



The Manitowoc Progressive

The Voice of the Manitowoc County Democratic Party

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July 2011



FROM THE EDGE OF THE CHAIR

Kerry Trask - *Rebuts Fredrich*

Once in awhile you read something that clarifies your thinking. That was emphatically the case for me with Charlie Mathews' June 24 article in the *Herald Times Reporter* pertaining to a visit paid by Mayor Justin Nickels and city council president Chris Able to MCM Composites, a local plastics molding firm, owned by Michael Fredrich, which currently employs 55 workers.

Mr. Fredrich, who lives in Fond du Lac, bought the company in 2001 and in just a decade has turned it into an impressively competitive business within the cutthroat global economy. He deserves credit for that and we should all wish his company survives and prospers.

Nevertheless, Mr. Fredrich used the occasion of the mayor's and council president's visit to aggressively lambast them with a self-serving, right-wing rant in which he clearly but unintentionally demonstrated why and how this country's conservative business elite is the biggest threat to the well-being of our communities and the survival of a humane and democratic social order in this country.

Like the Koch brothers, Mr. Fredrich virtually demands a status of privileged advantage for business executives and believes the primary purpose of public policy ought to be the advancement of corporate interests. Indeed, he condescendingly instructed the mayor and council president on their duty, asserting: "Your role is to lower the overhead of the business infrastructure in your community," snidely adding that "somebody has to create wealth [since] we can't all work for city and county government."

He also quite predictably deplored what he regards as the grossly excessive compensation paid to public employees and notified the mayor of the urgent need for the city budget to be "dramatically lowered" because of the potentially negative impact it would otherwise have on his business interests.

Continued on Page 2

MantyDems



Family Picnic

Monday, July 25th

5:00 – 9:00 PM

Manitowoc Lincoln Park – Cabin 2

\$10.00 – children under 12 free

Chicken Picnic, Games

Public Invited

Guest Speaker:



(See Page 3)

Mike McCabe, Executive Director

Reservations Required – contact Bob Jome at
rjome@sbcglobal.net or (920) 682-4074

Volunteers still needed for County Fair Booth!

August 23rd – 28th



Call or email Kerry Trask if you can
help for a few hours.

(920) 682-1710 or

kerry.trask@comcast.net

***There will be no
August Membership Meeting***

From the Edge *(continued from Page 1)*

Furthermore, he pontificated that the road to economic salvation must necessarily run through an unrestrained free market system managed by the corporate ownership class. Only private, profit-driven business can make us prosperous again, for, he asserted, “unless you have a profit motive, you won’t do it as efficiently,” (whatever “it” might be). And with that article of faith ringing from his lips he instructed the two public officials to make haste in privatizing most municipal services.

Not doing it his way, he asserts, would result in far fewer jobs and all the hardships and expenses that accompany growing unemployment. Then, just to make sure we got it, that warning was reiterated in the next day’s newspaper by Ivy Netzel, an obvious spokesperson for Mr. Fredrich, who wrote: “If city officials want more jobs in Manitowoc, they need to lower the cost of doing business in Manitowoc, including property tax, gas and electricity costs.”

All this whining and warning about taxes and regulations, along with demands for the privatization of public services and the slashing of social services for the needy, is standard boiler-plate rhetoric for the right-wing corporate crowd and the political wrecking crews their money puts into office. And it works amazingly well for them. Their threats and the fears they evoke have repeatedly resulted in more than generous tax cuts for people like Mr. Fredrich, whose positions of privilege keep getting stronger and more entrenched as ever greater portions of the wealth produced by the entire nation are unfairly and inequitably shifted to those at the top.

But here in Manitowoc the perverse logic of their demands breaks down. Here the taxes are already among the lowest in the state for out of all 588 villages, towns, and cities in Wisconsin the tax rate in Manitowoc ranks 480th down from the top. Furthermore, electrical rates charged by the community owned Manitowoc Public Utilities are virtually the lowest in Wisconsin, right down at the bottom with Two Rivers Water and Light, also mu-

nicipally owned. What does Mr. Fredrich want—a free ride?

Furthermore, his demand for the privatization of municipal services is another dumb, right-wing idea designed to make a few people rich while increasing costs and eroding the quality of life for everyone living in our communities. Private, for-profit, public service providers will always be concerned first and foremost about their own bottom lines. That is an abundant incentive for them to minimize services while escalating what they charge their captive customers without even being held accountable for how they meet community needs. Privatization would radically change the role of local government and the relationship between it and its citizens, reducing citizens to mere customers and handing over control of important spheres of community life to unelected corporate managers immune to the influence of voters. Like most right-wing, corporate schemes, this one would seriously undermine the democratic character of community life.

Nowhere in Mr. Fredrich’s comments and demands is there any mention of the general good of the community, the quality of our schools and public institutions, or the health and well-being of our citizens and the environment in which they live. Everything is about his interests and his ambitions “to make the highest profit the free market will allow.”

Building and maintaining good, well-run, civil communities in which necessary services are provided by efficient and responsive governments and where people have the opportunity of earning a family-sustaining living wage is the best way to promote economic growth and prosperity, rather than further empowering and enriching the already powerful few. Certainly what Senator Paul Wellstone once proclaimed must still be emphatically true — **“We all do better when we all do better.”**

But there is none of that in Mr. Fredrich’s dark and narcissistic vision of American society, and that is why he and those who share his goals and ideological beliefs are the most serious threats to the decent, democratic society so many of us still struggle to build. ■



Paul Wellstone

1944-2002

“We all do better, when we all do better.”

If you want real welfare reform then you focus on a good education, good healthcare and a good job. If you want to reduce poverty in our country then you focus on a good education, good health care and a good job. If you want to have a stable middle class, you focus on a good education, good healthcare, and a good job. If you want our country to do well in an international economy - do well in the next century - you focus on a good education, good healthcare, and a good job. That is a political majority language. And... if we want to have good education, good healthcare, and a good job, you know what the key is? The key is the right to organize...

(1999)



I can only hope you don't miss Mike McCabe, Executive Director of WDC and invited guest this Monday at the Family Picnic. Articulate, unwavering and painfully non-partisan, Mike McCabe is probably the foremost authority on the status of Democracy in the State of Wisconsin. Regardless of your party affiliation, you can get straight talk from Mr. McCabe and find out where Democracy is winning, and where it is not.

Founded in 1995, WDC is a not-for-profit, non-partisan political watch dog dedicated to clean government. It tracks the money in state politics [in fact provides the only searchable computer database of campaign donations], fights government corruption and works for campaign finance reform, fair elections, judicial integrity, media democracy, open and transparent government, and democracy reform in areas such as state legislative and congressional redistricting, ethics, and lobbying. These objectives are pursued through research, citizen education, community outreach, coalition building and direct advocacy. Areas of concern include:

- Research documenting the corruption in Wisconsin politics
- Supreme Court election reform
- Ethics enforcement reform
- Disclosure of special interest electioneering
- Enactment and implementation of Political Sunshine Legislation
- Protecting the integrity of Wisconsin's voter registration system
- Promoting judicial ethics
- Triggering criminal investigation of corruption at the State Capitol
- Enactment of legislation abolishing the corrupt legislative caucuses
- Enactment of a 'Pay to Play' ban
- Making sure every vote is counted
- Banning fundraising during the state budget process
- Fines against wealthy donors and politicians
- Tougher new enforcement policies
- Improved compliance with campaign finance laws
- Media Reform: Improved TV election news coverage

Most recently, WDC has been monitoring the legislation that has slid into the budget – i.e.,

- Raiding the clean elections fund to pay for Voter ID implementation, essentially swapping clean elections for voter suppression;
- Limiting access to state officials' financial records;
- As the privatization of education is expanded, tracking 'voucher' backers led by Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce, American Federation for Children and the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce and their mostly negative electioneering activities and direct campaign contributions to Governor Walker, three fundraising committees run by legislative leaders and 66 legislators - most [but not all] of them Republicans. They spent more than twice as much as opponents of the school voucher program.

WDC has also come together with a new citizen committee – **Make Our Votes Count** that will be monitoring how this year's redistricting is handled in Wisconsin and advocating for a non-partisan approach to drawing district lines in the future.

Lots to talk about. Be sure to be there. Monday, July 25th. ■

Think and Talk 'RECALL'
wherever you go.
Help to raise awareness of the
upcoming push to oust Walker.

The Manitowoc Progressive

The Voice of the Manitowoc Democratic Party

PO Box 1373

Manitowoc WI 54221-1373

Calendar of Events

- Mon, Jul 25th MantyDems Family Picnic, Lincoln Park Cabin 2. 5:00 – 9:00 PM
\$10 – children under 12 free
Guest Speaker, - Mike McCabe from Wisconsin Democracy Campaign.
- Mon, Aug 1st Executive Committee Meeting, 6:00 PM, Pizza Garden
- Sat, Aug 13th Think Tank – 9:30 AM, St James Episcopal Church
- August 23-28th Manitowoc County Fair – Please volunteer to serve a couple of hours at our booth – Contact Kerry Trask.
- Tues, Sep 6th Executive Committee Meeting, **6:30 PM**, Pizza Garden – *time and date changed due to Labor Day*
- Sat, Sep 10th Think Tank – 9:30 AM, St James Episcopal Church
- Mon, Sep 26th Monthly Membership Meeting, time and place to be announced

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Ron Kossik, Laurie Burke,
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Yes, I'll Join the Party and Help Democrats Win!

Mail to: Democratic Party of Wisconsin ■ 110 King Street ■ Suite 203 ■ Madison WI 53703

Or Join or Renew Online www.wisdems.org

Name/s _____

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Email _____

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Employer Address _____

Occupation _____

Fees include membership to both the State and County Parties.

- \$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.