 31, 2007. Occasionally, in her memory, we publish one of her quotes.

"We knew this was going to be the peace from hell, and so far the Administration has made every misstep possible."

Molly Ivins, from the June 2003 issue of *The Progressive*



From the Editor —

We want to hear from YOU. If you have something you would like included in a future newsletter, contact me at cfigge@charter.net or call 345-1371.

The due date for sending items for our July issue is June 20th.

— Charlene Figge

Volunteer

As **SUMMER 2007** approaches, we come to you and ask for help with several events in which the County Dems participate. *Please, can we count on your help?*

4th of July Parade



The Portage County Democratic Party will again have a float in the 4th of July Parade in Stevens Point. We are looking for volunteers to help distribute beads and possibly other items to people on the parade route. We also need members (and their children) to ride the float and wave, to show support of our Party's principles. If you can do so, please contact Corey Ladick at 344-2724. Also, we need some members to donate items that we can pass out on the route (for example, candy, popsicles, etc.). And please, remember to wave to our volunteers in the parade.

Amherst Fair: July 19 - July 22

Volunteers are needed to work at the Portage County Democratic Party's booth at the Portage County Fair in Amherst. Volunteers will sell our raffle tickets, hand-out free material such as pencils, highway maps and yardsticks, promote our picnic, and recruit new members. Positions open are:

<u>DATE</u>	<u>SHIFT</u>
Thursday, July 19:	6 - 9 pm
Friday, July 20:	6 - 9 pm
Saturday, July 21:	Noon - 3 pm 3 - 6 pm 6 - 9 pm
Sunday, July 22:	11 am - 2 pm 2 - 5 pm



It's our hope to get enough volunteers to assign two persons to each shift so that no one has to work the booth by him- or herself. If you can work a three-hour shift one of the days, please call Jack Allgaier at 341-5359. *Thanks!*

Items Needed for Silent Auction at the Portage County Democratic Party Picnic Sunday, August 26

Please look through your closets and garage for "white elephant" items to be auctioned off at our picnic. Call Wes Halverson (344-6877) or Will Stites (345-7065) with items to contribute. We will even pick up your contribution now and store it until the picnic. Don't wait till the last moment as it gets terribly busy right before the picnic. Help us help *you* clean out the unwanted—but useful—treasures from your house, garage, or basement. *Thanks!*

...an excerpt from Lee Iacocca's new book, *Where Have All the Leaders Gone?*

Had Enough?

Am I the only guy in this country who's fed up with what's happening? Where the hell is our outrage? We should be screaming bloody murder. We've got a gang of clueless bozos steering our ship of state right over a cliff, we've got corporate gangsters stealing us blind, and we can't even clean up after a hurricane much less build a hybrid car. But instead of getting mad, everyone sits around and nods their heads when the politicians say, "Stay the course."

Stay the course? You've got to be kidding. This is America, not the damned Titanic. I'll give you a sound bite: Throw the bums out!

You might think I'm getting senile, that I've gone off my rocker, and maybe I have. But someone has to speak up. I hardly recognize this country anymore. The President of the United States is given a free pass to ignore the Constitution, tap our phones, and lead us to war on a pack of lies. Congress responds to record deficits by passing a huge tax cut for the wealthy (thanks, but I don't need it). The most famous business leaders are not the innovators but the guys in handcuffs. While we're fiddling in Iraq, the Middle East is burning and nobody seems to know what to do. And the press is waving pom-poms instead of asking hard questions. That's not the promise of America my parents and yours traveled across the ocean for. I've had enough. How about you?

I'll go a step further. You can't call yourself a patriot if you're not outraged. This is a fight I'm ready and willing to have.

My friends tell me to calm down. They say, "Lee, you're eighty-two years old. Leave the rage to the young people." I'd love to—as soon as I can pry them away from their iPods for five seconds and get them to pay attention. I'm going to speak up because it's my patriotic duty. I think people will listen to me. They say I have a reputation as a straight shooter. So I'll tell you how I see it, and it's not pretty, but at least it's real. I'm hoping to strike a nerve in those young folks who say they don't vote because they don't trust politicians to represent their interests. Hey, America, wake up. These guys work for us.

Who Are These Guys, Anyway?

Why are we in this mess? How did we end up with this crowd in Washington? Well, we voted for them—or at least some of us did. But I'll tell you what we

didn't do. We didn't agree to suspend the constitution. We didn't agree to stop asking questions or demanding answers. Some of us are sick and tired of people who call free speech treason. Where I come from that's a dictatorship, not a democracy.

And don't tell me it's all the fault of right-wing Republicans or liberal Democrats. That's an intellectually lazy argument, and it's part of the reason we're in this stew. We're not just a nation of factions. We're a people. We share common principles and ideals. And we rise and fall together.

Where are the voices of leaders who can inspire us to action and make us stand taller? What happened to the strong and resolute party of Lincoln? What happened to the courageous, populist party of FDR and Truman? There was a time in this country when the voices of great leaders lifted us up and made us want to do better. Where have all the leaders gone?

Thanks to PCDP member Jo Welling for sharing the above excerpt with us —Editor

... And now, for some 'Bush-isms'

"Anybody who is in a position to serve this country ought to understand the consequences of words." —George W. Bush, interview with Rush Limbaugh, Nov. 1, 2006



"The solution to Iraq—an Iraq that can govern itself, sustain itself and defend itself—is more than a military mission. Precisely the reason why I sent more troops into Baghdad." —George W. Bush, Washington, DC, April 3, 2007

This is the fifth in our Interview Series: Meet Portage County Democratic Party Leaders. Each month we focus on members of our PCDP Executive Board or other County Dems. Our June issue focuses on Executive Board Member, Jack Allgaier, Treasurer.

PCDP: Jack, please share some of your personal background.

I taught math at the high school both in Rosholt (ten years) and in Stevens Point (twenty-two years). I became active in teacher unions in both districts, serving as President and chairs of several committees. I also became involved with the political arm of the state union (WEAC) after I saw that every decision made at the school board level was a response to state law or budget. I served on the political action and legislative committees for both our regional and state unions.

At my start around 1975, K-12 public education was supported (or not supported) equally by Republican and Democratic legislators throughout the state. I remember some



Republican legislators as being leaders in the Republican Party who strongly supported public education then. But this changed under the leadership of Governor Thompson who ran the Republican Party with an iron fist. If a Republican legislator did not support his views, that person was never appointed

to a leadership position and would certainly find a well-financed Republican as opposition in the next primary. Under the Thompson regime, funding for K-12 public education decreased, cost controls appeared, and the dreaded QEO (Qualified Economic Offer) surfaced. A lack of funding—and an inability to raise taxes—pitted programs against programs, causing successful programs to be cut and class sizes to increase. The QEO reduced median salary in the state, from in the top ten prior to its implementation to below average over all states currently. That may look good to taxpayers, but recognize Wisconsin has one of the toughest set of requirements in terms of education and experience, making it an expensive degree to obtain. The net result was that I quickly observed that public school teachers—and students—do better when the state government is Democratic. So I joined the party and volunteered to help where possible.

PCDP: What is your background with the Democratic Party?

Clinton Hass, an active promoter of the PCDP, convinced me to manage the booth at the Amherst Fair. I found volunteers to work the booth. I found signs to post. I found materials

to hand out. The first year I worked at the booth, it was hot and dusty! Only a few people stopped by—but they have continued to stop by every year, buying raffle tickets and even joining the party. Since then, I was elected to the Executive Board, and two years ago, I was elected treasurer.

PCDP: Other than politics, what are your interests?

I have volunteered my time a lot. I served on the first cable commission in Stevens Point. I was an alderman. I served on the transit commission and still am very concerned about the future of public buses in Stevens Point. I served on the Police and Fire Commission and as its chair. I enjoyed working with Mayors Fiegleson, Schultz and Wescott.

PCDP: What are your hopes for the Portage County Democratic Party?

I hope that it can survive financially. Everything is getting much more expensive. The cost of a headquarters takes about every cent that we can earn in two years—and our party is fortunate to receive strong financial support from US Senators Kohl and Feingold, Senator Lassa, Representatives Molepske and Vruwink, and especially, Congressman Obey. But every two years, it takes more money and more time to compete. Our party is so dependent on the membership to volunteer. Without that help, the party collapses!

PCDP: What else would you like us to know about you; what else would you like to share?

I currently teach part-time at Mid-State Technical College in Point to help cover the rising cost of health insurance. My wife Leigh and I entertain our grandson almost every week. After she retires, we plan to become snowbirds while we can still travel. ■

Please join **State Senator Julie Lassa** and invited guest, **Lt. Governor Barbara Lawton** for a reception on Wednesday, June 27th from 5:30-7:30 pm at Spiedini's Italiano Ristorante, 1010 Post Road, Plover. All contributions gratefully accepted.

Please RSVP or send donations to Friends of Julie Lassa, PO Box 483, Plover, WI 54467.

Also: Senator Julie Lassa is looking for volunteers for the Stevens Point July 4th Parade which begins at noon, and the Junction City Parade July 8th, which begins at 11 am. Interested in helping? Please call Julie at 342-0526.

Congressman Louis J. Molepske, Jr. Hosts Forum in Plover on SeniorCare



Rep. Molepske (left) welcomed concerned citizens from Portage County to the Health Care Forum in Plover on May 14, 2007. He led a discussion on rising health care costs and proposed legislative solutions.

Feedback received from this forum, he said, will guide the Governor and Legislature in making decisions on this critical issue.



Kevin Hayden, 2nd from left, Wisconsin Secretary of the Department of Health and Family Services, presented details of Governor Doyle's 98% Plan, a major initiative to guarantee health care to at least 98 percent of Wisconsin residents.

Spring News from the County Clerk's Office



As this time of year brings about weather alerts and tornado warnings, County and municipal officials, law enforcement and fire department staff recently attended Damage Assessment Training sponsored through Sandra Curtis, Portage County Emergency Management Director and instructed by the Wisconsin Emergency

training was geared for not only a natural disaster but also any type of possible terrorist disaster. The importance of assessing the damage as quickly as possible is what determines when state or federal aid could be brought to the local municipality.

County officials also attended informational meetings with the Federal Census Bureau to best determine complete address listings for the upcoming census activity. Early planning is a must to ensure that every household in each municipality is included in the census as each relates to funding brought into the municipalities until the the next census.

Thank you and have a great summer from the County Clerk's Office.

SHIRLEY M. SIMONIS
PORTAGE COUNTY CLERK

Rep. Vruwink Commends Senator Kohl, Feingold and Congressman Obey for Fighting to Save SeniorCare:

State Representative Amy Sue Vruwink (D-Milladore) issued a statement on May 25, 2007 following House of Representatives and Senate passage of the Iraq Supplemental Budget bill:

"Congressman Obey, Senator Kohl and Senator Feingold have worked incredibly hard to find a way for SeniorCare to continue, and I would like nothing more than to commend them for their hard work. The news that, upon signature of this bill, SeniorCare will be extended for 2 years is an amazing feat.

"Wood County has a higher percentage of SeniorCare enrollees than Milwaukee, with thousands of enrollees in Marshfield, Stevens Point and Wisconsin Rapids. This program is one of the good things about Government, and hopefully this extension will help make the Wisconsin SeniorCare program the model for programs around the United States.

"Once again, I commend Congressman Obey, Senator Kohl and Senator Feingold for their work for the Seniors of Wisconsin."



Portage County Democratic Party

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Mark your Calendar
General Meeting—June 12, 2007



Democratic Party
June
General Meeting

- Date:** Tuesday, June 12, 2007
- Time:** 7:00 p.m. (socializing begins at 6:30)
- Location:** "Little Chubbies" (formerly the Blue Top)
3425 Church Street, Stevens Point
- Speaker:** **Melissa Schroeder**
Member of the Democratic National Committee (DNC), elected 2004
- Topic:** In her presentation, "What Happens at Wisconsin Democratic Caucuses and Conventions leading to the National DNC Convention?" Melissa will address questions in our state Party process.

Melissa Schroeder has been active in the Lincoln County Democratic Party since 1977 and is currently its Chair.



She has held all other elected positions in the Party, and was the 7th Congressional District Chair from 1993-1997.

Melissa comes to us with a rich background of involvement at all levels in the Wisconsin Democratic Party. She looks forward to speaking with us and receiving our questions about the "inner workings" of the state Dems.

Open to the Public.
Join us!