



THE DEMOCRAT



Clark County Democratic Party Newsletter

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Serving Democrats with News and Opinion

November 2008

What'll it be?

We're down to the last few days of the 2008 election cycle, with the future hanging on decisions being made by a small percentage of the electorate at all levels.

What have we left undone? How can we get in the final few phone calls, doorbells, overpass antics and elevator speeches? Will we be grinding our teeth and grumbling at 8:30 p.m. Nov. 4 as the results go up on the big screens at Clark College's Gaiser Hall. Will we be straining to find the few nuggets of gold in an avalanche of Republican victory when we gather later at the Hilton Convention Center? Or will we be celebrating joyously at sweeping prevalence of progressive victories from our house to the White House?

Eight years ago we remained on tenterhooks as Florida slogged through acres of mispunched ballot cards. Four years ago we wondered how such a bright man as John Kerry could have let victory slink away, and we looked forward grimly to weeks of recounts in the contest between Chris Gregoire and a Republican state senator. Two years ago we celebrated resurgence as our efforts helped build Democratic majorities in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives and add to working majorities in the Washington House and Senate.

How can we overlook any possible effort to assure that another Republican comeback is forestalled?

On Oct. 14, the Clark County Elections Department mailed out 212,442 ballots to voters. As this issue of the newsletter published by the Clark County Democratic Central Committee goes to press, more than 160,000 of



This display on SR 500 just east of Falk Road has to be the best this year if not the best ever. The collection of signs, lighted at night, is mounted on the back side of John Robertson's shop in Precinct 130 thanks in part to Robertson's fellow IBEW stalwart Ed Barnes, who lives nearby but not as close to the busy parkway.

those ballots still languish unused in homes from Frenchman's Bar to Chelatchie Prairie, from Cottonwood Beach to the Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge and the southern outskirts of Woodland.

As Clark County Democratic Chair Dena Horton suggests in her column on the following page, there are lots of ways for individuals to work toward a better outcome. It all comes down to assuring that you and your like-minded friends, relatives, neighbors and acquaintances get those ballots marked and sent in, either by mail or dropped directly into one of the elections department boxes..

Money helps, of course, particularly in responding to the huge expenditures by such special interests as the Building Industry Association. But a few hours on the phone working the lists of identified Democrats who haven't yet used their ballots could make the difference between a sorry outcome and a happy result next week.

Meetings scheduled for November 2008 by the Clark County Democratic Central Committee and other Democratic organizations. (Check for updates at the county party's website: www.bluedonkeys.com).

Saturday, November 1	18th District Democrats meet at 9 a.m. in the clubhouse at Tri-Mountain Golf Course in Ridgefield
Monday, November 3	Meeting of the Clark County Democratic Central Committee executive board, 7 p.m. at the Carpenters' Hall.
Tuesday, November 4	Dinner at Dragonfly Café, 5 p.m. First results at Gaiser Hall, 8 p.m. Party at Hilton from 7 p.m. Voting closes at 8 p.m. First results from county at 8:05 p.m. Celebration ensues—or gloom descends as Republicans gloat.
Saturday, November 8	49th District Democrats meet at 9:30 a.m. at the Hometown Buffet, 7809B Vancouver Plaza Drive.
Monday, November 10	7 p.m. meeting of Clark County Democratic Central Committee at the Longshore Hall on Ingalls Street. Amendment to bylaws regarding proxy votes on agenda.
Tuesday, November 18	Clark County Section of 15th Legislative District Democratic Central Committee, 6 p.m. at the Parker House, Port of Camas-Washougal.
Monday, November 24	17th District Democrats meeting, 7 p.m. at the Waterford at Fairway Village, 2911 SE Village Loop. (Call on gate box for entry after 7 p.m.)

Time to get out those votes

By Dena Horton, Clark County Democratic Chair

As a political junkie, I admit I saw Oliver Stone's movie, "W." the first weekend after it opened.

The movie profiled George W. Bush's life from his drunken college days to his failed business ventures to his dismal presidency.

Folks, if George W. Bush is even half as eccentric in real life as he is portrayed in the movie, then it is worse than we feared! However, it is all the more reason why we cannot elect Sen. John McCain, who will continue Bush's agenda, and why we must elect Sen. Barack Obama as president to bring responsibility, reason and respect back to the White House.

So, this is it. The moment we have been working towards is arriving soon! As we hit the final stretch to Nov. 4 we cannot afford to let up on our efforts to get voters to return their ballots.

It is very important to remember that the presidency is not the only race at stake in this election. Our governor is fighting off negative attacks at every turn and our legislative and county commissioner candidates need all the phone-banking, doorbelling and fundraising help you can spare. If you have any time available to volunteer on any of the campaigns, please contact Eric Withee at the campaign headquarters.

It has been an honor and a thrill to be the Clark County Democratic Central Committee chair during this pivotal presidential election year and I hope that you will help the CCDCC see this through to Victory 2008 for all Democrats on the ballot!



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Pelz nixes election of most PCOs by write-ins

Dwight Pelz, chair of the Washington State Democratic Central Committee, has nixed the election of most Democratic Precinct Committee Officers by write-in votes.

In a letter emailed to lower-level party functionaries on Oct. 21, Pelz said:

“I am writing to forward to you an important Party policy concerning Elected PCOs. With the concurrence of the executive board and Parliamentarian David McDonald, I am ruling:

“In order to be recognized by Washington Democratic Party as an elected PCO for 2009 - 2010, he or she had to receive at least 10 percent of the vote obtained by the highest vote getter nominated by our Party, on the ballot, in the same precinct, in the August, 2008 primary.”

The ruling invalidates election of more than half the Democratic Precinct Committee Officers listed in the October edition of this newsletters. Clark County Democratic officials — including the chair of the 49th Legislative District Democratic Central Committee who edits this publication — had relied on the previous ruling of Secretary of State Sam Reed.

Pelz provided his background and rationale as follows:

“Earlier this summer ... Reed, in implementing new rules for the Top Two Primary, changed the requirements for electing PCOs. In the past, in order to be a declared an elected PCO by elections officials, and in accordance with RCW 29A.80.051 and our own Party rules, one had to receive at least 10 percent of the vote obtained by the highest vote getter nominated by our Party, on the ballot, in the same precinct, in the Primary.

“Reed waived this rule, and chose to ignore an important statute. Under Reed’s rules a person could write in his name or the name of a neighbor and be recognized as an elected PCO. One neighbor could write in the name of a Republican as a joke and she would be the ‘elected Democratic PCO’ under these rules.

“This creates a problem for our Party.

“Pursuant to Charter, precinct committee officers are to be elected, appointed or recalled pursuant to state law, the Charter and other provisions adopted pursuant to the authority of the Charter. In the event of a conflict between state law and the Party’s own governing documents, the Party’s documents prevail: ‘State laws relating to Party operations shall be observed unless in conflict with this Charter and other provisions adopted pursuant to this Charter.’ Charter, Art. 5.A (last sentence).

“Because Reed had no authority to waive RCW 29A.80.051; and because RCW 29A.80.051 is consistent with our Charter and other provisions adopted pursuant to the authority of the Charter, I am reiterating our standing rule, that an elected PCO had to receive at least 10 percent of the vote obtained by the highest vote getter nominated by our Party, on the ballot, in the same precinct, in the August 2008 primary. Only elected PCOs can vote in our re-organization meetings this November and December.

“Our Charter and our rules have set a bar, a threshold in order to be a PCO; either of being duly elected (under the 10 percent rule) or of being appointed by the authority of the county party. We have never allowed a single person to declare him or herself a PCO by the act of writ-

ing in a sole name on a ballot. Persons who did not receive 10 percent may apply to be appointed as PCOs – we will not recognize them as elected PCOs.

“We may run into a legal conflict down the road if a vacancy occurs and PCOs are required under state law to fill the vacancy and a court agrees that Sam Reed has unilateral authority to change a state law relating to the structure of our Party.”

There is no apparent appeal from the Pelz ruling available to lower-level party officials.

The editor of this newsletter offers apology for having stirred enthusiasm for the write-in process opened up by Reed’s ruling.

Bylaws fix on tap

Participants in the Nov. 10 meeting of the Clark County Democratic Central Committee will consider a bylaws change proposed by Jane Buchanan-Banks, chair of the bylaws committee. She wrote:

“The Clark County Democratic Central Committee passed a revised version of the Bylaws at the September meeting. Immediately after this, the state committee representatives received a message from the Washington State Democratic Central Committee regarding the reorganization meeting. This notice included the provision that proxies are not permitted at the reorganization meeting. This seemed to the Bylaws Committee a sentence we needed to add to our bylaws for clarity about procedures.

“The proposed addition will read as follows: ‘Proxies are not permitted at organizational meetings according to the State party bylaws.’ This sentence will be placed in the new bylaws at the end of Section A, Article VIII.”

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Ed Barnes continues active labor in retirement

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

Edward L. Barnes seemed surprised last June when his name was called at the annual Jefferson Jackson Dinner as 2008 recipient of the Dan and Val Ogden Award.

Hardly anyone else in the big banquet room at the Vancouver Hilton was surprised that Ed would be chosen as exemplifying the spirit of community service and party participation.

Born in 1933 in West Virginia, he moved to Vancouver with his family in 1946. He was drafted into the Army in 1953 and served in Japan and Korea. He was married in 1956 and he and his wife raised three sons in Vancouver.

After successfully completing an electrical apprenticeship program in 1959, he was elected to the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 48 Executive Board. In 1969 he was elected vice president and then served as local president from 1971 to 1979. He retired from the IBEW in 1995, completing a 40-year career. His sons are all union electricians as well.

He continued service to the community in retirement. His leadership roles have included service on the Columbia

Springs Educational and Environmental Center Board and the Vancouver Public Facilities Development Board. He served for 12 years on the state Transportation Commission, a seven-member board that sets transportation policy and advises the governor and legislators. While on the commission he served on the C-Tran/Tri-Met Light Rail Advisory Committee and was co-chair of the Columbia River Bi-State I-5 Corridor Committee. He represented the International IBEW on the Council for Industrial Relations and Maritime Trades for the electrical industry in the United States and Canada. He currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Union Labor Retirement Association and is a board member of the Northwest Labor Press.

Even with all the many responsibilities and obligations he had committed himself to, the Clark County Democrats have always been able to call upon him to activate his phone tree to help get volunteers to set-up for events including moving heavy equipment and furniture, wiring facilities, and for financial support of our activities and our candidates. This campaign season he has been particularly effective in putting up campaign signs throughout the community. His orange pickup loaded with 2-by-4s and signs for candidates is a common sight at likely spots on roadsides and intersections.