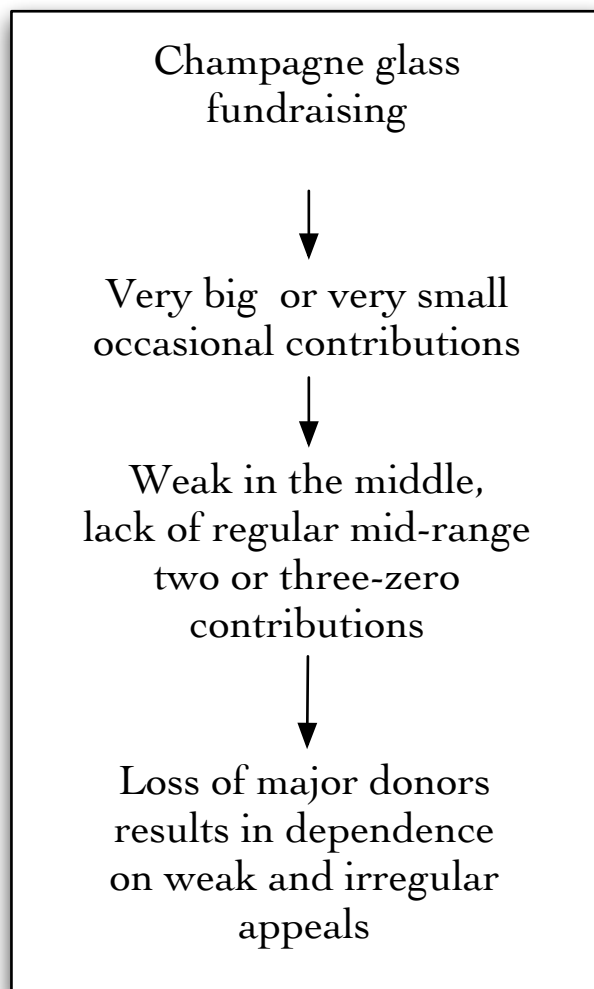


From: John McCreery, former International Vice-Chair
To: DPCA
Re: Strategic perspectives on problems confronting the DPCA
Date: Wednesday, March 23, 2011

Let me begin by congratulating everyone who participated, either physically or virtually, in the DPCA meeting in Seoul. I expected the meeting to be stressful. I feared that Democrats Abroad might be irretrievably damaged. Instead, I saw democracy in action, compromise reached after serious debate. Kudos to everyone involved. We now have, I propose, a window of opportunity to consider what I believe to be the most pressing problems confronting Democrats Abroad as we start to prepare for the 2012 election cycle. The first is our fundraising.

PROBLEM NO.1



My most memorable DNC meeting was one at which I heard a talk about fundraising. The speaker began by observing that professional fundraisers rate contributors by the number of zeroes in their donations, i.e., as one, two, three, four, five or six-figure

donors. She went on to note that there was only one of these categories in which Democrats had consistently outraised Republicans. Which do you think it is?

She was, mind you, talking about the Party in the Terry McCauliffe era, before the online fundraising revolution pioneered by the Dean and Obama campaigns. But the answer was six. That's right, six-figure donations from the limousine liberal crowd.

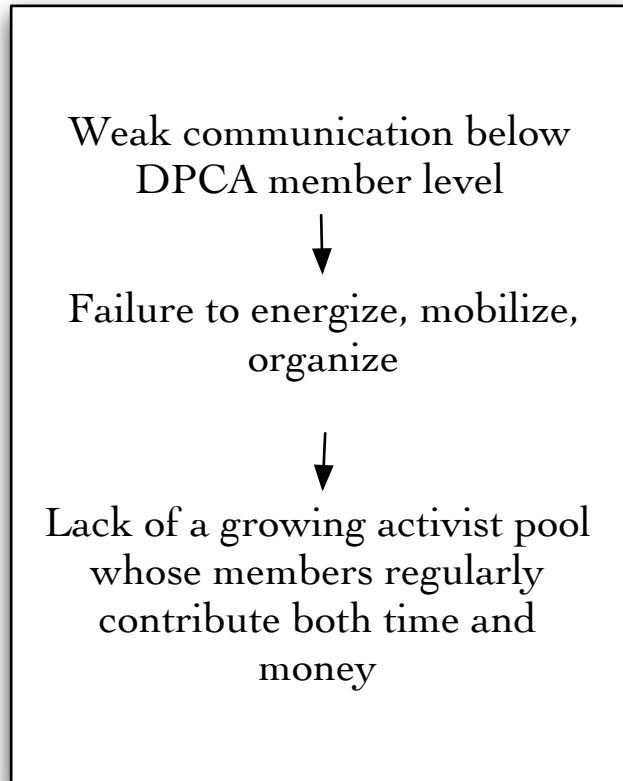
The speaker then went on to point out that, while we like to think of the Republicans as plutocrats, the categories in which they consistently beat us like a drum are the two and three zero categories. The reason is simple. The Republican base includes lots of churchgoers and members of Rotary clubs and other business associations. These are people for whom putting ten or twenty dollars in the collection plate every Sunday or spending a few hundred dollars on association fees and events is not big deal. In fact they see it as an obligation, a necessary part of doing what's right. In contrast, liberals and progressives are, if not downright poor, pikers. We may vote early and often, but we give too little and too late.

A look at DPCA donations over the last several years reveals that we used to be like the rest of the party. A handful of extremely generous people gave very large donations, in the \$20,000-plus range (often as much as allowed by campaign finance law). Only a few more gave in the few hundred to few thousand range. The rest was in very small and irregular donations. Thus, when the angels who gave big gifts disappeared (partly the result of the DNC's DEXPAT program that targets big donors directly), the top of our champagne glass disappeared. And judging by last year's results, only one donation in the thousand-dollar range, our stem is almost gone as well. If my memory serves me right, we budgeted for \$250,000 in income and received only \$158,000.

Our dream has been, of course, that effective use of electronic fund-raising would do for us what it did for the Dean and Obama campaigns. Just think, if we have a 100,000 members and they gave us an average of \$10 each, that would be a million dollars. That the dream has failed to materialize is all too evident. And, I suggest, the biggest reasons why aren't things we can do anything about. With organizations like MoveOn, DFA, Campaign for America's Future....the DSCC and DCCC all constantly bombarding our members with pleas for donations, our members' wallets are severely tapped even before we try for our bit.

What we can do, however, is to create a culture of giving, starting by focusing our efforts on recruiting, energizing, mobilizing and, above all, organizing a growing pool of activists. And here is where our current communications strategy is, to put it mildly, a very weak reed, indeed.

PROBLEM NO.2



At this point our communication tools include (1) a Website of no particular interest to anyone who is not already an activist, (2) occasional emails begging for donations that are little more than pale imitations of those used by other Party and non-Party organizations, (3) our Marketing Toolkit, which provides sample advertising, and (4) our Yahoo! groups, one of which is restricted to DPCA members and the other, DemsAbroad, of which I am currently moderator, is, while theoretically open to all members of Democrats Abroad, largely moribund. In the usual way of online groups it has become a space where only a handful of voices are heard and by at most 355 list members.

What is entirely missing from our communication program is **a systematic program for recruiting, training, motivating and retaining activists**, people who will not only contribute their time and energy but, if we build the culture of giving, will come to see regular financial contributions as part of what being an activist is.

The question I pose to you is whether we can now focus on filling this gap and, if we are successful, building a vibrant organization with a solid financial base.

Respectfully yours,
John McCreery
Yokohama, Japan
Former International Vice Chair
Moderator, DemsAbroad