

# GETTYSBURG AREA DEMOCRACY FOR AMERICA

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## WE are the ones...

DFA's Training Coordinator Arshad Hasan began the first session of the DFA Training in Gettysburg recently telling almost 100 people gathered, "The first thing you must all understand is that you are STRANGE. It is strange that you are sitting here learning about political organizing, and not out enjoying a beautiful Saturday like most normal people."

I'm guessing that you are a wee bit strange, too, because you are READING about political organizing, when you could be doing anything else that most "normal" people do. Maybe that is because most of us believe that we can actually return our country to the people who make it great – working one precinct, one voter at a time.

One thing the 18 of us from Gettysburg Area learned, and want to pass on to the rest of you, is that to be effective politically, we need to learn how to run effective campaigns, whether they are electoral campaigns or issue advocacy campaigns. To succeed we need to manage PEOPLE, TIME AND MONEY, and to change voters, we must learn to speak "normal."

But first we need clear goals. Until now, GADFA has been driven by task forces who select issues and topics that concern them, and recommend actions that the larger membership can support. Starting now, the Steering Committee will wrestle with larger issues like the following:

- Shall we endorse one or two progressive candidates, and work collectively to make sure they succeed?
- Shall we grab the moment when the whole country is focused on our failures to protect our own people in the wake of Katrina, and ask why?
- Shall we demand that we stop cutting taxes for the wealthy and focus our resources on the war on poverty that we never won, instead of a war on terror that we cannot win the way we are headed?

You may have other ideas for focusing our campaigns for 2005-2006, but NOW is the time to come together and discuss next steps. As Jim Wallis reminded us in his book Politics of God,

**"WE are the one's we've been waiting for."**

Elaine Jones, Chair

## Peace Rally in Washington D.C.

On September 24, 41 members of GADFA and other concerned citizens traveled to Washington D.C. to participate in a rally and march against the war in Iraq as part of 3-day effort to persuade lawmakers and the President to end the war in Iraq.



At the rally at the Ellipse, the huge crowd listened to speeches by Cindy Sheehan and other public figures whom spoke against the misguided policies of the Bush administration. The 1 ½ mile march proved to be somewhat difficult due to overwhelming attendance which jammed the streets, but the enthusiasm of the attendees such as the 'Raging Grannies' as well as the inventive posters and displays, including a group that performed in unison using full body masks, stimulated the interest of all who made the commitment to speak out against the seemingly endless war in Iraq - a war which has cost so many lives, both American and Iraqi.

After the march, the Gettysburg area people took the Metro to Shady Grove for the bus to Gettysburg. Thanks go to Jeanne Neylon, Sherrill Brown, and all those who attended for their help in making the trip a success.

### After the Peace March – JoAnn Udovich

Despite the crowd which exceeded the 100,000 planned for (and which may have been as large as 300,000), and dutiful coverage by Sunday newspapers around the country, it is difficult to judge the wider impact of the Washington Peace March.

From my own perspective, I was most struck by the nature of the crowd. In contrast to the speakers, the crowd was overwhelmingly white and middle-aged, with an enormous number of families. I enjoyed the little girl who carried a sign that read, "First Graders Against the War." Although the official speakers seemed more diverse (racially and ethnically), and more revolutionary in the sense of being anti-imperial, I was very encouraged that the crowd itself appeared to be the bedrock of middle America.

The marchers were the sorts of Americans who vote, who are

rooted members of communities from all over the country, who care about the dignity of all people, and who are appalled at the poverty and injustice within our own borders. In short, they looked exactly like our own GADFA group. Even if official, ideological, partisan Washington barely raised an eye at this event, I was impressed that our local conversation is being repeated in many, many other places.

The process of growing a rational, respectful conversation that is willing to give voice to the truth in the face of all the spin, lies, manipulations, and self-serving special interests is our only hope of moving beyond the societal impasse where we currently find ourselves. I was honored to have participated in this conversation in Washington with so many of our fellow citizens from around the country.



#### Educational Opportunity at the Carlisle Peace College

On November 11-12, 2005, the Carlisle Peace College will hold a two-day session focusing on issues of crucial interest to members of Democracy for America. The Conference, to be held at the Carlisle Church of the Brethren, will open Friday evening with a presentation by the imam of a local mosque and continue on Saturday with talks on depleted uranium, conscientious objection, economics of war and peace, Palestinian-Israeli peacebuilding, and making war illegal. Featured speakers include John Ketwig, author of "And a Hard Rain Fell," and Bill Dyson, Connecticut State senator and advocate for peace and justice. Lunch will be served on Saturday. A minimum donation of \$20 is suggested for those attending. Visit the Carlisle Peace College website for more information or contact Jan Powers, 334-3871.

For more pictures from the Peace Rally and a calendar of upcoming events please visit our website at:

[www.gettysburgareadfa.org](http://www.gettysburgareadfa.org)

## Democracy For America Training – A Huge Success

-Roger Lund

The response has been clear and overwhelming: the DFA training in Gettysburg was a big success.

Over 90 people participated in the two day event which featured trainers from California, Colorado, Vermont, Texas, Pennsylvania and Louisiana. We scurried between sessions, participated in workshops and ate and ate and ate. Our attendees were from all over the country, literally from coast to coast, although the vast majority were from Pennsylvania.

A featured speaker on Sunday was Tonya Payne, a DFA endorsed candidate for City Council in Pittsburgh. She was dynamic and inspiring as a woman who had had enough of the corruption of city government and led the way to make change. She ousted a 10 year incumbent and will be sworn in as a new council member in January. Congresswoman Payne anyone?

On Saturday night, after the first day, Gettysburg Area DFA hosted a picnic that was attended by conference goers and members of the local DFA chapter. All were entertained by protest songs by Will Lane and the incredible talent of

Watermelon Sugar, featuring the blog's own Hypatia.

After the picnic, a delegation of leaders from Pennsylvania For Democracy met to discuss the organization's goals for the future. With a little help of some wine and good company, the group managed to work until midnight.

Sunday was another jam packed day with people's heads still reeling from all they learned the day before. Featured as our lunch speaker was Monisha Sujan, a new DFA staffer and a displaced New Orleans resident. We heard the horrors of what happened in New Orleans, as well as the political implications of the storm on Louisiana politics. There are only two Democratic congressional districts in Louisiana, and both were decimated by the hurricane. The need to rebuild is enormous so DFA has adopted Habitat For Humanity as a charity to support, as that group intends to try and rebuild for the tens of thousands of low-income residents displaced by the storm.

Previous to the conference, DFA chapters across Pennsylvania collected funds for Hurricane Katrina victims and the money was collected at the

conference. There was \$686.65 collected for Habitat For Humanity and \$1050.00 collected for The American Red Cross for a total of \$1736.65 given by PA For Democracy members. Congratulations to all for this effort.

After the conference ended I have had many, many emails from excited attendees ready to work toward the change that we need to exact in this country. Buzz phrases like "Power Mapping," and "The Rule of Halves," and "24/9/7" permeate these conversations. All are ready to move forward and do what is necessary to take out country back.

My thanks go out to the Gettysburg Area DFA (GADFA) members who made this conference possible along with the incredible efforts of the Gettysburg College DFA group. In particular I thank Evelyn, Bert and Luke; without their assistance we could not have hosted this event. A great big thank you also goes to those who served as hosts for our out of town guests and those who shuttled people around. Also, to all on the

DFA staff: it was a pleasure working with you.

### ALAN OLSON ANNOUNCES

At our last GADFA meeting, we offered the challenge: if we don't run for office, who will?

Answering the challenge was Alan Olson, who has announced his candidacy for borough council in Carroll Valley. Although a long time community member, Alan did not see himself as someone who would run for office.

After attending a number of council meetings, and feeling comfortable with the process, Alan heeded the challenge thrown forth at our last meeting.

If you can be of assistance to Alan in the election, please contact him at [OlsonAlan@adelphia.net](mailto:OlsonAlan@adelphia.net). More than financial contributions, Alan could use some "ground" help, as he needs to create some print materials and he may need help on election day.

Please email Alan ( [OlsonAlan@adelphia.net](mailto:OlsonAlan@adelphia.net)) and offer congratulations and assistance in whatever way you can.

Don't forget: We are the one's we've been waiting for!



www.gettysburgareadfa.org

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**From Values to Action:  
A Progressive Response to Rick Santorum's *It Takes A Family***

What does it mean to be progressive? The program portion of our October meet-up will explore that question, partly in response to Senator Rick Santorum's recent book *It Takes A Family*. GADFA mascot and lifelong Adams County resident Will Lane will present a quick overview of the Santorum tome highlighting both its shortcomings and the lessons and opportunities it offers liberals and progressives. Then—with the help of small group facilitators from our Senate 2006 Task Force—he'll lead audience members through a process of reflection on their own progressive values. **The goal: an energizing progressive story that links together the many issues that concern us all** and can help empower us to do the work that needs to be done in the upcoming, critically important election year. Please come and help us shape our future!

Meet-up time and place: Wednesday, October 5, 7:00-9:00 p.m.  
206 Valentine Hall, Lutheran Seminary  
Gettysburg, Pennsylvania