

May 25, 2005

Volume 1, Issue 4

GETTYSBURG AREA DEMOCRACY FOR AMERICA

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"The eyes of the future are looking back at us and they are praying for us to see beyond our own time. They are kneeling with clasped hands that we might act with restraint, leaving room for the life that is destined to come.

"To protect what is wild is to protect what is gentle. Perhaps the wilderness we fear is the pause within our own heartbeats, the silent space that says we live only by grace. Wilderness lives by this same grace."

From: Terry Tempest Williams
(Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Resources)

We have the Power

On May 7 Democracy for America chair Jim Dean (Howard's brother) told representatives from 17 DFA groups attending the PA for Democracy conference that we now have 470 groups in 50 states committed to "Taking Our Country Back." In the months ahead, DFA will offer 20 new training opportunities for activists – and one of those trainings will be in Gettysburg! (See related articles on page 2.)

I was surprised at how many DFA leaders from all over Pennsylvania came up to Roger and me and asked, "How do you do it?" They had learned of our ability to attract 50 or 60 people to a meeting, and had seen our newsletter edited by Jason Townsend.

And we are making a difference! The Media Committee reports that an inventory of 59 letters to the editor in *The Gettysburg Times* on issues that we support revealed 49 from our group. Every week I get dozens of e-mails from Adams County residents about actions they are taking to save Social Security, to preserve our environment at home and on our small planet, and to oppose the war in Iraq while supporting our soldiers. Lots of us have gotten involved in preventing Gettysburg from becoming a new home for casinos, and to oppose the shift of funding for our schools from local control to a gamble on gambling money.

There was a blitz of calls to Senator Specter asking him to oppose removing the filibuster to block appointment of extremist judges. And on May 14 another caravan of nine DFA members traveled to Washington to talk with Rep. Platts and our Senators' legislative staff about the misguided Energy Bill currently moving through Congress. See our position papers on the Environment and on Social Security at www.gettysburgareadfa.org. Dare we ignore the connection between our dependence on foreign oil and the Iraq war?

Watch for more local actions on these issues, and remember, we have the power to change the direction our country and our county goes. As Howard Dean reminds us in his recent book, *You Have the Power*,

"Of all the initiatives I could mention, the most vital by far is the most simple: people taking power into their own hands, standing up, speaking out, and showing up in large enough numbers to effect change. Public involvement and grassroots activism—bringing reform to every level of the political food chain, from school board seats on up—that's how change will happen in America."

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TIME TO GET OUT OF IRAQ?

-- Alan Olson

As the Iraq Task Force keeps up with developments in Iraq, we have yet to agree on a unified position to recommend to our group.

At our next Task Force meeting, we will debate the pros and cons of the following positions:

- Staying long enough to prepare Iraqi security forces to take over and reliably defend the elected government.
- Declaring victory again, give a short deadline to withdraw, and do it.
- Declaring victory and start leaving tomorrow.

A Gallup poll of 1003 people in April 2005 revealed that if they had 15 minutes with the President, topic one would be the war in Iraq. Among Democrats, the top two things they would say to Bush are "get out of Iraq" and "you're doing a bad job." The top two things independents would say are "get out of Iraq" and "leave Social Security alone." The top two things Republicans would say are "you're doing a good job" -- and "get out of Iraq." See a common theme?

Join our discussion May 25th, 7-8:30 pm (and the last Wednesday of every month) at The Ragged Edge Coffee House, 110 Chambersburg St., Gettysburg or contact Alan Olson (642-8110) OlsonAlan@adelphia.net

Peace Camp

Peace Camp 2005 -June 20th to 24th-needs volunteers. Sponsored by the Interfaith Center for Peace and Justice, local children will gather each morning at the Gettysburg Area Middle School for activities on the theme **Feeding a Hungry World**. Adults and older teens willing to volunteer should contact Denise Weldon-Siviy at compulsive_reader@adelphia.net.

PA for Democracy

— Roger Lund

The first meeting of PA For Democracy was held on May 7 in Harrisburg and included groups from Erie to Philly. Representing Gettysburg area DFA were Roger Lund, Elaine Jones and Jason Townsend. The statewide coalition is led by Anne Dicker, who spoke on social security at our Gettysburg MeetUp in March.

The national head of DFA, Jim Dean, brother of Howard, gave the opening talk, outlining the direction DFA is taking as it finds its way. Currently there are 470 DFA coalition groups in 270 congressional districts. Dean spoke of the importance of "down ballot" or local and state elections, especially since congressional redistricting (including PA) is only 6 years away. PA may lose as many as 5 congressional seats, which will mean massive redistricting.

Our own Elaine Jones then led a session on how to structure a local DFA chapter. Jim Dean was so impressed with Elaine's comments that he proposed that she travel with him so she could lay it out for other state groups!

Workshops were held on developing websites, newsletters and media access. Jason Townsend led the newsletter training session as his early newsletter has led to copycats all over the state. Roger Lund attended the media session, and is working with our own media committee to strengthen our outreach.

Former US House Representative Joe Hoeffel spoke during lunch on the need to build a relationship with the state and local Democratic Party. A major focus of the afternoon was developing strategic action plans in six areas: framing effective messages, developing leadership structure for PA for Democracy, creating a Democratic vision and identity, targeting the PA legislature, stopping Rick Santorum, and defending Social Security.

Many ideas and action plans were introduced, some of which can be found at www.pademocracy.com. In the meantime, stay active... we need to prove that our grassroots are deep and strong and determined.

National DFA Training Coming to Gettysburg

A regional 2-day DFA training session will be held in Gettysburg on September 10-11. Roger Lund, vice-chair of GADFA, is spearheading the effort and will serve as chair of the host committee. Efforts will be made to attract attendees from all over PA, Maryland, DC, Delaware and Virginia.

The DFA web site describes this training as an effort to "create a team of trained citizens to respond. We are calling on all potential candidates, aspiring campaign managers and workers, and grassroots citizens just itching to jump into the political fray."

The classes will be led by DFA trained staffers and guest speakers and presenters. The cost for the 2 day session is only \$50.00. A special reduced rate of \$20.00 will be offered for students and people on fixed incomes.

The host committee is teaming up with the Gettysburg College DFA group and other coalitions. Volunteer needs include drivers, host houses for visitors, and in-kind donations for box lunches. More details will follow, but if you would be involved, please contact Roger Lund at 624-4860 or rlund@thechristmashaus.com.

Environmental Task Force Goes to Washington

-- Bob Knight

Nine representatives of the Gettysburg Area DFA led by Mac Heebner (with Lou Hammann, Pat Hammann, Carol Brown, Sherrill Brown, Sue Bumbaugh, Bob Knight, Jenny Hansen, and Kriscinda Meadows) spent May 12 lobbying on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C.

U.S. Rep. Todd Platts (R-Adams, Cumberland, York) spent nearly an hour with the delegation. He admitted he was not satisfied with the energy bill, HR-6, that passed the House, but "I voted in favor of it just to get it to the Senate ... to move the process along ... to get it to a Senate-House conference."

Platts said he supported as many as 20 amendments to the bill, many of them supported by the Bush administration, none of which survived on the floor of the House. One came close. Platts said the amendment to eliminate methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE), failed by a 219-213 vote. The compound, usually found in gasoline, is commonly stored in underground tanks and threatens drinking water. He said, however, he felt confident that the Senate would include an MTBE exclusion in any legislation it might bring forth, and the chances of the exclusion prevailing in a conference committee were good.

Platts also said he voted for an amendment that would have increased the amount of funding for research of alternative fuels. As the House bill reads now, \$8.1 billion is allocated for energy research, but only \$500 million of that is aimed at alternatives.

Santorum's legislative assistant, Matthew Beynon, turned out to be a Gettysburg College alumnus (class of 2003). It was in Santorum's office that the cost-benefit analysis argument became—an argument. All three of our legislators used the identical argument for their votes in favor of drilling for oil in the Alaska National Wildlife Reserve (ANWR)—that it would, in about 10 years, provide as many as 10,000 jobs and contribute somewhat to relieving the gasoline shortage.

The delegation argued that any additional gasoline resources would make no difference, because today's bottleneck is not supply, but refinery capacity. The delegation's points were summed up in a handout left by Lou Hammann:

"And then there is the bill that gives \$8.1 billion in new tax breaks to the oil companies—which are already swimming in cash. Why not use such money to encourage—maybe even reward—those among us who will commit to more energy-efficient means of transportation? And speaking of oil: The public should be informed that the supply of oil in the ANWR would have a minimal, even negligible effect on the price of gasoline. It will, however, devastate an ecosystem that sustains rare plants, animals and human beings that have no representation in the nation's capital."

Jenny Hansen adds:

Everyone we spoke to seemed a bit nervous (shaking hands, etc.) I couldn't figure out if they are still new at this (certainly Platts isn't), or if they were unsure what we as a group were going to say or do (since we oppose their positions for the most part). If the latter is the case, then perhaps we should keep showing up so they aren't afraid of us.

All in all, it was wonderful. I am grateful I went.



Mac Heebner with Santorum assistant Matthew Beynon

The Truth about Santorum ...

Would you be surprised to learn that Wal-Mart is one of Senator Rick Santorum's biggest supporters? The Wal-Mart PAC has given \$36,500 to Senator Santorum since 1993, according to the Philadelphia Inquirer. Could this be because Santorum has supported legislation helpful to Wal-Mart, such as defeating the increase in minimum wage and putting limits on overtime pay?

Democrats accused Santorum of taking a free ride on a Wal-Mart jet for his trip to Florida the day before Terri Schiavo's death. It turns out that the Senator did pay Wal-Mart \$3,300 for use of their corporate jet to be in Florida – but even though he was photographed praying outside Terri's hospice with throngs of supporters, he was only taking time out from a fundraising sweep that raised \$85,000 for his 2006 race.

Gettysburg Area DFA Newsletter is published each month via mail, e-mail and website posting. To add your name to the mailing list, contact GADFA1@YAHOO.COM or Elaine Jones at (717) 677-9442.

GETTYSBURG AREA DFA

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Gettysburg Area DFA Finds a New Meeting Place

Starting on June 1 the Lutheran Theological Seminary on Seminary Ridge in Gettysburg will be the new host for progressive thinkers!

Join us on Wednesday, June 1st for our June Meetup

**Seminary Library Lecture hall
second floor Wentz Library (right across from Valentine Hall)
at 7:00 p.m.**

..... and we can meet there the first Wednesday of EVERY month.

Easy parking behind Wentz Library.
Call the Seminary at 717-334-6286 or check the seminary
website www.ltsg.edu for directions