



The Manitowoc Progressive

The Voice of the Manitowoc County Democratic Party

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April 2011



FROM THE EDGE OF THE CHAIR

Kerry Trask

By paying close attention you can learn something from political campaigns. That was most certainly so for me during my recent run for the state assembly.

For example, I learned how important the Democratic Party of Wisconsin can be in waging a campaign, particularly for a novice candidate. Running for election, if done right, is a surprisingly complex undertaking, which we may not have adequately grasped or coped with had the Party not provided the assistance and advice of a whole platoon of highly professional campaign experts. Without them we may have been doomed to remain a small band of green, well-intentioned, hard-working amateurs.

But even with their help I soon sensed that something else of vital importance was missing not only from our own effort, but from the entire state-wide Democratic campaign. While the political pros were immensely smart about what they knew they were essentially tacticians and technocrats concerned mostly with data bases, polling, software, and media marketing. They were brilliant on the details but relying on their expertise alone left a very large hole in the very heart of the entire endeavor.

What we lacked and sorely needed was a compelling, inspiring central MESSAGE—a message we really believed in which could be clearly understood and identified with by a large number of the voters, and a message that could be repeated over and over again with conviction until it was absorbed into the public consciousness.

That is what the Republicans have been doing with remarkable success since Ronald Regan. Their message is clear and simple and never varies: lower taxes (mainly for the rich and corporate freeloaders), smaller government (mostly by cutting social and educational programs), freer markets (especially for subsidized, de-regulated, job-exporting, multinational corporations),

and “family values” (a puritanical code of angry patriarchal homophobia). Republicans not only have a message, they consistently stay on message, pounding away with unrelenting fury at the same simple concepts, assumptions, and myths. And, by doing so they not only win elections, but over the past 30 years they have transformed this country’s political language and way of thinking.

As masters of Orwellian language and “spin” they skillfully and cynically manipulate public moods, convincing millions of people to irrationally vote against their own self-interest. Furthermore, their radical conservative values and views have come to dominate the public discourse so that their hard-core right-wing ideas are now generally perceived to be “mainstream” ideas. By comparison, progressive values and ideas are made to seem as “extremist” and out of touch with the “real” America. Consequently, we Democrats are forever on the defensive reacting to an agenda established by militant ideologues of the far right. This is exactly the case with Bob Ziegelbauer, Joe Leibham, and Ron Zimmerman every bit as much as with Scott Walker, Newt Gingrich, and Rush Limbaugh. They all have the same message, which they repeat over and over again until people believe it must be true.

While Republicans focus on their message, we Democrats are dissipating our energies off in diverse directions espousing an endless laundry list of sundry issues attempting to attract support from a wide and varied array of interest and identity groups. We have yet to project a compelling and coherent statement that articulates with clarity and conviction the core values of our cause— values such as fairness, human dignity, equality of worth and opportunity for all our people, to name a few.

We Democrats, as a party, need to do more. We need to fill the hollow place that still remains at the very heart of our identity, to figure out what we really stand for—what we really believe in—and then drive home that MESSAGE before democracy in Wisconsin is irreparably dismantled by radical right-wing zealots with authoritarian ambitions and values. Let it begin at home. I invite you to join us at the Think Tank [*see calendar on Page 5*] to help create this message. ■

Hansen Accepts Award at Proxmire Banquet

Kate Schuette, Editor

I was sitting in the front, my steno pad and pencil in the ready, the recorder pointed towards the podium when Trask began introducing our honored guest and the crowd rose in unanimous applause, shouts and whistles of adulation. We could all see the jersey with the emblazoned 14 and there was no containing us. Over one-hundred were in attendance at the 5th Annual Proxmire Dinner honoring the 14 Wisconsin Senate Democrats who courageously vacated the state to raise awareness to the atrocities the Walker administration is perpetrating upon what is now the Once Progressive State of Wisconsin. Senator Dave Hansen was there to graciously accept the award presented by Bob Jome when the crowd again rose to its feet, the noise deafening, the joyful tears streaming down faces as we again applauded the efforts of those who are now known as the Fabulous 14.

Hansen, facing recall and on his way to a 'Save Dave Rally', broke away from his busy schedule to share moments of the Budget Repair Bill Stand-off remarking on how Wisconsin had not only gained state and national recognition, but also had reached beyond the states and become an international story. He added that in the *Time Magazine* list of the 100 most influential people, the Fabulous 14 have now risen to 13. He then emphasized how the real heroes were all the labor people and the people who came to Madison over and over again – the teachers, skilled craftsmen, corrections officers, police, fire fighters, and local employees — all those who protested en masse over and over again at the state capital.

We have been called cowards. But the easy way out would have been to rubber stamp the governor's plan. 'We rained on their fancy little parade', said Hansen. We had to do something – we couldn't give a rubber stamp to something that is so very, very important. We had to defend the working men and women of this state - for the middle class that seems to be evaporating – evaporating while the Koch Bros. move ahead with their 44 billion dollars of assets still wanting more. →

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14**



Tim Carpenter Spencer Coggs Tim Cullen Jon Erpenbach Dave Hansen



Jim Holperin Robert Jauch Chris Larson Julie Lassa



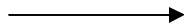
Mark Miller Fred Risser Lena Taylor Kathleen Vinehout Robert Wirth

Fabulous 14 — *continued from page 2*

At stake is 100 years of progressive tradition: Wisconsin the first for Unemployment Compensation and Workers Compensation; one of the first states to be involved with Social Security; and in 1959, passed a bipartisan bill allowing collective bargaining – where workers are at the table to have their input. Walker’s goal in 3-4 days was to put the bill forward and eliminate over 50 years of workers’ rights – the ability to sit at the table to discuss safety, health and working conditions and all the rest. Walker was not really after ‘correcting’ fiscal challenges - those concessions had already been met and agreed upon. He was selling out to the Koch Bros. – ‘their goal being to drop the bomb and destroy workers’ rights that have been with us for 50 plus years’.

We couldn’t let that happen, and not one of us wanted to be the 20th vote. We fled to Illinois together, sharing cars. Hansen drew special attention to the 7-month pregnant Julie Lassa, with two young children at home - facing a tough mortgage after running a courageous election to fill Dave Obey’s shoes – an election in an ordinary year in which she would be a congresswoman. But Fitzgerald withheld and locked up our paychecks (normally deposited directly to accounts). Once it dawned on him (after 6 days) it was a felony to withhold payment he put them in the mail.

‘Rush Limbaugh said she was kidnapped.’ Julie had the keys. She had the car. We’re Democrats - we carpooled. She wasn’t kidnapped – she was in unison with all 14. And then, one of the strongest – Senator Risser, 84 years old – if it were up to him, along with Erpenbach and Larson, we would still be there [in Illinois].



It has been reported that over 185,000 people visited the capital to welcome home the Fabulous 14 Democratic State Senators.



Senator Dave Hansen



Fabulous 14 — *continued from page 3*

Then, he looked me straight in the eye, as if to say be sure to write this down – get this correct: We came back to Wisconsin to meet the new budget. 1.8 billion cut from public education, privatizing pensions. They stole 28 million from the employee trust fund. We tried to protect Senior Care, Earned Income Tax Credit and Homestead Credit Act – the Republicans rejected that. During the first 6 weeks of Walker's administration, everything was passed including an administrative rule granting the governor the power of a pocket veto. **'The State of Wisconsin is now under one person rule.'**

Republican Senators who had supported collective bargaining rights since the time of its bipartisan adoption – 'they really are afraid of the governor,' said Hansen. Afraid that if they are not in lock-step with Walker they will face highly financed opposition in the primary race - essentially being ousted by the Koch Bros. They don't want to lose the next election so they vote against their beliefs to save their job. These Republicans - except for Senator Schultz who had the integrity to vote against the bill – are the real cowards. You can hear the dissension behind closed doors, but when Walker's hammer comes down they walk out in unison, many voting against their own convictions, without integrity. These are the real cowards. Those who shrink from what is just and correct to save their own skin.

\$250 million cut from the University System, separating Madison campus from the rest of the system – which means, to Hansen, the closing of some of the satellite campuses. The universities are going to be gone. \$72 million cut from technical schools – when we need training, training to upgrade our workforce to meet new job requirements. \$500 million cuts from SeniorCare, BadgerCare and Medical Assistance. SeniorCare - the best prescription drug plan in the country – it should have been the model for the national plan instead of Medicare D(ump).

Some people would say politics is about the wealthy. Hansen says, 'it is about seniors, ...children and...the working class people. It is not all about David and Charles Koch.'

Paraphrasing Wellstone, Hansen said – 'Politics is not about power, it is not about money – it is about doing good for people. I vow to continue that fight as long as I am in the legislature – hoping later than sooner.'

We rose for the 4th time chanting: Thank You! Thank You!



Senator Dave Hansen is the first of 8 Democrats facing recall. Help his fight to retain this Senate Seat. We need to get the Republicans out and keep the Democrats in. <http://www.hansenforsenate.com/>.

Checks can be made payable to:
Friends of Dave Hansen
3489 Blackwolf Run
Green Bay, WI 53411

*The Manitowoc County Democratic Party
proudly presents the
5th Annual Bill Proxmire Memorial Service Award
to the Democratic State Senators –
The Courageous Wisconsin 14
in recognition of their selfless service to
The State of Wisconsin and working
men and women and their families.*

Given this Day – April 10th, 2011

6th CD Forwards Resolutions to State Party.

April 16, 2011

(All 8 from Manitowoc County were adopted.)

- Supports the full restoration of all public employee statutory rights that were removed from state law with the passage of the Budget Repair Bill (Act 10)
- Calls for an end to our involvement in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and asks for a redirection of military spending to programs providing peacetime solutions to our economic problems.
- Supports legislation that provides transparency and a financially equal playing field for all political candidates.
- Supports the public funding of Supreme Court and other judicial elections and legislation that will prevent the compromise and corruption of the election process.
- Supports a return to progressive taxation whereby those who own the wealth in this country pay a fair portion of the costs of government.
- Opposes measure that would restrict the right and access to voting such as: photo IDs; elimination of same day registration; and elimination of early voting; and continues to support measures to grant voting rights for non-incarcerated felons.
- Is opposed to public funding of private and/or religious schools.
- Supports a secular government, void of faith-based initiatives such as vouchers for parochial education of its children; and that those religious groups that involve themselves in endorsing political candidates and/or political parties be restricted from enjoying tax-free status.
- Supports inspection and evaluation of existing nuclear reactors and a moratorium on construction of new reactors until the issues of spent fuel and safe operation are resolved, while moving to a decentralized electricity system.
- Supports research and development of alternative, renewable energy sources and distributed generation technologies that preserve the environment and our health and decentralize our power supply.

The Manitowoc Progressive

The Voice of the Manitowoc Democratic Party
PO Box 1373
Manitowoc WI 54221-1373

Calendar of Events

- Mon, May 2nd Executive Committee Meeting, 6:00 PM, Pizza Garden
- Sat, May 14th Think Tank – 9:30 AM, St James Episcopal Church,
Corner of 8th and State St., Manitowoc
- Mon, May 23rd Monthly Meeting – ‘*Scott Walker: A Serious Threat to Our
Way of Life.*’ Guest speaker Scot Ross from One Wisconsin Now.
Venue TBA.
- Fri-Sat, Jun 3-4 DPW State Convention – Milwaukee
- Mon, Jun 6th Executive Committee Meeting, 6:00 PM, Pizza Garden
- Sat, Jun 11th Think Tank – 9:30 AM, Venue TBA
- Mon, Jun 27th Monthly Meeting – TBA

MantyDems Officers

Kerry Trask, Chair
kerry.trask@comcast.net
chair@mantydemts.com
920-682-1710

Jon Buggs, Vice Chair
fluggs@ameritech.net

Dick Ekstrom, Vice Chair
ekstrom99@msn.com

Sherrie Richards, Secretary
s.irene63@yahoo.com

Bob Jome, Treasurer
rjome@sbcglobal.net

Nan Hallock, Past Chair
nanhallock@sbcglobal.net

Members-at-Large:
Kathie Fishbeck, Ted Zigmunt,
Ron Kossik, Laurie Burke,
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- \$50 per Month* \$75 per Year*
- \$20 per Month* \$45 per Year Activist
- \$10 per Month* \$35 per Year Pairs
- \$25 per Year General
- Other _____ \$10 Limited Income

*includes all family members

For monthly contributions – renew online — www.wisdems.org

Contributions are not tax deductible. Your contribution is subject to the limitations and prohibitions of the Federal Election Campaign Act.

Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, occupation and name of employer of individuals whose contributions, in the aggregate, exceed \$200 in an election cycle. Please provide all information on the membership form.