

Welcome to 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.

SAVE THESE DATES:

JAN 12TH --
REGULAR
MONTHLY MEETING
7:00 PM
RICHLAND COUNTY
BOARD ROOM
COURTHOUSE

JAN 20TH
INAUGURAL
CELEBRATION
5:30-8:30 PM
220 EAST UNION
RICHLAND CENTER

REMEMBER EVERY 2ND
MONDAY OF THE MONTH
WE HOLD OUR MEETINGS
AT 7:00 PM IN THE
COUNTY BOARD ROOM OF
THE RICHLAND COUNTY
COURTHOUSE



Inaugural Party Planned!



Celebrate the Presidential Inauguration Tuesday, January 20, 2009

Revisit the day's proceedings and catch the evening events in Washington as beamed into the beautiful Lincoln-era home of Lon and Bonnie Arbegust in Richland Center.

There we—friends, neighbors, and stalwart 2008 campaign workers—will toast our new president, Barack Obama, and share a multicultural dinner celebrating his life, our luck.

*5:30 p.m.—8:30 p.m.
220 East Union Street (Union at Church), Richland Center
Tickets: \$15*

*To be sold in advance, the limited number of tickets
are available for purchase at Ocooch Books & Libations, Court Street
Or Contact Bill Davis at 608-383-3813*

*In addition to street parking,
the Peace United Methodist Church lot across from the Arbegust home is available to partygoers.
And, FYI, the Arbegust family includes cats.*

*This fundraiser will help support the Richland County Democratic Party's
strategic development and future campaigns*

Richland Democrats Under New Leadership After Annual Meeting

Although the December snows delayed the Richland Democratic Party's annual meeting by one week, on December 15th the membership met for one final time in 2008. The gathering was primarily a holiday party and an appreciation of the office staff and volunteers of the 2008 election, but there was also the election of the 2009 officers. Requesting a time to rest a little, Will Buros chose to decline the nomination of Chair for the upcoming calendar year. Tom Crofton graciously put his name forward for the slot of Chairmanship. Will Buros was nominated for Vice Chair. Bill Davis and Delores McCarthy agreed to continue doing their excellent jobs as Treasurer and Secretary respectively. With no further nominations coming from the floor, a motion was made and seconded to accept the complete slate of nominations for office. The motion passed unanimously. In other business the By-Laws were amended to define a quorum as the members present at an appropriately called meeting. Thank-you's were extended to last year's officers, volunteers, Laura Bergdahl (our Obama field rep), and Deborah and Bruce Wunnicke for hosting the December Meeting in their lovely home.

Change in Meeting Place

For the January 12th meeting at 7PM, we will be in the Richland County Board Room in the new Courthouse wing. Entrance is from the South side at ground level. You take the elevator to the attic room. Signs will be posted. The door locks automatically after 7PM. We will put a clip on the mechanism to keep it open until 7:15, but we are supposed to keep it locked after that. The jailer will let latecomers in! On the agenda is a question of future meeting nights. A basement meeting room is available for Tuesdays, but not Mondays or Wednesdays throughout the winter. We need to pick a night that's best for the most and get a standard room assignment. If you wish any items on the agenda feel free to contact Chairman Tom Crofton at <mailto:tcrofton@countryrspeed.com>

Not Again!!!

This spring there will be another Wisconsin Supreme Court race. This time Chief Justice Shirley Abrahamson will defend her seat from another challenger who is already sounding the same themes that were peddled in the last two Supreme Court races. If there was ever a time to get involved in a nonpartisan race, this is the year.

Shirley Abrahamson has led the Wisconsin Supreme Court and the state court system as Chief Justice since 1996. The Chief Justice recently marked her 50th anniversary as a lawyer, her 30th year on the Supreme Court, and her 10th year as Chief Justice.

Chief Justice Abrahamson's excellent credentials include the following:

- Served as president of the Conference of Chief Justices, an organization that brings all 50 states and territories together on judicial issues;
- Been honored by the University of Wisconsin with its distinguished alumni award and by the American Bar Association and the American Judicature Society for her public service;
- Chaired the National Institute of Justice's National Commission on the future of DNA Evidence;
- Written extensively on victims' rights, criminal law, and the need for judicial independence and integrity;

Visit her website and show her your support! <http://abrahamson2009.com/index.php>

A New Year Begins

The View From the Chair

Opinion from Tom Crofton

Greetings for a new year, and perhaps a new era!

As the new Richland Dems chair, I hope to take a turn bringing new energy to the job, and I wish to offer several ideas for growing our organization. I, for one, am not quite done digesting the results of the November elections, and while I don't wish to drag folks through the mud, I am certain that there are lessons we need to learn to be more effective in our mission.

Which brings the first big question: what is our mission?

I personally ran into the contradictions of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin during my campaign. I was told by the DPW staffers not to call myself a Dem, not call myself Progressive, not say anything about issues, etc; but the Chair for the DPW wrote a newsletter called "The Progressive Badger", where he advocated all of the positions he told me not to take.

I took strong stands on the issues, developed simple approaches to the problems we face, and showed how the "fixes" would save taxpayers money and help revive the economy. Is this the role for the party (defining issues), or do we want to win at any cost, saying what is appropriate to get the votes? (My primary opponent told me he would never vote against a woman's right to choose, but stated publicly that he would not support that right...is that what it takes to win?)

My question to the group is "Are we a force for reform (as defined by us), or are we a brand that has its own institutional survival issues as its top priority? Are we following orders for the good of the group, without input to the definition of what "good" is? Many of the problems we face have our brand on them too. Are we willing to own up to that? Are the people we send to the State and DC accountable to us between election years? How can we increase our effectiveness in determining our future?

Here are some of the ideas I'd like us to discuss:

We need to develop a strategic plan. Some of the pieces are explained below. What are some other possibilities?

We should work to identify candidates before individuals start the process on their own. While primaries are a way to energize the party, they are expensive, possibly wasteful, and cause candidates to have two sets of positions and tactics (e.g. moving to the center after winning round 1). We could develop our own method of energizing the faithful, and bringing new people into the tent, by developing a straw primary system in the late winter of election year. We would not allow candidates to spend money, but would use party funds to advertise the events (with rules similar to Iowa's presidential caucuses.) This would bring out people and potential candidates in the winter.

We need to use a district-wide approach instead of a countywide approach for elections that overlap counties. I have developed solid working relationships with the 50th assembly district's county parties. We have friends there and a bright future of co-operation awaits us. I am scheduled to attend the county parties in the remainder of Schultz's senate district in January. I intend to bring this same message to them.

We should schedule a mid-term event to question our elected representatives on their work, and to encourage them to take on the tough issues. (For example, our local Democratic winners did not campaign on the Health issue. As much as we love them and worked for them, we need them to support universal health care that saves us all money, money we would put back in the economy as an immediate boost, (and not as deficit spending).

*IF YOU WISH TO
COMMENT FEEL FREE
TO EMAIL A
RESPONSE TO
[MAILTO:WILLBUROS@
COUNTRYSPEED.COM](mailto:WILLBUROS@COUNTRYSPEED.COM)*

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RICHLAND COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY BOOK CLUB PROPOSAL

By Bill Davis

Tom Crofton has suggested that it might be a good idea for the Richland County Democratic Party to have a book club. I endorse the idea, especially as a way to inform ourselves on our history and the critical issues of the day.

I believe that such a book club should have simple and straightforward rules and procedures designed to guarantee positive and constructive book discussions. I suggest the following:

1. The person who suggested the particular book title should be the moderator of the discussion, unless the person who suggested the title defers to someone else.
2. Everyone who wishes to attend may attend... our book club is inclusive.
3. Only those individuals who have actually read the book under discussion may participate in the discussion.
4. There may be a ten-minute segment at the end of the discussion during which folks who have not read the book may participate.
5. Participants are expected to be courteous and civil even with those with whom they may disagree.

I am suggesting JUST HOW STUPID ARE WE? Facing The Truth About The American Voter by Rick Schenkman as a book that deserves reading and discussion.

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

NEWSLETTER EDITOR:
WILL BUROS

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

SEE US AT:

[WWW.RCDEMS.ORG/
INDEX.HTM](http://WWW.RCDEMS.ORG/INDEX.HTM)



View From the Chair

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We should develop long term fundraising goals (e.g. \$150k for the State Senate race or \$50k for the Assembly races) and work a schedule of regular events (quarterly?) to avoid our "standard operating procedure", last-minute efforts at fundraising. We should flesh-out the quotes and votes project which I have started. The future Senate and Assembly candidates need a pile of research to craft a winning message. Already our opponents are responding to this year's election issues with double talk. (We need health care, we need school-funding reform... yeah but you said we didn't a few weeks ago).

We need to grow our group to bring in the young folks and families. Some of our events should be kid friendly, and perhaps we need to sponsor sports teams in local leagues.

Finally, I'd like to see us start a book club that meets separately from our regular meetings. The purpose is to discuss in greater depth the issues and solutions facing us today. I am willing to bring a few items to the January meeting to hand out as a start. I've been reading about the New Deal and am amazed at actions of the opposition and the variety of popular movements of the era (and the parallels to recent events). We are in a time where pundits say the Republicans are on the ropes and their old tactics won't work, but they used them effectively against me and won. I want to understand that better and help find the right candidate to win, for the right reasons. I will bring some photocopies of this material for everyone. Bill Davis has some thoughts to share on ground rules for the club, and an idea for the first book. My vote is to see the group meet at the same place and date, an hour early

Progressively Yours,
Tom