



PDA REMAINS OPTIMISTIC AND ENGAGED. WE HOPE YOU DO TOO.

It has been a tumultuous time of hope, disappointment, and ultimately resolve for us all. As we crawled from the wreckage of the election, PDA grassroots supporters, staff, and executive board members realized, more clearly than ever, that the path PDA and the PDA state caucuses are following is the path leading towards the redemption and transformation of our nation. And while Karl Rove and the Republican Party had a well-executed plan for November 2nd, PDA also has a plan for our future that will work every bit as well. We've outlined the plan in "A Progressive Plan to Change America" on our web site (www.pdamerica.org). Share it with your friends and neighbors. Post it on the water cooler at work.

Red and Blue, or Purple?

You've probably already seen the map equating red states with slave states, but Robert J. Vanderbei has created a more useful map of the United States using county-by-county 2004 election return data. The resulting map (www.princeton.edu/~rvdb/JAVA/election2004/) is a sophisticated depiction of how polarized our country isn't. There's blue in Texas, red in California, and a lot of purple everywhere.

What does that tell us? That there are very few states in our country where everyone is voting one way or another. That every state is a battleground state. No matter where you live in the United States, there are people like you. Get connected with them at www.pdamerica.org, and start pushing your state toward your 'moral values.' ♦

What You Can Do

Organize, organize, organize. We all needed a few days to get over the shock of the election, but now it's time to get back to work. Some of you may say you're too tired right now. Start small and work your way back up to full-blown activism. Some of you may say you're too angry. Harness that energy to do something positive. Read on for a list of possible activities, beginning with the least strenuous.

1. Give money to groups who still have the energy to fight for you and

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Running for Office A perspective on the Utah State House of Representatives race, District 53

By Laura Bonham, Western Regional PDA Field Coordinator, and Utah Progressive Caucus Co-Chair.

Win or lose, I have done my civic duty. That is what I kept telling myself as I struggled with the day to day of running a campaign against an entrenched Republican who has served six terms and is expected to become the Speaker of the House when re-elected.

I am a Democratic woman facing incredible odds in a gerrymandered district that defies reason. It was to be a tough battle from the beginning; but this election was probably the last before my opponent consolidates his power and becomes permanently ensconced in office. I figured that with a good organization and proper funding, the underdog might win. What a naïve view that was.

I am probably different than most folks when it comes to voting. I believe that as many different people as possible should hold public office, as often as possible. This prevents an entrenched and narrow point of view often clouded by special interests from taking root in our government. Sure there are elected positions, mostly administrative that

should not be effected by partisan elections; but for the most part, it is good for our democracy to have new perspectives enter into the mix on a regular basis. Change is part of life and change is good. I am clearly in the minority on this one.

When it comes to elected officials, most voters believe that change is not good. This leads to the heart of the matter. Change is the one thing that disrupts the flow of power in a Government that has become a power play. The longer one is there, the more powerful that politician becomes. The question should be how that power is

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PROGRESSIVE DEMOCRATIC SUMMIT • JAN. 21-23, 2005

The Progressive Democratic Summit in Washington, D.C. will be

filled with experienced speakers in the progressive movement, informational workshops, and other useful information for

progressive activists and organizations both inside and outside the Democratic Party.

Visit www.pdamerica.org for more details on this event, or contact Tim Carpenter by emailing info@pdamerica.org or calling toll-free 1-877-368-9221.

"Never forget that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it's the only thing that ever has."

MARGARET MEAD
(20th c. anthropologist)

State News

In Arizona...

The Arizona Democratic Progressive Caucus (AzDPC) is leading the organization of a Southwest Regional Progressive Forum that will be held in the Phoenix Valley on February 11-12, 2005.

Through its national affiliation with Progressive Democrats of America (PDA), AzDPC is working with progressives from California, Utah, Nevada, New Mexico and Arizona to plan a forum that will address the pivotal issues of our political and cultural community.

The forum will address issues such as:

How do we effectively vision our progressive movement?

How do we implement effective and meaningful electoral reform?

How do we address the reality of corporate-owned media and implement effective media reform?

Why does our movement remain so "white"?

How do progressives regain the moral high-ground?

How do we create and maintain effective alliances?

Thom Hayden has already committed to speak on effectively visioning our progressive movement. Other speakers will be confirmed soon!

Mimi Kennedy, Hollywood personality and activist, is organizing a troupe of actors to kick-off the forum with a reading from the wonderful fund raiser held in California last month. The reading is from a work-in-progress by the man often called "America's greatest living playwright," Tony Kushner. Headlining the cast at the California event were Sally Field and Mimi Kennedy, who both played the role of Laura Bush reading to a group of dead Iraqi children.

Sherry Bohlen

In Colorado...

The Colorado Progressives is a hub for core progressive influence in Colorado. Our commitment is in building a progressive social movement that will drive grassroots activism and progressive electoral politics. The general intention and hope is that by engaging citizens to collaborate for social change in ways emanating from a

deeper, ethical source, real results will manifest.

Many of the views expressed by the Colorado Progressives were crystallized, discussed, and nurtured in the ongoing Colorado discussion series called the *Progressive Cafes*. These conversational gatherings are spreading to many different communities across Colorado and are owned by the community. Rather than containing controlled discourse, they foster open dialogue, allowing people's voices to be heard with respect and openness. Many of those who regularly attend these gatherings see them as a vehicle for public outreach for progressive views. These Cafés help to build the progressive community and help to maintain communication between those who wish to work within the Democratic Party and those who wish to work outside the Democratic Party, as well as maintaining communication with the many different progressive activist groups throughout the state of Colorado.

With relation to building a progressive coalition here in Colorado, we are planning on meeting with an existing, Be The Change, created out of the Mike Miles for US Senate campaign. Their goals appear to be similar with those of PDA, working within the Democratic Party to inject progressive values and progressive positions on the issues as well as supporting progressive candidates during election years.

Patrick West

In Kansas...

We held a meeting last Saturday to begin planning for our 1, 2, 3 and 5 year strategies. We discussed several areas where we could make our views heard on the state level. We will meet again on December 4th in Lawrence, KS to further define our goals.

We also decided to accept the PDA affiliation and use their resources to begin our PAC. We found ourselves lacking in ability and expertise to begin this endeavor. We gladly accept the help of the PDA to do this.

We are planning a fundraiser sometime next spring. More on that as it becomes available. Our Communications Committee is pulling out all the stops in getting the word out about progressives. They have scheduled an interview on Democracy Now with Amy

Goodman for December and we are getting plugged by at least 36 NPR radio stations at this time.

Jeff Zamrzla

In Nevada...

Here in Las Vegas we were very happy to learn that our Clark County went Blue! Unfortunately the rest of the state didn't. We supported four Progressive candidates in the primaries and will actively research and support Progressive candidates for the next election.

NPDC co-sponsored a free public film screening of "Unconstitutional" and "Hijacking Catastrophe" Oct. 30th and hope to make educational films and forums monthly outreach events. We are working with civil rights groups here to take a resolution against the Patriot Act before our city council and county commission to demonstrate our solidarity with over 350 other cities and four states that have successfully passed resolutions.

We are very honored and inspired to be working with the Progressive Democrats of America and encourage people to explore the site and if you have any questions feel free to call us in Vegas.

Raj and Diana Rathor

In New York...

Thank you for welcoming me to the PDA community. I went to a Town Meeting at the LGBT center in NYC tonight. I am really glad I went—it was a window into the challenging moment that queers and all of us are in.

The room was packed with hundreds of people. There was talk about taking over the Democratic Party (and for that matter re-shaping the "gay" movement). The Democratic Party focus was met with a few hisses and some applause. I will list just some of the comments I think are of relevance to PDA.

1. This election revealed a lot of what we already knew.

2. Karl Rove decided that this election was about gay marriage. But in fact the numbers (of Bush voters in swing states with marriage initiatives) did not make the difference in this election. It is a homophobic spin that the general public is defining gays as

a the crux of the country being divided.

3. Paraphrase: "It is important that we do not confuse ourselves with the Democratic Party. We need to provide a vision and the voters will follow."

4. The LGBT movement cannot be a single issue. Our lives are all interconnected and we need to see how LGBT struggles strengthen other struggles. More importantly, LGBTs are in EVERY community—gender, race, class, religion, immigrant, etc.—and there are sweeping offenses taking place against all of these communities.

5. We must work with every organization we are a part of to be as progressive as it can be (this is a different position in every location).

6. We need to build an alternative to the churches—provide everyday contact (like unions), a community, and start a secular values discourse.

7. This is a moment when coalitions can be formed.

8. Paraphrase—"I shouldn't have to get married to someone who gets benefits from her/his workplace to have healthcare. I should get healthcare because I am human."

I made an announcement about the PDA Summit and told people that if they were interested in taking on the Democratic Party they should come and lead this effort! One person who had spoken extremely eloquently before I spoke came up to me and said he had looked at the PDA website and was interested.

Danielle

In Texas...

The Progressive Populist Caucus/Texas is holding a post election "WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE" feedback session in San Antonio on Saturday, November 20 at 11:30 am, at Picante Grill at 3810 Broadway. The objective is for the PPC to dialogue with progressive and populist activists from around the State on strategies to enlarge our already significant foothold in the Texas Democratic Party. Representatives from such common-ground groups as DEMOCRACY FOR TEXAS, Tejano Democrats, Young Democrats, African American Caucus, Asian American Democrats, Stonewall Democrats have signed on to participate and about 100 are expected. This is a first

step in galvanizing the entire progressive movement within the Democratic Party in Texas to continue transforming the Party.

A sixth regional group of the PPC in Texas has been formed in Corpus Christi Texas to encompass the entire South Texas region and will be installed with a seat on the PPC Statewide Steering Committee at the upcoming November 20 meeting.

The Houston area PPC also were invited by the Democratic Chair to recruit members of the Early Voting Ballot Board to play a key role in process and approving mail in, military and provisional ballots. Our work on that Board brought us up close and personal to the ballot processing and counting associated with the election of the first Vietnamese American and Democrat to displace a Republican with important committee assignments from the Houston area. He beat the Republican by 31 votes!

Stan Merriman

In Washington...

The Whatcom Country Democrats Central Committee passed a resolution on Nov. 10, 2004 urging the Democratic Party to take action to ensure the vote counting is completed fairly around the country. The resolution can be found at:

www.whatcomdemocrats.com/resolution_2004_nov.html

It urges the Democratic Party to take action to ensure the vote counting is completed fairly around the country. We have forwarded it to our State Dems and asked them to forward it to the DNC. We'd like to encourage other grassroots Democrats to do the same thing and flood the Party with similar requests as soon as possible. ♦

What You Can Do - continued from p. 1

your rights. Bev Harris, at www.blackboxvoting.org, is doing amazing work to protect your right to have your vote counted. You can do good work without even leaving your chair! Another option for making your dollars work is to give money to Progressive Democrats of America by visiting www.pdamerica.org.

2. If you'd rather not spend money,

you're still in luck. You could boycott the companies who gave Bush the largest campaign contributions. A full list can be found at:

www.opensecrets.org/2000elect/contrib/P00003335.htm

3. If you live in a state with disputed votes, find a way to get involved in demanding a full count. In Ohio, for example, you can go to www.neohioact.org/electionaudit and volunteer to help with the effort. For information about to do at the national level, go to

www.neohioact.org/electionaudit/WhatYouCanDoSusan.htm

4. Read this story about HIGH SCHOOL students in Colorado who staged a sit-in to demand a vote count: www.wsws.org/articles/2004/nov2004/colo-n06_prn.shtml

Get jealous about how much fun they were probably having while simultaneously making a point. Be inspired.

5. If you're still too depressed to get out of bed, indulge in some Michael Moore commentary on the election:

www.michaelmoore.com/words/message/index.php?messageDate=2004-11-05

Or read all about how difficult it would be to pull up stakes and leave the country:

www.harpers.org/ElectingToLeave.html

Whatever it takes, get engaged in the process again. If you've already dusted yourself off and gotten back to work, welcome back! And if you never left, thank you! For those of you wondering where to turn for opportunities at the local level, check out:

www.pdamerica.org/caucuses.php ♦

Bush's Challenge

In addition to grassroots organizing of progressive Americans at the district and state levels, we at PDA also recognize that a Bush White House is something that must be contended with. In his recent article entitled *Bush's Challenge* James Zogby offers an interesting 'inside the beltway' perspective on this presidency as it enters what appears will be its second term. Dr. Zogby is founder and president of the Arab American Institute (AAI) and will be speaking at the Progressive Summit in January. ♦

Running for Office - continued from p. 1

used, not how much power has been accumulated.

I have watched over the course of my campaign the loss of endorsements from groups who would by all accounts be my natural constituents just because my opponent, if re-elected, will likely become the Speaker of the House. These groups, mainly labor and education, do not want to offend the future Speaker. The future Speaker has never been a friend to either, yet these groups failed to support my candidacy, and in some instances actually endorsed my opponent. There is no reason to believe

that he will change course and support their cause now that he will actually control the agenda of the house. In fact, their efforts will likely have to be redoubled. Wouldn't it have made more sense to help unseat this person? The clincher was when my local paper endorsed my opponent's candidacy simply because he was still there and had power.

Some of the most powerful people on this planet understand that power grows when it is shared. When the masses become empowered, nothing can stop them. Look at Ghandi and Martin Luther King. Both of these men understood that by sharing power, they became more powerful, so powerful that they paid the ultimate price for it. This is the model we should consider when voting. What will this candidate do with hisher power?

Beyond the psychology of voters, more mundane things matter. Organization is a huge piece of the pie. This election was like a knife that cut both ways. People were very motivated to vote this time out, but still lacked the time or interest to become involved in volunteering. Those folks who do understand the need campaigns have for volunteers have had myriad campaigns to choose from. As a result, the more glamorous campaigns, President, Governor, Senate, Congress, through no fault of their own, attracted the limited number of volunteers in the Democratic Party, making campaigns

like mine hard put for labor. The same applies for fundraising. By the time we get to State House races, the pool is nearly empty. My campaign was destined for mediocrity from the beginning.

Sometime in early October, it became abundantly clear that I was not going to win this election. My few volunteers had more pressing matters and fundraising had dried up. I was basically a one-woman campaign team trying to cover a district about the size of New England. Between my own job and my family responsibilities, it was

time to make a choice, either accept the inevitable or drive myself and my family crazy trying to save a sinking

ship. I decided to accept the inevitable.

With this acceptance came a new plan. I continued to make appearances and managed some canvassing, although not nearly what I had hoped in the beginning. The weather was a factor as well. It rained for the final two weeks. I was determined to avoid personal debt, so a lack of funding meant limited yard signs and advertising. I did what I could do, and gave up on what I wanted to do. It is well worth mentioning that I found a whole new appreciation for my friends and supporters, those people who supported me financially and emotionally throughout this entire process. I am very grateful for them.

The news was not all bad. As it turned out, I got 36% of the vote, a little better than the last Democratic showing. In fact, very similar to most Democratic races statewide. But, we know what has to be done to win and have identified a number of people interested in working in the county party. For a progressive like me, I'm pretty happy about it. In the most conservative state in the union, a progressive Democratic woman went head to head against an entrenched conservative Republican male and got a third of the vote with a very limited campaign. This shows that some folks are listening, and proves that the progressive agenda has a place at the table.

However, it is good medicine for the soul to undertake a campaign for

elected office. Running for office requires self-reflection. As a candidate, you get to meet your neighbors and community leaders. You improve your public speaking skills, and learn to listen to others. You can identify problems and offer solutions outside of government. You get an understanding of how hard it is to be a candidate, and how important volunteers are in the political process. But most importantly, you fulfill your commitment as a citizen of the United States and to our great Democracy. All in all, I recommend running for office, learn from this enriching experience, keep it in perspective, and most importantly – have fun. And if you can't run for office yourself, help out someone who is. ♦

"The only cure for grief is action."

***G. H. Lewes
(19th c. psychologist)***

"The greatest sin is sitting on your ass."

***Florynce Rae Kennedy
(20th c. activist and lawyer)***

Letter to the Editor

Thanks to each of you for your leadership and your time commitment for making PDA happen. It is truly invigorating to see this much energy and optimism right after such a rip-off election. It is an honor and a pleasure to be associated and work with all of you. I will do my best to see that Texas and the south are represented. I'm sick of seeing RED on a map!!! We're going to change that! ♦

Sheril, TX

On Arafat's Passing

PDA extends its condolences to all Palestinians on the passing of Yasser Arafat and shares the hope that peace in the region, built on mutual recognition and respect, and including an autonomous Palestinian state, is something that will be achieved in the near future. ♦

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