



Durham People's Alliance

NEWSLETTER December 2011

2011 PA Year in Review

Despite a year of political challenges and budget constraints across every level of government, PA has prevailed as the progressive voice of Durham.

This newsletter is dedicated to highlighting our achievements, and looking forward to 2012: a year that presents many challenges and opportunities.

PA-PAC Election News

We have just concluded a stellar year for PA-PAC. Thanks to a fortuitous series of events, we succeeded in electing progressive council members, and assisting in the re-election of Mayor Bill Bell. We want to thank Mayor Bell and council members Diane Catotti, Steve Schewel, and Eugene Brown for their willingness to serve the citizens of Durham. We are now looking forward to an exciting but complicated election year in 2012.

Next year looks to be complicated for a number of reasons. The conspicuously flawed Republican redistricting (with not only its cracking, stacking and packing but the division of an incredible number of precincts) promises much mischief and confusion, and the lawsuits concerning it only add to the uncertainty. It is possible (but unlikely as of this writing) that the primary, which is scheduled for May 8, could be delayed.

The most remarkable thing about the May election is a Constitutional Amendment so egregious that the Republicans who adopted it are now running away from it. We could be positioned to be the only southern state to drive a stake through the heart of this intolerance. The text of the measure reads: "Constitutional amendment to provide that marriage between one man and one woman is the only domestic legal union that shall be valid or recognized in this State." Legal scholars agree that this language goes far beyond the stated intent to "ban gay marriage". If adopted, this bigoted amendment could potentially invalidate all same-sex domestic partner relationships and even impact domestic violence protection for unmarried couples, child custody and visitation, end-of-life directives, and domestic partnership benefits for public employees.

If you are an "unaffiliated" voter, you may have to decide between voting in a heavily contested Republican Presidential Primary (echoing the decisive role Durham and North Carolina unexpectedly played in the 2008 Democratic Primary); and an equally contested primary among incumbents and challengers for the five seats on the Board of Commissioners. Dissatisfaction among some voters with the performance of the current board means that there will be several challengers; and if Pam Karriker upholds her pledge not to run for a full term, there will be an open seat, creating a free-for-all in this contest.

New leadership for the Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People means that the PA-PAC may have a more dynamic relationship with this venerable organization. We salute Dr. Lavonia Allison for her dedication and past leadership, and look forward to getting to know the new members of the leadership, including Reverend Philip Cousins.

Durham County is now part of four congressional districts, not only one. We will be closely watching the filing for these seats. In addition, there is a new Senate District 22 which lacks an incumbent. Some candidates are making their intentions known.

In the realm of more-or-less wild speculation, it is possible that we will witness yet another special election for Durham District Attorney. This would mean that we would have had elections every two years (2006, 2008, 2010, and 2012) for an office that ostensibly has a four year term!

Do stay tuned, and keep your powder dry. Be prepared to support the candidate(s) of your choice with your money, your emotional support, and your time and energy. You can make a difference! And do not forget to write a generous check to PA-PAC for 2012, it may be a bumpy ride!

Committee Updates

Education: If you recall, the PA education committee re-formed less than two years ago. We are proud to say that our education committee has turned into a force to be reckoned with! The group worked with others on the Durham Public Schools (DPS) budget and with their intense lobbying and creative negotiations were able to save all but 36 teaching positions in Durham. They also increased transparency within DPS and worked on equitable school funding.

PA co-hosted a well-attended community education screening and discussion about school reform, thanks to a grant from the PA Fund. In addition two members attended a workshop on teacher evaluation to better understand what may be coming down the pike for our Durham teachers.

Last but certainly not least, they worked to pass the ¼ cent sales tax referenda, once again saving teaching positions and funding from pre-K through college. It was a successful year in no small part thanks to the committee forming coalitions with other groups in Durham and across the state to become even more effective.

The Committee usually meets the first Monday of the month, but will meet on January 9th.

Housing: PA's Housing Committee spent the first half of 2011 year fighting for a permanent funding source for very-low income housing, community services and neighborhood revitalization. We would like to thank them for their tireless work on behalf of Durham's most vulnerable citizens. Currently, PA members are working with Durham CAN's Housing Committee on three issues: Rapid Rehousing to help homeless people afford rental homes, jobs for homeless people, and "inclusionary housing" to include homes affordable to low income people in new and renovated housing, especially around transit.

Zoning & Planning: For two years, PA members have been fighting 751 South, a proposed intense development near Jordan Lake.

Neighbors of 751 S have filed a lawsuit in Superior Court challenging the validity of the rezoning. Judge Wayne Abernathy rejected Durham County's motion to dismiss the neighbor's lawsuit, but allowed the developers to join the suit. The case will be heard on January 9, 2012.

In January 2011, the Durham City Council extended the Urban Growth Area to include the 751 S property. City staff prepared an economic analysis, showing that annexation of 751 S would be a net loss for the city for years to come. The council voted to delay any decision until the lawsuit was completely settled. Subsequently, Mayor Bell was quoted as saying, "I wouldn't want the administration to spend any more time on it; they've spent enough now. I'm through with it ..."

Finding themselves without access to city services, the developers asked the county for sewer service. The County Manager opposed extension of sewer to the site because it would violate a long-standing agreement with the city, but the commissioners overruled him. Consequently, the developers have a promise of sewer services, but still have no water source. One local activist proposed that the developers name 751 S "The Sahara at Southpoint."

Stop Amendment One Committee: It is time for Durham to take a stand in one of the most important civil rights issues of our generation. North Carolina's anti-gay constitutional amendment will impact much more than gay families. People's Alliance is taking the lead in Durham to mobilize and win the vote against the anti-family, bad for business, divisive marriage amendment in May. Our goals are to both support the statewide organizing, but also to bring to bear all the Bull City's progressive energy to get out the vote locally. There is so much to do. Wanna help? We have already had our first meeting and organized a series of Action Groups. These groups need people with many different skills so please get involved. The marriage amendment will also be the topic for the January membership meeting. Come and learn about all the ways that, if passed, this amendment will be harmful to North Carolina citizens, families and businesses. You will also learn more about what each of these action groups will be doing, upcoming events, and how every PA member is needed if we are going to win in May.

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Make a Difference in 2012: If you'd like to join any of these committees and make a difference in Durham, call 919-682-7777 or email PA@Durhampa.org today! We cannot be the voice of social change in Durham without our members and volunteers. Is there an issue we should be working on? Do you want to start a committee around an issue you are passionate about? Are you available for one-time or reoccurring office tasks? Let us know – we can't do it without YOU!

We are thankful for YOU!

We would like to thank all of our members, sustainers, and friends for all of your hard work in 2011. Here are just some of the people who helped make 2011 a success:

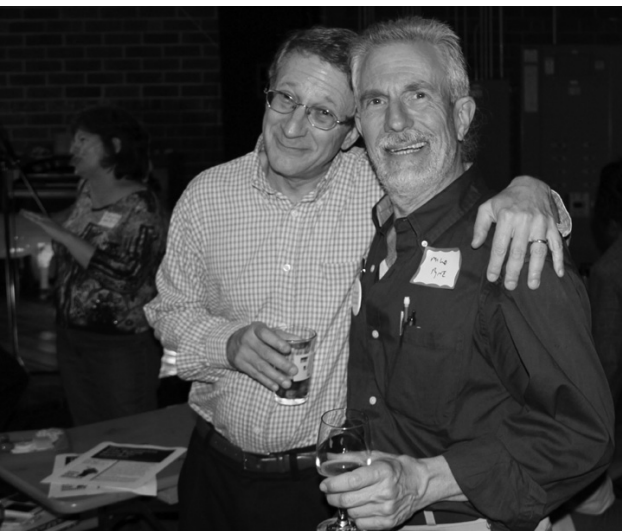
January Membership Meeting

Mark your calendar and get ready to begin the hard work that is needed in 2012!

We will elect our new Officers and Coordinating Committee, discuss Fracking and hear from the PA Stop Amendment One Committee.

Be sure to join us!

Tuesday, January 31st
The Kings Daughter's Inn
204 N. Buchanan Blvd.
6:30 p.m. social, 7:00 meeting.



Newly elected City Council member Steve Schewel and Milo Pyne at PA Social 11/17/11.

- **Jim O'Reilly** for developing and continuing to fine-tune a new PA database. Jim is always an email or phone call away (even if he's traveling across the country!) to help solve a problem or create a new report. We thank you for your patience and perseverance in this task!
- **Mark Hellman**: Did you get a renewal letter in the mail this year? If so, thank Mark! Membership renewals are a time consuming process and Mark was always there to ensure the letters got out on time.
- **Martha Scotford** for her continued service as our newsletter designer extraordinaire. This beautiful paper wouldn't be in your hands (or on your screen) without Martha!
- **Steve Bocckino** for keeping abreast on the 751 case in all of its twists and turns. Steve is an active citizen watchdog for all of us.
- **Lanier Blum** and **Lorisa Seibel** for their continued work on the housing committee.
- **Gann Herman** for taking the lead and becoming the PA representative to Durham C.A.N.
- **Ryan Clare** of Vertizontal Studios for completing the new PA website at an affordable rate and for being so quick to respond to any issue or concern.
- **The Kings Daughters Inn** for allowing us to use their beautiful meeting space.
- **iContact Email Marketing** for providing PA and NC nonprofits with free e-marketing accounts.
- **Fullsteam Brewery** for accommodating our PA Social and donating a growler to the winner of our "name that tune" contest.

• **The 2011 Coordinating Committee.** The PA Coordinating Committee is essential to moving PA forward. Here are just some of the ways these good Durhamites give their time and talent to PA: Attending monthly committee meetings and other community events on behalf of PA, organizing our issue focus, answering a litany of emails from staff, outreach, envelope stuffing and much more! **David Harris, Bob Healy, Kerry Sutton, Kathryn Spann, James Hill, Theo Luebke, Page McCullough, Milo Pyne, Ryan Smith, Shamielka Rhinehart and Dan Hudgins** – we couldn't do it without you. Thank you so very much.

• **PA-PAC Co-Chairs Milo Pyne and Tom Miller**, along with the assistance of volunteers, formulated questionnaires, conducted interviews, facilitated our endorsement meetings, and raised enough money to send out two beautiful endorsement cards and an Indy advertisement to support our candidates.

• **Volunteers:** Thank you to all for the work you have done this year. Here are just some of the actions YOU took to help PA move forward: staffed the PA booth, wrote letters and emails to newspapers and city/county officials, attended rallies, marched in parades, organized events, worked polls, attended Membership Meetings, assisted with our Sustainer Campaign to raise funds for PA, and much more.

Special thanks to **our Sustainers** for their continued and generous support of People's Alliance. This year we need an additional \$8,000 to cover administrative costs. Sustainer support ensures that PA continues to thrive as the progressive voice of Durham.

Membership Dues Renewal Reminder

We announced in October our plans to move from a rolling renewal date to a standard renewal date for all members. This change will free ten hours per month (1/4 of staff's time!) in subsequent months to work on issues, new membership recruitment, and other key tasks that keep PA moving forward. If you renewed in the 1st half of 2011, you will receive a renewal notice in January. We'll send out the remaining renewal notices in March. In 2013 we will migrate to a standard January renewal for all members. We humbly request you take part in this changeover and return your renewal card upon receipt, saving us time and resources (follow-up and 2nd notices are time consuming tasks). With a major election approaching in 2012 and so much at stake, we need your support now more than ever. Transitioning to an efficient renewal process will be a win-win for all of us. Thank you!



Durham People's Alliance

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www.durhampa.org

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*Please Contact PA Today to
GO GREEN and opt out of the
hard-copy newsletter! Thank you!*

Durham People's Alliance Membership Form

1821 Green St. #102 Durham, NC 27705 (919) 682-7777

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____ e-mail _____

- Put me on the PA 2x a month E-newsletter for updates and local events.
- I only want to receive the newsletter ONLINE. Do *not* send me paper version.

Enclosed are my annual dues in the amount of: \$ _____

\$35.00 (individual) \$50.00 (household)

\$51-100+ (sustainer) limited income: \$ _____

Charge my MasterCard / Visa (circle one)

Acc.# _____

Signature _____

Exp. Date ____ / ____

***We are 100% member funded and driven.
We thank you for your support.***

Areas of Interest:

- healthy environment
- gay/lesbian/bi/trans rights
- education
- elections and PAC
- growth with justice
- transportation
- housing
- race relations/diversity
- economic & tax fairness
- strengthening P A
- labor rights
- volunteering**
- Other _____

*Please tell us what you care about, want to help with, skills to share,
issues that you would like to see PA address and general comments:*

