



Celebrating a World-Wide Community

By Juscha Robinson

RAFAEL ENRIQUE COLMENÁREZ will be in Dane County this month and at Progressive Dane's General Membership meeting on Wednesday, March 25, where he will talk briefly about cooperative economics and climate change.

We are hoping to hear from him regarding local, grassroots political activism, as Venezuela has gone through transition in the last decade.

Mr. Colmenárez is a coffee farmer and coop organizer from Andres Eloy Blanco Municipality, a rural area in midwestern Venezuela also known by the name of its capital, Sanare. This area is considered the birthplace of the Venezuelan agrarian cooperative movement. He has given numerous presentations about agroecology, fair trade, and cooperative economics. He is also the president of FONCASA (Sanare Coffee Fund) a community organization that defends the economic and social rights of small coffee farmers.

Mr. Colmenárez has been very active promoting people to people exchanges and fair trade between coops in Venezuela and the US, and played a pivotal role in the establishment of the Sister County Relationship between his home town in Venezuela and Dane County, Wisconsin. He gathered the support of local elected officials and coops to support the agreement.

The sister-county relationship was approved by the Dane County Board of Supervisors last June. Sanare area coffee coops sent coffee to Wisconsin to celebrate the sistering. Information about the Sister County Agreement can be found at www.dane-andres.org.

Coming to Madison:

Green Jobs Enterprise Center

By Dace Zeps

THE INABILITY OF MANY TO FIND good employment is one of the biggest obstacles to the stability of my neighborhood and the success of our children. While making broader community connections with others looking at employment, I found that the issues in my neighborhood were complex. Scott Kleinfeldt, our Neighborhood Officer, identified the difficulty getting employed as a major problem leading to higher incidents of crime. Young people need something to do, they need hope and they need good jobs that they can actually get hired into. Young adults coming home from prison have added barriers that need to be addressed.

I began to search for something I could bring to the neighborhood that would impart skills and confidence and open the door to a good career. One of the surest ways to improve somebody's standard of living is to get them a job, but to sustain that improvement it needs to be a good job that pays a living wage, offers benefits, and a career pathway for advancement.

During that search I met Jerry Knapp, a business development representative for the Laborers' International Union of North America, at a Blue Green Alliance Rally at the Labor Temple and talked to him about the need in my neighborhood for employment opportunities. I was particularly interested in the union aspect in this new job market, knowing that these would indeed be family supporting wages.

Jerry, Scott, and I have since been working to establish the Worthington Park Green Jobs Enterprise Center between Starkweather Creek and the Department of Corrections in the Worthington Park neighborhood along the East Washington Avenue corridor in order to bring together existing union apprenticeship programs, pre-apprentice service providers, and other key stakeholders to train people in green construction crafts and business

skills in order to prepare them for better jobs; provide manufacturers a place to showcase and sell green building products; and provide entrepreneurs space to develop and grow for the purposes of building sustainable, affordable housing, retrofitting existing buildings, and deconstructing buildings to re-use, recycle, or donate all to secure a better future for our city.

Progressive Dane's Economic Issues Task Force is researching what needs to be put in place to help create the market. Alder Satya Rhodes-Conway, who works at the Center for Wisconsin Strategy, has provided us a wealth of information and contacts. Scott went to the 2009 Good Jobs, Green Jobs National Conference, hosted by the Blue Green Alliance in DC, and spoke with several individuals who are doing similar work around the nation. Working with Jerry, I've learned how much the Laborers' Union has been a leader in progressive thinking on how to tackle new markets and incubate new green businesses.

I am excited about partnering the community with labor and the police to emphasize the importance of investing in our people, especially our youth and those returning from prison, not only as a way to improve people's standard of living, but to stabilize and engage neighborhoods as well as prevent crime and increase safety.

We are looking to partner with anybody interested in making this happen for Madison. You can contact me at dzeps@sbcglobal.net, (608) 358-2940; or Rick Richards, Progressive Dane's Economic Issues Task Force Chair, at szygy1@charter.net.



Authorized and paid for by the Progressive Dane Campaign Fund, Mary Anglim, Treasurer

Forward! is the newsletter of Progressive Dane in Dane County, Wisconsin.

Progressive Dane is affiliated with the Independent Progressive Politics Network.

Progressive Dane is a democratic, membership-run organization. The following committees and task forces meet in the main conference room at the Social Justice Center, 1202 Williamson Street, unless otherwise noted.

Steering Committee: coordinates major activities, oversees the progress of other committees, sets the agenda for general membership meetings. Meetings open to all PD members.

Co-chairs: Jacque Pokorney, juju_jacque@yahoo.com Norm Littlejohn, normlittlejohn@hotmail.com

Next meeting: Monday, April 6, 7pm

Economic Issues Task Force

Contact: Rick Richards, syzygy1@charter.net Next meeting: Thursday, April 9, 5:30pm

Education Task Force

Contact: TJ Mertz, tjmertz@sbcglobal.net Next meeting: Contact TJ

Elections Committee

Contact: Lukas Diaz, diaz_luke@yahoo.com Next meeting: Wednesday, April 1, 8pm

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Next meeting: Wednesday, March 25, 6:30pm; Downtown Public Library, upstairs

Housing Task Force

Contact: Jacque Pokorney, juju_jacque@yahoo.com Next meeting: Contact Jacque

Newsletter Consortium

Articles are always accepted from PD members. Contact: Dace Zeps, office@prodane.org

Outreach & Fundraising Committee

Contact: Norm Littlejohn, normlittlejohn@hotmail.com Next meeting: March 24, 5:30pm

Policy Committee

Contact: Brenda Konkel, brendakonkel@gmail.com Next meeting: Sunday, April 19, 6pm

Transportation Task Force

Contact: Aaron Crandall, aaron.crandall@yahoo.com Next meeting: Contact Aaron

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Visit Progressive Dane on the web at www.prodane.org



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Last Month at the GMM

By Norm Littlejohn

FEBRUARY'S GENERAL MEMBERSHIP Meeting concerned itself with some core Progressive Dane issues: transportation, green jobs, immigration, elections—and PD's 2009 budget.

Treasurer Mary Anglim presented the proposed budget for this year, already modified slightly and approved by the Steering Committee. We're on the familiar shoestring, but functioning; the GMM passed the budget as proposed, after slight discussion.

A proposal from Elections Committee Chair Lukas Diaz to spend \$100 for on-line advertising was also passed. This will increase Progressive Dane's visibility and help spread the true word about PD, for very little money.

Co-Chair Jacque Pokorney gave the second half of her overview of this year's priorities and plans for action, which she started at January's GMM. Blended with that discussion was a wrap-up of efforts by PD and many allies to forestall the City Council's Metro fare hike—February's GMM was on the night after the Council overruled the Transit and Parking Commission to raise the adult cash fare on Metro buses to \$2, with increases for all tickets and passes, too.

All the Progressive Dane Alders in attendance, along with Eli Judge, Brian Solomon and Julia Kerr voted against raising the fare. All but Julia had voted

against the hike in last autumn's budget debate—welcome to the right side of this issue, Julia!

Voting to raise bus fares were these Alders: Tim Bruer, District 14; Joe Clausius, 17; Mark Clear, 19; Lauren Cnare, 3; Judy Compton, 16; Libby Monson, 7; Larry Palm, 15; Thuy Pham-Remmele, 20; Jed Sanborn, 1; Michael Schumacher, 18, and Paul Skidmore, 9. Does one of those names sound particularly familiar? You can find out who your Alder is at cityofmadison.com. Contact information is found there, too.

Along with the bus fare, Jacque led discussion on green jobs—our staffer Dace Zeps is deeply involved in an exciting project soon to emerge in the Worthington Park neighborhood, with potential for a large green facility for manufacturing and job training. (See article, page 1.)

Immigration remains a hot topic, and Jacque and Kyle Szarzynski updated the meeting: Student PD and an impressive array of other student groups are working on a resolution strengthening the "sanctuary" resolution of 2004. They hope to have Dane County Board Chair Scott McDonnell introduce it late in March. Meanwhile, talks continue to try to persuade Sheriff Dave Mahoney to end his policy of reporting to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) anyone arrested in Dane County who doesn't have documentation to be in the United States.

Time to Renew Your Membership

By Dace Zeps

Progressive Dane thanks you for being a member and encourages you to continue supporting the independent, grassroots political movement in Madison and Dane County by renewing your membership.

Of course, contributing as a sustaining member is the best way to support Progressive Dane. Giving as little as \$5 monthly, \$9 quarterly, \$12 annually or more helps to spread out your contribution and budget our resources better as we make plans to grow.

However you choose to renew, there are several ways to do so. Go to www.prodane.org and click on the Join/Donate button. Or mail in a check along with the membership slip on the back of this newsletter or with the membership card you'll receive with your renewal letter, which

also outlines some of our major priorities for the upcoming year and highlights some of our major accomplishments of the last year.

BEER Caucus Friday April 3 5:30 Brink Lounge East Washington between Blount & Livingston ...there's always so much to talk about

School Board: Budget and Beyond

By Arlene Silveira

It is a busy time for the School Board as we embark our new governance structure, participate in the strategic planning process, advocate for equitable school funding/budgets and prepare for our budget. Highlights for February are below.

Four Year Old Kindergarten (4K): The district has begun putting together projections for the financial requirements associated with starting a 4K program in the Madison Metropolitan School District. 4K is a program that would benefit the MMSD community, but there are many aspects of this program that need to be fully evaluated such as facilities, transportation, budget, collaboration financial commitments, and staffing.

To show our commitment to continue the evaluation of this program, the Board authorized the Administration to begin community-based planning for the future of a four-year-old kindergarten in the MMSD. We will be updated on a monthly basis as evaluation and planning progresses.

Dual Language Immersion Programming: There are a number of things happening in the district with respect to dual language immersion programming. The Board approved the renewal of the Charter School contract with Nuestro Mundo, Inc. concerning the operation of the Nuestro Mundo Community School for a five-year term.

We are also looking at the expansion of dual-language immersion programs in the district. We have hired a Program Support Teacher to collaborate with district, school staff and principal to develop a long range plan for expansion of dual immersion in the district. In the 2009–2010 school year we will begin an immersion program in kindergarten at Leopold Elementary. We are also evaluating middle school programs as well.

Superintendent Contract: The Board unanimously approved a one-year extension of Daniel Nerad's employment contract as Superintendent of Schools. Dr. Nerad has demonstrated his commitment to the district and his leadership skills in many ways. The Board is very happy with the time Dr. Nerad has spent visiting our schools and engaging our community.

Meadowood Community Center: February marked the opening of the new Meadowood Community Center. The center opened in the space previously occupied by Jacobsen Brothers Meats and Deli on the city's southwest side. It is a collaborative pilot project funded by the City of Madison and the MMSD. The center will provide programming for community members of all ages and has after school programming for students living in the area.

Legislative Informational Community Session: We are holding a special Board meeting to focus on legislative issues on Wednesday April 1 at 6pm at Wright Middle School. At this session we will

provide updates on school funding and state budget issues that affect the MMSD. We will discuss and share strategies on how the community can get involved in advocating for our schools.

Fine Arts Task Force (FATF) Informational Community Sessions: The focus of each session will be a presentation of the findings and recommendations of the FATF followed by an opportunity for discussion. The Executive Summary and complete FATF report can be found at www.madison.k12.wi.us/boe/finearts.

Thanks for all you do for our children. Please let us know if you have any questions or comments at comments@madisonk12.wi.us.

Lend a Hand to Progressive Dane!

By Dace Zeps

PROGRESSIVE DANE'S VOLUNTEER Night is Tuesday, April 14, 5:30–7:30pm, at the Social Justice Center conference room, 1202 Williamson St.

On this night, in addition to the primary activity of labeling the Progressive Dane newsletter Forward, help will also be needed to assemble the Garden Party mailing. As always, other activities include: folding the informational brochures, making calls to engage current members, writing thank you notes, entering data, and updating the website.

May Day 2009 in Madison

MARCH FOR THE POOR, IMMIGRANTS and workers with the Unión de Trabajadores Internacional, the International Workers Union, and other groups on Friday, May 1.

March to demand:

Passage of the Employee Free Choice Act; universal health care; mandatory paid sick leave; a living wage; a halt to foreclosures and evictions; increased funding for Section 8 housing; free university tuition for low-income students; no increase in bus fares; a living wage for W-2 workers; real funding for public schools; immigrant access to identification and drivers' licenses; amnesty for immigrant workers; stop the sheriff's notification policy to Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and no firings for no-match letters from

the Social Security Administration.

The march will gather at 10:30am at Brittingham Park, march to Capitol Square at 12:45pm to present state and federal demands, then at 1:45pm head to the City–County Building to address city and county demands.

Find more information at www.maydayinmadison.org or www.union-detabajadores.org; e-mail info@immigrantworkers.org.

THANKS!

to Mother Fool's Coffee House,
1101 Williamson St.,
and Lakeside Press,
1334 Williamson St.,
for their help in the recent campaign
to try to stop the bus fare hikes.

Mark your calendar!

Next Membership Meeting

Wednesday, March 25 • 6:30 p.m.

Upstairs at Madison's Downtown Public Library • Mifflin at Fairchild

Guest Speaker: Rafael Enrique Colmenárez, a coffee farmer and coop organizer from

Andres Eloy Blanco Municipality, our Venezuelan Sister County

May Day Rally Sponsorship Request — **VOTE**

PD Listservs Discussion — **VOTE**

PD Elections Committee Discussion on Clean Government — *Possible VOTE*

Action Updates on PD Priorities

Staff, Alder, Supervisor, and/or School Board Activity and Action Reports

Chair: Jacque Pokorney, juju_jacque@yahoo.com

If you need an interpreter, materials in alternative formats, or other accommodations, please contact the PD office at 257-4985 one week in advance of the meeting.



VOLUNTEER NIGHT!
Meet great people and help with labeling our newsletter and other easy tasks.
Tuesday, April 14 • 5:30pm
PD Office, 1202 Williamson Street
(Social Justice Center—conference room)
As always, refreshments are provided!

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- Please renew my membership** in Progressive Dane.

Sustaining membership: \$ _____ / month (minimum \$5) \$ _____ / quarter (minimum \$9) \$ _____ / year (minimum \$12)

To pay by bank draft, please attach a voided check; or first month's check payable to Progressive Dane.

Annual single membership:

<input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Regular	<input type="checkbox"/> \$36 Basic	<input type="checkbox"/> \$12 Low Income
<input type="checkbox"/> \$250+ Benefactor	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Supporting	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75 Contributing

Annual household membership: \$100 Contributing \$75 Regular \$50 Basic

More than two adults in the house? Sign them up for \$25 per person. Number of additional memberships _____

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You can also join Progressive Dane at www.prodane.org!