

Mark your calendar!

Next Membership Meeting

Wednesday, May 25 • 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Madison Public Library, 201 W Mifflin St

- Staff Report
- Treasurer's Report: Annual Budget--VOTE
- Burning Issue: The New Badger Partnership--VOTE
- Educational Issue: Participatory Budgeting
- Electeds Report: Update on Redistricting for City/County
- Open Announcements

Beer Caucus immediately following - Nick's Restaurant, 226 State St

Co-Chairs: Michael Johnson and Jacque Pokorney

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.



FORWARD!

VOLUME 19, NUMBER 5 • MAY 2011

Rebuilding Politics in Dane County from the Grassroots

Give PD Some of Your Time This Summer

by PD Outreach Committee

IT IS GOING TO BE A FANTASTIC SUMMER to recruit new members to Progressive Dane. People are out and about talking politics, and when it comes to local politics, PD's got the answers.

Progressive Dane will be tabling at the usual summer events, starting with the WORT Block Party on Sunday, May 22 going through to Willy St. Fair on Sunday, September 18. I know people will be looking for us, so we need your help to be there for them to talk to.

We need a core group of at least 10 people to commit to being tablers this summer. That way not everyone would need to table every event, since most events only need 6 to 8 to cover tabling with buddy. We table with buddies so we don't miss people who want to talk to us because we're talking to someone else. Shifts are usually two hours long, beginning around 11:00 a.m. and going to around 5:00 p.m. The events we plan on tabling at are:

- WORT Block Party, Sunday, May 22
- Atwood Summer Fest, Saturday, July 30
- LaborFest, Monday, September 5
- FightingBobFest, Saturday, September 17
- Willy St Fair, Sunday, September 18

If there are any others events that you'd be interested in tabling at, please let the office know by Monday, June 20 so we can discuss it at the next Outreach Committee meeting.

Tabling is easy and fun. You'll be provided with all the tools you need, and training is available. All you have to do is be excited about the possibility PD provides for Dane County!

So, sign up today! E-mail the office at office@prodane.org or call Dace at 608-358-2940 and let her know when you'd be available or to get more information.

Participatory Budgeting...Could We Make it Happen in Madison?

by Adam Porton

IN THE PAST FEW YEARS IT SEEMS LIKE progressives have always been on the defensive, fighting as hard as they can just to preserve decades old social justice victories. However, in Wisconsin, seasoned activists and average citizens alike are beginning to realize that the unique political moment we now find ourselves in demands that we begin to proactively propose and work towards our vision for a better society.

One way to do this on the local level is to advocate for something called Participatory Budgeting (PB). PB is "a democratic process in which community members directly decide how to spend part of a public budget." First implemented in the Brazilian City of Porto Alegre in 1989, PB has since spread to cities in other parts of Latin America as well as Asia, Africa, Europe and North America.

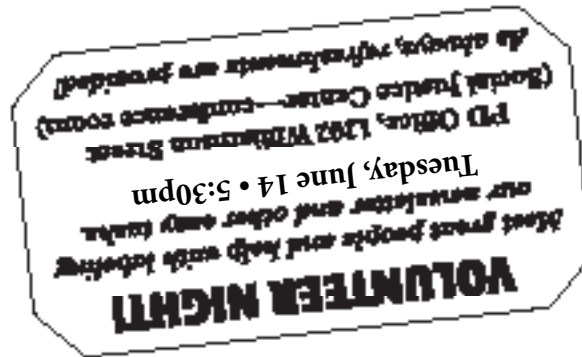
While every PB process is unique, most follow the same general sequence of steps. First, residents organize neighborhood councils to discuss budget priorities and elect representatives to a citywide committee (note, these are not elected officials, rather they function more like community spokespeople). This committee then researches and creates a list of possible capital improvement projects the city could spend money on. Finally, a binding ballot vote is held for citizens to directly select which projects they would most like to see funded.

The benefits of this type of budgeting are enormous. For starters, a budget decided upon through a PB process is many times more reflective of a citizenry's priorities than one where politicians make final spending decisions. Additionally, PB develops an active, civically minded body politic, one that feels extremely invested in both its community and local government. Finally, more than just a type of electoral reform, PB is a radical shift away from our special-inter-

est dominated political system and towards a more direct democracy.

In 2009 Chicago's 49th Ward became first, and as of now, only place in the U.S. to use a PB system. In Chicago, unlike Madison, each Alderman is charged with directly allocating their district's share of the city's capital improvement budget. This means that the only political barrier to achieving PB in a given ward is the willingness of the alderperson to cede decision making power to their constituents. And in the 49th Ward it was actually Alderman Joe Moore who spearheaded the project, working closely with his residents to create an inclusive, democratic PB system (to read more about PB in the 49th Ward go to www.ward49.com and click on the "Participatory Budgeting" link on the right hand side. Be sure to check out the video section which features a terrific YouTube clip summarizing how PB was implemented in the district).

By contrast, enacting PB in Madison where the entire capital budget is decided on by the full city council, would take more widespread political support. However, if successful it would also make the process more comprehensive as it would involve the entire city, not just certain wards. Indeed the need for a democratic budget allocation process in Madison has never been greater as record municipal budget shortfalls will inevitably pit vested interests against the core concerns of the people, especially those who are already politically marginalized. At this month's GMM we will talk more about PB and how Progressive Dane can help make it a reality in Dane County. The Progressive Dane Policy Committee will also be taking up this subject at its June 5th meeting (location and time TBA).



Name(s) _____ Date _____

Address _____

Phone (evening / day) _____ E-mail _____

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 \$75 Basic \$12 Low Income
 \$250+ Benefactor \$100 Supporting \$75 Contributing

Annual household membership: \$100 Contributing \$75 Regular \$50 Basic
More than one adult 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) 257-4985

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



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.

June Meetings

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 (608)843-9616; Michael Johnson, theidealvoice@gmail.com, (414)704-5811

Next meeting: Monday, June 6, 7:00pm

Economic Issues Task Force

Contact: Rick Richards, syzygy1@charter.net (608)255-5023

Meeting announcements made on PDComm

Education Task Force

Contact: TJ Mertz, tjmertz@sbcglobal.net (608)215-1942

Meeting announcements made on PDComm

Elections Committee

Contact: Michael Johnson, theidealvoice@gmail.com, (414)704-5811

Next meeting: Wednesday, June 1, 8:00pm

General Membership Meeting

Contact: Staff, office@prodane.org

Wednesday, June 22, 6:30pm

Madison Downtown Public Library

Housing Task Force

Contact: Heidi Wegleitner, heidimayree@gmail.com

Next meeting: Monday, June 6, 12:00pm (with Affordable Housing Action Alliance)

Newsletter Consortium

Articles are always accepted from PD members.

Contact: Jacque Pokorney, juju_jacque@yahoo.com

Outreach & Fundraising Committee

Contact: Dace Zeps, office@prodane.org (608)358-2940

Next meeting: Monday, June 20, 7:30pm

Policy Committee

Contact: Brenda Konkel, brendakonkel@gmail.com

Next meeting: Sunday, June 5, 7:00pm, location TBA

Transportation Task Force

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

Meeting announcements made on PDComm

Production and Circulation Consortium:

Mary Anglim, Erik Breilid, Dave Carrig, John Dupuis, Jamie Annear-Feyrer, Tom Kozlovsky, Jacque Pokorney, Richard Russell, Ralph Shively, Megan Turner, Dace Zeps

This month's contributors: Heidi Wegleitner, Jacque Pokorney, Kenneth Germanson, Adam Porton, Michael Johnson, Dace Zeps

Progressive Dane, P.O. Box 1222, Madison, WI 53701

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

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Masar Gets 'Lifetime Achievement Award' from Labor History Society

republished from South Central Federation of Labor's Union Labor News by Kenneth Germanson

STEPHEN MASAR, LONGTIME ACTIVIST in Madison labor, was awarded the Solidarity Award of the Wisconsin Labor History Society at the group's annual meeting April 16 at the Anderson United Way Center in Madison.

The award has been given annually for some 20 years to unionists for a lifetime of commitment to the labor movement, and is usually given for those who have volunteered their services, rather than full-time union officials.

It was presented by Jim Cavanaugh, President of the South Central Federation of Labor, who cited Masar's leadership of the Council's Education Committee and the development of its "Labor History with a Bite" educational series which the Council staged for several years recently. He also noted Masar's leadership within American Federation of Teachers Local 3732.

Masar responded with his appreciation of receiving the award, giving his remarks a

humorous and somewhat ironic twist, which drew chuckles from the packed crowd of 65 participating in the annual conference.

"What are you saving?" he asked the audience in his acceptance remarks, referring to the current protests in Wisconsin in opposing Governor Walker's effort to weaken unions.

Noting his 37 years as an archivist, Masar said, "The historic record is awfully sparse. Things change daily and much of that does not get documented at all.

What kind of records are you going to leave for posterity?"

He urged unionists to keep documents, handouts, newsletter and phone logs, suggesting they be organized in chronological order. Also, he recommended keeping intentional records, such as diaries, blogging or other recollections. Finally, he said it is important to keep records within a person's living space and not in a garage or basement where mold will tend to ruin them.

Redistricting, a Participatory Activity

by Michael Johnson

THE CITY OF MADISON AND DANE County are working through the process of redistricting. Using the most recent census data, the redistricting process takes place every 10 years and is key to providing fair and equal representation for Madison and Dane County residents. Recently both city and county committees have gone into their public comment phase, taking suggestions and complaints from residents and interested parties such as neighborhood groups as well as elected officials, on how to better create a map that best serves the greatest interest of residents.

As always, Progressive Dane elected officials have had key roles on both committees, as Alder Rhodes-Conway and Supervisors Hendrick and Richmond serve on the city and county committees, respectfully. At this month's GMM, we will be discussing the most recent progress of redistricting, and how Progressive Dane members can stay up to date and informed on the coming changes

to the community. For more information and to follow the process go to <http://www.cityofmadison.com/cityhall/redistricting/> and <http://www.countyofdane.com/board/redistricting.aspx>.



PD Strongly Supports Take Back the Land

by Heidi Wegleitner and Jacque Pokorney

PROGRESSIVE DANE AND THE Affordable Housing Action Alliance strongly support Take Back the Land's campaign to promote housing as a human right and match homeless people to people-less homes. Take Back the Land is working to maintain housing for innocent tenants at a foreclosed bank-owned home on Hammersley Road and put pressure on M&I Bank, the current owner, to transfer the property over to the people for long-term low income housing. M&I, a recipient of \$1.7 billion in the taxpayer funded bail-out, has yet to enter into a reasonable dialogue with Take Back the Land to address their concerns and seek a resolution to this matter. While our state legislature is working quickly to strip the rights of tenants in foreclosed properties and eliminate municipal tenant protections to further stack the deck in favor of their corporate donors like M&I, Take Back the Land is courageously taking action to hold these bailed-out-banks accountable and utilize vacant bank-owned properties to provide housing to homeless people.

In 2009 (last annual report available) 3,901 individuals stayed at least one night in a Dane County shelter program. However, 2,622 times they had to turn people away from shelter because there were not enough beds or they were ineligible. Families with children can only stay in shelter up to 90 days and have a 180 life-time limit. The individuals served include 2,061 people in families (666 families with 1,294 children), 1,310 single men, 497 single women, 2 couples without children and 31 unaccompanied youth under the age of 18. 53% are families with children, 34% single men and 13% single women. The federal government continues to cut funding for low income housing and the wait-lists for rent subsidies are either closed or years long. Yet approximately 11% of homes in the U.S. sit vacant.

We reject the notion that there is no money for affordable housing, but there is \$1.7 billion to bail out M&I Bank. Instead of repaying taxpayers, M&I recently skirted federal regulations to give \$70 million in executive golden parachutes. This \$70 million, if transferred to public housing, would have increased our housing stock by 402 Hammersley Road homes. M&I's decision to give \$70 million to their executives instead of paying back their loan from the

taxpayers is unconscionable and immoral. Public outrage over M&I's actions is justified and a federal investigation is warranted.

Alder Lisa Subeck recently released an ill-informed statement condemning Take Back the Land's actions on Hammersley Road and wrongfully characterized the actions as exploitative of the homeless. Alder Subeck should apologize for this statement and engage with Take Back the Land to better understand the facts of the situation so she can assist her constituents and mediate the situation.

Extending the residence for tenants at the Hammersley Road home should be viewed as a win-win for the tenants, M&I Bank, and the neighborhood. Allowing another vacant foreclosed home to diminish surrounding property values and invite antisocial activity would negatively impact the neighborhood. It is not the actions of Take Back the Land members, to improve the property and utilize it for homeless housing, that are the risk to the neighborhood.

Instead of M&I Bank's current practice of paying a security guard to watch the property 24 hours a day, it could utilize the current homeless tenants as caretakers who will keep up the property, pay the utilities, and be good neighbors. Our elected officials should be supporting this creative solution to provide more low income housing, reduce housing vacancy, and house the homeless, instead of siding with M&I Bank who refuse

to negotiate in good faith towards a resolution with the tenants.

We call on Mayor Soglin and Alder Subeck to convene a meeting with M&I Bank, the Hammersley Road tenants, and Take Back the Land-Madison to work towards a mutually acceptable resolution which ensures that innocent people are not displaced and rendered homeless just so a bank-owned property can sit vacant. M&I Bank should allow the tenants to stay so long as the property will not be occupied as an owner's principal residence. Protecting the vacancy of bailed-out bank-owned homes at the expense of innocent tenants and already marginalized homeless persons is wasteful, unjust, and deserves no legal sanction. For too long, our communities have let "property rights" trump human rights. We stand in solidarity with the people. Which side are you on?

Last Month at the GMM

by Dace Zeps

AFTER A BRIEF DISCUSSION ABOUT the most recent elections cycle and a vote that put Sam Stevenson on PDs Steering Committee, Brenda Konkel chaired a meeting of discussion and endorsements. Mary Anglim spoke about what she learned at the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign's meeting about Redistricting and Wisconsin Clean Elections Fund. Heidi Wegleitner distributed the People's Rights Campaign which was in last month's issue of the newsletter. Adam Porton shared how the Wisconsin Wave came about and what it hopes to accomplish. Each was endorsed by unanimous vote. Members are encouraged to participate to advance Progressive Dane's agenda within these organizations and to bring back to Progressive Dane those ideas and potential policy changes that would benefit Dane County as a whole. More information on each of these initiatives can be found at the following websites:

- http://www.wiscd.org/
http://www.peoplesrightscampaign.org/
http://wisconsinwave.org/

YOU ARE INVITED TO PROGRESSIVE DANE'S GARDEN PARTY
Friday, June 17, 2011 5:00-8:00
At the home of Fawn & Dmitri Bilgere 4209 Bainbridge Street Madison, Wisconsin 53716
Sponsorships accepted in support of the work of Progressive Dane www.prodane.org or contact office@prodane.org 608-358-2940