

Local Democrats Sponsor Women's March Caravan

Kennett Area Democrats Organized a Four-Bus Caravan to Washington, DC

In his Inaugural speech, President Trump said, "We are transferring power from Washington, D.C., and giving it back to you, the people."

Last Saturday we took him up on it and accepted his offer.

In mid-November, the Kennett Area Democrats (KAD), (Zone 8 of the Chester County Democratic Committee), began an effort to organize a bus caravan to the Women's March in Washington on January 21. An organizing committee consisting of Carol Catanese, Vicki Wiedwald, and Sally Bruffman began the work of acquiring buses, collecting money, and organizing seating. Through Klein Transportation, the team was able to secure three buses for the day. Using Email, Facebook and the KAD website, the three buses were sold out in less than a week, with a long waiting list. Going back to Klein, the team was able to secure a fourth bus, which again sold out in just a few days.

Early on the morning of the march, more than 200 souls from the area boarded the buses and headed south. On the trip down to the DC Metro station, we could see buses everywhere. One of the MD turnpike rest areas had over 150 buses in the parking lot.

Even though the DC Metro system had added extra cars and trains, they were all packed to the gills with excited people from all over the country.



On our way at the Metro stop

The Metro station located closest to the march site had been closed because of the massive crowds. It was then that we got the feeling that this was something really big.

Once on the ground near the Native American Museum, we were quickly caught up in a massive sea of humanity, unable to get anywhere near the speakers or the stages. We were simply stuck with very little room to move very far in any direction. But, guess what? It didn't matter... the joy of the crowd, the amazing creative home-made signs, and the good humor of the people around us made it fun and OK. Tired feet, sure, but energized, you bet.

Oh, the hats and sashes...

Everywhere we looked there was a sea of pink pussy hats, most hand knit or crocheted with little ears much like cats' ears. And long sashes with the event name printed on them. At one point, some of the group passed nearby the Smithsonian Institute, a museum of our nation's history. A museum employee came up to one of our folks and asked if they could have a sash, presumably for their collection. It was happily turned over to them.

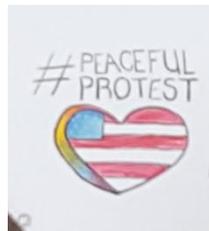
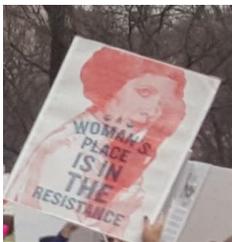


The crowd...

While technically a Women's March, at least 30-35% of the crowd were men. More importantly, there were many whole families there, all holding hands or coat sleeves to be sure no one got lost. There were elderly with walkers, wheelchair confinees, and many young people from teenagers to college students. The crowd was very diverse with black and white and Asian faces, LGBTQ folks, and some folks in Muslim religious garb.

Can't Believe the signs...

Almost all the signs people carried were hand-made and were really creative. There were many plays on words using terms of the female reproductive system, and one that really stuck out... FREE MELANIA. Here are some examples:



And the mood...

When asked to describe the mood of the people around them, our folks used words like amazing, palpable, joyful, positive energy, a beautiful experience. People were polite, excusing themselves when

trying to move around, sharing food, and getting to know their fellow trapmates. While there was a lot of anti-Trump talk and symbolism, we did not feel any bitterness or hate toward him or anyone else. Emotions were high, and there were spontaneous chants bubbling up through the crowd...

*“What does Democracy look like?
This is what Democracy looks like”*

We found the Police to be very supportive and non-interfering. If a squad car or ambulance needed to pass, people simply got out of way and let them pass. Most of us did not see any counter protesters at all, although there is the story of a truck with four Trump supporters and a loud PA system, trying to disrupt and provoke the marchers. Soon the truck was surrounded by people and could no longer move. Later, a policeman asked them to turn off the PA because it was illegal in that area.

What Comes Next...

For most of us, the march was not a single event but a new beginning for Democracy loving Americans. Already social media is buzzing with tips for contacting Congress people, and following their voting records (VoteSpotter.com). KAD has also formed a new political action committee charged with informing and energizing their members to take action on bills being considered at both the Federal and State levels. We are also encouraging our neighbors to consider running for local offices, and providing training and mentoring for them.