

GETTYSBURG AREA DEMOCRACY FOR AMERICA

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Letter from the Chair

Recently my husband called from a conference where Jocelyn Elders was a keynote speaker and suggested that I pass on her advice to all the progressives trying to make a difference in the Pennsylvania heartland:

When you are dancing with a bear, you cannot quit and sit down. You must wait until the bear gets tired and sits down – and then you can rest!

Some days I feel like we are doing more than dancing with a bear – we are being chased by a herd of elephants. When I read in the Washington Post that a House subcommittee had voted out a bill to eliminate all federal funding for the Corporation of Public Broadcasting within two years I realized that there will be no rest until we take our country back.

At our June 1 Meetup I was thrilled to see us fill our new space at the Lutheran Seminary on a summer night, and delighted in our discussions about Santorum, Energy Policy, Iraq, and casinos. We also adopted a new statement of Mission and Strategies, which clarifies our overall purpose and the issues we are currently working on. Take a moment to see where we are going and which of these task forces you have joined, or come on July 6 and add your own!

Mission and Strategies – Adopted June 1, 2005

Gettysburg Area DFA is an inclusive community committed to the progressive values underlying our democracy – equal opportunity and social justice; personal liberty; protection of our natural environment; fiscal responsibility; access for all to good health care and education; and peace and security through international cooperation and diplomacy.

We work to restore citizen ownership of our democracy by mobilizing grassroots participation in the political process. We support progressive issues through education, fundraising, community organizing, and citizen lobbying at the local, state and national levels. Gettysburg Area DFA seeks to elect progressive candidates and hold our elected officials accountable to all constituents.

How We're Getting There: We are...

- ✓ **Supporting progressive candidates who run for office at every level.**
- ✓ **Developing partnerships with other organizations in our local community, across Pennsylvania, and nationally to share ideas and leverage our resources to achieve our mutual goals and values.**
- ✓ **Identifying important political issues and policy proposals that affect our local community and developing the tools and resources to inform and empower local citizens to take action.**
- ✓ **Maintaining a clear, local, and public voice in support of effective policies that are in accordance with our core values. These currently include efforts to:**
 - **protect social security for future generations,**
 - **protect the environment and develop sustainable energy policies,**
 - **advocate for fair tax policies,**
 - **protect personal rights and freedoms,**
 - **end the war in Iraq and oppose any future attempts to substitute pre-emptive war for diplomacy, and**
 - **support national security efforts that truly create a safer and stronger America.**
- ✓ **Monitoring the positions and votes of our locally elected representatives and holding them accountable to their constituents.**

Elaine Jones, chair
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DFA Training Coming to Gettysburg Sept. 10-11

An exciting training conference is coming to Gettysburg September 10-11 and it is open to all people, at every level of knowledge, interested in progressive politics. (That's YOU!!!)

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, to sign up and show up."

The classes will be led by DFA trained staffers and guest speakers and presenters. We have just received confirmation that a keynote speaker will be Tonya Payne of Pittsburgh who was a DFA volunteer and decided that the current government in Pittsburgh was corrupt and needed change. She challenged a long time incumbent in the primary just held, on a platform of "reform" and won handily. She is a DF"A" - list endorsed person. (see her bio at <http://www.democracyforamerica.com/dfa-list> .)

The cost for the 2 day session is only \$50.00 and includes breakfast and lunch each day. A special reduced rate of \$20.00 will be offered for students and people on fixed incomes. We have several needs and look to you for this help.

First, sign up for the conference. Go to www.DemocracyForAmerica.com and register. So far 100 people have signed up. We are planning on 200 attendees, so there is time for you to join us. Still... space is limited, so, sign up now.

Second, we are trying to house as many out of town visitors as we can who want that type of housing. So far we have received commitments for 29 beds holding 47 people. Please e-mail Evelyn Steen (EvelynASteen@aol.com) if you will host a visitor in your home for 2 nights (Sept. 9-10). We need to know: Smoking or nonsmoking, pets, number and size of beds and how many people you will take. Vonnie Lau is gathering hotel information for those who prefer hotel accommodations.

Third, we are raising money for scholarships so we might invite worthy students, either high school or college age, to come to the conference for free.

Sponsorships are \$50.00 for an "activist" scholarship and \$20.00 for a "student" scholarship. Checks, made out to "DFA" can be given to Bert Herbert (Bert_Herbert@nps.gov) at a DFA MeetUp or sent to Gettysburg Area DFA, P.O. Box 489 Arndtsville, PA 17303. (clearly mark it is for a "Scholarship to the DFA training conference."

Finally, we are hosting the attendees of the conference at a pot luck picnic. Basically you need to start dusting your recipes and make your best ??? to share with all the visitors coming to town. It will be a fun evening for all of us, and a great opportunity to socialize with visitors from far and wide. More on this later.

Any other questions or comments can be directed to Roger Lund (rlund@TheChristmasHaus.com) or 624-4860. We look forward to everyone's participation.

Iraq Task Force Report

The Wednesday, June 22nd meeting of the Iraq task force boasted the largest number of attendees yet. The discussion was lively and the anticipation of upcoming events was high.

First on the agenda was an announcement of the speakers and program for the next general Meetup. Susan Naugle will facilitate a panel discussion on a historical perspective of Iraq, with two speakers confirmed.

Our own Lou Hamman will speak on the nature of the Islamic religion and how that belief structure guides and directs the Iraqi people. Lou will be followed by Tom Dombrowski, of the Army War College Carlisle, who will discuss the historical political structure of Iraq. Following these speakers there will be a question and answer period.

Plans were then made for the lobbying trip planned for Thurs, July 14 to meet with Senators Specter and Santorum and Rep. Platts. A great deal of time was taken discussing the need for "framing" a discussion so as to basically ask, "okay, so you guys got us into this, how are you getting us out?"

Will Lane is working on a final version of the handout to give to the elected representatives and Lou Hamman is working of a handout of copy points for those wanting to go to Washington. These copy points and handouts are being designed to make the representatives answer to us as to "what cost in lives is too high?", "what cost in dollars is too much," and "how will we know it is time to pull out?" There will also be questions regarding homeland security issues in this country and the growing problem with recruiting soldiers to fight this war.

If you are interested in joining the lobbying trip, contact Alan Olson, convener of the Iraq Task Force, at OlsonAlan@adelphia.net, or 642 8110, or make sure you come to the July 6th Meetup to sign up.

The next meeting of the Iraq Task Force is Wednesday, July 27, 7-8:30 PM at the Ragged Edge. All interested persons are invited to attend.

This article is concerned with the continuing efforts to regain honest elections. The incentive, of course, comes from the election fiascoes in 2000 and 2004. I offer it here so that none of us forgets that "creating honest elections" is still a cause for the likes of DFA people. I excerpted it from *Justice Rising: Grassroots Solutions to Corporate Domination* Spring, 2005, a new publication of the Alliance for Democracy. -Lou Hamman

Creating Honest Elections: The Problem, the People, the Solutions

By Jim Tarbell

Hard-nosed, political kingpin John Bolton, working with James Baker in Florida, walked into the 2000 recount and announced "I'm with the Bush-Cheney team, and I'm here to stop the recount." As a man who helped launder thousands of corporate and foreign dollars into political war chests he personifies the problems with our electoral system. As a former Senior Vice President at American Enterprise Institute, he is a central player in a broad, billion-dollar, thirty-year effort by conservative corporate-funded foundations to gain control of the American democratic process.

His associate James Baker is co-chair of the Carter-Baker Commission on Federal Election Reform. Purportedly created to "study the electoral process in the U.S., and make recommendations for improvements," this 21-person commission does **not** include any critics of our money-flooded campaign finance system, no experts on electronic voting, and no representatives of aggrieved voters shut out of our electoral process in both 2000 and 2004.

Dozens of voting rights-groups including the Velvet Revolution, Progressive Democrats of America, United Progressives and Code Pink protested at the first day of the Carter-Baker Commission hearings at the American University in Washington, D.C. on April 18. They were demanding that at least the big moneyed political power brokers be excluded from the panel. Shut out, of course, were any of the experts who recently met in Nashville at the National Election Reform Conference

On April 8-10 hundreds of experts had gathered in Nashville, Tennessee to create a first-of-its-kind gathering "To Save Our Democracy." Robert Koehler of the Tribune Media Services described it as "an extraordinary pulling together of disparate voting-rights activists. It had the feel of 1775: citizen patriots taking matters into their own hands to reclaim the republic. This was the level of its urgency."

It was a gathering of people asking, "why the lines were so long and the voting machines so few . . . and why virtually every voter complaint about electronic-voting machine malfunction indicated an unauthorized vote switch from Kerry to Bush." The computer experts who were there declared that "the numbers are screaming at them that something is wrong."

Will The People carry the day and eliminate the inside fix posed by the Carter-Baker Commission? Will the media alert the world to the American electoral crisis? Jonathon Simon who spoke at the National Election Reform Conference said, "When the autopsy of our democracy is performed, it is my belief that media silence will be given as the primary cause of death."

Want to Chat With Other Folks Like You?

Tired of people who give you blank stares when you rail about this government? There is a great community out there where you can chat and learn about all of the issues of our day. Go to www.BlogForAmerica.com and check it out. (WARNING: it can be addictive!!!)

Also, while you are at it, sign up for the national DFA mailing list on line. There is a wealth of information and support they offer to you as Gettysburg Area DFA coalition members. All they need is your email, and they do not share your name elsewhere. You may go to www.BlogForAmerica.com or www.DemocracyForAmerica.com to sign up. You will be glad you did. Spend some time browsing the site, it is full of information.

The Truth about Santorum ...

Santorum's Medial Malpractice Hypocrisy

Senator Rick Santorum has consistently voted to cap medical malpractice lawsuits at \$250,000, but when his wife, Karen Santorum, brought a suit against a Virginia chiropractor in 1996 for negligence causing her permanent back pain the family sought \$500,000 in compensation. ("TheBeliever," The New York Times Magazine, May 22, 2005.) Although we certainly should sympathize with the suffering Mrs. Santorum went through with an incompetent doctor-something quite a few of us can relate to-it is important to note how different things can look to a politician when it's suddenly a question of his own wife and family and no longer a matter of bashing malpractice "cheaters" on the floor of the Senate.

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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Calendar of Upcoming Events

July 6 – 7:00PM	DFA Meetup with panel on Iraq.	Seminary Library Lecture Hall.
July 13 – 7:00PM	Candidate Development & Recruitment Committee	Ragged Edge
July 14 – All Day	Lobby visit to DC to express concern about Iraq War.	Contact Alan Olson (OlsonAlan@adelphia.net)
July 27 – 7:00 PM	Iraq Task Force – All interested please attend.	Ragged Edge
Aug 4 – 6:00 PM	Bob Casey, Jr. Fundraiser (\$100 per person)	Hidden Horse Farm (Contact Will Lane)
Aug 14	70 th Anniversary of Social Security	
Sep 10-11	Grassroots Organizing and Campaign Training	Gettysburg College (Hosted by DFA)
Sep 24	Mass Anti-War March in Washington D.C.	Washington D.C.

Come and Meet Bob Casey!

PA State treasurer Bob Casey will be the honored guest at a fundraiser at the home of Gerald and Helen Sajer near Lake Meade on Thursday August 4, from 6 to 8 pm. With the strong endorsement of Governor Rendell, Joe Hoeffel and Barbara Hafer, Bob Casey is already planning his challenge to Senator Rick Santorum for the PA Senate Seat in the 2006 election.

Progressives who want to help defeat Rick Santorum are encouraged to join the host committee with a contribution of \$250 each to the Bob Casey for Pennsylvania Committee, or support the event with a \$100 contribution for the Casey campaign. For more information or to receive an invitation contact Gerald Sajer at 259-7213 or Elaine Jones at 677-9442.