



THE DEMOCRAT



Clark County Democratic Party Newsletter

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Panel to review caucus system

Dwight Pelz, chairman of the state Democratic Central Committee, has appointed a 17-member task force to review the state's political party structure built from the foundation of precinct caucuses.

In announcing formation of the panel in mid-February, Pelz acknowledged that his action was belated. The review was ordered by the state Democratic Convention last June acting upon a resolution presented by the King County Democratic Central Committee. Similar resolutions were offered by other counties.

Al Swindell of Woodland, immediate past chair of the 18th Legislative District Democratic Central Committee, is the only task force member who lives south of Olympia and the only representative of the 3rd Congressional District. Eight of the 17 members live in King County.

Pelz said the panel will begin holding meetings and hearings around the state starting April 26 in Tacoma. Sharon Mast of Seattle, a member of the Democratic National Committee, will chair the group.

The King County resolution noted that a record 240,000 Democrats had attended their precinct caucuses in February 2008 but that a lot more were unable to participate

because they had work or other obligations. The resolution asserted that those people were disenfranchised by the process.

The resolution noted as well that precinct caucus participants had demanded a better way of organizing the party's processes of nomination and consideration of issues. The resolution pointed out that the Democratic National Committee had ordained that Washington could not continue to select participants for the national convention by both primary election and caucus selection.

Dissatisfaction with the system was strong and widespread in Clark County. The record turnout for the Feb. 8 caucuses, fueled in considerable part by enthusiasm for Barack Obama as well as by dissatisfaction with the Bush administration, overwhelmed facilities and organizers at most caucus locations. In some cases, participants left in frustration before the appointed business of the caucuses had been completed.

Unless the task force proposes and the state Democratic Central Committee adopts changes in the structure and rules of the system, the next round of precinct caucuses will take place a little less than a year from now.

Active party members in non-partisan contests

Over a considerable range of public service positions, non-partisanship holds sway, and many of those contests are conducted in odd-numbered years following the rigorous partisanship of even-numbered years.

While reform movements have placed such races outside the bounds of organized party activity, party activists are nonetheless attracted to the possibilities in most odd-number years. So it will be this time around.

For the most obvious example, Nancy Baker is seeking re-election to

a second six-year term as a member of the Port of Vancouver Commission. Although she is not running as a Democrat, she has been active in party functions for all of her first term, and her husband, Ray Barney, is an active Democrat as well. At the most recent meeting of the Clark County Democratic Central Committee she said she hopes she will have continued support from her Democratic friends. She likely will not be disappointed.

Also on the election agenda this

year are about half the positions on municipal councils.

First to throw a hat into that non-partisan ring was Jack Burkman, who ran as a Democrat in 2006 for a 17th Legislative District slot in the Washington House of Representatives. Now he hopes to succeed Pat Jollota, who has announced her retirement from the Vancouver City Council. Burkman first won election to the council after Linda Horowitz decided not to seek re-election. He served a

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

Monday, March 2	Executive board of Clark County Democratic Central Committee meets at 7 p.m. at the Carpenters' Hall.
Saturday, March 7	18th Legislative District Democrats meet at 9 a.m. in the Clubhouse at Tri-Mountain Golf Course in Ridgefield.
Monday, March 9	Clark County Democratic Central Committee meets at 7 p.m. at the Longshore Hall on Ingalls Street.
Saturday, March 14	49th Legislative District Democrats meet at 9 a.m. at the Clark County Elections Department, 1400 Franklin Street.
Saturday, March 14	49th District legislators Town Hall session at 10 a.m. in Clark County Auditor's training room, 1400 Franklin Street.
Saturday, March 14	17th District Democratic Legislators' 11 a.m. Town Hall in Rose Besserman Room at 164th Avenue Transit Center.
Tuesday, March 17	Clark County section of 15th Legislative District Democrats meets at 5 p.m. at the Parker House in Camas.
Monday, March 23	17th District Democrats meet at 7 p.m. in the Forum Room at the Waterford on Village Loop Drive.

No time to be resting on our laurels

By Dena Horton, Clark County Democratic Chair

In January, we watched the inauguration of President Barack Obama with great pride and satisfaction.

Our pride grows as we watch our new president tackle our country's economy and the barrage of negativity from the Republicans with a calm and steady hand.

However, our satisfaction with his election alone is not enough. In his speech at the inaugural ball, President Obama himself recognized that the job of the Democrats and the citizens of our country did not end with his election and inauguration. Rather, our work is only mounting with each day. We have to keep organizing, spreading the word through our networks and neighbors, raising campaign funds and electing Democrats to other offices to ensure that President Obama has the support he needs from Congress, the state Legislature, and our local elected offices to implement his plan to improve our economy, health care and all the rest. It is not enough to ask, how can I support President Obama? He is part of the Democratic Party team that is turning the country around. If President Obama didn't have a Democratic Party majority in Congress, his task of passing a stimulus bill would have been far more difficult, if not impossible.



So we must continue to pull together as a party and as a community to support all of our Democratic candidates. How can you help? Get involved with local groups and activities that support the values and candidates of the Democratic Party and President Obama. Better yet, volunteer! We have our annual Jefferson Jackson dinner and auction in June and need all the help we can get to have a successful auction and sell out our dinner tickets. The funds we raise at the JJ Dinner will go to help local Democratic candidates as well as U.S. Sen. Patty Murray. To volunteer, contact me at chair@bluedonkeys.com or 360-904-0053 or Marsha Manning at pdamm2@comcast.net or 360-609-3527.

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Clark County, Washington

Editor: D. Michael Heywood

(email mikewrit@hotmail.com)

Phone at headquarters (360) 254-9116. Editor's home phone number is (360) 693-8809. His cell number is (360) 771-0124

Subscription Manager:

Gail Pollock

Phone (360) 695-4769

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Val Ogden adds an honor to list

Innovative Services Northwest annually honors several community leaders for particular service to the community.

The organization's seventh annual Caring Heart Awards Dinner will be on Saturday, March 14, at the Heathman Lodge.

Among those being honored is Val Ogden, whose contributions to the community as political leader, YWCA professional, legislator and otherwise have frequently won applause. She will be honored as the 2009 Vancouver USA Hometown Caring Heart winner.

Tickets for the event are \$50 for reservations made before March 6, \$65 after that.

People can make arrangements by way of the organization's website, www.innovativeservicesnw.org or by calling the organization's development director, Dawn Johnston, at

(360) 823-5171 or (360) 624-3631. Johnston said in a note to The Democrat, "Our hope is that Clark County Democrats will want to come together to support Val in celebration of commitment to the Community."

Innovative Services will honor people and institutions in eight different areas at the 2009 dinner. Maurice Classen will get the Chairman of the Board Caring Heart Award. Karen Sahlstrom will get the Children's Caring Heart Award. Columbia Cascade Corporation gets the Employment Caring Heart Award. Dick Halvorsen receives the Board of Directors Caring Heart Award. Dr. Larry Easter gets the EveAnn Classen Leadership Award. The Community Foundation for Southwest Washington gets the Development Caring Heart Award. Jim and Judy Marick will be recognized for their community advocacy.

Activists in non-partisan contests

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full term with distinction. At this writing he is not opposed.

Also on the Vancouver City Council is Jeanne Harris, who recently carried the Democratic Party banner into an unsuccessful challenge to Republican Clark County Commissioner Marc Boldt. She has not formally announced whether she will seek another term on the Vancouver policy board.

Another Democrat making a non-partisan move is Mike Dalesandro, a young party stalwart who lives in Battle Ground and has been on that city's Planning Commission for nearly a year. Dalesandro has organized the county party's booth at the Clark County Fair for two years and appears to be headed for a third suc-

cessful turn at putting together the display and wrangling volunteers to staff the position over the 10 August days of the fair. To join the fair effort or support Mike's city council race, call him at (360) 601-2840.

Another candidate for non-partisan office is D. Michael Heywood, editor of this publication and chair of the 49th Legislative District Democratic Central Committee. He is taking a third shot at election to the Vancouver City Council although he was eliminated in the primary elections in 2003 and 2005. He's again seeking the seat now held by Jeanne Stewart. He hopes his active party participation and the general mood of progressive optimism in the country as well as the community will stand him in better stead this time around.

Democrats inviting constituents to hear Legislature reports

All five of Clark County's Democratic legislators will host March 14 reports on the 2009 session in Olympia.

Reps. Deb Wallace and Tim Probst of the 17th Legislative District will have their town hall session in the Rose Besserman Community Room at the C-Tran Transit Center on 164th Avenue just north of S.R.14. The session will begin at 11 a.m., according to Peter Aller, chair of the 17th Legislative District Democratic Central Committee.

Sen. Craig Pridemore and Reps. Jim Moeller and Jim Jacks of the 49th Legislative District will have their town hall meeting starting at 10 a.m. in the training room of the Clark County Auditor's office, 1400 Franklin St. downtown.

The 49th Legislative District Democratic Central Committee will conduct its monthly business meeting in the same building starting at 9 a.m.

SAVE THE DATE:

**JEFFERSON JACKSON
DINNER & AUCTION**

**Saturday, June 13,
2009**

4:00pm – 8:00pm
**Hilton Hotel & Convention
Center, Vancouver, WA**

To volunteer, contact Dena Horton at 360-904-0053 or chair@bluedonkeys.com or Marsha Manning at 360-609-3527 or pdamm2@comcast.net.

To donate for the auction, contact Pam Brokaw at 360-909-5802 or pbrokaw1@comcast.net.

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PO Box 179
Vancouver, WA 98666



Jeanne Evans making much of 15th LD corner

This is the forty-ninth in a series of introductions to some local Democrats. Send suggestions for subjects of future columns to mikewrit@hotmail.com.

Jeanne Evans, the recently appointed vice chair of the Clark County portion of the 15th Legislative District, hadn't been much involved in organized party activity before she got interested in Barack Obama in 2007.

She attended the packed February 2008 Democratic precinct caucus sessions at the Camas Public Safety Building. When coordinators asked for a show of hands of folks interested in the party organization, her hand went up. That was enough to get her elected an Obama delegate to the Clark County Convention. It also got her on the August primary ballot as a candidate to become Democratic Officer for Precinct 947, about 12 square miles in the southeast corner of Clark County. She appeared opposite Michael Kepcha, who for some years had been the most visibly active Democrat in the neighborhood. Evans won by a substantial margin. Her enthusiasm caught the attention of Jake Lawlor, who had chaired the Clark County section of the 15th LD for a couple years. When Lawlor decided he needed to spend more time on his software company, he tapped Evans as his successor.

Along the way she had become even more supportive of the

young senator from Illinois. She attended the huge Obama rally in Portland and was lucky enough to be on the barricade when the candidate worked the crowd. She got to shake his hand. "When I looked into his eyes I knew for sure he was the one to lead the country," Evans said.

Evans spent her early years in Bear Springs at the foot of Mount Hood. Both parents were federal employees on the Mount Hood National Forest. She said their life-long participation in the Democratic Party went awry only once, when they chose Ronald Reagan over Jimmy Carter. That lapse still mystifies Evans.

She was a young adult in Eugene, had three kids, got involved in the peace movement, struggled with addiction. Now she's nine years clean and sober and has six grandchildren, all of whom live in the neighborhood. She moved to Washougal in 2002 to be close to the young families.

She commutes daily to her evening-shift job at the New Seasons Market on Rosa Parks Boulevard in North Portland. She remains enthused about the prospects of the Democratic Party in the 15th Legislative District. She and other eastern Clark County activists are planning an April road trip to meet with other Democrats in the vast district that has for too long been dominated by conservative Republicans.