

Richland County Democrat

Spring Primary Election Issue

February 2011

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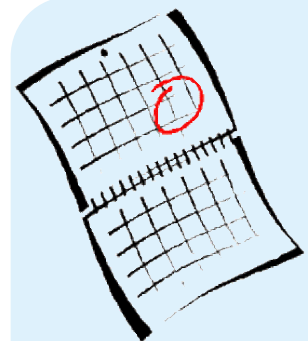
Remember to Vote Tuesday!

Tuesday February 15th is a primary election for the Wisconsin Supreme Court. There will be only two contestants after Tuesday- Make your voice heard!



We live with a country that has three branches of government. Yet, often it seems that when it comes to voting for the nonpartisan judicial branch, people seem to simply forget to vote. And yet, as evidenced by many of the very *partisan* decisions that have come out of the judicial branch of government in the past few years, it cannot be overstated how important it is to remember to vote for our elected judges. This Tuesday February 15th is a primary election to narrow down the candidates for Wisconsin Supreme Court. There are two candidates whom the DPW has pointed out as progressives,

Marla Stephens and JoAnne Kloppenburg.
(See pages 2&3 to find more about the candidates)



Save these Dates

February 15th
Primary Election day

February 15&16th
Rally at Capitol noon

February
16th Public Hearing on
Public Employee
changes. 7 PM
Richland County Court
House Board Room

March 8th
Richland Co. Dems
Monthly meeting

April 5th
Spring General
Elections

June 3-4th
DPW State Convention



Marla Stephens

Justice for All

Supreme Court

Experienced, Principled, Respected.

Marla J. Stephens began her appointment to the Judicial Council of Wisconsin as a member in 1996, was named Chairperson of the Appellate Procedure Committee in 1997 and continued in service to the Judicial Council as either Vice-Chair or Chair until 2010. Her long tenure on this council has afforded Marla deep insight into the workings of an effective court system, and gave her the opportunity to serve as a consensus builder among its distinguished members.

Preeminent among Marla's career accomplishments however, are nearly two decades spent as an Assistant Public Defender for the State of Wisconsin. Beginning with her early years in the Milwaukee Public Defender's Trial Office, Marla experienced the gamut of a trial court caseload, ranging from misdemeanors and felonies to juvenile and mental commitment proceedings. Her ability and service led her to the Milwaukee Appellate office from 1988-1994, where she represented clients in the court of appeals and the supreme court, and then her appointment as the First Assistant State Public Defender from 1994-1996, where she was charged with the supervision of attorney, investigator and clerical staff, liaison with local trial and appellate courts, and the oversight and certification of private bar attorneys.

In 1996, Marla was named the Appellate Division Director of the Office of the State Public Defender, the position she presently holds. As a member of the Executive Branch agency leadership team, Marla guides formulation of agency policy, supervises division managers, develops and advocates for agency budget proposals, serves as a liaison to the public and the Judicial, Executive and Legislative branches of state government, and represents the State Public Defender on various boards, councils and committees.

Marla lives in Shorewood, Wisconsin with her husband, Robert Dvorak, a Milwaukee attorney, and their son Josef, daughter Anna and dog Cole. Marla graduated magna cum laude from the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, in May of 1978 where she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy. She attended law school at Marquette University in Milwaukee where she earned her law degree in May of 1981. As a practicing attorney, Marla's post-graduate education has supported her career in public service. Balancing her many callings gives Marla a level of experience that lends depth and weight to her candidacy. She has devoted her career to the defense of the rights of individuals, and to the improvement of the justice system. She is committed, in her words, "to providing the people and entities that come before the court with an open mind, a fair hearing, and the faithful application of the laws of this State and our Country."



Assistant Attorney General Kloppenburg has been a litigator and prosecutor at the Wisconsin Department of Justice since 1989, serving under Attorneys General from both parties: Don Hanaway, Jim Doyle, Peg Lautenschlager and JB Van Hollen. Her legal experience is broad and deep and includes constitutional law, appellate law, civil litigation, environmental prosecution and administrative law. She has argued numerous cases before the Wisconsin Supreme Court and in the Wisconsin Court of Appeals and she has tried cases in circuit courts around the state.

Assistant Attorney General Kloppenburg graduated with honors from the University of Wisconsin Law School (1988). She has an undergraduate degree from Yale (1974), also with honors, and a Masters in Public Affairs from Princeton University (1976). During Law School, she was an intern for Chief Justice Shirley Abrahamson and later was a law clerk for Chief Judge Barbara Crabb of the United States District Court. A teacher at the UW Law School since 1990, she was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Botswana (1976-1979) and remains active in professional, civic and community life. She is a member of the Legal Association for Women (LAW), a mentor with the Dane County Bar Association, an English as a Second Language (ESL) tutor, and a member of her neighborhood association board, and has volunteered with various nonprofit groups.

Assistant Attorney General Kloppenburg and her husband Jack are the proud parents of two daughters and one son. They live in Madison.

"JoAnne Kloppenburg is a first-rate attorney and prosecutor. She is ethical, extremely intelligent and absolutely committed to making sure justice is done and the law is applied fairly." Judge Amy Smith

"I highly endorse JoAnne Kloppenburg to be the next Justice of the Wisconsin Supreme Court. She is an excellent lawyer, highly regarded for her legal skills. Her high ethical standards, analytical mind and intelligence make her particularly suited for this position. Most importantly, Wisconsin needs a jurist who values collegiality so that the work of the Court can be done in a professional atmosphere. We need JoAnne Kloppenburg now more than ever." Attorney Christine Bremer Muggli

Perhaps it is just me, but, when Governor Walker uttered the words that he was calling out the State's National Guard in preparation to any public employee unrest, I was reminded of Egypt's President Mubarak. It does seem somewhat ironic that as the population of Egypt is rising up against years of subjugation by the government, Gov. Scott Walker is seeking to eliminate almost all collective bargaining rights of state and local public workers as part of his plan for fixing Wisconsin's budget deficit, a move that no doubt will make Wisconsin public employees feel like taking to the streets themselves. In an article, Sunday, in the Wisconsin Journal, Dennis Dresang, professor emeritus of public affairs and political science, cautions that Gov. Scott Walker's plan could very well lead to public disorder. Dresang notes, "I think there is some risk of labor unrest. What [Gov. Walker is] dealing with here is a very aggressive and hostile action towards public employees."

According to Dresang, Wisconsin has a long history of a strong union movement. Wisconsin was the first state to let public employees organize and bargain collectively, Dresang said. It was also first to grant workers compensation and unemployment compensation.

Labor unions in Wisconsin started as early as 1865, when the Molders Union Local 125 was formed in Milwaukee. Worker strikes date back even further, to a ship carpenters walkout in Milwaukee in 1848.

Despite this long history of union activism in Wisconsin Gov. Walker plans to take a hard line on public employees. Perhaps the most controversial aspect of Walker's repair bill deals with collective bargaining. The governor wants to remove those rights for most of the 175,000 state and local employees in Wisconsin, allowing workers to negotiate only over salary.

Mubarak Must Go?

The View from the Chair

Opinion from Will Buros
Richland County Democratic Party Chair

However, Walker exempted most law enforcement and firefighters from the change in collective bargaining. The governor said he could not risk public safety by potential strikes from law enforcement.

On Sunday the 13th of February the Democratic Party of Wisconsin along with Teacher Assistants Association brought 16 activists to Richland Center to do canvassing around town. The group was pleased to find many people who were frankly shocked at the Governor's plans and willing to send postcards to their Representatives (Senator Schultz in particular) urging them to strike down the Governor's call for restricting union rights.

If you feel the need to emulate the Egyptians, there are rallies planned to take place in Madison at the State Capitol for Tuesday Feb. 15th and Wednesday Feb. 16th at noon each day. I'm sure the more that people show up to express their dissatisfaction with this assault on worker's rights the more the message will be heard. At a very least call the legislative hot line: 1-877-753-5578



Enough with the Crosshairs Already!

It is difficult to understand the fascination of right-wing groups with using the crosshairs of a gun scope to illustrate and promote their agenda to oppose the Democratic Party. While perusing some favorite hunting websites, I was led to the advertisement reprinted above that was warning that Hillary and the Democrats are once again trying to steal your gun rights. This time by using that communist organization the UN! Looking at the ad, I noticed that behind Sec. Clinton were crosshairs not unlike those in a gun scope. As I looked closer, I realized that it was in fact the UN symbol. But something didn't seem right. Upon googling the UN symbol, I noticed that the ad had used an artist's rendering of the symbol. Had the actual symbol been used (see above) it would not have resembled a set of crosshairs. The diagonal lines would be the noticeable lines. Just paranoia or coincidence? Somehow I don't think so. So enough with the crosshairs, already!

ObamaCare V. Supreme Court...

If you are to believe Wisconsin Attorney General Van Hollen, ObamaCare is dead now that the Florida Courts have decided the issue for us. (*Why is Florida always doing things like this to the rest of us?*) But, before we declare the patient DOA, perhaps we should ask for a second opinion. Lawrence Tribe had a wonderful editorial in the New York Times (2-7-11) explaining that from a legal perspective ObamaCare is still quite healthy:

Since the New Deal, the court has consistently held that Congress has broad constitutional power to regulate interstate commerce. This includes authority over not just goods moving across state lines, but also the economic choices of individuals within states that have significant effects on interstate markets. By that standard, this law's constitutionality is open and shut.

Many new provisions in the law, like the ban on discrimination based on pre-existing conditions, are also undeniably permissible. But they would be undermined if healthy or risk-prone individuals could opt out of insurance, which could lead to unacceptably high premiums for those remaining in the pool. For the system to work, all individuals — healthy and sick, risk-prone and risk-averse — must participate to the extent of their economic ability.

In this regard, the health care law is little different from Social Security. The court unanimously recognized in 1982 that it would be "difficult, if not impossible" to maintain the financial soundness of a Social Security system from which people could opt out. The same analysis holds here: by restricting certain economic choices of individuals, we ensure the vitality of a regulatory regime clearly within Congress's power to establish.

The justices aren't likely to be misled by the reasoning that prompted two of the four federal courts that have ruled on this legislation to invalidate it on the theory that Congress is entitled to regulate only economic "activity," not "inactivity," like the decision *not* to purchase insurance. This distinction is illusory. Individuals who don't purchase insurance they can afford have made a choice to take a free ride on the health care system. They know that if they need emergency-room care that they can't pay for, the public will pick up the tab. This conscious choice carries serious economic consequences for the national health care market, which makes it a proper subject for federal regulation.

Dear Neighbor: On the Multiplier Effects of a Public Sector Job

Edited from an email by Sigrid Peterson on Monday, February 14, 2011 at 9:01am
Dear Governor Walker,

I doubt you remember me. In fact, we've never formally met, but you and I grew up not half a block away from each other in the small town of Delavan, Wisconsin. I have only fuzzy memories of you—of riding my bike around the corner, seeing one of the “older boys” and hearing my sister say, “Hey, there's Scott Walker.” Our limited acquaintance notwithstanding, within the past four days I fear I've gotten to know you fairly well, or well enough. So perhaps it's time I introduce myself. My name is Sigrid Peterson. I'm your former neighbor from Delavan, and I'm a public sector worker in Wisconsin.

If it isn't obvious, I'm writing to ask you, your administration, and your Republican friends in the legislature to put a swift stop to your proposed “Budget Repair” bill, along with its crude and unapologetic assault on fifty years of rights and benefits granted to Wisconsin's public sector employees. If I'm irreverent, Governor Walker, I assure you it's in service to things greater than concern over my job, alone. I write this out of respect for my late father, too—your old neighbor, a lifelong Wisconsinite, and a public municipal employee. I also write this out of pride in the progressive legacy of my home state, a legacy you and your colleagues delight in dismantling.

My dad, Lyle (raised in Richland Center, WI), was living proof that a public sector job—with its modest salary but good benefits—garners more than the sum of its parts. Dad raised me and my seven brothers and sisters on a comparatively small municipal accountant's salary of \$32,000 a year. That salary not only fed (with lots of spaghetti) and housed us, but slimly subsidized all eight of our undergraduate educations at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His affordable health insurance treated eight cases of chicken pox, thirty-three episodes of tonsillitis, and paid for a total of one hundred thirty-seven stitches. Most importantly, his comprehensive health care saw my Mom, Shirley (raised in Muscoda, WI), through two years of chemotherapy treatments, and carried Dad to the end of his ten-year battle with cardiomyopathy. Dad's pension with the Wisconsin Retirement System is a lifesaver to my mother in her older years. Mom had to exit the formal labor force at a young age in favor of unpaid work in the home to feed, clothe, love, and educate eight good and generous people. She still lives in Delavan, Dad's pension serving as her fixed income against the backdrop of a labor market that would have punished (if not outright dismissed) her after forty years of bringing up kids. Five of those kids (and their families) live in Wisconsin, today. We are teachers, public attorneys, university doctors, web engineers, and business people. We give to our local communities. My Mom, in particular, has spent a lifetime in volunteer service to Delavan fighting for clean watersheds, transparent city government, the preservation of public education, and accountable economic development toward quality jobs.

I'm her sixth daughter and seventh child. Two and half years ago, I left a career in New York City to be close to her in Wisconsin and to pursue my dream of getting a PhD. I'm currently a graduate student in our top-ranked department of Geography, as well as an employee of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Similar to teaching assistants (“TAs”) (full-time graduate students who dedicate more than twenty hours a week to instructing undergraduates), I devote over half of my work week as a University Project Assistant (PA). I am staff in a policy research center in the Department of Sociology devoted to growing Wisconsin's economy through statewide partnerships between businesses and workers. That job (which grants me membership in AFT local 3220, the “Teaching Assistants Association,” or “TAA”) provides a small take-home salary of just over \$12,000 a year, along with state health insurance to help me weather winter infections and viruses. Importantly, my job also grants me a tuition waiver, without which I could never afford to pursue training in the academy. I know just how lucky I am, and my greatest goal is to repay this debt by becoming a professor in a land grant institution like the University of Wisconsin, giving back to young people seeking an affordable public education, as well as helping them get the most out of a few short years of engaging in the profound fun that is thinking and learning. Your proposal, Governor Walker, seeks to strip me of the contractual rights to the benefits allowing me to stay here, and I am frightened over what my future holds if it passes. While your version of Wisconsin's “door” may indeed be “open for business,” I doubt the business people I know would care to walk through it, especially now...try as you might to steeply discount the entry ticket. I leave in a few weeks to visit New York, to see my very good friends, and to catch them up on my goings-on in Wisconsin. I still have things to brag about, of course. I still get to live among the kind, committed, and understatedly clever folks of my upbringing, everyday. And I get to work for our tremendous state University, in a department I respect immensely, and with people I love. But I regret to say, Governor Walker, I brag a bit less enthusiastically, now. You disappoint me, old neighbor. What's worse, you don't just disappoint me, you embarrass me...you embarrass my father, you embarrass Delavan, and you embarrass the state of Wisconsin. Please stop your bill, for all our sakes. Sincerely, Sig Peterson Delavan, WI

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WE HOPE YOU ENJOYED THE EMAIL VERSION OF OUR NEWSLETTER.

FORWARD A COPY TO A FRIEND AND ENCOURAGE THEM TO EMAIL US AND ADD THEIR NAMES TO OUR LIST.

*THE NEWSLETTER IS AUTHORIZED AND PAID FOR BY THE
RICHLAND COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY, TOM CONWAY
TREASURER.*



We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.rcdems.org

Parting Thoughts

Given that Tuesday's Wisconsin Supreme Court Primary is a four-way race, one should think carefully about for whom they are to vote. My fear is that since there are two qualified progressive candidates in the group of four that the possibility exists that the progressive vote will split leaving the two other candidates with enough votes to move on to the spring election. It is not the editorial policy of the Richland County Democratic Party to endorse one progressive candidate over another in a primary election. So we will make no such endorsements here. But this would seem to be a time to discuss your vote with those like minded around you to make certain Democrats and progressives don't water down their choices and leave the conservatives to have an easy walk to the victory line come April. This is why this writer prefers a two party system. The more candidates on a ballot the more a minority of voters can swing an election.

There will be an informational meeting about the effects of Governor Walker's Repair Bill on all public employees in the State of Wisconsin. The meeting is set for 7 PM in the Richland County Courthouse in the County Board Room on Wednesday February 16th. At this writing it is understood that State Senator Dale Shultz will be invited to the event. The public is welcome. The Richland County Democrats are hosting. We hope to see a good crowd there.