



Portage County DEMOCRAT

GETTING TOGETHER, MOVING FORWARD

APRIL 2009

PORTAGE COUNTY, WI DEMOCRATIC PARTY

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www.PortageCountyDems.org

"... on April 22, 1970, Earth Day was held, one of the most remarkable happenings in the history of democracy. . . "

-American Heritage Magazine, October 1993

How the First Earth Day Came About

*by Senator Gaylord Nelson
 Founder of Earth Day*



What was the purpose of Earth Day? How did it start? These are the questions I am most frequently asked.

Actually, the idea for Earth Day evolved over a period of seven years starting in 1962. For several years, it had been troubling me that the state of our environment was simply a non-issue in the politics of the country. Finally, in November 1962, an idea occurred to me that was, I thought, a virtual cinch to put the environment into the political "lime-light" once and for all. The idea was to persuade President Kennedy to give visibility to this issue by going on a national conservation tour. I flew to Washington to discuss the proposal with Attorney General Robert Kennedy, who liked the idea. So did the President. The President began his five-day, eleven-state conservation tour in September 1963. For many reasons the tour did not succeed in putting the issue onto the national political agenda. However, it was the germ of the idea that ultimately flowered into Earth Day.

I continued to speak on environ-

mental issues to a variety of audiences in some twenty-five states. All across the country, evidence of environmental degradation was appearing everywhere, and everyone noticed except the political establishment. The environmental issue simply was not to be found on the nation's political agenda. The people were concerned, but the politicians were not.

After President Kennedy's tour, I still hoped for some idea that would thrust the environment into the political mainstream. Six years would pass before the idea that became Earth Day occurred to me while on a conservation speaking tour out West in the summer of 1969. At the time, anti-Vietnam War demonstrations, called "teach-ins," had spread to

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The Obama Administration announced the appointment of Van Jones, who will serve as **Special Advisor for Green Jobs, Enterprise, and Innovation at the Council on Environmental Quality.**

Jones is the founder of **Green for All**, a national organization that promotes an inclusive green economy, strong enough to lift people out of poverty. He is also the co-founder of the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights and Color of Change, two highly innovative social justice organizations. A 1993 Yale Law School graduate, Jones is the author of the 2008 New York Times best-seller, *The Green Collar Economy.*

2009 CALENDAR

APRIL

- Tues Apr 7 *VOTE: Spring Election*
Thur Apr 9 Note Date Change for this month: Executive Board Meeting, Kristin's at 6:30 pm
Tues Apr 14 General Meeting at Kristin's Riverwalk, 6:30 socializing, 7:00 p.m. meeting
Fri-Sun 17-19 Trivia 40 in Stevens Point, WI
Sat 18 Dems on Triva Phones 6-10 pm
7th CD Convention at Holiday Inn in Wausau
Sat-Sun 25-26 Democratic Leadership Institute

MAY

- Tues May 5 Executive Board Meeting, Kristin's 6:30 pm
Tues May 12 General Meeting, Kristin's at 7:00 pm

JUNE

- Tues June 2 Executive Board Meeting, Kristin's 6:30 pm
Sat Jne 6 Walk Wisconsin
Tues June 9 General Meeting, Kristin's at 7:00 pm
Fri-Sat Jun 12-13 WI State Convention in Green Bay
Fri-Sun Jun 19-21 MREA 20th Anniversary Fair, Custer, WI

JULY

- Sat July 4 4th of July Parade, Stevens Point
Tues July 7 Executive Board Meeting, Kristin's 6:30 pm
Tues July 14 General Meeting, Kristin's at 7:00 pm
Th-Sun Jul 16-19 Amherst Fair; Parade 2 pm Saturday
Th-Fri Jul 16-17 Crazy Days: Stevens Point



Visit our Web Site:
www.PortageCountyDems.org

Then... see President Obama's new Web Site at www.whitehouse.gov

**SPRING ELECTIONS are
Tuesday, April 7, 2009.**

Remember to VOTE !



From the Editor —

We want to hear from YOU. If you have something to include in a future newsletter, please contact me at cfgge@charter.net or call me at 345-1371.

The due date for sending items for our May 2009 issue is April 20th.

— Charlene Figge

County News

7th CD CONVENTION

Date: Saturday, April 18, 2009
Time: 8:30 am Doors open; 9:00 Registration begins; 10:00 Convention starts



Location: Howard Johnson Inn
2101 N. Mountain Road
Wausau, WI

Cost: \$10 for registration;
\$15 for lunch.

Printing of our newsletter has been paid for with donations.

Thank you to our 2009 Newsletter Sponsors:

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We are grateful for your generosity.

To add *your* name to our growing list of sponsors, send your donation (payable to PCDP) to Charlene Figge, Newsletter Editor, 5411 Woodland St., Stevens Point, WI, 54481

(Any amount is greatly appreciated.)



MESSAGE FROM PARTY CO-CHAIRS

Dear Friends,

First of all, we urge **each and every one of you** to exercise your right as a citizen and go to the polls and **VOTE on April 7th**. Thank you!

And we thank Chad Haanen for his tenure on the Portage County Executive Board representing the College Dems. Chad found it necessary to submit his resignation recently. Thanks for your service, Chad!

Along with bidding farewell to Chad, we bid welcome to our two newest members of the Executive Board. At our general meeting in March those present elected **Chandra Lay** and **Jim Waisbrot** as Members-at-large. Welcome, Chandra and Jim!

Now that spring has arrived, we're preparing for much activity for the Portage County Dems. We'll send delegates to the 7th Congressional District Convention in Wausau on April 18th and the Wisconsin State Convention June 12-13 in Green Bay.

Would you like to sign on as a supporter of Senator Russ Feingold in his re-election bid in 2010? Contact us and we can see that you get an endorsement form which can be distributed to others.

We hope to see you at our next General Meeting at Kristin's on April 14th.

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

Wisconsin State Convention



Mark your calendars for the Wisconsin State Convention to be held in Green Bay.

Dates: June 12-13, 2009

Location: Radisson Hotel & Conference Center
2040 Airport Drive, Green Bay.
Phone: 888-201-1718
<http://www.radisson.com/greenbaywi>

Special Rate Rooms are \$95 plus tax for a single or double plus \$10 for each extra person. Includes breakfast.

County Clerk Update.

There will be a statewide election on April 7, 2009 which will include the State Superintendent of Public Instruction candidates Rose Fernandez and Tony Evers and the Justice of the Supreme Court candidates Randy R. Koschnick and Shirley S. Abrahamson. You will also see municipal offices and school district races on your ballots. There are no referendum issues in any areas in Portage County.

Remember, you can visit our website to view the unofficial election results for the statewide offices at www.co.portage.wi.us shortly after 8:00 p.m. on election night. Please encourage everyone to vote!

County officials and departments have been busy watching closely as the stimulus information is being released to see if any applications might be available for our local area. We are also looking at preliminary 2010 county budget guidelines to prepare ourselves once the state finalizes their budget.

Have a great spring and feel free to stop by the County Clerk's office if you are coming through the building.



Shirley M. Simonis
PORTAGE COUNTY CLERK



What are the UWSP College Democrats up to these days?

Zach Vruwink, President of the College Dems, informs us that the College Dems just returned from a trip to Washington, DC, where members were able to meet with Congressman Dave Obey and staff from Senator Russ Feingold's office. They also met with Josh Mantell who is a staffer for the Chief Administrative Officer of the House.



Here at home, Zach tells us, the College Dems will be doing some tabling and visibility for the upcoming Supreme Court race in Wisconsin.

Portage County Democratic Party

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GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday, April 14th at 7:00 pm
at Kristin's Riverwalk
1140 Clark Street in Stevens Point



Democratic Party APRIL 2009 GENERAL MEETING

- Date:** Tuesday, April 14, 2009
Time: 7:00 p.m. (socializing begins at 6:30)
Location: Kristin's, 1140 Clark Street in Stevens Point
Agenda:
- General business meeting
 - Updates from Elected Officials
 - Presentation by Mike Tate, Candidate for State Chair of Democratic Party
- Program:** **The Politics of Conservation**
Presenter: **Jessica Garrels**, Organizing Director for the **Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters**, will cover the history of conservation in Wisconsin, who WLCV is and how they work, this session's four Conservation Priorities, legislative accountability, and the vital role citizens can play and have played in turning conservation policy into state law.



Jessica Garrels, WLCV's Organizing Director, joined the organization in March of 2005. She established WLCV's first permanent field office in Green Bay, developing important relationships with local conservation organizations and area leaders and providing opportunities for citizens to increase communication with their

legislators. While there, she served on the Mayor's Sustainable Greater Green Bay Task Force. She currently oversees the two (soon to be three!) WLCV field offices around the state. Jessica also serves as the Vice President of the Green Bay Chapter of Trout Unlimited. Prior to joining WLCV, Jessica was a Peace Corps volunteer on the edge of the Sahara Desert, where she developed a true appreciation for water conservation. She has a B.A. in International Relations from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. On the weekends, you might find her in waders restoring trout streams in northeastern Wisconsin, snowshoeing, biking, running, or trying to learn how to cook.

All are welcome...! Refreshments will be provided.