



THE DEMOCRAT

Clark County Democratic Party Newsletter

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Serving Democrats with News and Opinion

December 2009

Spring looms huge on political calendars

To paraphrase the old recruiting poster, your local Democratic Party needs YOU!

To volunteer, that is, to participate in a heavy schedule of activities and events through the coming winter and spring, peaking with the Washington State Democratic Convention in Vancouver June 25 and 26.

From that climactic event, party activity will be steady and heady through the November general election including the re-election campaigns of U.S. Sen. Patty Murray and Clark County Commissioner Steve Stuart. Also lively will be re-election campaigns of four Clark County Democratic members of the state House of Representatives as well as at least a couple of Democratic challenges to three Republican legislators in the 17th and 18th Legislative Districts.

Planning for all of that, including a Jefferson Jackson dinner and fund-raising auction early in June, has been astir since the Washington State Democratic Central Committee's executive board decided in September to hold the 2010 state convention in Vancouver on June 25 and 26.

That decision, fostered by a plea from Vancouver's representative on the Democratic National Committee, Ed Cote, followed by several weeks the announcement that the Washington State Republicans will hold their convention in Vancouver June 10 through June 12. The Republicans have already lined up Mitt Romney, one of their bidders to challenge President Barack Obama in 2012. Democratic leaders are considering possible stars on our side of the political spectrum.

Even though conventions at all levels in a presidential year are likely to draw far more interest and participation, the 2010 Democratic convention here bids fair to be about the largest event held so far at the Vancouver Convention Center and Hilton Hotel. Indeed, party leaders suppose the major meeting of the convention on Saturday, June 26, will be held at the Clark County Events Center at the Fairgrounds.

Party members and leaders have much to accomplish apart from the convention and Jefferson Jackson events. Chores include organization of legislative district caucuses

and the Clark County Democratic Convention. The state Democrats established a common date and time for all meetings. The legislative district caucuses will be at 1 p.m. on Sunday, March 14. All county conventions are to be held on Saturday, April 10, starting at 10 a.m.

In other years, delegates to the legislative district caucus have been selected at precinct caucuses. In 2010, however, the state central committee decided to skip the February meetings. The legislative district caucuses thus will appoint some of the 1,600 delegates to the state convention. Some delegates also will be selected at county conventions. Many delegates will be elected officials.

Clark County's two star freshmen in the House of Representatives — Tim Probst of the 17th District and Jim Jacks of the 49th — have instigated a plan and process to assure maximum results from political effort over coming months. Probst sketched the notion in an email to several party leaders:

"Jim Jacks and I just talked by phone, and we have a request we hope you might consider. Could we put the county maps on the wall at the next county and district meetings (and perhaps subsequent meetings, as well) showing the precinct results for President Barack Obama and Gov. Christine Gregoire, and, once available, for Initiative 1033 and Referendum 71? We thought this might spur discussion about the organizing, mechanics, and public outreach we need to do in order to continue strong positive branding for the party, strong GOTV (get-out-the-vote) and strong election results for Democrats going forward.

"We both expect 2010 to be a challenge, and we need everyone's eyes on the prize. Hanging up the maps — and asking how we are going to keep building the brand and returning great election results — might be a very literal way to help make that happen. Would that be ok?"

Early response from party officials was enthusiastic and very nearly unanimous. So efforts have begun to gather the political data and depict them graphically on maps for use at party functions over the weeks and months of the campaign season to come.

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

Saturday, December 5	18th District Democrats meet at 9 a.m. in the clubhouse at Tri-Mountain Golf Course in Ridgefield.
Monday, December 7	17th Legislative District Democrats meet at 6:30 p.m. at the facility of Friends in Service to Humanity (FISH) 1600 W. 20th St. to prepare Christmas baskets for families..
Monday, December 7	Executive board of Clark County Democratic Central Committee, 7 p.m. meeting at the Carpenters' Hall, 610 E. McLoughlin Boulevard.
Saturday, December 12	49th Legislative District Democrats meet at 9:30 a.m. at the Wood Fire Restaurant, 4400 E. Fourth Plain Boulevard.
Monday, December 14	Clark County Democratic Central Committee meets at 7 p.m. at the Longshore Hall on Ingalls Street a block west of the Clark County Jail.
Tuesday, December 17	Clark County section of 15th Legislative District Democrats meets at 6:30 p.m. upstairs at the Parker House in Camas.
Saturday, December 19	Clark County Women Democrats meet at 11:30 a.m. at Boppin' Bo's in Vancouver Plaza. Please bring items for the women's shelter.

Many irons in the fire

By Dena Horton, Clark County Democratic Chair

Many thanks all who have sent emails, calls, and participated in the Clark County Democratic Central Committee discussion on the House Health Care reform bill.

At the Nov. 9 CCDCC general membership meeting, we had a lively — but very civil — debate about the bill and U.S. Rep. Brian Baird's decision to vote against the measure on Nov. 7. People came prepared to discuss their points and not shout down those with opposing views. A group of CCDCC representatives will meet personally with the congressman to convey the concerns and comments of the body to him directly. A request for meeting has been sent to Baird, and we will keep you posted on the outcome of the meeting.



Keeping an eye on the horizon, we have many activities coming up and will appreciate any volunteers and support. Thank you for continued food donations at our CCDCC meetings. We strongly encourage folks to take a day in December and volunteer to strengthen our community. If you would like to volunteer with other like-minded Democrats, contact Eric Withee at 541-912-1512 or eric.withee@gmail.com to find out how you can assist other Democrats with preparing and serving meals for Share or contact Pete Aller at imblu17@comcast.net or 360-254-2158 to help with packing boxes of food and clothing for FISH.

Vancouver landed both Democratic and Republican State Conventions in June 2010. However, much work needs to be done in preparation. We will not be holding precinct caucuses in February, but we will hold legislative district caucuses in March. We anticipate opening a campaign headquarters in April or May. In June, not only will we be putting on the Jefferson Jackson Dinner and Auction, but as the host county, we'll be assisting with logistics for the state convention and hosting a fundraiser too. We anticipate a picnic in July and a lively rematch against the Republicans in a charity softball game in August. The summer and fall will be busy with campaigns and election observer training for congressional and state house legislative races, county commissioner, and the "courthouse gang."

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Manning's service honored by state party

Marsha Manning, treasurer of the Clark County Democratic Central Committee and state committeewoman for the 17th Legislative District Democrats, was honored as state committeewoman of the year by the Washington State Democrats at the 15th annual Warren G. Magnuson Dinner Oct. 27 at Benaroya Hall in Seattle.

The award was presented by Ed Cote of Vancouver, a member of the Democratic National Committee who was recently elected to another four-year term on the DNC executive board. He cited Manning's considerable efforts on the party's behalf including her valiant work on successful annual Jefferson-Jackson events.

Manning's was one of 10 Warren G. Magnuson citations — Maggies — presented at the gathering.

Blair Butterworth received the lifetime achievement award. Snohomish County Councilman Dave Somers was named male elected official of the year. State Senate Majority Leader Lisa Brown was honored as female elected official of the year.

Ellie Webb, chair of Grant County Democrats, was named female chair of the year while Nathe Lawver,

chair of Pierce County Democrats, was named male chair of the year.

Named volunteers of the year were Chad Lupkes of King County and Lenore Barker of Walla Walla County. State committeeman of the year is Alec Stephens of the 37th Legislative District Democrats. Female Rising Star of the year is Megan Gustafson, chair of the Washington Young Democrats. Male Rising Star is Marc Oommen of the Skagit County Young Democrats.

Oregon politics grabbed a big slice of the limelight at this year's festivity.

The keynoter for the 2009 Maggies was former and possibly future Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber. Kitzhaber, a practicing physician, served as governor for two terms, 1995-2003, but could not seek a third successive term. He announced his plan to seek another term on Sept. 17 and immediately moved to the front of a pack of Democrats considering the race. All but one of the other hopefuls thereupon withdrew from consideration, but former Secretary of State Bill Bradbury said he remained determined to challenge Kitzhaber.

Incumbent, Burkman, Swindell win races

Jeanne Harris easily won reelection to the Vancouver City Council. Jack Burkman won the Vancouver Council seat opened by the retirement of Pat Jollota. Al Swindell snared a seat on the Woodland City Council, beating an incumbent councilman and two other challengers.

However, Mike Dalesandro fell about 150 votes short in his challenge to Battle Ground City Councilwoman Lisa Walters. And D. Michael Heywood was buried by a Jeanne Stewart landslide in his third or fourth hapless bid to get a seat on the Vancouver Council.

Such were the results for five active Democrats engaged in the Nov. 3 non-partisan general election. The tally also showed Clark County voters supporting Tim Eyman and rejecting domestic partnership legislation. However, the Clark County numbers helped defeat Initiative

1033 statewide and affirm Referendum 71.

Burkman, who served on the Vancouver Council once before and subsequently carried the Democratic banner in a bid for a seat in the state Legislature, handily defeated a conservative retired Navy officer for Position 1 on the council. Harris held her seat against Anne McInerney-Ogle, who was able to win considerable support from labor and progressives. Dalesandro's close call suggests he has sufficient political magic to give it at least one more try. Heywood probably has learned the lesson that he should stick with party functions rather than seek support from the whole electorate.

Swindell could have concluded likewise after two previous shortfalls with the Woodland electorate, but he took a shot when nobody filed for the seat during the June filing period. So did three others, including

the incumbent, during a special filing window.

While Swindell got a plurality win among the four, his effort to back a change in Woodland's municipal governance fell flat.

The only partisan race on Clark County ballots was for the remnant of a state House of Representatives term in the 15th Legislative District. Republican David Taylor, appointed to sit in for Dan Newhouse after that veteran joined Gov. Christine Gregoire's cabinet, won easily against Democrat John Gotts. Gotts scarcely campaigned and said he really wasn't interested in the job. Yet he got the votes of 568 voters who live in the five 15th LD precincts in the southeast corner of the county. This may suggest that Elida Monroe, Jake Lawlor, Jeanne Davis and the other determined Democrats in that area have a base from which to build in years to come.

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Stephanie Liberman leads Young Democrats

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

Stephanie Liberman, president of the Clark County Young Democrats, has been active in politics ever since she attended Skyview High School a couple of blocks from the home where she spent her formative years.

“My strong desire to work for social justice led me to become interested in politics in high school,” she told The Democrat. “I was a member of the Western Democrats while attending Western Washington University and then continued with the Clark County Young Democrats when I came back to Vancouver.” She found the local group on the Internet and called Jamie Holm, then president of the organization. “After he returned my call, I decided the group was a perfect fit for me. I started attending meetings and participating in activities.”

That was a couple of years ago, right after she was graduated from Western and accepted a fourth-grade teaching position at Image Elementary School in the Evergreen School District. “I was very lucky to be offered a position at the school where I had interned,” she said. “I love teaching, I love my students and I love Image, a wonderful school.”

While she appears to have settled comfortably into her profession, Liberman hasn’t quite settled on a permanent domicile. She grew up in the 18th Legislative District and resided for awhile at an apartment complex in Fishers Landing in the 17th District. She wanted a change from suburban living, so now she is living in North Portland and so is not technically eligible for office in the Clark County Democratic Party. She does intend to remain active with the Young Democrats and hopes that the group deemed chapter of the year by Washington Young Democrats for 2008 will remain lively and effective.

“Over the summer the Young Democrats and I coordinated with Organizing For America and their health-care reform work,” she said. “We have also raised money for the Cascade AIDS project, worked with the Winter Hospitality Overflow and planted trees to reduce erosion.”

She also has been active in Planned Parenthood. “I am a member of the Legislative Action Team and will take over as chair of that organization in January,” she said. “I’ve also done work with the Clark County Health Department.”

What moves her to such a menu of community effort? “I have been very privileged with opportunities in my life,” she said, “so I feel a great responsibility to my community.”