



# The Compass

*Harrison County Democracy For America Newsletter*

Volume 1, Issue 1 Fall 2005

## WELCOME...A Note From The Chair

The publication of a regular newsletter has long been a goal of this organization. Now through the efforts of our current editor and faithful member, Lori Hostuttler, we proudly offer to you this, our first edition. Of course our primary hurdle in trying to accomplish this endeavor was to first be able to establish the HC DFA as a viable, substantial and respected entity that would be worthy of your attention.

For a group that began with only six tired and disappointed campaign workers, who in the fall of 2004 made the grim discovery that our beloved state of West Virginia (and even our own Harrison County) had turned an angry shade of red in the last election; this was no easy task.

Just as our numbers have grown so much over the last several months, so have our identity and our mission. Our dedicated members have worked diligently as we lobbied our state legislators last winter, stood vigil on the courthouse plaza, worked against the privatization of Social Security, created relationships with the state and county Democratic Party organizations, helped the Red Cross collect donations for hurricane relief, held raffles and appeared at festivals and other events, worked with other concerned and progressive state organizations, held forums for our government officials, and even represented our county and state in a Washington, D.C. peace demonstration.

Finally thanks to all of our members and the support of our many friends in Harrison County, we now begin another phase of our struggle toward re-establishing a truly responsive and people directed government. We hope that you will find this small publication both informative and interesting and certainly we hope that you might enjoy reading it as much as we have enjoyed creating it.

Please feel free to respond to anything you see in this publication and if you are so inclined, please join us at our next regular meeting. The Harrison County Democracy for America is a progressive political action club and welcomes the participation of the interested public in our efforts to make government more responsive to the wishes of the governed.

Jerry McKeen  
HC DFA Chair

## HC DFA Spaghetti Dinner

Sunday, December 4, 2005 Clarksburg Knights of Columbus Hall

12:00 noon until 5:00 p.m.

Adults \$7.00—Children \$4.00

Meal Includes Meatball, Sausage, Salad, Desert, and Beverage—Take Out Available

Tickets Can Be Purchased From Members Or At the Door

## Next Meeting

Wednesday,

December 7, 2005

Village Square

Conference Center

7:00 p.m.

Alternative Energy

Public Forum

Preceded by an Informal  
Dinner at the Elks Club

Restaurant at  
5:00 p.m.

(Same Location)

More Information on  
Page 2

## Event

Spaghetti Dinner  
December 4, 2005

Please help us to make this event successful. We are facing an election year and if we are to achieve our goals, we must have a sound independent financial base. Without this base we will have no chance to make our voices heard.

# Alternative Energy Public Forum

December 7, 2005  
7:00 pm  
Village Square  
Conference Center  
Route 19 South,  
Clarksburg

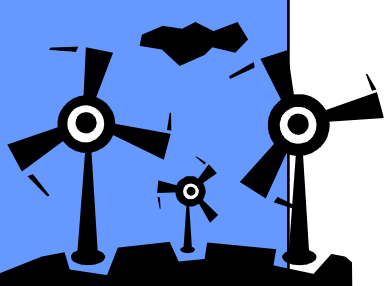
In the aftermath of October's record snowfall and week long power-outages, many people are wondering how alternative energies could have kept their furnace running or how they could have saved a freezer full of food. Is a solar back-up system the answer? Is a totally solar-powered home possible in this part of the country? What about small-scale wind power for the homeowner?

To help answer these questions, Harrison County Democracy for America (HC DFA) has developed a program to provide information to the

public on alternative energy. Two knowledgeable speakers will discuss the technical and political prospects for solar and wind power development in West Virginia. Matt Bennett, General Manager and Senior Installer for Dovetail Solar & Wind, Gloucester, Ohio will be on hand to demonstrate equipment and answer your technical questions about solar and wind power. Matt is a certified installer of photo-voltaic equipment, including PV laminate roofing systems with many years of experience. Of course, no conversation on alternative energy would be complete without covering the political aspect. Allan Tweddle will delve into the reasons why West Virginia is far behind other states in offering net metering, state grants

and incentives and what we can do about it on the state, county, and local levels. Allan Tweddle is a Canadian born engineer who retired to West Virginia in 1998. He is a member of the West Virginia Environmental Council's lobby team and a board member of the West Virginia Environmental Institute.

Elected officials, contractors and small business owners from throughout the state have been invited to attend this event. Plan to attend this free, informative meeting on implementing this emerging technology in West Virginia. For further information contact Denise Binion at [denisebinion@verizon.net](mailto:denisebinion@verizon.net) or (304) 669-0247.



*A time comes when  
silence is betrayal.  
Some of us who have  
already begun to  
break the silence of  
the night have found  
that the calling to  
speak is often a  
vocation of agony, but  
we must speak. We  
must speak out with  
all the humility that is  
appropriate to our  
limited vision, but we  
must speak.  
- Martin Luther King*

## HC DFA Fights For Social Security

Harrison County Democracy for America has joined the front lines in the battle against the Bush Administration's attempt to privatize Social Security, which does nothing to make the program more solvent and would result in a cut in benefits. On two separate occasions HC DFA has held events to educate and inform the public about the President's plan.

A Birthday Party was held for the 70 year old program on Monday, August 15 at the courthouse plaza in Clarksburg. Cake was served and almost 200 people signed a petition urging the President and Congress to protect Social Security, including two elected officials, Delegate Tim Miley and County Commissioner Ron Watson. Gary Zucket of the West Virginia Citizen Action Group also participated in the program.

On September 26, HC DFA held a town hall meeting on the future of Social Security at the Bendum Civic Center in Bridgeport. The panel provided by West Virginians United to Protect Social Security included Gary Zucket and WV AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Larry Matheney. State Senator Joe Minard and Delegate Tim Miley also attended the event.

- Nathan Drain

# What Is 'Delegates on Duty?'

During the past few weeks (and for the coming several weeks) your members of the West Virginia House of Delegates (Ron Fragale, Same Cann, Richard laquinta, and Tim Miley) have been holding town hall meetings in communities throughout Harrison County. We decided to host these town hall meetings because we, as your elected public officials, believe that we serve the citizens of this county every week of every year, and not just for the 60 days of the Legislative Session. In the past, citizens of this county would usually never see their politicians unless an election was drawing near and the politicians needed something from them, ie. their vote. In a departure from past practices and with hope that it starts a new trend with other elected officials, Delegates Fragale, Cann, laquinta, and I decided that it was time to show the citizens of Harrison County that they can expect their Delegates to be "on duty" by being available and accessible throughout the year, every year. Thus, we decided to host various town hall meetings calling it "Delegates on Duty."

Of the several town hall meetings we have hosted thus far, the attendance has ranged from approximately 8-20. We are not discouraged when some of the town hall meetings have had low turnouts because we believe it is most important to show the citizens of that particular region of the county that we have made, and will continue to make, ourselves available to them at any time and for groups of all sizes. Our goal is to visit approximately 15-20 communities in Harrison County. These communities have included, and will in the future include, Lumberport, Spelter, Reynoldsville, Stonewood, West Milford, Lost Creek, Johnstown, Pine Bluff, Shinnston, Bridgeport, Northview, Eastview, Salem, Wallace, Mt. Clare, Lake Floyd, and Nutter Fort. If you believe that there are communities that have been overlooked, please contact me so that we may add it to our list. The meetings have not all been scheduled so, if you have any additional locations you would like for us to visit, please let me know as soon as possible so that we may include it in our scheduling plans. I would encourage all of you to attend one or more of these town hall meetings. Please know that we are not holding these town hall meetings seeking compliments, but rather, we are looking for questions, suggestions, and yes, even criticism (hopefully constructive) from you.

We also intend to have Saturday Breakfast meetings during the course of the regular Legislative Session that begins in January so that we can keep the citizens of Harrison County updated as to the developments that are occurring in Charleston. If there are additional ways that you believe that we can make ourselves more available, accessible and most importantly, accountable to you, please do not hesitate to share your thoughts, ideas, and suggestions with me.

I am grateful to be a part of the Harrison County Democracy for America organization and, if I can every be of service to any of you, please do not hesitate to call upon me.



- Harrison County Delegate Tim Miley

# Young Democrats Organize in Harrison County

An organizational meeting and get-together for those interested in forming a chapter of the Young Democrats in Harrison County was sponsored by the Harrison County Democracy For America at UNO's restaurant in Clarksburg. Derek Scarbro, president of the WV Young Democrats, spoke to the group concerning the focus and activities of the club on the state level. "There are thirty-four local chapters of the Young

Democrats active in West Virginia at the present time," said Scarbro. Following Derek Scarbro's remarks, West Virginia Delegate Tim Miley was introduced. Delegate Miley said that only by becoming involved in the political process and involved in organizations such as the Young Democrats, can young people have the opportunity to really participate in the political process and see first hand what is happening

in state and local government. Many local schools were represented including: Robert C Byrd, Liberty, Lincoln, Bridgeport, Notre Dame, Washington Irving Middle, East Fairmont and Fairmont State University.

The Young Democrats also hosted a pool party at Stealey Pool on August 22. Delegate Richard laquinta was in attendance and spoke briefly. The young democrats were on the

campus of Salem International University November 11, for a recruiting drive. "I think it is very important to have a group for young people to take part in the political process. That's what the Young Democrats provides," says Nathan Drain, a charter member.

For more information on the Harrison County Young Democrats contact Nathan Drain at 641-0624.

- Nathan Drain

# Getting Down to GRASSROOTS



From the time that we first conceived of our little group, and even before we had a name or a formalized Mission Statement, we have had “grassroots organization” on our minds and in our hearts. Now after working for months to become a real entity, with respect and community recognition, we are preparing to actually roll up our sleeves and get to work on this important facet of our existence.

For many years the very concept of “precinct organization” has been ignored and treated as a “dinosaur of the past” by the Democratic Party in West Virginia. No longer fueled by the patronage system of old, the whole system has dissolved, resulting

in a real loss of two-way communication between the ordinary, individual voters and the leadership of the Democratic Party. Although it is true that precinct captains will no longer have patronage jobs to hand out to party loyalists, there remains a need for this key position to both report the concerns of their neighbors to elected officials and to pass down election information and needs from officials to their precinct neighbors. We need to re-establish the very important and key role of **precinct captain** in order to ensure the two-way communication and support between the electorate and our government officials and have joined with other interested groups in Harrison County to get this task underway.

In cooperation with the Harrison County Democratic Men’s Club, the Harrison County Democratic Women’s Fed-

eration and the Democratic Executive Committee, we are in the process of helping to re-establish an organization of the voting precincts of our county. Several of our members responded to the invitation of the Men’s Club to attend a planning session for this initiative on October 25<sup>th</sup> and then attended a meeting of the County Democratic Executive Committee on October 26<sup>th</sup> to ask for their approval and assistance with the process.

At that time Mike Romano, representing the Men’s Club, volunteered to schedule a training session for those who wished to become involved with the process of locating, recruiting and appointing individuals to take on the responsibility of precinct captain in each of the ninety four precincts of our county. He was able to arrange for Tom Vogel, Executive Director of the WV De-

mocratic Party, to provide the training on Thursday November 10 at the American Legion Hall in Clarksburg.

An open meeting on **Saturday November 19 at 1:00pm at the American Legion Hall in Clarksburg** will then be advertised to attract anyone interested in volunteering to become either a precinct volunteer or a precinct captain, or even just to help locate others that would be able to help in this initiative. We hope that a large number of DFA members will be on hand for this meeting and will join in this very, very important part of our mission to revitalize and strengthen the basic organization of the Democratic Party in anticipation of the upcoming elections. This organizational effort will be a primary step in regaining our state’s return to our true color of blue in 2008.

-Jerry McKeen

## Books for the Progressive Reader

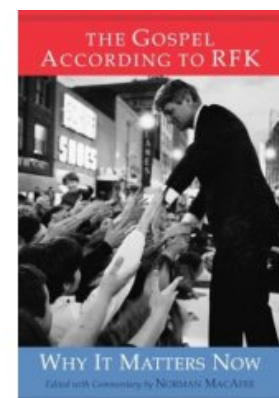
### ***The Gospel According to RFK – Why It Matters Now***

Edited with commentary by Norman MacAfee

“Together we can make ourselves a nation that spends more on books than on bombs, more on hospitals than the terrible tools of war, more on decent houses than military aircraft.” Robert F. Kennedy, March 24, 1968

Gleaned from campaign speeches of March 16, 1968 through June 4, 1968, the compelling words of Robert F. Kennedy ring out as a reminder from the past, a prod on our conscience, and a call to action. Recommended reading for anyone who has forgotten or would like to newly acquire the faith in American democracy that was Robert F. Kennedy.

Find Out About More Books on page 7.



Check Out HCDFA on the web—[www.hcdfa.com](http://www.hcdfa.com)

# Where Do You Get Your News?

**Fed up with what passes for real journalism in today's news?** How many times have you sat in front of your TV set or pored over a newspaper wondering why there is virtually no effort to do any real reporting? Do you find yourself turning your TV off in frustration because commentators and panelists seem to have no curiosity or guts to ask in-depth questions? Do you get sick of hearing the same lines repeated over and over with seemingly little conscious thought about what is really behind the news day? If you can answer yes to even one of these questions, it's time to discover the world of alternative news.

One of the best things about alternative news sites is the fact that they are subscription free. Most alternative news sites are independent media, funded solely by contributions from their readers and are not swayed by corporate advertising dollars. Some sites may also receive revenue from the sale of books, T-shirts, posters or buttons offered on their websites. In addition, many of the following sites also provide subscription services for email newsletters and breaking news alerts.

## **The AlterNet – Weekday and Weekend Email Editions** <http://www.alternet.org/>

*AlterNet is a project of the [Independent Media Institute](#), a nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening and supporting independent and alternative journalism that also includes [WireTap Magazine](#), an online magazine by and for socially conscious youth, and the [Strategic Press Information Network](#), a non-profit public relations consulting organization that provides media trainings to other non-profit organizations to enhance the power of their message. AlterNet's journalistic achievements include being named one of NPR's five "winners on the Internet," winning a Webby in the Print and Zines category and a nomination in the "activism" category, and winning Utne's Independent Press Award for Online Political Coverage.*

## **Truthout** <http://www.truthout.org/>

*Truthout contains commentary on current issues, Op-editorials, video reports and a town meeting where you can join in and voice your opinion on important topics. TO was started in the aftermath of the 2000 presidential election hoping that we could reach a few people, have some small impact on the dialog, and maybe just maybe try to restore a little integrity. Today TO is visited more than 4 million times per month by readers seeking the straight story and wanting to be involved in building a better tomorrow.*

## **Common Dreams News Center - Breaking News & Views for the Progressive Community** <http://www.commondreams.org>

*An eclectic mix of politics, issues and breaking news with an emphasis on progressive perspectives that is increasingly hard to find with our corporate-dominated media. Common Dreams contains links to daily newspapers, alternative weeklies, national and international news services, radio, television, and viewpoints from a variety of journalists. There are also numerous links to Washington, DC sites including House and Senate votes.*

## **Buzz Flash** <http://www.buzzflash.com/>

*Buzz Flash provides headlines, news, and commentary for a geographically-diverse, politically-savvy, pro-democracy, anti-hypocrisy web community, reaching five million\* people a month and growing. At Buzz Flash you will also find the Wings of Justice Award, GOP Hypocrite of the Week, the Last Chance Democracy Café, and the Independent Thinker of the Month.*

## **ENN – Environmental News Network** <http://enn.com/index.html>

*The Environmental News Network (ENN) is the largest, most recognized online environmental news source in the world. Since 1993, ENN has provided balanced and non-partisan news, information, and interactive resources for individuals, organizations, and corporations with environmental interests. ENN's daily newsletter and information website is read by over 400,000 viewers each month - an influential audience that includes a cross section of business, government, education, scientific and non profit innovators, and leaders working to improve our environment.*

- Denise Binion

According to the Treasury Department, from 1776-2000, the first 224 years of United States history, forty-two Presidents borrowed a combined \$1.01 trillion from foreign governments and financial institutions, but in the last four years alone, the Bush Administration borrowed \$1.05 trillion.



## Should the State of West Virginia or West Virginia University provide Domestic Partner Benefits for their employees?

### MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

Your representatives cannot **SPEAK FOR YOU** unless they **HEAR FROM YOU!** While it is extremely important to let them know how you want them to vote, it is always a good idea to let them know when you don't agree with their vote. Likewise, do not forget to let them know when you appreciate what they are doing.

**Senator  
Robert C. Byrd  
(202) 224-3954**

**Senator  
John D. Rockefeller  
(202) 224-6472**

**Congressman  
Alan B. Mollahan  
(202) 225-4172**

I live with my partner of 13 years along with our 2 children ages 6 and 4. Since May of 2000, I have worked 1-2 days a week in order to predominantly stay home and be the primary caretaker for our girls. Initially my partner worked for Pressley Ridge Schools who did provide Domestic Partner Benefits. In December of 2001, she had the opportunity to advance her career by taking a job with West Virginia University. Since that time our family has had to absorb the cost of buying private catastrophic insurance for me. With the rising costs of, well, just about everything the \$211 monthly payment seems like an unnecessary burden on our family especially when the insurance only kicks in after a \$2500 deductible.

This past August a group of us from Harrison County Democracy

for America (HC DFA) attended the Jefferson Jackson dinner in Charleston at which Governor Joe Manchin assured us he was committed to providing insurance for all West Virginians. I sent Governor Manchin an e-mail outlining my above concerns.

I have been corresponding with various politicians and their representatives since my first inquiry sent to the governor. Overall, I have been ignored; Joe Minard, Richard laquinta, Ron Fragale, Tim Miley, Sam Cann have not responded to my concerns sent to them over two weeks ago. The governor's office forwarded my e-mail to a PEIA representative, Keith Huffman, who responded that they could not find a viable solution to determining whether someone was truly partnered. I quickly did some research on the various companies who do pro-

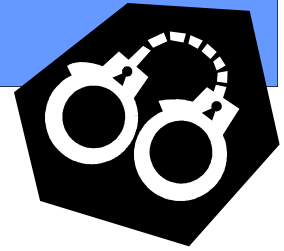
vide domestic partner benefits and provided this information to Mr. Huffman on October 14th including a document used by The Ohio State University to prove partnership. I have not heard back from Mr. Huffman as of today.

At this point, it seems that these folks are not even interested in being in a conversation around this topic. Many major universities provide this benefit to their employees such as the University of Pittsburgh, The Ohio State University and Temple University. What keeps our state from taking this step and why? The people addressed are not providing a reasonable answer to this question. Our voices need to be heard regarding this important issue. Will you join me in making change?

- Julie Rea

### Harrison County Democracy For America Mission Statement

*The mission of Harrison County Democracy For America is to enact positive change in the county's Democratic Party, to insure support of all true Democratic candidates, and to create a more positive and proactive organization to support Democratic goals and positions. We intend to do this through active participation in the existing party structures, including the Executive Committee, Men's and Women's Clubs, and Young Democrats. We want to reinvigorate these organizations with new positive energy and leadership. And help put a new face on the Democratic Party as we enter a new century and an evolving political climate.*



The following letter to the editor appeared on the Dominion Post Opinion page, October 22, 2005.

Recently I read that more than 60 % of the American people think that going to war against Iraq was a mistake. It is far worse than a mistake and the media, our congressmen and the American people should start looking at it for what it is - - a crime.

Nearly 2,000 American soldiers are dead, tens of thousands of innocent Iraqi civilians are dead and many more on both sides are disabled because the American people were lied to by our government. At every turn we were terrorized with the specter of mushroom clouds, nerve gas and anthrax, by the president, the vice president, the secretary of state and national security adviser. They lied to Congress, our allies, the United Nations and to the American people, not once, not twice, but repeatedly and they are still lying today.

It is not a mistake, it is a crime. It is a crime of the highest order against our troops, against the country of Iraq, against the coalition troops and against the reputation of the United States of America. It is a crime against humanity and the freedom and justice America used to stand for. It is a violation of international law because the United States attacked a sovereign nation without cause. People need to get comfortable with calling it what it actually is instead of pretending that it is a mistake.

Now the same administration that got us into Iraq is not ruling out the use of force against Syria or Iran. We have heard repeatedly that Saddam Hussein is a war criminal and that he is responsible for the deaths of many people. I ask you, has the Bush administration evened the score? Are they now responsible for more deaths than Saddam Hussein?

We hear constantly about the troops who have paid the ultimate price. The truth is that they have been sacrificed and will continue to be sacrificed until "We the people" stand up and say, "No more!" How much more are we going to take? When will we have had enough?

The war against Iraq was not a mistake; it was a deliberate, premeditated act of aggression. The sooner we start facing reality, the sooner the criminals and the real terrorists can be brought to justice and made to pay for this crime.

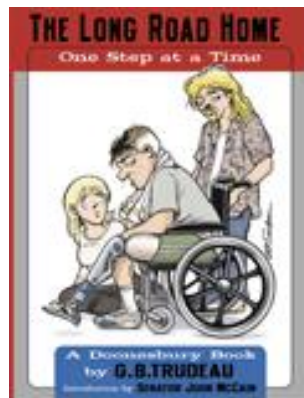
- Denise E. Binion

## More Books for the Progressive Reader

### ***The Long Road Home: One Step at a Time***

Garry Trudeau

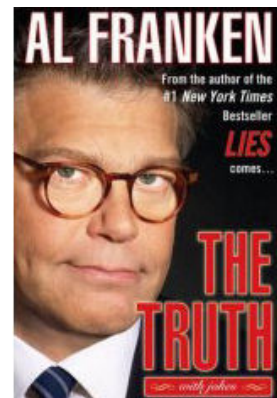
Garry Trudeau's latest chronicles the journey of Doonesbury character B. D. from the battlefield in Iraq home after an amputation and hospitalization at Landstuhl and Walter Reed. **Mr. Trudeau has pledged the advance and all royalties from his newest book to Fisher House Foundation™.** (Fisher House is a "home away from home" for military families, that allows them to be near their family member during recovery from illness or injury.) <http://www.fisherhouse.org/upcoming/upcoming.shtml>



### ***The Truth (with jokes)***

Al Franken

Just released, Franken's new book is a humorous commentary on everything from Bush's grand scheme for Social Security reform to Tom DeLay (who Franken describes as "an absolute horror show"). Franken takes no prisoners with assaults of cutting humor on the Iraq war, moral values as well as Tim Russert and Bill Frist. As usual, Al Franken is eye-opening thought provoking and hilariously funny.



All of the books listed here and many more can be purchased on-line through the "Progressive Bookstore", [http://hcdfa.com/progressive\\_bookstore](http://hcdfa.com/progressive_bookstore) on the HCDFA website. HCDFA receives a small profit from these sales which helps to defray the costs of maintaining our website.

- Denise Binion



Harrison County Democracy For America  
PO Box 964  
Clarksburg WV 26301