

Metro Atlanta DSA – Minutes: October 6, 2007

The meeting was called to order at the Friends Meeting House in Decatur, with introductions; 19 in attendance.

Treasurer's report:

We have \$1,458.30 in the checking account. Milt added that 15 people have contributed as members of the host committee for the Bernie Sanders dinner, and most of the expenses for the invitations have been paid. After collecting for tickets to the dinner we expect to be able to pay registration to the convention for all delegates and alternates.

Film showing:

Last month Norm hosted a film about Palestinian Jews who volunteered to fight in the Spanish civil war. George Sossenko, a veteran of the international brigades, spoke. More than 20 people attended. Austin suggested continuing with films, book discussions or other educational activities.

National convention (Nov. 9-10):

Milt circulated the tentative convention agenda. Up-to-date information will be at www.dsausa.org.

Many people will arrive **Thursday** night so registration starts about 4 pm but there will be no other activities that night.

Starting 10 am **Friday** Nov. 9 there will be an overview of DSA, including reports from each attending local. Joe Schwartz of Temple U. will talk on "The Political Lay of the Land," then resolutions will be presented.

Saturday morning will focus on the Economic Justice Agenda. In the afternoon a resolution on the organization's priorities will be presented. It is intended to be used to influence electoral candidates (especially for the House). Statements from candidates for DSA's National Political Committee and the election will follow.

On **Sunday** results of the NPC election will be announced; honorary chairs and vice-chairs will be elected; and we will discuss implementing the priorities. Lunch will be followed by workshops/presentations on organization building. The program ends with singing of the Internationale/Solidarity Forever.

Cliff Kuhn will lead a history walking tour of downtown Atlanta especially for convention attendees, at 3 pm Sunday after the convention ends.

We need to try to get media coverage of both the dinner and the rally.

NOTE RE FEES: Jeff moved that members who wish to attend the convention as observers are welcome to pay their own registration fees, but the local will also pick up their fees otherwise (in addition to the fees of delegates and alternates). Passed unanimously.

Nominating committee report and elections:

Jeff reported on the nominating committees' nominations and invited other nominations. We re-elected the chair: Milt Tambor; membership secretary: Norman Markle; recording secretary: Barbara Joye; and treasurer: Austin Wattles.

We also elected four (voting) national convention delegates: Barbara J., Milt, Barbara Segal, Norm and alternates: Adam Shapiro, Joel Amis, Austin, Bob Caine. Several others present expressed their intention to attend as observers.

Douglass-Debs Awards Dinner:

Friday, Nov. 9. Beer and wine at 6 pm, dinner 7 pm at the IBEW hall, 501 Pulliam St.

Invitations have gone out but since they were printed co-chairs Nan Orrock and Richard Ray found out that they need to be at another conference and will not be able to attend. Milt is seeking a substitute to present one of the awards.

Milt will open with a welcome and introduce Frank Llewellyn, who will talk about the organization and introduce John Lewis, who will introduce Bernie Sanders. Rev. McDonald will make remarks. Frank and Mary Hamilton will perform.

We have a short deadline for the program book printing – maybe two weeks; we will send an email on the deadline. Please contact Barbara Segal right away if you sell an ad. We can create the layout, or we welcome camera-ready copy. Ticket RSVPs are due Nov. 1. See invitation return cards for rates for both tickets and ads. Contact Milt if you didn't receive an invitation or want more.

We need help with ordering and picking up the beer; Barbara J. will handle wine. Barbara S. is doing layout for the program book; Paul S. is ordering the awards for Charlie, Alice and Bernie; Norm will send out reminders about the event.

Help is needed to sell ads and tickets and call people with reminders.

Greeters are needed, to arrive by about 5:30.

FEES: All of us who attend are expected to pay the \$35 ticket cost.

Jobs With Justice:

MADSA has joined the Jobs With Justice coalition, for a fee of \$100. See www.atljwj.org

Grady Hospital discussion (abbreviated notes on a complicated issue):

Milt described the formation and advocacy work of the Grady Coalition, which DSA joined, and introduced Coalition Coordinator Bert Skellie, who had just come from a strategy meeting.

In 1998 the Grady board proposed raising the fee for pharmaceuticals. The Grady Coalition was formed in response and has been reconstituted recently. The media gives the impression that Grady is mismanaged and needs to be an independent nonprofit, which is what the business community and Republicans want. This sounds OK but has not worked well for Piedmont Park, for example. It means no open records requirement and a self-perpetuating board, which is not likely to represent the poor. There is pressure to put this new “nonpolitical” entity between the board and the CEO. Children's Healthcare now runs Hughes Spalding (Grady's children's hospital) and has cut back on services.

The strategy session is working on a clear platform, including 1) no to privatization, so the hospital will remain accountable to the people; 2) the state, metro counties and Emory need to pay their fair share; 3) healthcare is a human right.

Most people don't know that the state cut Grady's funding by \$60 million this year, from the Disproportionate Care Hospital funds in the State's Indigent Care Trust Fund,

although charity care at Grady increased by \$73 million. County funding has been flat for years; no increases.

Henry also explained many aspects of the problem and concluded that without single payer health insurance no public hospital will do well. Many issues besides management quality caused this crisis.

-- Barbara Joye, recording secretary