



Last Month's GMM

By Jacque Pokorney

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 28, AT THE CENTRAL LIBRARY saw a large and varied attendance for the PD General Membership Meeting, including observer Tim Cooley, head of Economic Development for the City of Madison.

We started with an interesting discussion led by former PD Alder and current transportation aficionado Robbie Webber regarding the chaos caused by the attempt to relocate the Greyhound Bus terminal.

Greyhound currently picks up passengers at Madison Metro's North Transfer Point (Huxley Street near Aberg), with the hope that a multi-modal station will be incorporated into the eventual train station to be located at Monona Terrace. PD is likely to stay very actively involved in all things regarding buses and trains for the next few years.

Then PD co-chair TJ Mertz gave us a quick County Board election de-briefing. The emphasis is now on investigation and open records requests concerning campaign contributions. There were likely several ethical violations, and this will be pursued further by our Elections Committee, along with PD member volunteers. If interested, contact Elections Chair Lukas Diaz.

We proceeded on the ethics theme with an overview by the other PD co-chair, Jacque Pokorney. She gave a brief discussion of the letter that has been sent to City Attorney Michael May and the entire Ethics Board for the City regarding a laundry list of likely ethics violations that have occurred over the last couple years. The hope is that a meeting will be convened to further investigate these issues. Our hope is also to get Ethics Board members to attend a future PD GMM to discuss these issues further.

Next, we elected three new members to the Steering Committee to get it back to full strength, ten members. New to SC is Heidi Wegleitner, a lawyer with Legal Action who has also spearheaded a recent effort with The People's Housing Vision that will soon be presented to the city of Madison Common Council. Also re-elected after a hiatus are long-term members Brenda Konkel and Lukas Diaz, both of whom will work to further revamp and update our communications tools, including our webpage and blog posts.

Finally, Alex Gillis and Yvonne Gerts from UTI (*Unión de Trabajadores Inmigrantes*) talked about the May Day Rally. There was a unanimous vote to endorse the rally, and TJ Mertz spoke at the rally on behalf of PD, especially in regards to educational issues and immigrant rights.

Take Back the Land Campaign

Housing is a Human Right

By Heidi Wegleitner

AT THIS MONTH'S GMM WE WILL LEARN MORE ABOUT TAKE Back the Land and Operation Welcome Home's (OWH) campaign to advance housing as a human right.

May is a national month of action honoring the fiftieth anniversary of the Woolworth's lunch-counter civil rights sit-ins with "live-ins" designed to challenge the policies which facilitate bailed out banks evicting people from homes which will sit vacant.

On Monday May 10, OWH held a press conference to celebrate moving Desiree Wilson and her young children into a vacant foreclosed home on Madison's west side. The house had been vacant for several months and absent any intervening party or action from the owner, it will soon become the property of Bank of America.

Prior to moving into the vacant house, Ms. Wilson and her young children had been staying in one room at her parents' house since they were displaced due to a foreclosure of their previous residence.

OWH and Ms. Wilson's bold action drew significant media attention to the urgency of the housing crisis and the demand for housing as a human right.

The property owner, while initially indifferent to the family's presence, eventually filed a complaint due to liability concerns. Ms. Wilson and her family voluntarily vacated the home to avoid a trespassing charge.

OWH, however, considers this just the first chapter of their effort to connect homeless people to people-less homes as part of the national Take Back the Land movement.

Operation Welcome Home is a community of homeless people and their allies in Madison organizing around the root causes of homelessness. They fight for affordable housing, jobs, and an end to the criminalization of poverty. OWH has previously organized to challenge hostile policies toward the homeless in Brittingham Park and Peace Park.

For more information on OWH and Take Back the Land, visit <http://operationwelcomehome.wordpress.com/>

Summertime is Tabling Time

IN ADDITION TO OUR ALWAYS FUN AND LIVELY VOLUNTEER Night (next month on June 15), summer is time for tabling at events. This year Progressive Dane will be at a few Farmers Markets, a few local events, and at Fighting Bob in Baraboo. E-mail me at office@prodane.org or call 358-2940 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 26. Help spread the word about progressive politics in Dane County!

Become a fan of Progressive Dane on Facebook!

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php#/pages/Progressive-Dane/117607684897?ref=ts>



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.

Meeting announcements made on PDComm; also see www.proदानe.org for listings.

JUNE MEETINGS

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

Co-chairs: Jacque Pokorney, juju_jacque@yahoo.com; 843-9616
TJ Mertz, tjmertz@sbcglobal.net; 215-1942
Monday, June 7, 7pm

Economic Issues Task Force

Thursday, June 17, 5:30pm
Contact: Rick Richards, szygy1@charter.net; 255-5023

Education Task Force

Contact: TJ Mertz, tjmertz@sbcglobal.net; 215-1942

Elections Committee

Wednesday, June 2, 8pm
Contact: Lukas Diaz, diaz_luke@yahoo.com; 262 443-3136

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Wednesday, June 23, 6:30pm
Upstairs at Madison Library Central Branch, Mifflin at Fairchild
Beer Caucus afterward, Nick's on State Street

Housing Task Force

Contact: Jacque Pokorney, juju_jacque@yahoo.com; 843-9616

Newsletter Consortium

Articles are always accepted from PD members.
Contact: Dace Zeps, office@prodane.org; 358-2940

Outreach & Fundraising Committee

Monday, June 21, 6:30pm
Contact: Dace Zeps, office@prodane.org; 358-2940

Policy Committee

Sunday, June 13, 7pm
Contact: Brenda Konkel, brendakonkel@gmail.com; 345-8720

Transportation Task Force

Contact: Aaron Crandall, aaron.crandall@yahoo.com; 294-9505

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Visit *Progressive Dane* on the web at www.proदानe.org



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County Immigration Task Force Update

By Adam Porton

THIS SPRING THE FIGHT TO DEFEND immigrant rights has continued to unfold at the county level. To refresh memories: Democratic Sheriff Dave Mahoney has implemented a policy of reporting the names of all immigrants booked into Dane County jail to the federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency. If ICE feels someone held in Dane County is in the country without proper documentation, they then place a prison "hold" on that person while they review the person's immigration status.

The effect of this policy is that being arrested for even minor offenses like driving infractions or disorderly conduct, not to mention being mistakenly arrested, can lead directly to deportation! Additionally this policy, which is not required by law, has fostered a harmful culture of fear and mistrust of law enforcement among Dane County's immigrant community.

However, despite countless public hearings about the devastating nature of this practice, the Sheriff has refused to alter his stance, and the Democrats on the County Board are avoiding holding one of their own accountable. Instead, they created a "task force" to study the issue further. While this task force was formed in May 2009 and was supposed to

be finished by November of that year, it didn't begin meeting until last fall and still has still not concluded its investigation.

One positive development came May 13, when the task force met to present three possible final recommendations it might make to the County Board. One of the possible recommendations is not to change the policy. Another is to notify ICE only if the person arrested is being charged with a "serious crime". The final option is for the task force to recommend the policy be discontinued all together.

Concerned community members once again turned out in force at the meeting to overwhelmingly support ending the policy in all cases. In fact, Brenda Konkel, a longtime opponent of the reporting practice, noted in her blog post about the event that in over three hours of testimony only "four intolerant old white guys showed up to testify in support of the sheriff."

The task force must now meet a final time to vote on a recommendation. I hope it will heed the community's voice and take a strong stand against this unjust and intolerant behavior. And if it does, the County Board may finally do more than pay lip service to the cause of immigrant rights, and instead take punitive measures against the Sheriff.

Garden Party June 18

YOU ARE ALL CORDIALLY INVITED TO Progressive Dane's Annual Garden Party and Summer Fundraiser. 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 18 from 5-8 p.m.

Here's what you can do to help: Sponsor the Garden Party with the pledge form and envelope you'll find in this newsletter, pledge on-line at <http://www.proदानe.org>, or wait for our call.

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!



We Must Move Beyond Simply Preserving Our Schools

By TJ Mertz

ON JUNE 1, THE MADISON METROPOLITAN School District Board of Education (MMSD) will hold a hearing and vote on its 2010–11 budget.

Over the last months the Board has worked hard to enact savings and efficiencies totaling over \$15 million while preserving crucial programs, opportunities, and jobs. What has been missing from the process is a concerted effort to move beyond preserving to improving our schools and their governance.

I am bringing forth a proposal asking the Board to reallocate a portion of these savings to address equity and provide a better basis for policy and budget decision-making. At the May 26 General Membership Meeting I will be asking Progressive Dane to support this proposal.

A full explanation of the proposals can be found on the PD website, but some introduction here is warranted. Equity first and then decision-making.

Much of my involvement in education advocacy stems from my 2005 appointment to the MMSD Equity Task Force. After much work, in 2008 the Board of Education enacted a policy based partially on the recommendations of that Task Force.

Both the Task Force and the policy recommend, where appropriate, “unequal distribution of resources and services in response to the unequal distribution of needs and educational barriers.” Before being decimated by budget cuts, MMSD used to do this through what were called “supplemental allocations,” which provided extra resources to our highest need schools.

Little progress is being made in the achievement gap, and African American and Hispanic students are more than twice as likely to drop out as they are to participate in programs for the “Talented and Gifted.” There is much room for improvement, and I am asking that this be brought back.

- **Budget \$2 million** in Supplemental Allocations to high-need schools via the Equity Resource Formula (or a similar criterion) and aligned with purposes identified in School Improvement Plans and consistent with the Strategic Plan and Equity Policy.

Since SAGE and Title I do provide resources to high-need elementary schools, it may be advisable to target secondary schools disproportionately with these funds.

Observers of and participants in this

budget process have repeatedly expressed frustration with the quality of information available to base decisions on.

The Strategic Plan, the Equity Policy, the Literacy Evaluation Initiative, the Talented and Gifted (TAG) Plan, the Culturally Relevant Education Program and much more all include evaluation and reporting components. These are all critical to bringing improvement to the district.

Because of budget pressures, the staff are being asked to do more with less. This is an area where a small investment could have great effect.

- **Budget \$250,000** for improved data collection analysis and reporting as required in the Strategic Plan, TAG Plan, Equity Policy, Literacy Education Evaluation and elsewhere. This should include the creation of a position working with the Board of Education to determine and meet their informational needs.

For 16 years the state-imposed revenue caps have forced painful cuts. Recent state actions and inaction left the Board with difficult choices involving further cuts and significantly increased property taxes.

Without these or other initiatives, the district is projected to levy over \$13 million less than is allowed by the state.

It is imperative that some of that authority be used to move forward, to improve, not just maintain.

Bike to Work Week is June 6–11

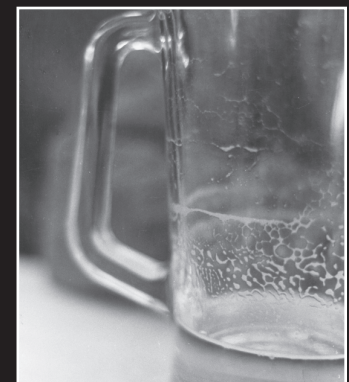


By Aaron Crandall

THE BICYCLE FEDERATION OF Wisconsin will be hosting the 2010 Bike to Work Week activities in Madison from June 6–11. The week will be kicked off with Ride the Drive on Sunday, June 6, from 10 am–4 pm, and the annual Art Bike Parade, starting at 10:30 am.

Activities throughout the week will include morning commuter stations at different locations around Madison from 7–9 am each day. There will also be other cool activities each day that week, including a bike-in movie on Monday, free bacon on Thursday, and of course, the Final Celebration at Tenney Park on Friday, June 11!

See www.bfw.org for more information and for updates. Try biking to work during our Madison Bike to Work Week and hopefully you'll be able to keep it up throughout the summer and beyond!



Beer Caucus

Nick's Restaurant

226 State Street

after GMM (8:30)

Wednesday, May 26

Mark your calendar!

Next Membership Meeting

Wednesday, May 26 • 6:30–8:30 p.m.

Madison Public Library, Main Branch • Mifflin at Fairchild

Staff Report

Immigration Task Force: *Jon Hawkins*

Take Back the Land: *Operation Welcome Home*

School Board Budget: *Tj Mertz*

City Elected Report: *Alder Mike Verveer*

Announcements

Chair: Michael Johnson, theidealvoice@gmail.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, June 15 • 5:30pm
PD Office, 1202 Williamson Street
(Social Justice Center—conference room)
As always, refreshments are provided!

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

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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 _____

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