

Mark your calendar!

# Next Membership Meeting

General Membership Meeting  
 Wednesday, May 27, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.  
 Madison Public Library, 201 West Mifflin Street

## GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING AGENDA

Guest Speaker: Brenda Konkel, Prioritizing our Priorities  
 Staff Report  
 Treasurer Report  
 Alder Report – Marsha Rummel  
 Supervisor Report – Barbara Vedder  
 Bike to Work – Aaron Crandall  
 Walk on the Child's Side – TJ Mertz, Vote to Endorse  
 Chair: Marsha Rummel



# FORWARD!

The Official Newsletter of Progressive Dane

Volume 17

No. 5

May 2009

Rebuilding Politics in Dane County from the Grassroots

## Last Month at the GMM

By Dace Zeps

With Kyle Szarzynski chairing, April's General Membership meeting was an affirmation of the work that we all do in and outside of Progressive Dane. TJ Mertz gave a summary of the items discussed at the Steering Committee Retreat, the development of a PD Education Platform, the need for School Finance Reform, and the re engagement of the Policy Committee. Aaron Crandall talked about the new Bike/Walk Group that Robbie Webber has formed to implement things that came out of the Platinum Bicycling Committees report. In looking at the issues being raised at the May Day Rally, it was important to recognize how many organizations are working to promote justice in Dane County. Progressive Dane members working within all groups need to let others know that our elect are ready to move items forward when the work is ready and gets to that level. Alex Gillis spoke eloquently about our combined struggles for a just and equitable society and that we must work together to stave off attack from those who would rather see us fail.

## Promoting Urban Agriculture

By Marsha Rummel, Alder, District 6, Madison

Soil and environmental degradation, expansion of global industrial development, industrialized agriculture, and the reliance upon petrochemicals for fuel and food has threatened natural resources and our food security. Urban sprawl causes annual cropland losses and soil erosion. These trends contribute to the growing alarm about our natural resources and food security. One solution to meeting future urban food security demands, while protecting and conserving natural resources, is the conversion of unused parcels of land in the urban environment to sustainable food production areas.

There is a growing interest in urban agriculture and sustainable practices in Madison. It started over a decade ago with the explosion of community supported agriculture building on the phenomenal success of the Dane County Farmers Market. Now local neighborhood based farmers markets are located throughout the city and surrounding municipalities. There is a proposal to construct an indoor Madison Public

Market somewhere near downtown. There are waiting lists for community gardens. Accessible community gardens are proposed for the new Central Park. The incredible model of Will Allen and Growing Power in Milwaukee has inspired many to set up an urban farm in Madison. There are advocates for edible landscapes in city parks and green ways and locally sourced and organic foods in school lunch programs. School vegetable garden programs are growing around the country as a way to connect kids to growing and eating healthy foods. Green roofs are part of our expectations in new developments. Land trusts and land banking earmark land for agriculture use and Victory gardens for food pantries. There is increased community awareness and support for urban fringe agricultural projects like the Drumlin Farm in Fitchburg which have faced development pressure. Reusing production facilities like the Land of Lakes Dairy on East Washington for value added food products. Chicken keeping opportunities have expanded. A Dane County Food *See Agriculture page 2*

**VOLUNTEER NIGHT!**  
 Meet great people and help with labeling our newsletter and other easy tasks.  
 June 16 at 5:30  
 Social Justice Center, 1202  
 Williamson Street  
 As always, refreshments are provided!

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- I support the principles and purpose of Progressive Dane. **Sign me up!**  
 **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:**  \$50 Regular  \$36 Basic  \$12 Low Income  
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- 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 \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Progressive Dane, P.O. Box 1222, Madison, WI 53701 • For more information: (608) 257-4958  
 You can also join Progressive Dane at [www.prodane.org](http://www.prodane.org)

**The Beer Caucus**  
 June 5, 5:30 p.m.  
 The Brink Lounge  
 701 E. Washington Ave

## Save the Date – Walk on the Child's Side 10th Anniversary School Funding Action!

By TJ Mertz, Education Task Force Chair

On June 16, 2009 at 11:00 AM, concerned citizens from around Wisconsin will gather at Library Mall on the UW-Madison campus and march to the State Capital, bringing a message that comprehensive school funding reform cannot wait.

The event marks the tenth anniversary on the original "Walk on the Child's Side." In 1999 and subsequent years, Price County Citizen's Who CARE, (Committee for Alternative Revenues for Education), and their allies walked hundreds of miles from

Northern Wisconsin to Madison, spreading the message that Wisconsin's broken school funding system needs to be fixed.

After ten additional years of cuts to our children's educational opportunities, the need for fix is greater than ever! This message needs to be heard. Join the "Walk on the Child's Side" veterans and newcomers to the struggle on June 16 and be part of the movement for change. Go to <http://bit.ly/6AvAc> for more information and a poster you can print and distribute.

*Forward!* is the newsletter 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 of the Social Justice Center at 1202 Williamson, unless otherwise noted.*

**Steering Committee:** coordinates major activities, oversees the progress of other committees, and sets the agenda for the general membership meetings. Meetings are open to all PD members.  
*Cochairs:* Norm Littlejohn normlittlejohn@hotmail.com, Jacque Pokorney juju\_jacque@yahoo.com  
*Next meeting:* June 8, 7:00 p.m.

**Elections Committee**  
*Chair:* Lukas Diaz, diaz\_luke@yahoo.com  
*Next meeting:* June 3, 8:00 p.m.

**Newsletter Consortium**  
*Contact:* Dace Zeps, 257-4985

**Outreach and Fund raising Committee**  
*Contact:* Norm Littlejohn, normlittlejohn@hotmail.com  
*Next meeting:* May 26, 5:30 p.m.

**Policy Committee**  
*Chair:* Brenda Konkel, brenindakonkel@gmail.com  
*Next meeting:* May 31 and June 14, 5:00 p.m.

**Transportation/Environmental Task Force**  
*Contact:* Aaron Crandall, aaron.crandall@yahoo.com  
*Next meeting:* As needed

**Economic Issues Task Force**  
*Contact:* Rick Richards, syzygy1@charter.net, 255-5023  
*Next meeting:* June 18, 5:30 p.m.

**Education Task Force**  
*Contact:* TJ Mertz, tjmertz@sbcglobal.net  
*Next meeting:* As needed

**Housing Task Force**  
*Contact:* Jacque Pokorney, 843-9616  
*Next meeting:* As needed

**General Membership Meeting**  
*Next meeting:* May 27, 6:30 p.m.  
*Madison Public Library, 201 West Mifflin Street*

PRODUCTION AND CIRCULATION CONSORTIUM: John Dupuis, Norm Littlejohn, Jacque Pokorney, Richard Russell, Ralph Shively, Dace Zeps

THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS: Aaron Crandall, TJ Mertz, Adam Porton, Marsha Rummel, Dace Zeps

Submit articles, meeting times and announcements for the June newsletter to Dace Zeps, 257-4985, or office@prodane.org by noon, Friday, June 5.

Send all correspondence to:  
Progressive Dane

P.O. Box 1222, Madison, WI 53701

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

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**Agriculture from page 1**

Council has been created to combat hunger. And the list goes on. All this, coupled with composting of food and yard waste as well as water conservation efforts such as rain barrels, make for an exciting sustainable future for food security.

Progressive Dane members and elect on the city and county level have been active in urban agriculture for many years. County Board Supervisor Kyle Richmond recently established a Sustainable Action subcommittee of the Environment, Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee which he chairs to develop an 'action agenda' in 2009

**Garden Party June 19**

You are all cordially invited to Progressive Dane's Annual Garden Party and Summer Fund raiser. This year's party will again be at Betty Zeps' home at 1922 Adams Street in Madison. We hope that everyone can join us on Friday, June 19th from 5-8.

Here's what you can do to help: Sponsor the event by returning the pledge form in the envelope provided

**Try Bicycling to Work in June**

By Aaron Crandall,  
Transportation Task Force Chair

May is National Bike Month, proclaimed by the League of American Bicyclists. Bike to Work Day has past, it was May 15, but here in Wisconsin, we're waiting until June to get folks on their bikes to work. Check out www.bfw.org to register for Bike to Work Week (BTWW), which is from June 6-12 this year. Normally, BTWW is in May, to coincide with the National Bike to Work Day, but the Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin figured more people may be interested if the weather was a bit nicer.

Join other riders on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, from 7-9 a.m., for free coffee, bakery & bike repair at several locations along bike paths on those days. Be sure to stop by at Tuesday's Commuter Station, which will be at the Isthmus, 101 King St., for the press conference.

Events include Art Bike Decorating and Art Bike Rally on Sat, June 6,

that addresses beginning farmer needs, farmland preservation and conservation, food security and profitability.

Urban agriculture promotes food security, improving each participant's health and quality of life, and creating unique opportunities for racial and ethnic diversity while creating dynamic, aesthetic cityscapes. Progressive Dane is uniquely poised to expand on this interest. Please join us at the May GMM to discuss next steps we can take as an organization to support the growing movements around urban agriculture in Dane County.

in your invitation. If you can't find it, pledge on-line at www.prodane.org.

Another way to help is to volunteer to bring food and drink. Contact office@prodane.org to let us know what you can bring.

Finally don't forget to mark your calendar and come and have a great time in support of Progressive Dane with an evening of food, drink, music, and great progressive talk with new and old friends!

starting at 10 a.m., Madison Children's Museum. Then, on Sun, June 7, there will be a Commuter Workshop & Ride at Willy Street Co-op, starting at 10 a.m. On Tuesday, bike to the Capitol square with Mayor Cieslewicz from Hillington Green at Norwood Place, starting at 8:30 a.m., followed by the press conference in front of the Isthmus at 9 a.m. Also on Tuesday, from 5-6:30 p.m., socialize with fellow bikers and bicycle-friendly employers over drinks & appetizers at Restaurant Magnus for Bicycle Friendly Business Happy Hour.

Then, join Planet Bike for the soon-to-be-famous Planet Bike bacon, coffee, bakery & bike repair at Capitol City Trail at Broom St, from 7-9 a.m. on Wed. Bike to the Mallards at 5 p.m., leaving from the SW Commuter Trail at Crazylegs. On Thursday, there will be Bike Trivia at Cafe Montmartre at 6 p.m. Finally, the final celebration is at the usual venue of Vilas Park and will begin at 4:30 p.m.

See the Bike Fed's website at www.bfw.org for more information, to register, and for updates. Get out there on your bikes and bike to work beginning in June!

**May Day in Madison**

This year in Madison, almost 40 organizations, including many student groups, came together to celebrate May Day with a march and rally to present our demands. Our own John Hendrick and TJ Mertz gave impassioned speeches on Education Funding Reform and Immigrant Rights.

**WE DEMAND:**

- ♦ Passage of the Employee Free Choice Act
- ♦ Universal health care now
- ♦ Mandatory paid sick leave
- ♦ A living wage
- ♦ Halt 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 Sheriff notification to ICE
- ♦ No firings for Social Security no match letters

**PD Supervisors Fight for Immigrant Rights**

By Adam Porton

On Thursday, May 7, Student Progressive Dane (SPD) and the Immigrant Worker's Union (IWU) mobilized more than fifty activists and community members at the city-county building to pressure the County Board to end Sheriff Dave Mahoney's ICE Hold policy. Those attending registered and spoke against a county resolution to create a taskforce to further study the Sheriff's behavior. UTI and SPD found the taskforce resolution to be extremely problematic because it would create the illusion that the county board was taking action against the Sheriff, while in reality the board would be once again simply postponing any real progress on the issue. Instead of a taskforce, the concerned citizens present called for the passage of a resolution which would specifically



**Summertime is Tabling Time**

In addition to our always fun and lively Volunteer Night (next month on June 16th), summer is time for tabling at events. This year Progressive Dane will be at a few Farmers Markets, a few of local events, and at BobFest in Baraboo. E-mail me at

office@prodane.org if you are able to table and together we'll find a time that works for you. I'll have a list of events and times at the GMM on May 27th. Outreach and Policy are creating a few mini campaigns around several of the issues Progressive Dane is working on to help bring people into our table. This year more than ever we'll need your help to get the word out.



prohibit the Sheriff from voluntarily reporting the names of all non-citizens booked into Dane County jail to the federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency (ICE). This resolution, sponsored by PD Supervisor John Hendrick, had unfortunately been blocked by the conservative leaning Public Protection and Judiciary Committee the previous Tuesday and therefore could not be considered by the full board.

Because of the presence of so many concerned activists and community members on May 7th, County Board supervisors were forced to talk about their opinions of the Sheriff's policies on record. While the vast majority of them condemned the Sheriff's actions, they

unfortunately failed to see the taskforce resolution for the diversionary tactic it was. Only four supervisors, all from Progressive Dane, spoke at length against the resolution. Calling for real action on the issue, PD supervisor Barbara Vedder stated that "The stories we've heard about this aren't just stories. They are real life situations of people living in fear, and for people to live like this in our own community is reprehensible." While the taskforce resolution did ultimately pass, IWU and SPD will continue to keep the grassroots pressure on by working to ensure that the taskforce contains members who understand the importance of returning action oriented proposals to the county board.