

Special points of interest:

- Facts about our County Central Committee
- Facts about our past performances
- Facts about the post Sept. 11, 2001 Military
- Facts about Iowa's Caucuses

Check Us Out or A Peek Under the Hood by Paula Rehahn-Hill

Perhaps you are like many people who before venturing into something new prefer a peek inside, a preview. Here is one member's "scoop" on the Allamakee Democrats Central Committee meetings and activities.

A friend, neighbor, and longtime Democrat accompanied me to my first Allamakee County Democratic Meeting. It was 2003, the critical election year that mandated my involvement. Mine was not the only new face in the group. There were others, from varied ideologies; lifelong Democrats, Independents and former Green Party supporters, newcomers to the area and lifelong community members. Longtime local Democratic supporters were also there, for sure.

What struck me immediately that very first day, was how everyone in the group felt free to comment. Farm policy, veterans' affairs, the war in Iraq, health care, gay rights; these issues were hashed over. Not that everyone agreed! However, the beauty of the group, I have found, is how they listen to varied opinions and conduct a give and take discussion. The diverse membership (farmers, educators, pastors, a social worker, a gay rights activist, a union member, a writer, artists, an electrician, factory workers, a custodian, veterans, nurses) present topics of interest to them, discuss books they have found fascinating or news items that upset or pleased them. I relish digesting the new information and find the group very stimulating.

More than once I have witnessed a newcomer's visible relief at discovering others share his/her heartfelt concerns. The opportunity to discuss issues with open-minded folks is a pleasure.

For the last several months local candidates and staffers for the presidential candidates have joined our meetings. Turning Allamakee County Blue is a mission we take seriously. To that end many of us donate time to Democratic activities like our

County Fair and Fish Days' booths, parades, updating and creating web sites, developing informational materials and handouts, being poll watchers, getting out the vote, distributing yard signs, creating posters and cartoons, writing and performing in radio ads, canvassing, stuffing envelopes, selling tickets, etc., etc., etc! Even so, we understand that family and work demands affect the time a person has to give, meaning members give what time they are able.



Central Committee

Community concerns are definitely a major focus of our Democratic activities. This spring members voted to contribute \$50 of Committee funds to support the planned Mississippi River Bike Trail. Following that motion, without a word being said, individuals approached the Treasurer. By the time everyone returned to his or her seats, the contribution had increased to \$360.

Helping Postville's Food Pantry with donations of food and diapers occurs each month. Alerted by a Postville teacher of the local needs, we've also provided used children's items - coats, gloves and hats - in such numbers the school ran out of storage space for them!

Our bi-annual Adopt-A-Highway road clean-up makes us proud to serve our county, while having a mighty good time doing it. We have got some speedy competitors!

After that talk of money, though, are you wondering if you will be hounded for donations? NO. Will donations be expected? NO. Members always joke, "We're not rich, we're Democrats!"

Inside this issue:

Senator Harkin's Message	2
Do we make a difference?	3
Post Sept 11th Military	4
Why I'm a Democrat	5
Iowa Caucus	6
Cartoons	7
Candidates Visit Waukon	8

Continued on Page 2

Check Us Out (Cont.)

“There have been some downright heady successes in the past few years.”

When my husband and I contribute, we give what we can, with no mind to what others can afford.

Our current Chairperson is Karen Pratte and Vice Chair is Bob Malli. In 2006 Karen was named the “Best Chair in Iowa” at the Iowa Democratic Party’s Jefferson-Jackson Day Awards Dinner in Des Moines. Karen, now in her second term, works tirelessly year round to make sure all the t’s are crossed. Her effective team building has resulted in alliances with other northeast Iowa central committees to coordinate candidate visits. Karen would not like my mentioning her though and would immediately say, “All our members contribute to our success. It takes a group.”

There have been some downright heady successes in the past few years. In Des Moines, Allamakee County became known as “the little county that could” after three hundred Allamakee and Winneshiek County Democrats turned out, fill-

ing the Allamakee Fairgrounds Hall for “Supper with Senator Harkin” in Fall 2004. We showed Senator Harkin, the gubernatorial hopefuls and many local legislators, that we could sponsor quite a shindig. Maybe you were there?

One thing is, I wish you had been on the Courthouse steps with us election night 2006. Talk about an unfolding drama. Gradually the returns for one precinct, then another, were posted. We went from uncertain to hopeful to downright ecstatic. What a night! Our hard work had paid off.

Well, if that “preview” has convinced you to try a meeting, join us at 11:00 AM on the first Saturday of the month at Gus & Tony’s in Waukon. There will be coffee waiting and most of us eat lunch while we meet. Come as you are, we are very informal. Oh, and if you want to come with a member, just call Karen at 563-535-7254.

A Message from Senator Tom Harkin about Iowa’s Caucuses

“There’s one big reason for Iowa’s First in the Nation role in our presidential nominating process: Nobody does it better! The marathon campaign leading up to the Caucuses is an extended interview for the most powerful job in the world. Iowans approach this responsibility with a unique thoughtfulness that has won the respect of pundits and politicians alike. The road to the White House is through the heartland. And, in

Iowa, what matters most is a candidate’s mettle, not money. Even lesser known candidates have ample opportunity to make their case and come out on top. For Iowans, politics is not a spectator sport – it is all about participation and personal engagement with the candidates. The Iowa Caucuses are democracy at its very best.”

Senator Tom Harkin

“Why I’m a Democrat” Challenge

Would you like to tell us why you are a Democrat? Or would you like to write an article important to the democratic cause? If so, you are invited to join our blog at <http://allamakeedemocratsviews.net>. Registration is easy. Once registered you may sub-

mit material and make comments about articles already published. **At least visit the site.** You can read Part 2 of “Why I’m a Democrat”. Also visit our web site for continuing information and news <http://allamakeecountydemocrats.com>