



The SCPD Progressive Patriot

The Newsletter for Progressive Activists in NE Ohio

"A Grass Roots Coalition for Change"

WHAT IS SCPD?

SCPD is a 501(c)4 grass roots organization of dedicated people committed to social justice on the local, State, national, and international levels. We support efforts that better the lives of all citizens by working to promote human rights, equal economic opportunity, responsive government, a safe, sustainable environment, and a society built on compassion. Our goal is to expand grass roots participation in the political process and to return the federal government to the will of the people.

If you are interested in SCPD, contact Ingrid Kunstel at ikunstel@neo.rr.com

APRIL, 2006

SPRING FORUM INSPIRES AND EDUCATES LOCAL PROGRESSIVES

Organize, Mobilize and Deliver the Progressive Vote in 2006

Ingrid Kunstel

Over 400 progressive activists turned out on Sunday, March 26 for a forum held by Summit County Progressive Democrats (SCPD) and Progressive Democrats of America (PDA). Co-sponsored by other area grass roots organizations, the forum was designed to teach organizing and mobilizing skills to activists and to begin to generate momentum for the November elections.



Dennis Kucinich gave an inspiring speech about a new America that will support peace, help to create a world working together, and that supports single payer healthcare and stands behind working men and women.

The Keynote speaker was **John Green** of Akron's Bliss Institute, who described research showing that face-to-face contact with voters, forming coalitions among grass roots organizations, and collaborative work will help Democrats take back the U.S. Senate, House, and the State of Ohio. These are the most effective strategies for the future.

The event was emceed by **Mimi Kennedy**, PDA Board Member and television actress. A highlight for
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U.S. Senate candidate **Sherrod Brown** was given an award for his work on behalf of all working men and women by **John Wagner** of the AFL-CIO. U.S Representative



Mimi Kennedy & Mary Nichols Rhodes



Eileen Goldman & Mimi Kennedy



Cindy Sheehan

Spring Forum, continued—

many was when **Cindy Sheehan**, Gold Star Mother & PDA Board Member, spoke to the audience. She said that her son Casey was killed four days after he arrived in Iraq while doing a job that he was not trained for, wearing body armor from the Viet Nam War, and riding in a trailer behind an unarmored vehicle. She stated that the war is not about the right and the left, but rather about what is right and wrong. She said we need to stand up beside the brave politicians who are making a stand and say this war is wrong. Cindy left the auditorium to a standing ovation, the audience clapping and returning her peace sign.

Chris Redfern, Chairman of the Ohio Democratic Party said that we don't need Republicans to define patriotism for us. As chair he wants all Democrats involved. He wants to once again make this the party of the people. National Director of PDA **Tim Carpenter** asked Redfern if he would commit to building a progressive caucus in the state of Ohio and if he would commit to doing forums like this around the state. Redfern said that he would.

Carpenter then said that we need to build a

party with all of us working toward gaining a progressive majority in Congress, and that we need to do something meaningful which works toward that goal every day.

The forum featured breakout sessions for participants to learn about activism. Each session had standing room only crowds. A final panel with representatives from various grassroots and community organizations ended the day on a high note.

Summit County Progressive Democrats are now planning a forum for the fall of 2006 that will feature workshops for activists, to teach in-depth skills.

SCPD is also forming a group of individuals from surrounding counties that are running for Precinct Committee People, with a goal of doing training, and sharing ideas as to how to reach out to voters in their precincts. We want voters in the precincts to be registered, organized, and ready to help get out the vote for every election. For more information about these events, contact Ingrid Kunstel at ikunstel@neo.rr.com or at (330)-923-0732.

PROGRESSIVE SUMMIT SPARKS ENTHUSIASM, SPURS ACTION, OFFERS HOPE

Mary Nichols-Rhodes

They came from far and wide. From all four corners of the state, activists from across Ohio came together in Akron on Sunday, March 26th 2006, for the "Organize, Mobilize, and Deliver the Progressive Vote in 2006" Grassroots Summit, sponsored and hosted by the Summit County Progressive Democrats. The event was co-sponsored by the Portage Democratic Coalition, NE Ohio Sierra Club, Tri-County Regional Labor Council, AFL-CIO, Blue 88, Ohioans for Democratic Values, Democracy for America, Cleveland Peace Action, USW Local 7, Medina County Democratic Action Committee, Wake Up Ohio, Wayne County Network for Progressive Democracy, America Votes, and the Ohio Democratic Party.

Close to 500 people, representing 13 Ohio counties and 43 groups/organizations, heard an incredible group of speakers, built alliances, and joined forces in this first step toward a statewide network for change.

Dennis Kucinich of Ohio's 10th District gave a passion-filled speech about building the progressive movement to end the occupation in Iraq and to take our nation back from those who are trampling our Democracy, to which the crowd rose with resounding applause.

The keynote speaker, John C. Green, Ph.D,

Director of the Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics, Professor of Political Science, University of Akron, presented, "Grassroots Politics: Something Old and Something New" giving wonderful information about the effectiveness of united Grassroots strategies.

Participants then selected one of five Break-out Sessions to attend, offering information and instruction to strengthen grassroots organizations. Grassroots 101 was presented by Steve Chaffin, NW Ohio Regional Coordinator, Ohio Democratic Party. America Votes and Ohio was presented by Scott Nunery, State Director, America Votes. Blue 88, Our Work In Ohio was presented by Chris Glaros, Executive Director of Blue 88. Issues 2006 was presented by members of Summit County Progressive Democrats.

Denise Woods prepared and presented Raising the Minimum Wage, Guy Marentette and Steve Cochran prepared and presented Single Payer Health Care, and Scott Peipho prepared and presented Against Tel Tabor. Turning Up The Volume on the Progressive Voice was presented by Kevin Spidel, Deputy Director of Progressive Democrats of America; Michael Carano, Ohio PDA Organizer; Patrick Carano, Ohio PDA Organizer; and Tim Carpenter, National Director of PDA.

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A packed house



Cazzel Smith

Forum Sparks Enthusiasm, continued—

During the Registration period before the program and during the break, attendees had the opportunity to network and mingle, and gather information from informational tables that were set up in the atrium.

The last portion of the Summit was a Panel Discussion, Question and Answer period that included Cazzell M. Smith, Jr., Jane Buder Shapiro, Marian Harris, Scott Nunnery, Chris Glaros, and Tim Carpenter.

This Summit attracted grassroots organizations, hundreds of activists from all over Ohio, many current political office holders, five candidates for the 13th U.S. Congressional District (OH), as well as candidates for Ohio Senate, Court of Appeals, State House of Representatives, Ohio's 19th U.S. Congressional District, Ohio Attorney General, and Ohio Secretary of State, and the leadership from the Ohio Democratic Party.

People were networking. There was a cooperative spirit. There was a positive energy that was palpable.

SHERROD BROWN RECEIVES LABOR AWARD AT SCPD FORUM

Mary Nichols-Rhodes

Senatorial Candidate Congressman Sherrod Brown, 13th District, received a Special Recognition Award from the Tri-County Regional Labor Council, AFL-CIO, representing 88 local unions and 20,000 members, at the Summit County Progressive Democrats Grassroots Summit.

Congressman Brown led the opposition to the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), and has been a fierce critic of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). He has fought for fair trade policies to include protections for workers and fair wages.

Brown was cited for his strong and consistent fight to protect American jobs and American workers throughout his tenure in Congress since 1992.

The award was presented by John Wagner, Executive Secretary Treasurer.



US Representative Sherrod Brown

ECONOMIC UNFAIRNESS — PART I

Frank Kunstel

Next time you're arguing with your relatives about income fairness:

A progressive philosophy would hold that government policies should promote economic fairness. Not that everyone should have the same amount of income, but that individuals should have a fair chance to improve their economic standing, especially if they are on the lower half of the socio-economic ladder. And the rich should contribute a larger proportion of their wealth to helping society achieve this fairness. So how are we doing in the U.S.?

Over the past 30 years, one of America's most cherished values—the ability of a person to move up the economic ladder—has eroded.

According to the Wall Street Journal newspaper (WSJ) and BusinessWeek magazine (BW), not very well. Over the past 30 years, BW (12/1/03) reports, one of America's most cherished values—the ability of a person to move up the economic ladder—has eroded. The number of people progressing upward has steadily diminished in recent decades. WSJ (5/13/05) stated, "As the gap between rich and poor has widened since 1970, the odds that a child born in poverty will climb to wealth—or a rich child will fall into the middle class—remain stuck. . . Americans are no more or less likely to rise above, or fall below, their parents' economic class than they were 35 years ago." That's **Point 1**.

Point 2: Compare 1979 to 2003. The

richest 1% of income earners' share of total income rose from 9.6% to 17.5%. The share of the bottom 40% of income earners fell from 11.3% of total income to 8.8%.



Further, from 1950 to 1970, for every additional dollar earned by the bottom 90% of households, the richest 0.01 percent earned \$162. And from 1990 to 2002 that amount INCREASED to \$18,000—an increase of over 1000%

Point 3: Average hourly earnings dropped by 5% between 1979 and 2004, adjusted for inflation. Domestic corporate profits rose by 64% in this same time period.

Point 4: Fifty years ago corporations paid 60% of all federal taxes. By 2003 that figure was down to 16%. Who is making up the difference? Individual taxpayers. Further, between 1996 and 2000, 61% of American corporations paid no income tax whatsoever.

So we have less class mobility, lower income for average families, and higher income for wealthy families. None of this meets America's principles and none of it helps build the commitment of most of our citizens to our nation. This has taken place over the past 30 years when Democrats had their fair share of majority rule in Congress, so it can't all be blamed on today's-Republican Congress and George W. Bush. But in the next issue, Part 2 will take a look at how he has made things incredibly worse.

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REDFERN & CARPENTER AGREE TO ESTABLISH PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS INSIDE THE OHIO DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Mary Nichols Rhodes

Chris Redfern, Ohio Democratic Chair since December of 2005, had written "A Vision For the Ohio Democratic Party" that promised to "reach out to our progressive activists, open up a dialogue with them, ask them for input in guiding our party and encourage them to work with us, not against us." At the SCPD Forum, Chris Redfern made good on that promise.

Redfern and Tim Carpenter (National Director of Progressive Democrats of America) sat at a table together at the SCPD Forum in front of an audience of progressives who were primed and ready for true alliances to be made and for real strategies to be discussed. Redfern and Carpenter delivered.

Redfern said now that he is the Ohio Democratic Party Chair, progressives will no longer feel like outsiders. The old state party that was closed to new faces is

gone--this is the people's party, and progressives now have the power to make the Democratic Party what we want it to be.

Tim Carpenter told of successful platforms passed in New Mexico, California, Massachusetts, and Arizona, and then challenged Redfern to organize anti-war Town Hall meetings like the one held in Cleveland in March. Redfern accepted.

Then, Tim Carpenter issued an incredibly important challenge: to work with PDA and other groups to establish a progressive caucus inside the Ohio Democratic Party. Chris Redfern answered, "Absolutely!"

PDA Coordinators Michael and Patrick Carano have been contacted by the Ohio Democratic Party. They are currently working with the ODP to establish a Progressive Caucus in Ohio.

Summit County
Progressive Democrats,
an Ohio chapter of

