



THE DEMOCRAT

Clark County Democratic Party Newsletter

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All set to enjoy Howard Dean

It's **Jefferson Jackson Dinner and Auction** time again in Clark County as Democrats and their friends prepare once more to renew connections, dream of a more progressive political future and shape up support for candidates who share the notion that people should come first in the considerations of public policy.

This year's festivity will begin around 4:30 p.m. on Friday, June 5, at the Clark County Fairgrounds Events Center. Preliminaries will include plenty of schmoozing and opportunities to look over and start silent bidding on some of the goodies assembled for the annual fund-raising auction. The climax should come around 8 p.m. when modern Democratic icon Howard Dean delivers one of his impassioned addresses about the values we share under the wide big top of Democratic ideals.

This most recent manifestation of our determination to prevail in local, state and national electoral affairs is rooted in small gatherings of similarly inclined activists who started what they were pleased to call the Committee of The Good Folks. In those early days they could all gather in such small venues as church assembly halls. Now, though, we call on the best and largest facilities available in the community. For the past couple of years, the Jefferson Jackson event was at the new Vancouver Hilton and Convention Center downtown. Early plans were to gather there again this year. That was before Ed Cote, our steadfast representative on the executive board of the Democratic National Committee, was able to score Dean as our keynoter. The former presidential candidate has lately been in greater demand than any Democratic figure short of President Barack Obama. But he was able to squeeze Clark County into the schedule so long as he could be here for a few afternoon hours on June 5. No sooner had his visit to the Northwest been confirmed than there began a feeding frenzy for a few moments of his time here and half an hour there. By the time he actually shows up Friday, riding in the stretch limousine piloted by Clark County Democrats' Vice Chairman Jim Martin, he may be so tightly scheduled that we'll have to put a stop

watch on every handshake and quick exchange of pleasantries.

Demand for tickets to the fairgrounds festivity has been such that last-minute deciders may have to look for scalpers. As of distribution of this newsletter, the price of a ticket on the fair market is \$75. Although that is the highest price ever, it won't net much for the party coffers owing to the higher cost of arranging for 700 or so people to park at the fairgrounds and gather for an early supper in the events center.

The coffers will have to depend on the generosity of participants in the annual auction. Pam Brokaw and her committee have been working for weeks to compile a sufficiently attractive list of items and events to draw the bucks. By the time all the paddle wagging is done the Clark County Democratic Central Committee should have enough cash on hand to keep things going for the next year with sufficient reserve to fund a coordinated campaign office in 2010, when the re-election of U.S. Sen. Patty Murray will top a substantial list of partisan hopes and dreams.

Why Jefferson Jackson? Google coughs up more than five million hits including a few individuals who carry the names of the founding icons of our party. Atop the tally is the Wikipedia entry:

"Jefferson-Jackson Day is the most common name given to the annual fundraising celebration (dinner) held by Democratic Party organizations in the United States. It is named for Presidents Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson. During presidential election campaigns, certain dinners are considered important venues for candidates to attend.

"It is usually held in February or March around the same time as the Republican Party's equivalent Lincoln Day, Reagan Day or Lincoln-Reagan Day. The Iowa dinner is held in November so as to precede the state's caucuses for the Democratic presidential nomination."

Why is ours in early summer? We can discuss that and other pressing issues next Friday afternoon.

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

Friday, June 5	Annual JJ Dinner and fund-raising Auction starting at 4:30 p.m. at the Special Events Center, northeast quadrant of Clark County Fairgrounds. Key-note speaker is former presidential candidate and Vermont Gov. Howard Dean.
Saturday, June 6	18th Legislative District Democrats meet at 9 a.m. in the Clubhouse at Tri-Mountain Golf Course in Ridgefield.
Monday, June 8	Executive board of Clark County Democratic Central Committee meets at 7 p.m. at the Carpenters' Hall at 610 E. McLoughlin Blvd.
Saturday, June 14	49th Legislative District Democrats meet at 9:30 a.m. at the Hometown Buffet in Vancouver Plaza.
Monday, June 16	Clark County Democratic Central Committee meets at 7 p.m. at the Longshore Hall on Ingalls Street west of the Clark County Jail.
Monday, June 22	17th Legislative District Democrats meet at 7 p.m. in the Forum Room at the Waterford, Village Loop Drive entrance.
Tuesday, June 23	Clark County section of 15th Legislative District Democrats meets at 6:30 p.m. upstairs at the Parker House in Camas adjacent to the Camas-Washougal Port's marina.

Memorial Day reality

By Dena Horton, Clark County Democratic Chair

Often we don't take time to reflect on certain things until we are directly confronted with them.

Even I must admit, normally I look forward to Memorial Day for the extra long weekend and hadn't really contemplated its true significance.

However, as many of you know, my brother (and roommate) is a staff sergeant with the 41st in the Army National Guard in Oregon and was recently deployed.

He will spend a few weeks in Georgia for training and then head to Kuwait in early June for approximately three weeks before heading to Iraq to serve out the rest of the 15-month deployment.

When I spoke with him recently he said that he hasn't been dry since they landed in the humidity and thunderstorms of Fort Stewart, Georgia, but that much to his surprise, the food is actually very good.

This Memorial Day was bittersweet for me and my family. It was good to hear his voice and to know that he is doing well, but we worry for what lies on the horizon for him and keep him and all of our servicemen and women in our thoughts and prayers this Memorial Day.

I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank so many of you who have been so supportive, patient and kind. Several people have "checked-in" on me, offered assistance, and have asked for the latest news on my brother. I greatly appreciate the gestures and just wanted to say thank you from the bottom of my heart.



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Who is Organizing For America for what?

Organizing For America is the latest manifestation of determination to tap the phenomenal surge of political enthusiasm that put a junior senator from Illinois in the White House.

For more than 16 months since the February 2008 precinct caucuses, we who have leadership roles in the Clark County Democratic Party have wondered how to tap into the enthusiasm for Barack Obama.

We were swamped on that February Saturday morning by rooms crammed with people who wanted to be part of the Obama energy — along with a smaller but similarly enthusiastic coterie of people who thought Hilary Clinton should be president.

Some among us have high hopes that OFA will be the vehicle to tap the Obama magic. Others regard it as a misbegotten effort that will siphon off energy from the constant effort to elect and re-elect Democrats from Congress down to local partisan jurisdictions. Many of us remain interested and await further details on what the goals and objectives of the growing and evolving effort might turn out to be.

OFA came to Clark County in March with two separate events, one organized by Jeanne Evans at the Municipal Courthouse in Washougal. She said she was pleased by the response to her invitation to a variety of progressives.

OFA next appeared the evening of May 12 when about three dozen folks answered the invitation to become part of the new movement by showing up at the restaurant attached to Green Meadows Country Club.

Perhaps a third of the group comprised party regulars including Young Democrat leader Eric Withee and County Party Treasurer Marsha Manning. That most regular of all local Democrats, Dan Ogden, provided the following report:

“Val and I attended the meeting at the Cameo Restaurant. Regular party people there were John Kendall and Ralph Schmidt. The group numbered about 30, although I did not count. I knew few of the rest of the people. Most were middle aged. There were only one or two young Democrats and they were helping with setting up the meeting, so far as I could tell.

“The organizer and presenter was young and obviously inexperienced. He tried to spend most of the time having the various tables brainstorm among themselves on the issues and how to promote public awareness and interest in them, and then report back. The presentation centered on building a parallel precinct organization to the regular Democratic party organization to promote

discussion on three subject areas: health care reform, education and energy.

“I suggested very strongly that there be no effort to build a duplicate precinct officer system but instead invite non regular organization Democrats to participate in one or more of three special task forces in each county which would address the three major topics, schedule forums about them and otherwise promote the issues, as contrasted with the regular organizing effort to recruit, train, and encourage precinct workers; and search for and assist candidates for state and local office.”

State Democratic Chair Dwight Pelz has lately become more enthusiastic about OFA. He reportedly did not talk up the effort when the state Democratic Central Committee met in Tacoma at the end of April. However, in a May 14 email to party officers he threw the weight of the state party behind the new group:

“OFA is kicking off here in Washington with a 13-city Listening Tour,” Pelz wrote.

“OFA is the grassroots-based, organizing arm of the Obama administration. Its mission is to organize support for President’s Obama’s policies and to capitalize on the excitement and true power you brought to the political arena last year. ...OFA will be led here in Washington by a familiar face — Dustin Lambro, who worked in Tacoma on the Campaign for Change last year. At these Listening Tour Town Halls, he’ll listen to your input about how OFA should be structured in this state. Those decisions will be made by you, not by people in the other Washington.”

All but five of the listening sessions have already been held. Those final opportunities to speak to Lambro are in Seattle June 1, Sequim June 2, Everett June 3, Spokane June 4 and Bellingham June 5.

Amanda Nelson needs help

Hockinson livewire Amanda Nelson, past chair of the Clark County Young Democrats and the Washington Young Democrats, is looking to get on the National Young Democrats leadership ladder.

She’s mounting a campaign to win election as secretary of the nation-wide organization. Her campaign includes travel to several hotbeds of youthful progressive enthusiasm as well as other expensive efforts. She has passed hats at a number of Democratic gatherings but still needs more ducats in the buckets. See her at the Jefferson Jackson dinner or send her checks and money orders at www.amandanelsonforyda.com.

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Carrie Parks, Gary Akizuki local party pillars

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

Gary Akizuki and Carrie Parks have been stalwarts of the Clark County Democratic Party since 1995.

“When Linda Smith won election to Congress in 1994, I made a New Year’s resolution to do something about it,” Gary told *The Democrat*. “I went looking for some Democrat to support, and Harold Abbe and Dan Ogden talked me into running myself.” His first and only campaign (so far) for public office was against Republican State Rep. Marc Boldt in the 17th Legislative District. He didn’t win, but he and Carrie have remained active in the party ever since, serving in a number of slots. Gary is presently state committeeman for the 17th LD. Carrie chaired the 17th Democrats for three two-year terms during which the district elected Rep. Deb Wallace to break the Republican grip on what had been considered a solid Republican stronghold.

Gary is frequently called on for his skills as a writer and editor. He has served on resolutions committees at several party levels and once chaired the Resolutions Committee at the state Democratic Convention. Together they served as Clark County campaign chairs for Al Gore in 2000. Gore

won in the county as he won the popular vote in the nation. They pine for the better world we might have now had Gore been able to win a majority of the U.S. Supreme Court.

The couple — Gary from Seattle, Carrie from Gig Harbor — met as journalism students at Washington State University in Pullman. Upon graduation, Gary went to work as a reporter at the *Raymond Herald*. They moved to Camas a couple years later when Carrie was hired as a reporter at the *Post-Record*. Gary left journalism for a career in insurance. “I got tired of making \$170 for a 70-hour week,” Gary said.

Carrie also left journalism for a career in social services. He’s presently an underwriter for Standard Insurance and commutes daily to the home office in Portland. Carrie is a case worker for Columbia River Mental Health.

Both have served in many community volunteer capacities outside the political sphere. Gary also umpires high school baseball games. “Best job I ever had,” he said. “My opinion is the only one that counts. And if I really don’t like somebody I can get rid of him.”

They are celebrating their 30th anniversary this year. Their two children, Michelle and Allen, were graduated from high schools in the Evergreen District and now attend Washington State University Vancouver.