



THE DEMOCRAT

Clark County Democratic Party Newsletter

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Serving Democrats with News and Opinion

March 2010

Did you miss the biennial precinct caucus?

For the first time in at least a century, we Democrats did not gather in even-year February precinct caucuses to talk about issues and candidates in elections to come.

The Republicans did caucus on Feb. 13, and their neighborhood views may percolate up to plenary sessions at county, state and even national levels. We Democrats will have our first chance to organize, debate and offer advice at the legislative district caucuses to be held the morning of April 10 at Hudson's Bay High School.

The notion of gathering in small, close-knit groups to form political views and nominate candidates evidently was developed by the earliest European settlers of this continent. Some of them were involved in the process of inventing democracy, whereby power and ideology came from the populace rather than from the divine inspiration of a monarch and his courtiers.

One thread of history suggests that the caucus notion was lifted from processes used by the earlier inhabitants of the continent. In an 1872 paper about political history, James Hammond Trumbull referred to Capt. John Smith's 1624 history of Virginia and New England wherein Smith noted an Algonquin practice, "Caw-cawaassough, one who advises, a counselor..." Trumbull noted that the secret clubs and gatherings at the root of early American political parties even before the Declaration of Independence frequently adopted Indian names and rituals.

(There is at least one reputable alternative theory: shipyard workers in Boston early in the 18th century — calkers — held meetings to plan their political ventures.)

Whatever the root notion, such secretive, ritualistic gatherings were in continuing conflict with populist notions that ideas and nominations should flow from open and egalitarian processes such as primary elections. The high ideal was that politics would no longer be founded in smoke-filled rooms.

The Washington State Democratic Central Committee in 2009 opted for the putatively more open process and ordained that precinct caucuses would not be organized this time around. Among the arguments against caucuses are that they cost too much, achieve too little and involve too

few, particularly in a year without a contest for president. In other such years, as many as 12 precincts might caucus in a school cafeteria or church basement without crowding. In 2008, in utter contrast, five or six precinct caucuses could not be packed into the public spaces arranged for the purpose.

By the time caucuses rolled around that year, organizations supporting Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton knew the party nomination might well hinge on the results of precinct caucuses in this state. Both groups pulled out all stops to assure maximum caucus attendance and participation. Obama's backers prevailed in every precinct in Clark County and most of the rest of the state. The same sort of thing was happening elsewhere that month, and Clinton never regained the momentum that had made her look like a sure thing only a couple of months before.

However, the several other purposes of precinct caucuses weren't achieved. The caucus is supposed to bring in participants for other party activities. Very few of the several thousand 2008 caucus participants continued with the process. Once Obama had secured the nomination, only a few dozen Clark County voters were active in his campaign, and just a couple of dozen got involved in the campaigns of other Democratic candidates. The fall-off was clearly illustrated in the general election tallies, where Obama got far more votes than other Democrats in every Clark County precinct.

National campaigns may never again rely on grass roots. Future successful candidates may be selected and groomed and supported to election by the corporations now deemed political persons by the U.S. Supreme Court.

At local levels we may be inventing alternate ways to recruit and winnow candidates for election to public service. The Legislature, trying to follow the wandering dictates of courts, has ordained abandonment of party labels for candidates. They are described on the modern ballot not as Democrats or Republicans but as preferring to be considered one or the other. In particular, we now have half a dozen would-be candidates for Congress looking for ways to be deemed the first choice of Democrats.

Meetings scheduled for March 2010 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 1	Executive board of Clark County Democratic Central Committee, 7 p.m. meeting at the Carpenters' Hall, 610 E. McLoughlin Boulevard.
Saturday, March 6	18th District Democrats meet at 9 a.m. in the clubhouse at Tri-Mountain Golf Course in Ridgefield.
Monday, March 8	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.
Saturday, March 13	49th District Democrats meet at new time and place, 10 a.m. in the Teamsters/Labor Hall, 2212 NE Andresen Blvd.
Tuesday, March 16	Clark County section of 15th Legislative District Democrats meet at 6:30 p.m. at Tommy O's, 4101 SE 192nd Ave.
Saturday, March 20	Clark County Women Democrats meet at 11:30 a.m. at Boppin Bo's in Vancouver Plaza. Expected speakers include Denny Heck and Tony Golik, candidate for county prosecutor.
Monday, March 22	17th District Democrats meet at 7 p.m. in the Forum Room at the Waterford on Village Loop Drive.

Convention calling

By Dena Horton, Clark County Democratic Chair

All Clark County Democrats are hereby called to Democratic Legislative District Caucuses and the Clark County Democratic Convention on April 10, 2010 at Hudson's Bay High School in Vancouver located at 1206 E. Reserve Street.



This newsletter and announcement serves as the formal call to caucus and convention for Clark County Democratic Central Committee Precinct Committee Officers (PCO). Registration will begin at 8 a.m.; the Convention will begin at 10 a.m.

The event is anticipated to conclude at 3:30 p.m. We have an exciting day planned and hope you will be able to join us. This is a caucus and convention process, not an event where one can show up at any time, vote, and then leave. Registration at the door is necessary. By signing in, the participant is declaring himself or herself to be a Democrat. We will begin with the convention business in the morning and hear from candidates for federal, state, and local offices. We will recess for an hour for lunch. Attendees are encouraged to bring their own lunch or support local restaurants nearby. After the lunch break, we will reconvene and begin the legislative district caucuses, which will elect delegates to go on to the Washington State Democratic Convention on June 26 in Vancouver. If you wish to bring a resolution to the county convention on April 10, there is a proper format to use to draft resolutions for consideration. We will soon be posting more information, the agenda and resolution instructions on www.bluedonkeys.com.

Let's show them that Democrats are fighting for our values and will continue to win elections in November.

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Clark County, Washington
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Deb Wallace bows out of 3rd District field

State Rep. Deb Wallace told a group of her supporters gathered for a Feb. 20 fundraiser that she had decided to leave the field of candidates seeking to succeed U.S. Rep. Brian Baird.

“We cannot let the seat go to an anti-choice, anti-health-care Republican,” she said. “We must come together and support a Democrat who will keep the people at the heart of their mission to serve.”

She did not endorse any of the remaining five Democrats in the field. She said she believes district voters need to elect “a true moderate Democrat who has the wherewithal to win this election.”

She said she would concentrate on her legislative duties. She also said she continues to support Monica Stonier as her successor.

The remaining candidates are state Sen. Craig Pridemore of the 49th Legislative District, former 17th District Rep. Denny Heck, 2008 Baird Challenger Cheryl Crist,

Maria Rodriguez-Salazar and Kasandra Bessert of Battle Ground.

As of Dec. 31, Heck was way ahead in the money race, having raised \$114,000 to add to his own \$100,000 loan to the campaign. Wallace had raised nearly \$23,000 when she dropped out. Pridemore had nearly \$9,000 in hand. None of the other three reported much success in getting donations.

Of the gaggle of Republicans contending for the seat, David Castillo of Olympia is way ahead with \$104,172 contributions reported to the Federal Elections Commission.

County races

Democratic County Commissioner Steve Stuart is working hard for re-election to a second full four-year term. As of this writing, no Republican has announced against him.

Longtime Democratic Prosecutor Art Curtis, who announced his retirement in December, has endorsed election of his chief deputy, Curt Wyrick, a Democrat with a couple

of decades worth of experience in the prosecutor’s office. Tony Golik, who has prosecuted major crimes for Curtis for several years, is also running as a Democrat. An assistant Vancouver city attorney and long-time Republican activist has announced that he will campaign to win the position.

Assessor Linda Franklin, County Clerk Sherry Parker and Treasurer Doug Lasher — all Democrats — are seeking re-election. Only Franklin is being challenged so far.

Veteran custody officer Tim Shotwell, a Democrat, has mounted a second challenge to Republican County Sheriff Garry E. Lucas. Shotwell has been head of the custody officers guild for 18 months. He got 42 percent of the vote against Lucas in 2006.

Republican County Auditor Greg Kimsey, seeking a fourth four-year term, has yet to draw Democratic opposition.

Dan Ogden reported in improving fettle

Dan Ogden, who broke an arm after suffering a hip injury early in February, is reported to be recovering very well at Cascade Park Care Center, 801 SE Park Crest Ave.

Val Ogden told The Democrat, “I would like to be sure everyone knows how he is doing.

“He met with Pete Aller to plan the PCO training and started calling people to remind them to save the date.

“His spirits are high and he has a positive attitude — although he would like to be home sooner rather than later. It will probably be three or four more weeks before he can come home. Meanwhile, his phone number is 713-0942.”

Hold the date:

Clark County Democratic Central Committee
Mini Short Course about the duties and privileges of
Precinct Committee Officers and other volunteers.

Saturday, April 3, 2010, from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Longshore
Union Hall, 1205 Ingalls Street (where the CCDCC meets monthly)

The program will include instruction about political parties, duties and advantages of precinct committee officers and expectations of candidate.

This course is designed to serve volunteers including new or nearly new PCOs. All activists are welcome, whether they have had previous training or not. Successful Veteran PCOs are particularly encouraged to participate in the role-playing session. Those with laptop computers should bring them for the session on use of Vote Builder.

To reserve a seat and a packet of materials for the short course, please call Dan Ogden at 360-254-8886 or email him at danogden@comcast.net by March 27.

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Dennis Kampe takes aim at 18th LD target

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

After more than two decades of persuading legislators to support vocational education in general and the Clark County Skills Center in particular, Dennis Kampe hopes 18th Legislative District voters will send him to Olympia as a Democratic member of the state House of Representatives.

He decided to seek one of the two 18th LD House seats in 2008. He was thereby ready to kick the campaign into high gear late last year when the younger and less entrenched of the Republican incumbents took a notion that she was ready to grab the 3rd District seat in Congress being vacated by Democratic Rep. Brian Baird.

Until then, Kampe notes, he wasn't too active in the Democratic Party although he was legislatively active. As the longtime director of one of the more successful public vocational schools in the nation, his lobbying effort had to encompass members of both parties.

He's not shy about proclaiming Democratic values, however, and he's working hard to win Democratic backers. So far his list of endorsements is heavy with party members. (See his campaign website, www.ElectKampe.com.)

Kampe's forbears settled in Clark County more than a century ago, and he has not lived anywhere else. He was graduated from Ridgefield High School as was his mother before him. Upon graduation he went to Clark College and was graduated in machine technology. That got him an apprenticeship that led to journeyman status and a 10-year career at Kenton Machine. Along the way he was asked back to Clark as an instructor and soon added duties teaching shop at Prairie High School. When several local school districts joined to create a post-secondary vocational school in 1983, Kampe was hired as second in command to the founding superintendent, Mike Bjur. When Bjur left eight years later, Kampe moved up to head the school. He leads a staff of 50 who provide training in more than a dozen different vocational areas to a student body of 1,050. More than 19,000 ready-to-work graduates have completed the courses since 1983, and most of them are still on the job. The school consistently wins high marks in accreditation.

After many years of living close to the school at 12200 NE 28th St., Kampe and his wife Debbie moved to the Hockinson hills four years ago. He has lived in the legislative district for 40 years, much longer than any of the half dozen Republicans and independents running for the vacant seat.