

## May 6, 2023 - DSA Business Meeting

**Present:** Jackie Reimers, Robbie Liben, Tony Davis, Arthur Endsley, Bob Rosen, John Wolverton, Sarah McClain, Mark Anderlik, Pamela Voekel, Jody Pavilack, Bethany, Moreton, Steven Clark, Catherine Parke

### Roles:

- **Facilitator:** Sandy
- **Time-keeper:** Robbie
- **Progressive stack:** Mark
- **Note-taker:** Arthur

### Introductions

- *Motion to approve the agenda* (Robbie, Jackie), *approved*
- *Motion to approve last meeting's minutes* (Jackie, Robbie), *approved*

### Treasurer's Report (Sarah McClain)

- \$6,998.54 in the bank; \$5,544.53 belongs to the Legislative Action group, \$1,454.01 belongs to the Chapter as a whole;
  - Quarter 1 dues were \$418.00
  - Sarah donated \$100
  - Thank you to those who donated \$100 for the May Day event

### Working Group Reports

- **Ecosocialist Working Group** (John Wolverton)
  - Pre-emption bills SB 208, 228 have been approved by the Legislature
  - One pre-empts any locality from prohibiting methane gas lines, stoves in new construction
  - Other pre-empts any action to prohibit liquid natural gas installations
  - Currently working with SAFE Cities to see if it's possible to get around this legislation
  - Also working to get the City to sign-on to the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty
  - Sandy: Do these bills prohibit electrification?
    - \* John: No, state government sponsor was not aware of our local efforts to incentivize electrification
  - Jody: Aware of any court-based challenges to legislative attempts to pre-empt cities?
    - \* John: Not aware of that; Anne Purnick (sp?) at SAFE Cities group might know more. State has pre-empted local control on housing issues because City governments are often under-the-thumb of NIMBYs.
  - Jody: Republican over-representation in state legislatures. . . Housing issues combined with Ecosocialist WG?
    - \* John: Housing issues closely related to what Ecosocialist does

- **Common Good Missoula** (Arthur Endsley, John Wolverton)
  - Arthur: John and I attended the Common Good Delegates Assembly last Wednesday. Event was largely about soliciting more money from member organizations. Of the six proposals for further research/support put to the Common Good member organizations, only one of those proposals actually originated in one of the Action Research Teams. The others were wish-list items from the City and Eran Pehan.
  - John: Housing Justice Action Research Team has disintegrated due to disagreements between the Team and the Common Good executive leadership. HJART has reformed outside of Common Good as the Welcoming Neighbors Network. Common Good was skeptical about the parking mandates proposal at the City right now... Robbie will be releasing an op-ed on this soon. See also Robbie's Action Alert to DSA membership.
  - Arthur: We also promised Common Good we would ask the DSA Membership to approve a one-time, \$100 donation to the Common Good Training Fund, as Lisa Davey did facilitate discernment at the most recent DSA Retreat. We'll put a formal proposal together for the DSA Membership at a future meeting.
  - John: Parking mandate is coming back to the City Council on Wednesday morning. One of the Councilors (Heidi West) put a substitute motion to block Daniel Carlino's motion, committing the City to maintain the status quo.
  - Sandy: How many folks are involved with the Welcoming Neighbors Network?
    - \* John: Seven
  - John: Liam, Hannah and others from the Tenants Union are involved with Common Good and other member organizations.
- **Editorial Working Group** (Robbie Liben)
  - Recent editorial by Sarah
  - "An Injury to One," by Robbie
  - Max Cummings authored an Op-Ed about the Montana People's Veto
  - Group meets alternate Tuesdays, by Zoom
  - If there's information you want to get out, someone on the Group can help write or ghost-write an editorial
  - Also, there are three new faces here today! If we do something weird, let us know!
- **Labor Working Group** (Mark Anderlik, Steven Clark)
  - First and third Thursday of each month
  - First Thursday is a training; most recently we had Kate Alexander from City Coffee to talk about her recent experience; Kate also said she'll get more active with DSA.
  - Third Thursday is the business/ organizing meeting.
  - On June 1, we have a training on Montana Labor Law.
  - Invite more people! Trainings are usually at 6:00 or 6:30 PM at Good

Works on Alder St. Business meeting is often at Paradise Falls or Union Club.

- Our group, Western Montana Workers Alliance, has been assisting various individuals wanting to set up a union; maintain confidentiality for most of the process.
  - \* Brand new place in Missoula that has been organizing well. . . This coming week, on Thursday, we're having a meeting with Black Coffee organizers. . .
- Steven: I work at Morgenroth Music, owner is looking to retire so we were hoping to turn it into a worker-owned co-op. Unfortunately, owner recently decided to sell to a big national corporation. Employees are pretty upset, considering next steps.
  - \* John: Is this the group that put pianos on Higgins?
- John: Is there any subversion/ action related to Black Coffee moving into the Wren?
  - \* Mark: That move was planned independent of any labor activities at Black Coffee
- Anything the general public can do to support Morgenroth employees?
  - \* Steven: Not yet, trying to keep things under wraps
- **Statewide Working Group** (Sandy Burch)
  - 934 signatures on the Montana People's Veto in two weeks, delivered to Governor on May 1; not just Missoula signatures but from around the state
  - Continuing to organize; next meeting is Sunday (May 7) to plan next steps
  - We can make a big difference in Montana politics because Montana politics is small. . .
  - Jackie: Were you able to give it to the Governor in person?
    - \* Mark: No, there were six of us from three different Montana communities. There were all kinds of things going on May 1, so we didn't expect to see the Governor; he's certainly not acted on it. There were about 12-15 bills we were asking him to veto. There's huge potential to make a difference in Montana and we demonstrated our capacity, getting almost 1000 signatures in two weeks.
  - John: Are the e-mails of all those signatures getting put into our database?
    - \* Mark: Yes
    - \* Sandy: First of many structure tests
  - Mark: We also have a list now of quite a few people who are willing to go out and get signatures. We're building up our volunteer base. We have almost 8,000-9,000 list of contacts state-wide, building on our defeat of LR131.

#### **Recruitment Drive** (Sandy Burch)

- Proposing a recruitment campaign. . . All the Working Groups (WG) need

- more people; everyone's maxed.
- Possible structural changes could be part of the process. As we bring in new people, we want to make sure our chapter is functioning well.
  - We have the makings of a powerful organization. We need to recruit to make it happen.
  - In order to recruit, we need...
    - Jean McAlevee methodology (“Organizing for Power”); also relevant to electoral, community, and labor organizing
      - \* McAlevee methodology involves “structured organizing conversations;” these are a game-changer.
      - \* Natural Leader identification, this is what the Republicans are doing but we need to do it for good.
    - No one is actually doing grassroots organizing in Montana since the effort to legalize marijuana
    - A credible and transformative plan to win; coherent, radical, successful campaigns
      - \* We are the Left in Montana
    - A clear ask
      - \* Defined roles and tasks, campaigns that teach and ask for collective action
      - \* Should be relatively easy for the majority of people to participate
      - \* One ask at a time
  - We can fold-in stuff we're already doing (Teamsters support, chapter party) as structure tests
  - John: Structured Organizing Conversations, are those typically one-on-one? Would it be more effective to have a “Welcome into the Organization” meeting instead of many one-on-one meetings?
    - Sandy: Absolutely, I think that's part of “leveling up,” new-member on-boarding.
  - Jody: How do college campuses fit into this?
    - Mark: In the past, we've tried to get a Young DSA (YDSA) chapter started at UM; hasn't happened. But during the Montana People's Veto campaign someone did come forward... Sandy, we need to figure out a follow-up.
    - Jackie: Also met a young man at the Socialize with Socialists at the Union Club who was really interested. Tried to follow-up, haven't been successful so far.
    - Jody: Did we have a presence at the Queer Prom?
    - John: Arthur and I tabled at the Sustainability Fair on the UM Campus; was struck by awareness of so many students. There are so many organizations for students to join and they're not around for very long.
    - Arthur: Graduate students at UM were starting to organize a labor union last year...
    - Jody: Another way to think about it is that creating activists when they're 18-22 can pay back over their lifetime... They often have a

ton of energy.

- Tony: “Leveling up” to me means engaging, recruiting...?
  - \* Sandy: Sorry, that is semantics... “Leveling up” also means new member on-boarding and escalation.
- Pamela: What about identifying student leaders of student organizations, asking how we can support them?
- Catherine: Human rights are being undermined everywhere... When we reach out to any group we should also ask: please teach us, too. Everything is at stake and on the table now.
- Mark: Looking for natural leaders... The young people who are interested in YDSA, they’ll already be people who are active. There is nobody except the Northern Plains Resource Council doing the kind of organizing we’re doing; huge gap in Montana non-profit work. There’s no sense of a campaign. How do we escalate this?
- John: Credible but do-able... I think we need to keep in mind that when we have a strategic loss (e.g., Veto Campaign ignored by the Governor)... We could win anything we want if we had a million people. For strategic losses, we have to be careful about exhausting people. We should filter what is winnable based on capacity.
- Catherine: And strategic losses can get the word out, like the Tennessee Three.
- John: If anyone has any connections with the people who were arrested in the Capital [during protests supporting Zooney Zephyr], it would be good to get an after-action report...
- Sandy: So what’s next? Should we meet specifically to talk about recruitment?
- Mark: I think we should have a Recruitment Working Group, or ad-hoc Working Group. In the meantime, Working Groups should be considering how to recruit people into their WGs. We could also keep working on YDSA.
- *Motion to re-convene about recruitment in a few weeks, a date to be determined by the Steering Committee* (Sandy, Mark)
  - Tony: It’s a reasonable time to escalate, after the Montana People’s Veto.
  - John: I think we could have it in place of a General Meeting
  - **Amended:** *Proposal to discuss recruitment at the June General Meeting, setting aside one hour* (Mark seconds), *approved*

*Motion to add 15 minutes to the agenda* (Sandy, Robbie), *approved*

#### **Ukraine War Resolution** (Mark Anderlik)

- Had an educational meeting to discuss the Ukraine War... Sarah and I felt the proposal before you was generally agreed upon by those present. Hayley (National DSA) put us in touch with the International Working Group, which has more resources and information. But we think the current proposal is sufficient. Some are of the opinion that the timing to

pressure our government is now; to voice dissent if nothing else.

- Robbie: Is this something we would National DSA to take on...?
  - Mark: We're catching up to National... It hadn't been apparent to us that any action has been taken.
- *Proposal reads:*

Be it resolved that the Western Montana chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America demands: - That the US government put its full weight and effort behind a cease-fire in Ukraine; - That this be followed by pressure on both parties to negotiate peace; and - That the US government stop escalation of the war, stop arms shipments to Ukraine, and stop encouraging Ukraine to fight until achieving the return of Crimea.

- Sandy: What comes next?
  - Mark: We could write an editorial, join the Veterans for Peace on their monthly marches...
- *Motion to endorse the Resolution* (Mark, Robbie), *passes* (7 ayes, 1 nay, 6 abstain)
  - Robbie: Do we intend to publicize this in some way?
    - \* Mark: We should, maybe as an editorial
  - John: It's my understanding that the US government hasn't been encouraging Ukraine to re-claim Crimea, but also that Crimea is essential Ukraine's economic independence.
- Robbie: We should continue the conversation.
- Arthur: Everyone's been so busy, some people had conflicts with this Education meeting, but Mark did a lot of great work pulling resources together. It would be nice to learn more about this in the future, maybe get short position presentations from various people?
- Bob: Does the large number of abstentions suggest we should wait a little longer before publicizing this?

#### **National Convention Delegates Election** (Arthur Endsley)

- We have the opportunity to send one delegate to the National Convention, which is held every 2 years
- Mark: Attended online previously. It's similar to a Union convention if you're been to one. It's going to be in-person in Chicago, which will be an opportunity to meet people. There are resolutions being proposed; can be like "drinking out of the firehose" because so many proposals are considered at the Convention. This is the basic decision-making body for DSA. There's a tendency toward cohesion.
- Arthur: Looking for two volunteers, the Delegate and the Alternate. According to National: "Alternates also attend the Convention and are responsible for filling in as delegates if a delegate needs to take a break or can't make part of the proceedings."
- Jody: Any way to use frequent flyer miles as a donation?
  - Mark: Yes, if that's possible

- Sandy: I'd like to nominate Mark and Jackie. I'm not going.
  - Mark and Jackie accept.
- John: I'll nominate myself as a alternate.

**Announcements:**

- Make sure you have Newsletter submissions to Bob Rosen by Friday, May 26
- Sandy: I'm planning to take a 2-week vacation from organizing in the next month
- Media: Voice of the People radio program, Montana DSA podcast, National podcast
- John: Who's doing the Instagram account?
  - *Jackie and Robbie might contribute*
- Mark: Want to plug Voice of the People; our next feature is about May Day, Sarah will be reading her editorial. We also have an interview with Zoey Zephyr.
  - Jody and Pamela: Dartmouth and Columbia YDSA chapters had recent victories... Possible to interview them...

*Motion to adjourn (Arthur, John), passes*