

Minutes of Democracy for Wisconsin – Madison Meetup Wednesday, August 3, 2005

1. **Action on the Downing Street memo – Ann Batiza.** Ann read parts of the Downing Street memo of August 23, 2002. Then members used a break-out session to discuss approaching Representative Tammy Baldwin. Democracy for America is promoting a nationwide effort for groups to contact Representatives to ask them to hold a hearing on the revelations in the Downing Street Memo. DFA will provide a list of 2nd Congressional District members who have signed an online petition for Congress to provide such hearings and the group will present that to Tammy or her office.

Bill Scanlon suggested that instead of merely presenting this petition to Tammy, who is already in support of such an action, that we should ask Tammy to hold a hearing on the Iraq war in Madison in the spirit of the hearing on the Vietnam War held by Wisconsin's U. S. Rep. Kastenmeier in 1965.

See: <http://www.madison.com/wsj/opinion/others/index.php?ntid=45905&ntpid=2> for an 8-7-05 opinion piece in the Wisconsin State Journal that mentions the 1965 Kastenmeier hearings in relation to the Iraq War by Bill Kaplan, a political writer in Washington who is also a UW graduate.

In addition, the discussion group developed topics to include in a media packet for the event:

- 1) A full copy of the August 23rd Downing Street memo – with certain portions highlighted
- 2) A list of persons from Wisconsin who died and perhaps quotes from the families of one or more of the soldiers
- 3) Statistics from the meeting including the number in attendance and the number of signatures on the petition
- 4) Information about our request to hold hearings and Tammy's response

Tammy can be reached at her Madison office at:

10 E. Doty St., Suite 405
Madison, WI

608-258-9800 (Phone)
608-258-9808 (Fax)

Several members of DFW indicated their interest in participating in this project. Anyone else who is interested should contact Ann Batiza at abatiza@charter.net.

2. **Report on the Democracy for America Organizing Convention, July 31, 2005, in Stevens Point – Jim Schuessler, Russell Wallace, and Ann Batiza.**

Jim reported on the three Wisconsin DFA organizing committees that reflect the three major goals for DFW that came out of the conference. They are Education/ Best Practices, Organization/ Websites, and Winning Elections. Madison members Jim Schuessler and Russell Wallace are helping to lead the “Organization/Website” committee and Ann Batiza, Wanda Williamson, and Laura Gottlieb of Madison are helping to head up the “Win Elections” committee.

Ann and Russell discussed the goals for the event and also highlighted some state representative and state senate races that have been targeted by the Progressive Majority. Several of these are geographically close to Madison and we might be foot-soldiers in their efforts. As of now, winning three races will change the dominant party in the Senate to the Dems and winning eleven races are required to change the dominant party to the Dems in the Assembly.

Close by races include the following. Note that there may be other Dems competing in primaries.

Assembly District 47 – Meagan Yost (D) running against Gene Hahn (R)
Region - much of Columbia, a part of Sauk and part of Dane county. Includes Merrimac and Mazomanie as well as Medina, York, Randolph and Scott on the Northeast and includes Lodi, Roxbury and Dane among others.

Senate District 5 – Jim Sullivan (D) is running against Tom Reynolds (R). This is a 46% Democratic district. *Region* - part of Brookfield, Wauwatosa, West Allis, West Milwaukee, Elm Grove)

Assembly District 80 – Janis Ringhand (D) is running against Mike Powers (R)
Region - Green and Rock Counties south of Madison

Other Wisconsin races of interest:

Senate District 9 - Note that Joe Leibham (R) in Senate District 9 (Manitowoc and Sheboygan) won by only 46 votes. We need a Dem candidate to run against him.

Senate District 17 – (Southwest part of the state – large area, Grant, Lafayette, Iowa, part of Sauk, Richland and Juneau. Includes Cassville, Dodgeville, Necedah and Lyndon Station)
Held by Dale Schultz (R). (Russ Feingold pulled 58% of the vote here. We need a candidate.

Assembly District 89 - John Gard (R) (Peshtigo, north of Green Bay)
This seat will be open because Gard will run for the U.S. Congress. Steve Kagen, a physician from Appleton (neat guy) is running against him, although he will first face a primary battle. Focus – Health Care “No patient left behind.”

“We must join together to defend our national security, to attract high wage jobs for those able to work, to balance our budgets, to secure equal opportunity for all, to bring and end to special privileges for the few, and to preserve each and every one of our civil liberties.” – Steve Kagen

Tel 800-255-9355

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Ann’s notes from the meeting are on file on this website. She noted that among the six groups reporting on their activities around Wisconsin, Madison’s group seems to be the largest. Milwaukee reported having 20 – 25 people present at their monthly meetups.

- 3. New DFA Web software – Jim Schuessler.** DFA is rolling out new web software combining the best elements of Meetup.com, DeanLink, and a simple contact management database. The software tools will allow faster and better community building and event organizing. Therefore, we will no longer have “Meetups”. They will be “Meetings.”
- 4. Bring Our Troops Home Now Referendum – Dennis Coyier.** Dennis is spearheading an effort from Wis. Network for Peace and Justice to get over 12,000 signatures on a petition in 60 days to have a referendum to bring our troops home now on the ballot. This will also be presented at the August 10th Dane Dem meeting for endorsement. You may contribute to the wording of this referendum at the following URL. The date and time of the next WNPJ meeting is also posted there.
<http://my.execpc.com/EA/CE/dcoy/demresolutions/meetings.html>
- 5. (addendum) John Mosman stepping down.** John Mosman is going on hiatus from his many duties within DFW. We thank John for all of his work in the past and thank those who have volunteered to take on these tasks.

