



# THE DEMOCRAT



Clark County Democratic Party Newsletter

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*Serving Democrats with News and Opinion*

February 2009

## Obama off to a sprightly start

After a historic inaugural that drew the largest crowd ever to Washington, D.C., President Barack Obama has established a bright, new pattern of leadership.

Beset by doctrinaire Republicans and others determined to see him falter, the president has a two-word rejoinder: "I won."

As he goes about the nation's crushing business with deliberate speed, his very calm and positive demeanor seems to be acid in the self-made wounds of his assailants. From Rush Limbaugh to Glenn Beck and Bill O'Reilly, the haters spew ever more enraged bile in response to every Obama notion and nuance.

Meanwhile, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is greeted with rousing cheers from the career diplomats at the State Department. Military leaders dripping in gold braid gather to applaud the president's initiatives to restore honor and value to their service. Throughout the rest of the government, the thin layer of partisan abrasives laid down during the Bush-league years gives way to reason and the best interests of the public.

All the while the private sector appears determined to make things as bad as possible before the president and his

congressional allies have time to make things better.

Hardly a day goes by without an announcement by corporate America that another 10,000 or 20,000 working people are going to be booted into the street and onto the straining unemployment rolls. The bankers and financial fixers take their billions of bailout dollars to stuff their feather beds and line their golden parachutes while refusing to open up the credit taps for productive purposes. Congressional minority Republicans wheedle and whine for changes in the ever-growing bailout packages, then take to the media to demand more and better deals for the Midas class.

People know better. Early polling consistently shows growing support for Obama and his determination to encourage us to pull out of the slough of despond. As of publication of this newsletter, his approval rating is higher than for any president since John F. Kennedy.

This is a democracy and we are Democrats, however, and all of us have our little complaints about the president. Can we hold them in reserve, at least awhile, and join to defend him against the conservative curs? Our party is in his capable hands and he merits our support.

## Pelz beats challenger; Macoll loses to Smith

Dwight Pelz won a full term as chair of the Washington State Democratic Central Committee on Jan. 24, withstanding a rigorous challenge posed by Snohomish County Democratic Chairman Mark Hintz.

Vice Chair Eileen Macoll did not survive a challenge, however, losing to Spokane County Democratic Chair Sharon Smith.

Treasurer Habib Habib and Secretary Luis Moscoso both were re-elected without opposition.

Thurston County Democratic Chair

Jim Cooper was elected head of the state chairs organization. Judy Guenther of Lewis County was re-elected chair of the 3rd Congressional District Caucus.

The party leaders assembled for the weekend session in Olympia voted 98-65 for Pelz over Hintz. Among those speaking out for Pelz was Peter Goldmark, elected as State Lands Commissioner last November. He gave Pelz much credit for his successful challenge to the Republican who had held the post.

The contest between Smith and Macoll was decided on a 107-59 tally. Participants didn't say a lot about their choice. Observers including the political writer for The Daily Olympian noted that Macoll went to the Democratic National Convention as a super-delegate supporting the nomination of Hillary Clinton. Smith was seen as a major state worker for Barack Obama.

By most measures, Pelz has been a solid and effective leader of the state

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**Meetings scheduled for February 2009 by the Clark County Democratic Central Committee and other Democratic organizations. (Check for updates at the county party's website: [www.bluedonkeys.com](http://www.bluedonkeys.com)).**

<b>Monday, February 2</b>	<b>Executive committee of Clark County Democratic Central Committee, 7 p.m. meeting at the Carpenters' Hall.</b>
<b>Saturday, February 7</b>	<b>18th Legislative District Democrats meet at 9 a.m. in the Clubhouse at Tri-Mountain Golf Course in Ridgefield.</b>
<b>Monday, February 9</b>	<b>Clark County Democratic Central Committee meets at 7 p.m. at the Longshore Hall on Ingalls Street.</b>
<b>Saturday, February 14</b>	<b>49th Legislative District Democrats will not meet on the regular February Saturday as it is Valentine's Day. Next meeting March 14 at Hometown Buffet.</b>
<b>Tuesday, February 17</b>	<b>Clark County section of 15th Legislative District Democrats meets at 5 p.m. at the Parker House in Camas.</b>
<b>Saturday, February 21</b>	<b>Clark County Women Democrats meet at 11:30 a.m. for lunch at Boppin' Bo's, Vancouver Plaza.</b>
<b>Monday, February 23</b>	<b>17th District Democrats meet at 7 p.m. in the dining room at the Waterford on Village Loop Drive.</b>

## Women Democrats reschedule after December blizzard stifles meeting

Owing to the cancellation by severe weather of their December meeting, the Clark County Women Democrats will gather for a no-host luncheon and meeting on Saturday, Feb. 21, at 11:30 a.m. at Boppin' Bo's Restaurant, 7809 N.E. Vancouver Plaza Drive next to the now-defunct WinCo store..

"There will not be a featured speaker this month," said Chair Donna Quesnell. "Instead we will hold our annual White Donkey auction-fundraiser. We ask members and guests to bring items — practical, and/or decorative, or service vouchers that will encourage purchases."

Quesnell said she hopes that folks who attended the inaugural festivities in Washington, D.C., will attend the luncheon to share their memories and insights.

Also, the Women Democrats will discuss goals for the organization as well as suggestions for forthcoming activities.

The Raging Grannies will entertain.

All Democratic men and women are invited and welcome. As space at the restaurant is limited, those planning to attend are asked to inform Quesnell by telephone. Her number is 360-694-0766.

## 49th Democrats bumped by Valentines

The regular February meeting of the 49th Legislative District Democratic Central Committee would be the second Saturday of the month. That happens to be Valentine's Day this year, the second busiest day for all dining establishments including the Hometown Buffet where the 49th Democrats usually have their meeting. Restaurant management begged the Democratic group to give up the regular reservation so the crowd of celebrants could be accommodated. The executive committee agreed. The next regular meeting of the organization will be at the restaurant on March 14 at 9:30 a.m.

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# How we celebrated big Obama day

By Dena Horton

Clark County Democratic Chair

I arrived in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 18 and could feel the excitement in the air.

Everywhere I went there were people selling inauguration t-shirts and trinkets. I was most struck by the strangers I passed on the sidewalks. They were smiling and saying, "Good morning!" and other friendly salutations.

People weren't just excited, they were happy! I was staying with a friend and several others who had flown in for the week. The Detroit native amongst us made us put on a fifth layer of clothing before leaving for the ceremony and later we were very glad she did! It was 23 degrees outside but felt much colder.

I stood in line to get into the purple section for approximately six hours. My five layers of clothes and the body heat from my fellow Americans kept me warm despite the temperature.

As I got close to the gate entrance, the mass of people pushing to get in crushed me up against a cement barricade and I started to hyperventilate. A capitol policeman saw my distress and pulled me and my friend around the barricade and into the entrance. I made it in, but unfortunately, the purple gate was closed 10 minutes later,



stranding ticket holders, including Clark and Cowlitz County representatives Monica Stonier and Jo Brewer, outside.

I couldn't see the stage area well, but found a spot to watch the ceremony on the jumbotron. Finally, the ceremony started and history was made.

It was an incredible speech, and my eyes teared up at several points.

Unfortunately, I had to skip the parade in order to get ready for the Western Inaugural Ball. At the ball, I saw several friends as well as Congressman Baird and Sen. Ron Wyden. From a

distance, I saw the concert performed by Mark Anthony and Jennifer Lopez. I got within 200 yards of the stage to see the speeches and dances by Vice President Joe Biden and Jill Biden and President Barack Obama and Michelle Obama.

As we left Washington, it was a relief to have the event happen without any major incidents. It was also very emotionally moving to face an unknown future, not with fear and apprehension, but with hope and determination. Let's keep working together and keep the momentum of hope moving forward!

## Pelz wins another term in face of opposition

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party since he won the position three years ago. At that time the party was in dire financial condition owing in part to the cost of recounts necessary to secure the election of Gov. Christine Gregoire. Pelz worked the party out of debt and into a solidly positive current financial condition. During his watch Democratic Sen. Maria Cantwell was re-elected by a substantial margin, Goldmark won his challenge and a record 240,000 people opted for participation in last February's precinct caucuses.

Along the way, however, Pelz ruffled feathers with his aggressive style and blunt manner.

Pelz did not say much about the

opposition following the vote. He did reiterate the party's record of considerable success during his tenure. At the same time he cautioned that the party will be hard-pressed to continue raising money at the pace it enjoyed following the Gregoire recount battle four years ago.

The party could face structural challenges as well given the limbo in which the U.S. Supreme Court has left the two-party system. Much of the party's success has been possible thanks to the high energy generated by the charismatic Obama candidacy. So far, notwithstanding Smith's win over Macoll, the party hasn't retained much of that energy.

While The Olympian and other

media focused on the leadership contests, many participants reported that the fuss about Pelz and Macoll was a minor bump in the celebration of Democratic victories and possibilities.

The party had planned to kick off the weekend activities with a reception at the Governor's Mansion next to the Legislative Building. Even though a lot of leading Democrats were in Washington, D.C., for the Obama inaugural, so many folks showed up in Olympia that the party had to move its party to the Legislative Building Rotunda. Gov. Chris Gregoire held a photo session there and delivered a stirring address about Democratic prospects.

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## Peggy Pratt illustrates how to be a solid PCO

**This is the forty-eighth in a series of introductions to some local Democrats. Send suggestions for subjects of future columns to [mikewrit@hotmail.com](mailto:mikewrit@hotmail.com).**

Peggy Pratt pretty much epitomizes the ideal Democratic Precinct Committee Officer.

She has held that position for more than a decade in Precinct 120, Vancouver's Arnada neighborhood west of Interstate 5 between Fourth Plain Boulevard and McLoughlin Boulevard. She walks the streets of modest homes daily. She knows who's moving in, who's moving out, who's facing foreclosure, who's a solid Democratic voter, who's leaning in that direction and who might be willing to consider changing party affiliation.

She had opposition for the post in the August 2008 primary but easily prevailed with the highest total vote of any PCO in the 49th Legislative District.

She would be an obvious asset to any candidate looking for votes at the doors of Arnada. For no particular or evident reason, however, no candidate asked for her help in the precinct during the recent general election campaign when a better turnout from 120 could have made the difference in at least two close counts. Nonetheless, she worked the precinct using such materials as were available at the combined cam-

paign office in Orchards, where she regularly volunteered.

She doesn't remember not being a solid Democrat since she was born Petronella Mary Gallo in New York's Little Italy in 1925, the youngest of seven children raised in a fourth-floor walk-up by Gioacchino "Jack" Gallo and Giuseppina "Josephine" Talarico. Although both parents were born and raised in Calabria, they didn't meet until after Jack migrated through Ellis Island in 1905 and Giuseppina arrived in 1906. All seven of the children adopted anglicized names for school at P.S. 23 across Baxter Street from their home. Papa was a distant figure, working the graveyard stevedore shift at Pier 21 and serving as a union official proud of keeping the family away from the Mafia. Peggy worked a number of jobs after leaving school. While at her PBX at the Bank of China she met a young Chairman Mao who came to New York before the war to take over the bank for his party.

In 1948 Peggy married William Pratt. In 1950, with the first of three children, they moved west, taking 65 days in a house trailer. Peggy worked out of the home most of her life and retired from the State School for the Blind after 23 years. She bought her comfortable duplex just off McLoughlin 25 years ago and began the continuing process of learning the politics and particulars of her neighbors.