



Kendall County Area Democratic Women

December 1, 2009 • Volume 11, Issue 4



KCADW Voice

From the President

Looking back: We had a wonderful and inspiring speaker at our November meeting. Boerne Police Sgt. Robert Ricco told us about the Restorative Justice program he leads in Kendall County. This program is currently limited to juveniles, but Ricco hopes to expand it one day. The goal of the program is to bring an offender and his/her victim together so that the victim can make the offender understand the harm he/she had done and to describe what the offender could do in recompense. The program has a far lower rate of recidivism than does the regular justice system and costs far less for the state. Those of us who had an opportunity to hear Sgt. Ricco were inspired to help him expand the program. To learn more, go to www.restorativejustice.org or read *The Little Book of Restorative Justice* by Howard Zehr, or *Restorative Justice, How it Works*, by Marian Lieberman.

Holiday Parade: Kendall County Democrats will have a float in Boerne's Weihnachtsfest parade on December 5 at 6 p.m. Josephine Renfroe, who is parade chairwoman for both the KCADW and the KCDC, is looking for a lot of volunteers to make the Democratic entry into the parade a success. If you can help, please call her at 830-249-3118. She needs float decorators and riders.

Looking Ahead: In the week after our spectacular Eleanor Roosevelt Dinner, the KCADW Board of Directors spent several hours discussing the challenges of putting on that dinner and the future of fundraising by the club. It became clear early in the discussion that while we were pleased with our 2009 ER Dinner, many of the women who chaired committees this year or in past years were not willing to take on those jobs again. It is not clear that other members were willing to take over from them. Since the ER Dinner is our major fundraiser each year, I also asked Board members how important fundraising is to them.

As a result of that discussion, I made the following statement to the club at our November meeting, and then walked members through the survey that we have sent along with this issue.

“At our last Board meeting we discussed extensively KCADW's fundraising activities and the ER Dinner in particular.

“It was the sense of the majority of the Board—all of those present at the October 20 meeting—that the ER Dinner, while a fine tradition of the club, has become too burdensome for the relative few who do most the work. Several of the ER Dinner committee chairwomen from the 2009

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Upcoming Programs

Since we will have no regular meeting in December, there will be no program. As Program Chair I will work this year to bring more non-political subject programs focusing on topics of interest to the public. By doing this, your board is hoping you will feel comfortable to invite independent-minded friends to our meetings, thus increasing our outreach to the community.

—Jean Robitaille

KCADW Officers

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| President | Claire Oxley Gluck |
| First Vice President | Vacant |
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| Treasurer | Gwen King |
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| Proofreaders | Margaret Sanchez, Jean Robitaille, LaVerne Peterson, Stu Adamslundy |
| Distribution Team | |

Phone numbers and email addresses available in club directory

Mark Your Calendar:

December 5: Boerne's Weihnachtsfest parade.
Come join the Democrats in the parade or cheer us on from the sidelines.

December 10: Please note that we will NOT have a meeting this month. Join us at the holiday party instead (see below).

December 15: The KCADW Board will not have a meeting this month.

December 17, 6:00 p.m.: Kendall County Area Democrats' Holiday Party at the home of Bill and Gwen King. RSVP to gwenjking@aol.com or 830-755-4434. Please bring a plate of finger food (savory or sweet) to share. The address of the Kings is 8385 Rolling Acres Trail, Fair Oaks Ranch. The Kings are generously providing beverages.

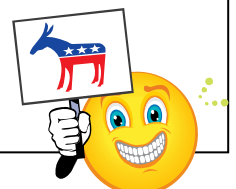
January 7, 7:00 p.m.: KCDC meeting at the BISD Administration Building on Johns Road.

January 14, 10:30 a.m.: KCADW meeting at the Holiday Inn. Come hear the Deputy Political Director of Annie's List speak about the organization's program and the Democratic women it is supporting for office in Texas.

January 21, 10:00 a.m.: KCADW Board meeting at Stu Adamslundy's home.

Are you receiving the *Voice* in the mail? Since you signed up, have you gotten connected to the Internet so that you could receive it online? If so, consider switching over to the electronic version. You will save the club the cost of printing and mailing and save some trees, too. Call Susanne Rupp, 698-0559.

This newsletter is intended to reach people interested in the work of the Democratic Party in general and of Kendall County Area Democratic Women specifically. To be removed from this mailing list, please contact the editor at srupp@hughes.net or 210-698-0559.



Membership Report

Welcome to a New Member:

Lynne Janzen
Fair Oaks Ranch

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and previous dinners said they are burnt out and are not able (willing) to take on such jobs again.

“The majority of the Board has also concluded that in the future an Eleanor Roosevelt event could be quite different and still serve the important function of fellowship, though it might not be a major fundraiser if we changed it.

“Bearing in mind that every member of the club has an equal voice in making a decision of such importance, the Board would like for each person to answer a short survey that shows some options the Board has considered.”

The Board members and club members in attendance expressed their thoughts and feelings and filled out the survey. If you weren't at the meeting, please see the survey on Page 6. You may send your responses to me at clairegluck@gvtc.com or mail the survey to me. Thanks for your input.

Claire

Alice Myrl Cannon Hill

By Carol Carpenter and Carla Heath



“Myrl Hill was a big woman with a big voice and a big heart,” says Carol Carpenter. “When our friend passed away, she was 93 years young, having spent ten of those years as a staunch member of the KCADW.” Carla Heath says, “Kendall County has lost one of its most loyal and vocal Democratic supporters with the death, on November 2, of Myrl Hill.” She was an active member of Boerne's First United Methodist Church where she held many leadership positions with the United Methodist Women. Carla says, “She wore her donkey pin proudly and everyone knew how Myrl felt about world affairs.” She volunteered for almost 20 years with the Family Services Thrift Store. Carol reports “In 1995, she received the Community Builder's Award.”

Born in Bruce, Mississippi on May 14, 1916, Myrl attended the University of Mississippi and married William Hill, Sr. Myrl lived in Memphis where she had a 30-year career with the U.S. Civil Service and raised two sons. When her husband of 50 years died in 1987, she soon came to Fair Oaks Ranch to live with her son, Brooks, and his wife. Carol says, “When I asked her if her son was a Democrat, too, with a twinkle in her eye, she said, ‘If he isn't, he'd better not let me know about it!’ ”

“Some years ago,” Carol continues, “I was presenting a program to the KCADW about the destructive ‘Christian’ Reconstructionist movement and how misleading were their interpretations of Biblical Law. Myrl, sitting on the front row and taking all this in, finally had heard enough. Down went her feet with a loud stomp and she bolted upright. Looking me right in the eye, she said in her booming voice, ‘If these people are messing with my religion, I'm going to rise-up against them!’ She made us laugh; but she also shared with us her indomitable spirit and her infallible compass for what was right. The KCADW extends its heartfelt condolences to Myrl's family.”

Carla concludes, “She will be missed by many in the Boerne/Fair Oaks communities, but her influence as a role model for people of all ages will stay with us.” A touching eulogy from Myrl's funeral can be found on the website www.kcadw.com.

Corruption Abounds

By Cindy Offutt

"Our members were not invited to Wall Street's party, but we have paid for it with devastated pension funds, lost jobs and public bailouts of private-sector losses. Our goal is a financial system that is...the servant of the real economy rather than its master."

--AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka to the House Financial Services Committee



A group called Transparency International has published its rank-ordered list of how the world's countries stack up in terms of corruption. New Zealand is the least corrupt, immediately followed by Denmark, Singapore, and Sweden. Somalia is rated the most corrupt, with Iraq, Sudan, Burma (aka Myanmar) and Afghanistan coming in just slightly ahead of Somalia at the bottom of this year's list.

Transparency International ranks the United States at #19 (out of 180), placing the US just ahead of Barbados, Belgium and Qatar and just behind Japan and the United Kingdom. According to Forbes online, Transparency International's rating index is based on worldwide surveys of country specialists, business officials, human rights monitors and others.

I've been thinking about corruption lately, primarily because of all the attention the mainstream media has recently conferred on Afghanistan and the election of Hamid Karzai and how heroin money has reportedly corrupted the government there. However, even as our media focuses on allegations of corruption within Afghanistan's government, it seems only fair that we turn the spotlight on ourselves and ask, "Is the United States truly free of systemic corruption?"

To answer this query, it may be useful to consider one example that's recently been in the news, and that is the influence that banking and financial concerns enjoy over our elected representatives in the U.S. Congress, power that is, unfortunately, perfectly legal. If nothing else, the financial and banking crisis of the past year—coupled with the astonishingly weak regulatory response to that crisis so far proposed by both the executive and legislative branches of our government—have clearly demonstrated that "Money Talks" and "Business as Usual" will very likely prevail over most if not all substantive reform that might be proposed to correct the excesses of the past decade or two.

I believe that our financial and political systems as they now exist are inherently corrupt, even though most of the practices that give rise to this corruption are largely legal. Our laws as presently written effectively permit (some would say encourage) the transfer of vast wealth from ordinary Americans (the so-called Main Streeters) to a few well-placed people on Wall Street and K Street. This corruption is anchored in two fundamental facts: 1) financiers and bankers, among others, are able to lobby our elected representatives with virtually unlimited funds at their disposal, in large part because the Supreme Court has effectively ensconced campaign finance within the protections of the 1st Amendment, and 2) the law permits bankers and financiers to take enormous risks with no fear of accountability and with every expectation of a government bailout.

The question that haunts me is this: With the Department of Agriculture reporting record-setting numbers of Americans going hungry, with upwards of 40 million Americans unemployed, with foreclosures at a record high, with the middle-class's buying power on a persistent decline for the last three decades, with millions unable to retire because their retirement savings have taken a 30% nosedive over the past 18 months, why aren't well-informed, rational Americans taking to the streets, en masse, to protest our elected representatives' milquetoast regulatory response to the practices that gave rise to the economic crisis? I'm not talking about this August's right-wing shout-outs; insofar as I could tell, most of those people were about as ill-informed as they come.

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What I'm talking about, instead, are people who understand the constructive role that government can play in restraining the excesses of laissez-faire capitalism.

The problem may well be that too many citizens of this country have given up on, or forgotten, the notion that the government works for us. Not for lobbyists. Not for bankers. Not for financiers. Not for special interests.

Or maybe it's just that legalized "pay to play" practices have become so much a part of the American way of life that we are no longer able to see it and call it for what it is—corruption.

Until and unless we are willing to compel our elected representatives to pass laws that do what's right for average Americans, rather than laws that permit the rewards to flow only to a select few, we will continue to live in a country that's effectively just as corrupted by the influence of money as Afghanistan.

P.S. And this doesn't even address the very pragmatic assessment that if we don't fix the laws that legitimize financial corruption today, we are just setting ourselves up for yet another big stinky crisis further on down the road, what MIT economist Simon Johnson has tagged as yet another repeat of the "boom-bust-bailout" cycle.

ER Dinner Survey:

You may paste this into an email or simply make your comments in an email. You may also print this page and mail it to Claire at 108 Stone Creek Circle, Boerne, TX 78006.

1. Is it important to you that the KCADW put on an event honoring Eleanor Roosevelt Dinner?
 - Pot luck - but still elegant and dressy
 - Pot luck - casual
 - Picnic in a park - family friendly, low cost food (hamburgers, hot dogs)
 - Catered - elegant, at a hotel or restaurant (Cost would probably be around \$40 - \$50/ticket)
 - Catered - casual - cheaper meal such as pasta, or BBQ -- family friendly
2. If so, please indicate why:
 - Fun gathering of Democrats
 - Opportunity to hear an excellent speaker
 - Fundraising
 - Enjoy doing the work of setting-up, cooking, cleaning, making silent auction items, etc.
3. If you would like for the ER Dinner to continue as it has been, what job would you be willing to take:
 - Overall chairperson
 - Publicity chairperson
 - Set-up and decoration chairperson (setting tables, decorating them and setting up microphones, serving tables, etc)
 - Wine/Appetizer chairperson
 - Food Chairperson
 - Clean-up chairperson
4. If the club is to continue putting on a different sort of event to honor Eleanor Roosevelt, which of the following formats would you prefer (select one)
 - Wine tasting with or without a silent auction
 - ER Dinner with or without a silent auction
 - Selling geraniums or other plants
 - Formal English Tea
 - Antique Road Show (have people pay to have their collectibles evaluated)
 - Garage/Rummage sale
 - Another idea? Please describe it:
5. Is it important to you that the KCADW raises money to give to Democratic candidates, or do you prefer having KCADW be a means of meeting and socializing with fellow Democrats and/or being more active Democrats?
6. If fundraising is important to you, on what sort of activity would you be willing to work?
 - Wine tasting with or without a silent auction
 - ER Dinner with or without a silent auction
 - Selling geraniums or other plants
 - Formal English Tea
 - Antique Road Show (have people pay to have their collectibles evaluated)
 - Garage/Rummage sale
 - Another idea? Please describe it:

Hold Them Accountable: How Our Representatives Voted in Washington
Thanks to Gwen King for keeping us up to date on how our legislators voted.

In the U.S. Senate

Worker, Homeownership, and Business Assistance Act of 2009

Vote **Passed** (98-0, 2 not voting). The Senate passed this bill that would extend unemployment benefits in states with a jobless rate over 8.5% and tax credits for some homebuyers and businesses. The bill was sent back to the House for final approval.

Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison voted **YES**

Sen. John Cornyn voted **YES**

Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2010

Vote **Passed** (71-28, 1 not voting). The Senate completed its work on this \$64.9 billion legislation funding the Justice Department, Commerce Department, National Science Foundation and related agencies and programs. The House and Senate will now go to conference to work out differences between their versions of the bill.

Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison voted **YES**

Sen. John Cornyn voted **NO**

In the U.S. House of Representatives

Expedited CARD Reform for Consumers Act of 2009

Vote **passed** (331-92, 9 not voting). The House passed this bill that would move the date credit card companies would have to comply with new credit card regulations from February 22, 2010 to December 1, 2009. The Senate has a similar bill, though it is unclear whether it will take action on either bill.

Rep. Lamar Smith voted **YES**

Rep. Ciro Rodriguez voted **YES**

Worker, Homeownership, and Business Assistance Act of 2009

Vote **passed** (403-12, 18 not voting). The House gave final approval to this bill extending unemployment benefits and tax credits for some homebuyers and businesses, sending it to the President. The President signed it on Friday.

Rep. Lamar Smith voted **YES**

Rep. Ciro Rodriguez voted **YES**

Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Act of 2009

Vote **passed** (230-193, 11 not voting). The House passed this bill intended to bolster security at chemical plants. It now goes to the Senate.

Rep. Lamar Smith voted **NO**

Rep. Ciro Rodriguez voted **YES**

Affordable Health Care for America Act

Vote **passed** (220-215). On Saturday the House approved this health care reform bill by a slim margin. The Senate is expected to begin work on its own health care reform bill soon.

Rep. Lamar Smith voted **NO**

Rep. Ciro Rodriguez voted **YES**

Leticia Van de Putte, a long-serving state Democratic senator, has started a cottage industry from the term "A wise Latina Woman." Shortly after hearing the controversial term, she had T-shirts printed and distributed to over 200 family and friends. Others have picked up on this and the phrase can now be found on many other items and even as a Facebook group. The Senator has reported only one bad reaction to her T-shirt. It came from a man at her local sports club, who angrily yelled that he was also wise. She said, "Great, get a T-shirt." (Reported in the *New York Times*, Sunday, Aug. 9.) Thanks to Carla Health for sharing it with us.

Comment

In her article in *The Nation* magazine (November 30, 2009, excerpted and reprinted with permission) **Katha Pollitt** tells it like it is:

Whose Team Is It, Anyway?

You know what I don't want to hear right now about the Stupak-Pitts amendment banning abortion coverage from federally subsidized health insurance policies? That it's the price of reform, and prochoice women should shut up and take one for the team. . . . Hey, Representative Stupak and your sixty-four Democratic supporters, Jim Wallis and other antichoice "progressive" Christians, men: why don't *you* take one for the team for a change and see how you like it?

For example, budget hawks in Congress say they'll vote against the bill because it's too expensive. Maybe you could win them over if you volunteered to cut out funding for male-exclusive stuff, like prostate cancer, Viagra, male infertility, vasectomies, growth-hormone shots for short little boys, long-term care for macho guys who won't wear motorcycle helmets and, I dunno, psychotherapy for pedophile priests. Men could always pay in advance for an insurance policy rider, as women are blithely told they can do if Stupak becomes part of the final bill.

. . . Why should antichoice be the only people who get to refuse to let their taxes support something they dislike? You don't want your tax dollars to pay, even in the most notional way, for women's abortion care, a legal medical procedure that one in three American women will have in her lifetime? . . .

Women Democrats have taken an awful lot of hits for the team lately. Many of us didn't vote for Hillary Clinton in the primary because the goal of electing a woman seemed less important than the goal of electing the best possible president. Only a self-hater or a featherhead didn't feel some pain about that. And although women are hardly alone in this, we've seen some pretty big hopes set aside in the first year of the Obama administration. The Paycheck Fairness Act, which would expand women's protections against sexism in the workplace, is on the back burner. Meanwhile, the Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships is not only alive and well; it's newly staffed with antichoice like Alexia Kelley of Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good, who, as Frances Kissling notes in *Salon*, has compared abortion to torture.

I know what you're thinking: conservative Democrats like Stupak took Republican districts to win us both houses of Congress. . . . But those majorities would not be there, and Obama would not be in the White House, if not for prochoice women and men—their votes, talent, money, organizational capacity and shoe leather. We knocked ourselves out, and it wasn't so that religious reactionaries like Stupak—who, as Jeff Sharlet writes in *Salon*, is a member of the Family, the secretive right-wing Christian-supremacist Congressional coven—would control both parties. Elections have consequences, you say? Exactly: Obama, the prochoice, prowoman candidate, won. Stupak didn't put him in the White House, and neither did the Catholic bishops or the white antifeminist welfare staters. . . . We did. And we deserve better from Obama than sound bites like "this is a healthcare bill, not an abortion bill." Abortion *is* healthcare. That's the whole point. . . .

The big prochoice and feminist organizations are up in arms—NOW and Planned Parenthood want to see healthcare reform voted down if Stupak is retained. . . . Consciously or unconsciously, by not organizing in advance to insist on coverage of abortion, prochoicers set themselves up to be out-manuevered. In fact, as Sharon Lerner reported on TheNation.com, Democrats stood by while antichoice kept contraception out of the reform bill's list of basic benefits all insurers must cover. So much for the "common ground" approach where we all agree that birth control is the way to lower the abortion rate.

Enough already. Prochoicers have been taking one for the team since 1976, when Congress passed the Hyde amendment. . . . Time for the theocrats and male chauvinists to give something up for the greater good—to say nothing of the twenty prochoicers, all men, who supported Stupak out of sheer careerism. After all, if it weren't for prochoicers, there wouldn't be much of a team for them to play on.

From our immediate past president, Jean Robitaille:

I received many hugs and compliments as thank you for serving as President. I just want to let you know how very much your hugs and compliments over two years have meant to me. It was an honor to lead such a wise and distinguished group. I know I leave you in great hands with Claire and the Board to lead us. I speak for KCADW when I say we stand beside Claire, not behind her. **YES WE CAN!**

A special thanks to Gwen Adrian, Cindy Offutt and Gwen King for serving on the Nominating Committee. Without your hard work we would not have this exciting team to lead us. Thanks, Susanne, for taking on editorship of the *Voice*. I know you will do a great job. Of course, Janice adds the polish that makes it so enjoyable. Thanks to Claire for the example she has set.

Safety Flash (as reported in the September issue of the *Texas Co-op Power* magazine):

Counterfeit electrical products bearing a fake UL logo are showing up in showrooms. What does this mean to you? The UL label guides consumers to reputable electrical products that have been rigorously tested and approved for safe use. UL has introduced a new holographic version that can now be found on approved products.

***Happy Holidays from your Voice editors!
See you at the Holiday Party on December 17.***

**Kendall County Area Democratic Women
P. O. Box 2132
Boerne, TX 78006**

