



The Manitowoc Progressive

The Voice of the Manitowoc County Democratic Party

www.mantydems.com

Join or Renew Membership On the Web

March 2009

Bill Proxmire Banquet



Honoring the Late Dale Bolle

Peg Lautenschlager, Keynote Speaker

Sunday, March 22nd

5:30 PM – Cash Bar 6:30 PM – Dinner
Club Bil-Mar

\$25 / Person - \$45 / Pair - Advance
\$30/Person - At the door

See Insert for More Details

RSVP today at chair@mantydems.com

April Membership Meeting

Monday, April 27th – 7:00 PM
Gotham City – 902 York St. Manitowoc



Kerry Trask, Ph.D.

Wisconsin's Unique Political Heritage

Disparity of Income...

By Bob Jome

Not since the time of the “robber barons”, has America seen the degree of inequality in income we have today. It isn't the economic crisis of today that has produced this inequity, but 30 plus years of conservative ideology that is responsible for the income gap between the rich and poor in our country.

The United States is becoming more unequal as income becomes more concentrated among the most affluent Americans. Income disparity has been rising since the late 1970s, and is now at a level not seen since the Gilded Age - roughly 1870 to 1900, a period in U.S. history defined by the extreme contrast between the super-rich and the devastatingly poor.

Early in the twentieth century, the share of total national income drawn by the top 1 percent of U.S. earners was around 18 percent. That share hit an all-time high in 1928, when that top 1 percent took home 21.1 percent of all income, including capital gains, then dropped steadily through the next three decades. Amid the post-World War II boom in higher education, labor union growth and overall economic growth, the American middle class grew and prospered, and the top 1 percent of earners took home less than 10 percent of all income through the 1960s and 1970s. Those days are often looked at as the finest era in American economic history for the dynamic growth of the middle class, enabling more citizens to share in the American economic dream. Since then, the topmost 1 percent have seen their share rise again: it shot past 15 percent in 1996 and crested at 20.3 percent in 2006. It is no accident that the wealthy have prospered so much. Instead it is a planned economic pattern that has been instilled by conservative ideology – do the words “trickle down” and “supply side economics” ring a bell?

As is often reported, Henry Ford paid his workers about twice the going labor rate because he wanted to have a



customer base that could afford to buy his cars – and it worked – a healthy middle class drives a successful economy – “demand side economics” has worked repeatedly. Put money in the hands of consumers and they will drive the economic engine.

To further illustrate the recent disparity growth, in 2006 the 400 richest Americans, a tiny percentage of the population, saw their income rise by nearly 23 percent from the previous year to an average of \$263 million per year (*according to Internal Revenue Service data*). Since 1996 this group has nearly doubled its share of all income earned in the United States. How about the tax liability of these richest Americans? The top 400 paid just more than \$18 billion in federal income taxes in 2006, or an average of \$45 million, on a record \$105 billion in total income, which sounds like a large tax burden until we note that it was the **lowest effective tax rate** in the 15 years since the IRS began releasing such data. That compares with nearly \$1 trillion paid by all other individual taxpayers in 2006.

The gains for the richest took place amid a booming economy, in which hedge funds and private equity firms blossomed and the subprime lending machine went out of control. It should also be noted that governmental regulation of these entities had been consistently reduced as the ideology of the time preached that the “free market” would regulate itself if we would just remove those smothering regulations and leave it alone. The result of that thinking is all too apparent in today’s economic crisis!

Most economists would agree that some disparity in income is a good thing, encouraging work ethic, individual motivation and an entrepreneurial spirit, but the extreme to which the current disparity has risen is unhealthy. CEO’s in America earn on average, 260+ times the income of their average worker (up ten times what it was in 1970), and far above the difference seen in other top industrialized nations.

So, what of the tax burden imposed on the wealthy? The income tax rate paid by the wealthy has shrunk dramatically due to rate reductions and a plethora of tax breaks. For example, the capital gains tax rate, not generally a concern

of the majority of taxpayers since most capital gains are experienced on huge investment portfolios, is now at 15 percent, down from 28 percent in 1997. The ideology of recent times has seen to it that the wealthy keep as much of their money as possible, allowing the burgeoning inequity in income. While the wealthiest have seen their incomes grow dramatically, their average tax rate has sunk to a low of 17 percent.

But aren’t the wealthy giving back immense sums to charitable causes? While some have made sizable contributions to charity, they are not outshining the rest of the generous American population. More than half, or nearly 54 percent, of all the itemized deductions taken by the wealthiest were related to their charitable contributions, a figure roughly unchanged since 1996. While the top 400 wealthiest earned more deductions from their charitable contributions, such gifts still account for just 5.19 percent of all itemized charitable contributions by all taxpayers and many of the poor who contribute what they can, aren’t counted because they don’t itemize.

Closing of the income gap at various times in our history has led to some of the most prosperous eras. The old adage about a rising tide raising all ships is as true today as it ever was – elevating the least among us will produce an improved society which is a decided benefit to all. Social security is an example of how our society improved by providing a safety net for the elderly and otherwise disadvantaged and universal health care can be an example of how today’s society can be improved. Consolidating wealth in the hands of a few does not elevate our society – let’s hope that change is just around the corner.



Bob Jome serves on Manitowoc Public School Board. He is a past Chair of Mandydems, now serving as Treasurer. Bob enjoys retirement from a career teaching Math at Lincoln High School.



Third Annual Bill Proxmire Banquet & Silent Auction*



With Special Tribute to the Late

Dale Bolle

In addition to his work as President and Owner of Bolle Trucking, Dale J. Bolle became extremely active in county and state government serving on the Manitowoc County Board of Supervisors from 1970 to 1980, its Board Chairman from 1976 to 1978.

In 1982 he became a full-time Democratic State Representative for the 2nd Assembly District serving in this capacity for 12 years.

(A Veteran of World War II and the Korean Conflict, Dale J. Bolle retired as Captain from the U.S. Army Reserve after 23 years of service. He was decorated with the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star with Oak Leaf Cluster.)



Key-Note Speaker

Peg Lautenschlauger

Former Wisconsin Attorney General

With Tributes by Bob Ziegelbauer and Ted Zigmunt

*Contributions for Silent Auction

Everyone has their unique way of participating in the 'goings-on' of the party. Some of the more special contributions are those items for the Silent Auctions. Whether it be fine art or crafts, caps and tees, small appliances, books, gift baskets and certificates, those homemade breads and pies, wines and liquors, etc. - make your contribution for the Bill Proxmire Banquet and Silent Auction.

Contact Nan Hallock, chair@mantydem.com or at (920) 652-0016.

Sunday, March 22nd

5:30 – Cash Bar

6:30 – Dinner

Club Bil-Mar

3627 Cty Trk CR
Manitowoc

Advance Tickets \$25

\$45 / Couple

\$30 at Door

Public Invited



3rd Annual Bill Proxmire Banquet Honoring the Late Dale Bolle

Name _____

Address _____

Number attending _____ at \$25 each \$45 /couple (\$30 each at door) \$ _____
(Total enclosed)

Make Contributions payable to:

Manitowoc County Democratic Party

PO Box 1373

Manitowoc WI 54221-1373

(RSVP by March 18th)

Or contact Nan Hallock, chair@MantyDems.com Phone (920) 652-0016

Bullets

Nan Hallock, Chair

chair@mantydem.com or 920-652-0016

■ FEINGOLD FUNDRAISER

Sunday, March 15th, 12:00 Noon – 1:30 PM
Manitowoc Yacht Club - RSVP: Nan Hallock

In addition to Russ, there will be lunch, live music, beer, soft drinks and coffee. A cash bar will be available for other adult beverages. An individual ticket (suggested donation) is \$50. Hosted by Dolly Stokes and Nan Hallock, they hope you will mark your calendar and plan to join them for what will be a fun and meaningful get together with Russ.

■ **VOTE! SPRING ELECTION – Tuesday, April 7th**

The Editor Endorses those Candidates in (Parentheses):

Supreme Court Justice – (Shirley Abrahamson), Randy Koschnick
Supt Department of Public Instruction – (Tony Evers), Rose Fernandez
Manitowoc Mayor – (Justin Nickels), Dave Soeldner
Manitowoc Public School Board – Mike Herrity, (Ron Kossik), Tim Newberg
City Council Races
Township Races

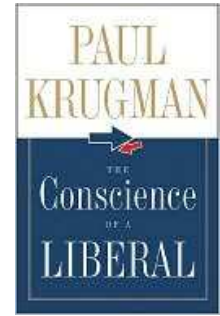
- **Think Tank meets Saturday, March 14th** and the 2nd Saturday of each month following. 9:30 AM, at the Lakeshore Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 421 N 8th Street, Manitowoc. *If you like talkin' politics – it's the place to be. New-comers encouraged to attend and are always welcome. It's fun!*

- **MantyDems needs volunteers** to spearhead and coordinate two important summer projects:
Fun Summertime Fundraiser - Brat fry? Fish boil? Concert? Casino night? We're eager to hear your creative ideas! Time and place are flexible.
MantyDems Booth at County Fair- Primary responsibility is coordinating volunteers to serve in exhibit booth.
If interested, please contact Nan Hallock (*see above*)

- **Call for Resolutions** – Grassroots at its best. Deadline is March 15th. See insert for directions for submitting Resolutions. Resolutions to be adopted at brief meeting following Proxmire Banquet.
- **Call for Delegates** – persons interested in serving as delegates to the 6th Congressional District and State Conventions please contact Nan Hallock. All members may attend – only Delegates are allowed to vote. Delegates are those few elected members to shape the resolutions into Party Platform.
- **6th CD Convention – April 18th**. Hosted by Dodge County at Feil's Supper Club southwest of Beaver Dam. All members may attend, but only Delegates may vote. Pre-registration fee is \$20.00. Registration will be \$25.00 at the door. Checks may be sent to Angela Sutkiewicz at 434 Erie Ave, Sheboygan, WI 53081. The pre-registration deadline is April 10, 2009. Angela can be reached at 920-452-3717 or asutkiewicz@excel.net.
- **Democratic Leadership Institute April 25-26th** – MantyDems will absorb tuition for two Young Dems. Interested candidates should submit written request with brief reason for wishing to attend to Nan Hallock (*see above*). *Registration forms can be accessed at www.wisdems.org.*

Book Review

By Bob Jome



The Conscience of a Liberal
by Paul Krugman

This is an excellent book by the Nobel Prize winning Princeton Professor of Economics and New York Times editorial columnist, Paul Krugman. While it isn't light fiction, neither is it an overwhelmingly complex read.

With a look at the economic history of the U. S. for the last century or so, Krugman points out that recent history has been dominated by what he calls "movement conservatives" (we often say neo-cons) who have worked hard to undo the gains of the New Deal. The New Deal and the years following brought on the growth of a prominent middle class and a shrinking of income disparity in this country. The movement conservatives have reversed that and have produced the great disparity found today.

Krugman points out that a return to a more equal and democratic society is a very possible reform that can be brought about by a new political coalition. He does an excellent job of describing how we got here and what can be done to fix the mess.



CALL FOR RESOLUTIONS FOR PRESENTATION TO THE 6TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Resolutions should be on state and national issues/topics, and if adopted at the local level will be presented to the 6th Congressional District. From the resolutions presented to the District at the 6th CD Convention on April 18th, a total of 10 will be selected for submission to the Democratic Party of Wisconsin for review and adoption by the party delegates at the State Convention.

To facilitate the review of resolutions, please submit them to our Secretary no later than March 15th. The Secretary will prepare copies of all submitted resolutions for review at the Proxmire Dinner on March 22nd. *(Late resolutions will be accepted at the meeting following the Proxmire Dinner if presented in written format, a minimum of 25 copies for distribution to membership.)*

Submit to: Kate Schuette, Secretary
kschuette@tds.net
8906 North Avenue
Cleveland WI 53015

Deadline: March 15th

Resolutions may not exceed 100 words (no exceptions) and should follow the format in the sample below. *(Note: Handwritten Resolutions may be submitted.)*

Resolutions may touch on a multitude of topics including but not limited to:

- Social Security
- Education
- Health Care
- Election Process, Voter ID
- Equal Rights Amendment
- Separation of Church and State
- Campaign Financing
- Repeal of Patriot Act
- Women’s Right of Privacy
- Marriage/Civil Unions
- Conservation — Global Warming, air Pollution, Lakefront, Sustainable energy
- Living Wage
- Agriculture
- Taxation — Property Tax – Taxpayers Protection Act, TABOR
- Homeland Security
- Other

Sample Resolution

Funding Social Security Without Privatization — 100 words.

1 Whereas, Social Security is a benefit that survivors, disabled and retired millions rely on;

2 Whereas, full benefits can be paid until 2052 according to the Congressional Budget Office

3 and 80 percent thereafter;

4 Whereas, increasing the income cap on FICA will make Social Security solvent beyond 2075;

5 Whereas, private Social Security accounts will cause the government \$2 trillion in transition

6 costs; and

7 Whereas, Social Security is the principal income for 2/3rds of retirees, and for 1/3rd it is their

8 only income;

9 Therefore, resolved, the DPW opposes any privatization of the Social Security system and

10 favors an increase in the income cap.

The Manitowoc Progressive

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PO Box 1373

Manitowoc WI 54221-1373

Calendar of Events

- Mon, Mar 9th Great Decisions*, Global Food Supply
Sat, Mar 14th **Think Tank / Newsletter Committee – 9:30 AM, at Unitarian Fellowship**
Sun, Mar 15th Feingold Fundraiser, Yacht Club – Noon
Sun, March 15th Deadline for submission of Resolutions
Mon, Mar 16th Great Decisions*, Cuba after Castro
Sun, Mar 22nd **Proxmire Banquet, Honoring the Late Dale Bolle 5:30PM – Club Bil-Mar**
Peg Lautenschlager – Keynote Speaker. Short Business meeting to follow for adoption of Resolutions.
Mon, Mar 23rd Great Decisions*, Universal Human Rights
Mon, Apr 6th Executive Committee Meeting – 6:00 PM – Pizza Garden
Tues, April 7th **VOTE! Spring Election**
Sat, Apr 11th **Think Tank / Newsletter Committee – 9:30 AM, at Unitarian Fellowship**
Sat, Apr 18th **6th CD Convention.** All members welcome.
Apr 25-26th Democratic Leadership Institute
Mon, Apr 27th **Membership Meeting, Kerry Trask, Ph.D., WI Unique Political Heritage**
Mon, May 4th Executive Committee Meeting – 6:00 PM - TBA
Tues, May 26th **Membership Meeting, Mark Swanson, Supt. Manitowoc Public Schools**
Jun 12-13th DPW State Convention – Green Bay
Mon, Jun 22 **Membership Meeting, Keeley Crowley presenting on Women’s Issues**
- All Great Decisions, 6-8 PM, Manitowoc Public Library.

MantyDems Officers

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Chair

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920-652-0016

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Phil Knier

Past Chair

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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

Name/s _____

Address _____

City/Zip _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Employer _____

Employer Address _____

Occupation _____

Fees include membership to both the State and County Parties.

\$1,200 Investor* \$45 Activist

\$1,200 Investor* \$35 Pairs

\$600 Patron* \$25 General

\$240 Friends* \$10 Senior/Student

\$120 Supporter* \$10 Limited Income

\$75 Family* Other _____

*includes all family members

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.