

# THE DEMOCRATIC RURAL CONFERENCE OF NEW YORK STATE

Bulletin #24

January 2015

## NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Members,

A sincere and hearty thanks to you and the hard working committee members in your counties.

While our statewide candidates were all handily re-elected, results in most of our DRC counties were very disappointing. Nevertheless, we will bounce back with determination and commitment. We are the Party with the right message; inclusion and opportunity. The political environment will be better in 2015 with the emphasis on economic development in our counties and the increasing approval of President Obama's assertive actions. We will rise to the occasion.

Thanks to all who have sent in suggestions for our upcoming conference being held at the Holiday Inn in Syracuse. We will definitely offer campaign trainings on subjects to which you gave high priorities as needs. We need to balance time allotments, availabilities of speakers and your feedback on issues as well.

The DRC offers technical assistance with your campaigns, speakers at your events, and help in contacting State elected officials. Please feel free to contact me with your requests, concerns and suggestions.

As you will see in the material in this bulletin, we continue working for our high need rural school districts. We hope you will follow the issue of public school funding and express your positions to your state legislators and the Governor.

I wish you all a Happy, Healthy and Productive New Year. I am proud to be a Democrat and to have the opportunity to work with you in the coming months.

*Irene*



## SAVE THE DATE

2015 DRC CONFERENCE

April 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>

**Syracuse, NY**



Holiday Inn

441 Electronics Parkway,  
Liverpool, NY 13088

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## *In Memorium*

We lost a great lion of the New York State Democratic Party and the nation on New Year's Day. The respect and devotion to Governor Mario Cuomo from the DRC is immeasurable. His commitment to justice and fairness was second to none. It is with great sadness that we say good bye to this truly remarkable leader. We send sincere condolences to Governor Andrew Cuomo, the Cuomo family and all our DRC friends who had the good fortune to have known and worked with Governor Mario Cuomo. Through his public service, he inspired so many of us to continue his legacy for a more just society.

## WHAT HAVE WE BEEN UP TO.....

### Executive Committee Meeting 12/14/14 in Syracuse

An Executive Committee Meeting was held on December 14<sup>th</sup> at the Sheet Metal Union in Syracuse. Guests included Diane Dwire, the Democratic candidate who ran in the 126<sup>th</sup> Assembly District, who shared her experiences running her campaign. She graciously thanked the DRC for the help given to her and expressed her excitement that this year's Conference will be held in Syracuse.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### Audit / Finance - Cindy Emmer

Cindy Emmer reported a balance of \$6741.59 as of 12/14/14. Each member committee, which paid its dues, received a \$450 grant from the DRC last fall. 2015 dues are payable to the DRC. Send \$10.00 check c/o Cindy Emmer, 858 Davis St., Elmira, NY 14901

### Conference Committee – Jane Dodds

Jane Dodds reports that our focus at this year's Conference, held on April 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> at the Holiday Inn Syracuse, will be on developing our committees, promoting the Democratic message, and recruiting good candidates and campaign organizations for this fall's elections. We'll also begin building coalitions for our 2016 races. We encourage the County Committees to broaden our audience by bringing new local committee members, and inviting the people in your districts who might consider running campaigns or running for office. Our tentative schedule includes programming based on DRC Member surveys, with sessions on campaign finance reporting, promoting effective candidate messages, and strategies for future campaigns. We hope each and every DRC member can attend, and bring your rising stars!

# THE DEMOCRATIC RURAL CONFERENCE OF NEW YORK STATE

## Issues Committee – Judith Hunter

Irene Stein gave a brief review of the Ad Hoc Committee on School Funding. Since the DRC Board meeting, a small contingency of this committee met with the Board of Regents on December 17, 2014. The Regents favors a “blended approach” which adds to Foundation Aid as it reduces the Gap Elimination Assessment. Their approach is consistent with our “White Paper” see second attachment. They also recommend a one-time expenditure to be covered by the settlement funding, some of which will benefit rural schools. The DRC “White Paper” was also sent to Governor Cuomo, Senators Andrea Stewart Cousins, John Flanagan, Dean Skelos, Jeffrey Klein and Assembly Leader, Sheldon Silver and Assemblywoman Catharine Nolan. The DRC Issues Committee continues to steadfastly advocate for a fairer school funding formula.

Issues Chair, Judith Hunter asked for authorization to document the effects that the Safe Act has had on DRC Counties. The Issues Committee is also investigating the issue of natural gas storage.

## Political Committee – Mark Alquist

An extensive and spirited discussion about the current state of the State Committee, as well as results from rural counties in the November election resulted in the formation of a sub-committee to work with the Governor’s office, state wide elected officials and the DRC counties to strengthen the State Committee.

## By-Laws Committee – Phil Jones

Phil presented a recommendation to amend the By-Laws to strengthen the role of the Nominating Committee and stress its emphasis on broadening the geographic make-up of the DRC Board. There was also clarification of how uncontested races for the Board would be handled. The amendments to the By-Laws were approved and will be presented to the General Membership at the Spring Conference in April for final approval.

## Communications - Don Ackerman

Don Ackerman reports good news in the efforts to improve and expand information delivery about the DRC and our activities. One of our primary vehicles is our Facebook page, which now has over 700 “likes”. This means more people are following our content. All of us can do more to help promote outreach by joining our Facebook page and encouraging your committee members to join. We post articles of general interest to our counties that appear in statewide and local media. We are very eager to have Democrats across the state submit articles and/or interesting items about events and people in your area. We are working in conjunction with Judith Hunter (Issues

# THE DEMOCRATIC RURAL CONFERENCE OF NEW YORK STATE

Chair) who has sent us a number of articles that have been posted to the FB page. Also, our website and brochure are in the process of being revamped and should be ready soon.

## Program Book - Joyce Melfi

The Program Book Committee – Joyce Melfi, Jeanne Crane and Lorie Longhany request that County Leaders start getting approval for their County ads – the earlier we get a jump on the program book the easier it will be to put together. A special request is being made for your assistance in procuring ads by either reaching out to your networks (local unions, law firms, businesses, etc.) or if preferred give leads to us. As in the past, Lorie Longhany will assist in any art work. County leaders will receive ad rate cards and instructions in February.

## CONTACT INFORMATION AND MEMBER SERVICES

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Judith Hunter, Issues Committee Chair

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# THE DEMOCRATIC RURAL CONFERENCE OF NEW YORK STATE

## DRC Board Services

### Speakers Bureau

The following DRC members are available as speakers at DRC County Events:

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

### Mentoring Services

The DRC Executive Committee has many experienced County Chairs. We are available to mentor and provide support to new County Chairs.

PREPARED AND FORMATTED BY: Lorie Longhany

EDITOR: Irene Stein and Doris Kirsch