

Democratic Rural Conference of New York State

July, 2013

Bulletin # 18

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FIRST AND FOREMOST: MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

THE 2014 DRC CONFERENCE

WILL BE HELD ON APRIL 25TH AND 26TH, 2014

LOCATION TO BE DETERMINED.

WHAT HAVE WE BEEN DOING?

VIM, VIGOR AND VITALITY

For those of you who missed it, here is a rundown of the 2013 Conference in Saratoga Springs: 2013 ANNUAL SPRING CONFERENCE, APRIL 26 AND 27 AT THE SARATOGA HILTON, IN SARATOGA SPRINGS

This year's spring conference was another resounding success. The theme was "Building the Farm Team, Growing the Party". Over 300 participants, from one end of New York State to the other, attended.

Friday the 26th included a number of presentations including: 1) "Defining and Cultivating Diversity in Your County Committee" led by DRC Chair Irene Stein; 2) a County Chairs' Roundtable led by Seneca County Chair, Ted Young; 3) NYS Board of Elections Campaign Finance facilitated by Jane Dodds, DRC Vice Chair.

Saturday's workshops included: 1) "Grassroots Campaign Management in a Nutshell" presented by former DRC Chair Denise King; 2) "Turning the Grassroots Blue" panel led by June O'Neil, former NYS Democratic Chair; and "What a County Can do to Spur Economic Development" by Martha Robertson, Chair of the Tompkins County Legislature.

In addition, Governor Cuomo hosted a wonderful Welcome Reception featuring New York State products. Attorney General Eric Schneiderman provided a delicious dessert reception and Comptroller Tom DiNapoli sponsored a sumptuous breakfast.

The NYS Young Dems had a late night fun event which introduced Ithaca's new dynamic young Mayor, Svante Myrick, to the DRC and activist Democrats. Joining us as well at the conference were Lt. Gov. Bob Duffy, Senate Minority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, members of Congress and a number of state Assembly and Senate members.

Our annual event would not have been possible without the significant support of our incomparable U.S. Senators, Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand, the New York State

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Democratic Committee, the New York Pipe Trades Association and Bill Samuels of the New Roosevelt Initiative.

Officers were elected during the conference. The incumbents, Chair Irene Stein, Vice Chair Jane Dodds, Treasurer Cindy Emmer, Secretary Phil Jones, and Parliamentarian Don Ackerman were all re-elected. Board members that were elected or re-elected were Mark Bellardini, Jason Clark, Jeanne Crane, Doris Kirsch and Bob Reynolds.

Many attendees filled out our conference survey and they validated the quality of the presenters, the program and the facilities of this year's conference.

The Daily Gazette stated "The influential role of New York's upstate rural Democrats was on display Friday night..." and the Albany Times Union quoted Gov. Cuomo as saying, "I would not be the governor of New York without the DRC". Both statements attest to the success of the Conference and the role of the DRC in state politics.

Our thanks go out to Jane Dodds, Conference Coordinator and the entire Board for its participation in the planning and implementation of this year's Spring Conference

-----B. Don Ackerman

BOARD MEETING AND RETREAT, JULY 13, WATERLOO, N.Y.

Treasurer Cindy Emmer reported that we had a balance as of 7/13 of \$31,836. The DRC Journal generated a profit of \$12,600. A motion was passed to determine the amount of money to be awarded this year to each county during a conference call prior to Labor Day. Because each year's election needs are different, a second motion was passed to establish a subcommittee to explore how the money might be used in future years. In addition, the board discussed fund-raising ideas which included having a fund-raising event at the Fall State Committee meeting. Ideas were floated as to how to get additional ads in the Spring Conferences Journal.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

ISSUES COMMITTEE

Issues Chair Dawn Rivers and John Hurley represented the DRC at a meeting with staff of the Lt. Governor's Office. The meeting focused on these issues:

The Regional Development Councils: Gaps in representation of significant stakeholders were discussed. In response, the DRC was asked to submit a list of overlooked constituencies and the names of individuals who might fill those slots. Dawn is seeking a list of such people and their affiliations. She will report to the Board before forwarding the information to the Governor's Office.

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Mandate Relief: The DRC representatives indicated that mandate relief continues to be a major problem in rural counties. Ms. Rivers is seeking a list of these mandates that especially impact rural counties.

Education Funding: A request was made to change the funding formula in a way that helps low-wealth, low income areas.

Finally, concern was expressed about the new tax free zones, and particularly the aspect of no taxes for individuals employed in these zones.

After discussion, the Board endorsed the idea of an educational forum to discuss funding and related issues, perhaps to be held in early spring.

Early voting and the I-98 project were suggested as other issues which the Issues Committee might explore. -----Dawn Rivers

YOUTH COMMITTEE

The Youth Committee of the DRC would like to thank everyone who helped to organize the very successful youth event at the recent Conference as well as everyone who participated.

Moving forward, the committee recognizes the need to continue to recruit young Democrats into the DRC as Associate Members and develop a process through which they are able to extend their collective voice on issues important to them and their peers. As such, the committee will be developing a Youth Advisory Board that will work in concert with the committee.

The DRC Board also recognizes the challenges that many of our colleagues, young and old, have in securing challenging and rewarding employment here in rural New York. Accordingly, work is underway to assess the feasibility of organizing a DRC Career Fair as a first step in assisting rural employers and rural job seekers in their effort to connect with one another.

For more information on the Youth Advisory Board or the DRC Career Fair, please contact me directly at jasonclark2001@msn.com or at 617-312-8594.

Jason Clark, Chair, Young Democrat Outreach Committee

-----Jason Clark

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2014 Spring Conference

We have been holding our conferences in unionized hotels in DRC Counties. Since we need a hotel that can accommodate 300 people, we have few options. We agreed to search for a suitable venue in Syracuse, which is located in a non-DRC county. Jane Dodds, Conference Coordinator, was asked to put a “soft hold” on the Desmond in Albany, while we search hotels in Syracuse. A final determination will be made in a conference call in the coming weeks. The dates of the Conference will be April 25 and 26.

We reviewed evaluations from the last Conference so as to take suggestions into consideration for the next one. Many members wanted fewer speakers while many others commended the fact that so many speakers attended!

We discussed the 2014 agenda, the possibility of a straw poll, the desire to possibly have a Congressional panel and networking for both Congressional and State Senatorial candidates, in keeping with the 2014 political agenda.

OLD BUSINESS

Mark Bellardini and Jason Clark asked the Board to consider joining the I-98 advocacy group, the Northern Corridor Transportation Group. The Board and membership have already endorsed the I-98 proposal. The Board voted to join the Group as a Gold Member (\$1000).

Chair Stein reported that the Eleanor Roosevelt Legacy luncheon was scheduled for October 21 in NYC, and that the DRC will again have a table. She asked that Board Members indicate their interest in attending as soon as possible. If there will be extra space at the DRC table, we will open it up to the membership, as in the past.

----- Phil Jones and Irene Stein

THE RETREAT

Dr. Barry Warren, of SUNY Oneonta facilitated this three hour retreat. Because of the many changes in the DRC environment over the past years and because we had a number of new members, it seemed a good thing to review our goals, problems and successes in order to plan our actions for the coming year.

We hope to develop a public relations campaign to increase awareness of our existence, our achievements and our proposals. We also will follow up by strongly advocating for the I-98

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project. We already started to do this in the meeting earlier in the day when we joined the Northern Corridor Transportation Group. We also hope to organize a Lobby Day in Albany. We will work towards TAKING BACK THE SENATE. We will try organizing a forum on public education.

This means a lot of work for us Board members, and, we hope many of you will help. If you would like to work on any of these initiatives, please let Irene know at iws2iws2@gmail.com.

---Irene Stein

FLYING HIGH-

Did you know that long-time DRC member Mary Ellen Silitch was inducted into the Aviation Hall of Fame? Congratulations, Mary Ellen.

SAD NEWS

Charlie Young, husband of a founding Board member and current Honorary Member Ruth Young, passed away this week after a long illness. Our thoughts are with Ruth who was a devoted wife and caregiver. May Charlie rest in peace; may Ruth find solace and comfort. Ruth's address is 204 Sayre Street, Horseheads, NY 14845. Should this Bulletin reach you in a timely fashion, there will be Celebration of Life at Braun's Pour House, 70 Old Ithaca Road, Horseheads, NY on Saturday, August 3rd at Noon.

Ed Arrington, former 3 term Mayor of Owego and member of the State Democratic Committee passed away on July 24, 2013. Condolences may be made to the Arrington Family at www.emfaheyfuneralhome.com. Services will be held on Monday, July 29, 2013 at 1:30 PM at the First Church of the Nazarene, 3732 Waverly Road, Owego, NY.

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

I hope the DRC can be helpful in this year of local races. We also hope the campaign training we offered at the Conference will be an asset. Beyond the modest financial assistance we hope to provide, we can assist in other ways. If you need experienced campaign advice, help reaching particular people, or a speaker at your events, please do not hesitate to contact us. Be sure to bring issues concerns to the attention of our Issues Committee.

We are always looking for ways to do new things and old things better. Your ideas are more than welcome.

Enjoy the summer and hold your heads high as you fight on for government that works for our people. -----**Irene**

Announcement

There will be a Conference Call meeting of the DRC Executive Committee on Wednesday, July 31, 2013 at 7 PM to exclusively discuss the location of the 2014 DRC Spring Conference.

Toll-Free Access Number:

1.800.704.9804

Participant Code:

36633195#

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THE DRC CONTACT INFO, ETC....

Web page: www.nysdrc.org

To subscribe to our list serve go to: NYSDemocraticRuralConference-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

To Post a Message on the List serve go to: NYSDemocraticRuralConference@yahoogroups.com

Meet on Facebook at www.facebook.com/pages/Democratic-Rural-Conference-of-New-York-State/162050418621 ----- Administrators: Don Ackerman and Dave Fronk

Or e-mail us at:

Irene Stein, Chair ----

Jane Dodds, Vice Chair and Conference Chair---

Cindy Emmer, Treasurer and Finance Committee Chair---

Phil Jones, Secretary and By-Laws Committee Chair ---

Don Ackerman, Parliamentarian ---

Doris Kirsch, Board Member and Asst. Secretary ---

Dawn Rivers, Issues Committee Chair ---

Mark Bellardini, Board Member and Labor Committee Chair---

Jim Testani, Board Member and Political Committee Chair ----

Jason Clark, Board Member and Youth Committee Chair ---

Joyce Melfi, Board Member and Program Book Chair-----

Ted Young, Board Member----

Bob Reynolds, Board Member ----

Mark Alquist, Board Member ----

Lorie Longhany, Board Member ----

Jeanne Crane, Board Member ---

Ian Brody, Web Master ---

iws2iws2@gmail.com

jmdodds@aol.com

cindy.emmer@yahoo.com

phildem@rochester.rr.com

Bdonack@aol.com

wdkirsch@gmail.com

me@dawnisme.com

bellar@earthlink.net

jtestani1@gmail.com

jasonclark2002@gmail.com

babbmelfi@juno.com

tyoung28@rochester.rr.com

bobnkaren@live.com

mhalquist@verizon.net

lorie.longhany@gmail.com

jeannecrane01@localnet.com

ian.brody@ianbrody.com

DRC Board Services...

SPEAKERS Bureau:

The following DRC Members are available as speakers at DRC County events:

Irene Stein, Cindy Emmer, Bill Wood or Phil Jones.

MENTORING Services:

The DRC Executive Committee has many experienced County Chairs. As such, we are available to mentor and provide support to new County Chairs.

DUES:

Dues are \$10 for 2013, checks are payable to the DRC and should be sent to DRC c/o Cindy Emmer, 858 Davis St., Elmira, NY 14901.

PUBLISHER, WRITER and EDITOR: Irene Stein;
FORMAT and PAPER BOY: Phil Jones

COPY EDITOR: Doris Kirsch;