

THE DEMOCRATIC RURAL CONFERENCE OF NEW YORK STATE

Bulletin #31

May 2017

Message from the DRC Chair

I want to congratulate all the newly elected Board members and thank the membership for their vote to support my leadership for another term. I hope you benefited from our recent conference. Please give us your reactions on the evaluation survey we are sending out to you.

As upstate residents we are all facing unprecedented threats to the economic progress we have made to date to revive the losses we have incurred. The Trump agenda represents real crisis with its threats to health insurance coverage, protections for consumers, social security and the general welfare of working men and women – just a partial list of many atrocities.

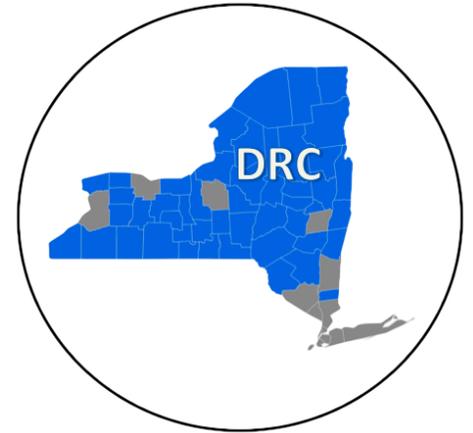
Challenges always present opportunities. This is especially true today with the strong negative reaction to Trump policies all over our counties. We need to take advantage of the benefits all these newly activated Democrats will bring to our ranks as we engage in this year's local races and gear up to take back Congress in 2018.

We can create organizational structures to help do just that. Please note the 'Best Practices' and 'Resist' reports below. We will try and help all counties take advantage of this new momentum. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with me. It is possible to create a structure that unites groups within each county, preserves their independence, increases communication and participation, reduces chaos and brings many new people into the Democratic Party.

We, of course, will continue all of our normal activities in 2017; Speakers Bureau, mentoring, issues promotion, financial assistance, youth outreach, etc. Our goal is to elect Democrats resulting in a better life for all.

Let's move forward together!

Irene



www.nysdrc.org

Visit and join our Facebook page at

**Democratic Rural Conference of
New York State**



2018 DRC Conference

TBA

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WHAT HAVE WE BEEN UP TO?

We just wrapped up a very successful conference held in Syracuse on April 21st and 22nd. On Friday afternoon we had a tremendously inspiring welcome from Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, giving us insight into what's been happening in DC. A panel discussion of both pros (Henrik Dullea, PHD) and cons (Cort Ruddy) of a state constitutional convention was enlightening and gave our conference attendees a lot to chew on. Early evening we heard from Governor Andrew Cuomo, who gave a stellar address at the annual 'welcome reception' reminding us of how his administration is working to better the lives of all New Yorkers. We also had a galaxy of NY State elected officials; LG, Kathy Hochul, AG, Eric Schneiderman, Comptroller, Tom DiNapoli, Senate Minority Leader, Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Assembly Majority Leader, Joe Morelle, NYSDC Chairman Byron Brown, NYSDC Executive Director, Basil Smikle and many others. AG Schneiderman's dessert reception and the Young Dem's karaoke session closed out the evening in fine fashion and a great time was had by all. Saturday morning's breakfast was sponsored by our great friend, Comptroller DiNapoli. Our business meeting followed on Saturday with elections of officers and Board members. Irene Stein and Judith Hunter were re-elected Chair and Vice-Chair, Don Ackerman was re-elected Parliamentarian, Diane Lechner was elected Secretary. Board members for the next term are as follows; Joyce Melfi Cwiklinski, Doris Kirsch, Jeanne Crane, Mitch Ford, Donna Schick and Tim Perfetti. Two workshops were offered on Saturday; Moving your Message Via Social Media and Fundraising Fundamentals, two absolutely essential trainings going into this year's local election season. Without question this was a very successful Conference with more than 450 people attending over the two day event.

Best Practices

From Arlene Feldmeier from the Herkimer County Democratic Committee.

January Waffles Brunch Jumpstart your committee every new year with a fun event. Elections are over and most people are ready for a light hearted good time on a weekend morning. Why waffles? Everyone loves them, it is very inexpensive and a couple of waffle irons, some toppings, locally harvested maple syrup and whip cream from your local dairy co-op are all that's needed. Non cooks bring the trimmings; strawberries, blueberries, nuts, whipped cream, coffee and juices. Get everyone involved with the setup and cooking and this fund raiser is a great team builder and a wonderful way for your committee to look over the political calendar and plot out your goals for

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the upcoming political year. Face it, announce another committee meeting and you'll get yawns. Instead reward your committee with a Waffles Brunch!

Resistance Report

From Tompkins County An amazing number of spontaneous groups dedicated to curbing and ultimately defeating the Trump agenda have sprung up in Tompkins and many of the DRC counties across NY. We held a "listening session" to an overflow audience which made many suggestions. Through this event we organized a steering committee to respond to them with an action plan. We are also setting up a system to communicate and work with all the groups by identifying a contact person in each group. That way, not only are events communicated to all the groups, but groups are not duplicating each other's activities. One organization might organize a rally, another might hold a session on "how to run for office", another on the ACA, etc. That way much more can get accomplished, communication between groups is maximized, and a great sense of camaraderie and community develops.

From Turn 27 Blue The DRC counties in NY 27 (Niagara, Genesee, Livingston, Orleans, Wyoming, Ontario) along with County Chairs of Monroe and Erie joined forces with several of the grass roots resistance groups – Citizens Against Collins, GLOW Progressives, Indivisible NY 27th and Sister District for WNY to commit to countering the first congressman to endorse Trump, Chris Collins. The Chairs and activists have committed to working hand in hand to push back on the Trump agenda and to find a viable candidate to challenge Collins in 2018. Besides coordinating many of the efforts of resistance, the Chairs and activists have sent a press releases to local and statewide news outlets blasting Collins and inviting prospective candidates to reach out with their intentions. Please send the DRC Communications Chair, Judith Hunter – judith.hunter@gmail.com your Resistance story to share with the DRC membership.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Audit / Finance - Mark Alquist

Bank account balance as of April 17, 2017 – \$31,291.47

If you haven't done so already please send 2017 dues to Mark --

\$10.00 payable to the DRC c/o Mark H. Alquist, 4046 Wayne Street Williamson, NY 14589

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Program Book – Joyce Melfi Cwiklinski

The DRC 2017 Program Book was a great success! The Program Book Committee is thankful to all who participated in this year's program ads. We look forward to your cooperation again next year. We will continue to try to grow the book each and every year, but as you know this greatly depends upon your cooperation. We encourage you to start thinking now about others who may be able to support the DRC through the Program Book. Next year we also hope to incorporate more color into the book giving you the option to choose color or black-and-white. We are excited about this new opportunity. Remember if you have any comments or suggestions we would love to hear your feedback. As we all get back to work for the 2017 election season we wish you all much success! Thank you.

Joyce, Lorie & Jeanne

Political Committee – Peter Bujanow

DRC Regional Training – “Winning Rural Elections”: In response to our recent survey, the DRC Political Committee organized and hosted a Regional Training Event on May 6th entitled “Winning Rural Elections”, held on the beautiful campus of SUNY Adirondack in Warren County. The training focused on targeting, voter identification, creating a field plan, messaging and getting out the vote. A very enthusiastic group of participants included regional, county and local candidates, party leaders and campaign advisors from Essex, Franklin, Saratoga, Warren and Washington counties. Additional training events are being considered for other locations throughout the DRC counties. If you are interested in hosting a DRC training event in your county or if you have any questions please contact Peter Bujanow at: Pbujanow@gmail.com.

Communications Committee – Judith Hunter

The Speakers Bureau continues to be active. Judith Hunter (Vice Chair) spoke on behalf of the DRC at the Oneida County Democrats' dinner on April 20. Please know that someone would be happy to say a few words about the DRC at your event. Please invite us! Our Facebook page (Rural Democratic Conference of New York State on Facebook) continues to grow; we're knocking on 1,000 likes, so please help put us over the top! The point is to give you the information and opinion you need to make the case for Democrats at all levels. We'd also like to try something new, something we're going to call "Resistance Reports." There is so much energy on the ground in our counties since the election, and we'd like to highlight it. However, Judith can't keep on top of every single upstate media outlet, however hard she tries! So we're looking for people to help send

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her info on resistance activities in your part of the DRC. If you'd like to volunteer to send Judith links about activities, we could get a team going to cover all of rural New York. If you're interested in helping out, please email Judith at judith.hunter@gmail.com.

DRC Board Services

Speakers Bureau

The following DRC members are available as speakers at DRC County Events: Irene Stein, Bill Wood, Judith Hunter.

Mentoring Services

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

CONTACT INFORMATION

Irene Stein, Chair	iws2iws2@gmail.com
Judith Hunter, Vice Chair and Communications Chair	Judith.hunter@gmail.com
Mark Alquist, Treasurer, Audit and Finance Chair	mhalquist@verizon.net
Diane Lechner, Secretary	tcdchair@gmail.com
Don Ackerman, Parliamentarian	Bdonack@aol.com
Doris Kirsch, Board Member and Assist. Secretary	wdkirsch@gmail.com
Ted Young, Board Member	tyoung28@rochester.rr.com
Lorie Longhany, Board Member and Bulletin	lorie.longhany@gmail.com
Jeanne Crane, Board Member and Program Book	jeannecrane01@localnet.com
John Hurley, Board Member and Issues Chair	JFHurley@rochester.rr.com
Joyce Melfi, Board Member and Program Book Chair	babbmelfi@juno.com
Peter Bujanow, Board Member and Political Committee Chair	bujanow@berk.com
Mitch Ford, Board Member	mford75281@aol.com
Donna Schick, Board Member	donnaschick@yahoo.com
Tim Perfetti, Board Member	timothyperfetti@gmail.com

PREPARED AND FORMATTED BY: Lorie Longhany

EDITOR: Irene Stein and Doris Kirsch