

Democratic Rural Conference of New York State

January, 2013

Bulletin # 16

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WHAT HAVE WE BEEN DOING?

Our hard work, along with yours, in the **2012 ELECTION CYCLE** consumed most of our energy with many good results. First and foremost **President Obama** was re-elected. He was the victor in a number of our DRC counties (Broome, Cayuga, Clinton, Columbia, Cortland, Essex, Franklin, Madison, Niagara, Oswego, Otsego, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Seneca, St. Lawrence, Sullivan, Tompkins, Ulster, Warren, Washington and Yates). Happily, **Sean Patrick Maloney** was elected to Congress in the 118th Congressional district and Congressman **Bill Owens** was re-elected in New York 21. **Nate Shinagawa** did not unseat Tom Reed but he made an impressive showing in a Republican district. Unfortunately, **Kathy Hochul** lost her bid to return to Congress but came very close to winning in the most Republican district in the state.

We did very well in State Legislative races. **CeCe Thaczyk's** win in the 46th Senate District was the icing on the cake. Unfortunately, the defection of five Democrats from the Senate Democrats to an Independent Caucus deprives the Legislature of a Democratic Senate. There is new leadership in the State Senate with Andrea Stewart Cousins taking the helm, and it is our hope that Democratic Senators will once again join together in the near future.

A very nice Supreme Court victory occurred in the 4th Judicial District. **Christine Clark**, a former Family Court Judge, became only the 4th Democrat, and the first Democratic Woman to be elected in that Judicial District. The District is composed entirely of DRC counties.

2013 CONFERENCE

The Conference will be held in **Saratoga on Friday and Saturday, April 26 and 27** respectively. Jane Dodds agreed to serve as Coordinator once again. Irene reviewed the comments and suggestions attendees at the 2012 Conference had made, and appointed the full Board to serve as the Program Committee. Chair Stein also appointed a sub-committee consisting of Mark Alquist, Jim Testani, Mark Bellardini, Jane Dodds and herself to propose a theme for the conference as well as identify potential trainers and topics.

Message from Cindy Emmer, Treasurer

Please send dues for 2013 to Cindy Emmer at 858 Davis St., Elmira, N.Y. 14901 **as soon as possible. Dues are \$10 per year.** This is an important component of membership and helps us meet our goal of helping your counties in their important job of electing Democratic candidates.

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Board Meeting, December 1, 2012

We held an election at our well attended Board Meeting in Syracuse on Dec.1 to fill the vacated positions of Vice-Chair and 5 Board Members. The Election was conducted by Mike Schell, Chairman of the Nominating Committee (Members Steve Jones and Kim Muller). Jane Dodds was elected Vice-Chair for a term ending in the spring of 2013. Mark Alquist, Jim Testani and Lorie Longhany were elected to terms ending in the spring 2014. Jason Clark and Jeanne Crane were elected to terms expiring at the Spring Conference 2013. Outgoing members were thanked for their service (**Cindy Lockrow, Dan McCandless, Joe Pickreign, Dawn Rivers and Tom Poelker**) and Chair Stein was directed to write an individual communication thanking each of them.

Our By-Laws state that vacancies are to be filled by the Board. Since some terms end in 2014, those appointed to those terms serve for over a year without membership approval. After discussion, a By-Laws change was approved as follows (change underlined): VACANCIES-Any vacancy in the office of an officer or director shall be filled by a vote of the Executive Committee until the General Membership meeting at the next spring conference. At the Spring Conference General Membership Meeting, the full membership shall fill the vacancy for the completion of the term of the office left vacant.” This motion is not applicable to those new Directors elected at the Dec. 1 meeting.

We will be electing officers plus five Directors at the Spring Conference Meeting. The proposed By-Laws change will be presented to the General Membership for approval at the Spring Conference General Membership meeting.

GUESTS:

Mayor Stephanie Miner, Co-Chair of the NYSDC, welcomed us all to Syracuse and thanked us for our work in the recent elections

Rodney Capel, Executive Director of NYSDC also thanked us for our work in the elections.

He discussed the recent change in the moving of the NYS Appointments Office from the Executive Office to the Office of General Services. He indicated that the change is an effort to expedite an unnecessarily long and drawn out process and should not change the degree of input that County Chairs now enjoy. He was not sure whether the Office would handle non-exempt employees in addition to openings for exempt positions. Board members then expressed a range of concerns. Rodney indicated that the State Committee was currently hampered by lack of money precluding adequate staffing and adequate office location. He hopes and expects that the Governor will be helping with these problems. Rodney also promised to try to give adequate notice of future meetings. We appreciated his attending as well as his responsiveness to our questions.

Senator Valesky was invited but was not able to attend. Chair Irene Stein shared a conversation she had had with him concerning the Independent Democratic Caucus. He indicated that he would have to be convinced that there had been significant changes in the Democratic Senate Committee and that while he still had an open mind, he was not yet convinced that such changes had occurred.

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ROLE OF ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

You may recall that at its August 18 meeting, the Board approved a By-Law change to permit Associate Members to serve as Board Officers or Directors. Because of the lateness of the last State Comm. Meeting, there was not adequate time to send out the notice of By-Laws change to the membership so it was not voted upon then. This issue was revisited at the December Executive Committee meeting. A revote was taken and that proposed By-Law change was defeated. As a result the status quo prevails, and any NYS Democrat can become an Associate member by paying dues resulting in the ability to attend meetings and receive communications. They cannot, however, run for Officers or Directors of the Board.

ISSUES COMMITTEE REPORT

Irene reported for Dawn Rivers, Committee Chair that she was still working on a date to meet with Lt. Governor Duffy's staff concerning our identified issues of unfunded mandates, infrastructure, school funding and Regional Economic Development Councils. `

It is important that all members continue to call Dawn's attention to issues in their counties on which they want attention/action.

YOUTH COMMITTEE

Jason Clark suggested that the Board consider the creation of a Youth Recruitment and Retention Committee which was supported the Board. Irene will appoint this committee in her upcoming Committee assignment process.

NEXT DRC BOARD MEETING

The next DRC Board Meeting will be on Feb. 16 at 10 AM. We will meet at the Broome County Democratic Committee Headquarters, located at 508 Upper Court Street, Binghamton, NY.

The tentative agenda will include:

- Minutes – Jones
- Treasurer's Report and Finance Comm. – Emmer
 - 2013 Budget
 - 2013 Audit
- 2013 Committee Assignments – Stein
- Committee Reports
 - Conference Comm. – Dodds
 - Issues Comm. – Rivers
 - Other
- Possible Board Retreat – discussion
- Possible Guests:
 - Sen. David Valesky has been invited. No response yet
 - Broome County officials (Mayor Ryan and Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo may drop in).
- Old Business
- New Business - venue for next Board meeting

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Message from the Chair:

Happy New Year and thanks for all of your hard work during the recent election cycle as well as throughout the year.

I was honored to serve as an Elector at the Electoral College meeting and equally privileged to be appointed as one of two tellers to count the vote for President Obama. I believe I received both of these honors in recognition of the work of the DRC in the New York State Democratic Party, and that is a tribute to all of you.

We will be working in the coming months on the 2013 Conference. We will do our best to respond to the suggestions you made after the last one. The focus will be on campaign training in this year of local races.

While electing Democrats in our counties is our job, the issues that keep emerging are numerous and daunting. We want to express and relay the concerns of rural Democrats. To do that, **WE NEED TO CONTINUE TO HEAR FROM YOU.** You have indicated that jobs and the economy are at the top of the list. They underlie our quality of life, and our rural areas are in a continual struggle to improve the situation. You have indicated that our infrastructure and our schools are high priority areas needing attention.

While everyone is reeling from the tragic mass shootings that have occurred, our folks in rural areas, where hunting is common, are keenly attentive to the legislative response. I think that we must take some actions to avert tragedies such as those we have seen in 2012 and earlier. Happily, Our Governor and Democratic Legislators responded with regulating assault weapons, diligent screening before giving permits, better services for those diagnosed with mental illnesses, and, at the same time, keeping the ability of recreational hunters to continue these pursuits.

As we enter 2013, what about communication? It is important that you communicate with us and with one another on an ongoing basis, raising issues, suggesting ideas and activities. We offer our list serve, face book page, and direct e-mail and telephone as ways to do this. I also would like to remind you that we offer a Speaker's Bureau, new chair mentoring as well as assistance in campaign strategy.

As we continue to work to elect Democrats, we must also keep our elected officials cognizant and responsive to rural areas and rural issues. You have a very important role in the life of our communities in rural New York. Be proud and be active!

I am looking forward to continuing to work with you on our important work.

Irene

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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

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, Parlimentarian ---

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 Cindy Emmer, 858 Davis St., Elmira, NY 14901.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THE BULLETIN: IRENE STEIN, PHIL JONES, DON ACKERMAN, DORIS KIRSCH, JASON CLARK