

THE DEMOCRATIC RURAL CONFERENCE OF NEW YORK STATE

Bulletin #26

June 2015

Message from the DRC Chair

Dear DRC Family,

Judging from the evaluations you submitted, our 2015 Conference was a great success. We arrived somewhat dispirited because of the results of the local 2014 elections. We left the Conference energized and proud to be Democrats. We were reminded that we are the Party that actually strives to strengthen the middle class, stimulate job creation, raise the minimum wage, improve our infrastructure, our environment, our access to health care, the Party with due respect for organized labor and for all Americans, not just the privileged few.

As we start our 2015 campaigns, we are heartened by the "fighting" President we are now seeing, and are diligently seeking candidates to support the Democratic agenda in our cities, towns and villages. We have provided some training; we will prepare you with information you need on the SAFE Act if it becomes an issue in the campaign.

We will try to help you financially. We are working with the State Committee to strengthen our mutual ability to win elections.

Please keep us informed about your local issues. Let us know if you need technical assistance, a speaker for your events, help navigating Albany government or any other political problem with which we might help.



www.nysdrc.org

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**Democratic Rural Conference
of New York State**



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I do want to announce that there will be two vacancies on our Board as of June 16. Mike Schell, Chair of our Nominating Committee, will be sending out a notice next week.

In conclusion, please be aware that each of you who carries a petition, registers Democratic voters, makes telephone calls, raises and/or contributes money is making a difference. Each of you who participates in our elections is truly acting out the basic meaning of democracy – government by and for the people. You should feel proud, and I thank you for your commitment.

Irene

DRC Chair

Message from the Conference Chair RESTORE, REBUILD, MOVE FORWARD

2015 Annual Conference in Syracuse

Thanks to everyone who attended the April 17-18 DRC Convention in Syracuse ~ and special thanks to all the DRC Board members and Committee volunteers who worked so hard to make the event a success!

It was wonderful to have the chance to hear in-depth presentations, with opportunities for Q&A and personal interactions, with LG Kathy Hochul, Comptroller Tom DiNapoli, and Attorney General Eric Schneiderman. Our dinner was both informative and highly entertaining, with remarks from Senator Chuck Schumer, Assembly Leader Carl Heastie, Senator Andrea Stewart Cousins, Mayor Stephanie Miner, Onondaga Chair Mark English, State Committee Exec Director Basil Smikle, and State Party Chair David Paterson.

We had 35 Young Democrats attending and participating in all aspects of the conference ~ we especially enjoyed the dancing and karaoke nightcap event!

DRC Members filled several training workshops. County Chairs shared ideas at their Roundtable session. Many Committee Treasurers got the latest campaign finance filing updates. On Saturday, Political Strategist Karen Feldman offered valuable advice for running rural campaigns, and Jim Dean, of Democracy for America, gave us insights to prove that "Anyone Can Run, and Anyone Can Win".

Our closing luncheon, sponsored by NY Pipe Trades, featured remarks from Greg Lancette, Political Director, and an inspiring call to action from Congressman Paul Tonko.

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We appreciate those who completed conference evaluation forms. One recurring suggestion is that we should "get more local Democrats to attend the conference". Help us next year by extending invitations to all interested Democrats in your home counties!

Jane Dodds

WHAT HAVE WE BEEN UP TO.....

At the DRC General Membership meeting held on April 18th in Syracuse the membership voted in the following officers for the next two year terms; Irene Stein, Chair, Jane Dodds, Vice-Chair, Jason Clark, Secretary, Mark Alquist, Treasurer and Don Ackerman, Parliamentarian. Elected to the Board of Directors; Mark Bellardini, Jeanne Crane, Judith Hunter, Doris Kirsch, Joyce Melfi and Bob Reynolds.

The DRC Board wishes to gratefully and appreciatively thank Phil Jones, who served as secretary to the DRC for almost eight years, and Cindy Emmer, who served as Treasurer for the past fifteen years. Their hard work and dedication are measured in hundreds of hours of service to this organization. Thank you, Phil and Cindy!

The membership also voted to approve a proposed amendment to the bylaws. The amendment did not change the intent of the by-laws but rather did the following; cleaned up some wording regarding when elections would be held, strengthened the language in the bylaws regarding the Nominating Committee's responsibilities, particularly in the area of recruiting and promoting geographic diversity on the Board, put in writing some of the practices that have been used in the past for electing by acclamation Board members when there is no contest, and stressed that no one running for an office on the DRC Board could serve on the Nominating Committee.

The DRC Board met again at the State Committee meeting on May 17th at the Albany Hilton.

The DRC Subcommittee on Relations with the State Party met with our new Executive Director, Basil Smikle. We shared with him some of the issues we have been hearing from our DRC Chairs. He was very open and wants to work with us to meet various concerns.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Audit / Finance - Cindy Emmer, Mark Alquist

Cindy Emmer reported a balance of \$30,143.45 in checking and \$4049.42 in savings for a total of \$34,192.87 as of 5/28/15. Reminder, If you have not paid your 2015 dues please do so as soon as possible. Send \$10.00 payable to the DRC c/o Mark H. Alquist, 4046 Wayne Street Williamson, NY 14589

Program Book Committee – Joyce Melfi

Although it was a tough year, we were able to produce a fairly profitable program book. Special thanks go out to Lorie Longhany who really pulled through when she faced huge challenges and to Jeanne Crane who persevered as rough as it was. Thanks to all who participated and helped to

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support the DRC. We came up with a few creative ideas and will continue to reach out to all of you for assistance with new ads and additional revenue sources. Give us your ideas soon and often. Our goal is to grow each year.

Issues Committee – John Hurley

John reported that the ad-hoc sub-committee on education funding that is chaired by Chair Stein has had success in educating various interest groups on the disparities that exist within the current education funding formula. It was also reported that the issues committee will be working on drafting a white paper on the SAFE Act in order to dispel myths that exist in rural counties and educate members on the pros and cons of the law.

Communications Committee – Judith Hunter

To better serve the DRC counties, we need to update our list of press contacts from throughout the DRC counties. If you have email addresses for outlets that you would like us to send DRC press releases to please email them to Judith Hunter at judith.hunter@gmail.com.

Youth Recruitment and Retainment – Jason Clark

Jason reported that 27 Young Rural Democrats exercised the subsidy that was provided by the NYSDC at the annual conference held in Syracuse. He thanked the county chairs for their diligence in recruiting active young members of their respective committees. He conducted an informal straw poll to determine whether there was interest in holding another campaign career fair. The outcome indicated that there was. The committee will discuss the feasibility for next year's conference.

Nominating Committee – Mike Schell

There will be two vacancies to be filled at our July 18th meeting. Mike Schell will be sending out the general notice for the Nominating Committee. If you are interested in being nominated at the July 18th meeting for a position on the DRC Board please send a letter of intent to Mike Schell at michaelwschell@yahoo.com

Campaign Finance Information for Treasurers

For those DRC members who missed the Campaign Finance Workshop at the DRC Conference in Syracuse, here's a brief summary of what we learned.

The 2014-15 State Budget established some new requirements for the Board of Elections. In addition to the pilot program for public financing, the state has established new reporting requirements for Independent Expenditure reporting, and has created a Compliance Unit within the NYSBOE.

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The Compliance Unit was created to identify and assist those committees whose filings are not quite perfect under the new guidelines. In the past, committees with small budgets may have filed reports “the way we always did it”. Now, with electronic filings, it's very easy for everyone to scrutinize the reports. The Compliance Unit is making every attempt to reach out to Treasurers, and help them understand the new filing guidelines so that their reports are accurate.

We were given a nice handout describing the most common deficiencies, and a new summary of the Schedules for Contributions and Expenditures. Thankfully, some good friends of the DRC, who are very knowledgeable about the new regulations, were available to answer many questions from the DRC membership.

As one very knowledgeable workshop participant told us: the Compliance Unit is the GOOD COPS, here to help us so that we don't have to meet the Enforcement Unit. If your Treasurer receives a notice of deficiency, there will be a direct personal contact with someone in the Compliance Unit included in the notice. Your Treasurer can work directly with this representative to learn how to make the appropriate changes.

You can find the updated Campaign Finance Handbook at www.elections.ny.gov. You can also call the Board at any time at 800-458-3453.

CONTACT INFORMATION AND MEMBER SERVICES

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Judith Hunter, Board Member and Communications Chair

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* recently resigned

DRC Board Services

Speakers Bureau

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

Irene Stein, Bill Wood, Judith Hunter, Jason Clark.

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