



GrassRoots

Newsletter of the Whatcom County Democratic Central Committee

February 2008

www.whatcomdemocrats.com

647-7661

Vol 4, Issue 2

Welcome to the Caucus 2008

It's time to gear up for 2008. The Caucus is the start. In the '08 election, Democrats have a real chance of taking back the White House and increasing our majorities in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate. The "Looking ahead" box on the lower right shows the races we need to work on.

The Republican Party sought for decades the control of both the Congress and the Presidency. For seven years they have put our country (and much of the world) on a course to environmental, political and financial ruin. The Republican Party, nationally and locally, is as committed to this course as ever—even though the American people have drawn away from them in disbelief and anger. Now is our time to act—to place all Americans on a better course—for a better America.

Here in Whatcom County our challenge is to re-elect our Democratic Governor, add two Democrats to our state legislature, and mobilize thousands of new Democratic voters to offset the voters in Washington's "red" counties.

Winning elections isn't rocket science. With each campaign, we Whatcom Democrats have improved our tools, refined our message and approach, organized our tasks for maximum impact, and expanded the base of progressive voters. However, each year, we face two limiting factors: money and volunteers. Here's where you come in:

Please give to support this Caucus and to support our campaigns to elect Democrats- we rely on citizens, not powerful corporations and lobbies.

Sign up today, or call or visit our office, and volunteer to help us make a difference this year and in '08. In the next column are some ideas on ways you can volunteer.

Central Committee meeting Wednesday February 13

7 p.m., Brigid Collins House, corner of E. Holly & Garden Sts., Bellingham. A special program:

Managing Bellingham's Growth

Presidential local contacts

Clinton: Maggie Hansen, 733-2539; David Narsico, 714-1258

Edwards: Michele Kammerer 398-2878

Obama: Stephanie Kontouros, 734-2686

Types of volunteer work that you could do in 2008

- Phoning your friends and neighbors who are Democrats and networking to find more Democrats
- Walking your neighborhood to visit neighbors for voter registration and sharing information
- Arranging or hosting social gatherings or "coffee" for local Democrats to meet candidates.
- Finding visible, high-traffic yard sign locations in your part of the county
- Putting up yard signs in your area
- Staffing voter registration tables at community events in your area
- Help organize picnics or rallies in your area to showcase candidates and 100 days until election day
- Provide work and/or storage space for campaign materials in your area
- Find friendly businesses or organizations in your area that have multiple phones for use as phone-banks
- Data-entry using your home computer or at the Whatcom Dems office in Bellingham, where we are working on a major project to identify like-minded voters.

Looking Ahead -- Races in 2008 in Whatcom County

U.S. President & Vice President

U.S. Congress -- 2nd District

Washington State

Governor

Lt. Governor

Attorney General

Secretary of State

Treasurer

Auditor

Commissioner of Public Lands

Insurance Commissioner

Supt. of Public Instruction

Washington State Legislature

State House of Rep. -- 40th & 42nd Dist.

State Senate -- 40th Dist.

Whatcom County

Pub. Utility Dist. Commissioner Dist 1

Superior Court 1, 2 & 3

A field guide to the Democrats of Whatcom County

This is the special Caucus edition of GrassRoots, and many of our readers are first-time, so here is a guide to Whatcom County's Democrats. We're about restoring democracy, respect for our Constitution and rule of law, and government as servant of the public's common interest. We invite you to join us in this American civic responsibility.

Why is the Caucus so important?

The Presidential delegate-selection process in Washington State is determined by the major parties. The Washington Democrats choose all of Washington State's Democratic delegates to the national convention via a sequence of Democratic events starting with the Precinct Caucuses. This process is not run by, or answerable to, the Secretary of State. The Secretary runs a "presidential primary" (on February 19), but it has no bearing on the Democrats' delegate selection.

How can I learn about the Whatcom Democrats?

Visit the office Monday-Friday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. We're on the lower floor at 215 W. Holly, Bellingham 98225. This is the corner of Bay St. and W. Holly. Doors lead in from both streets. Go to our website: www.whatcomdemocrats.com, Or call our office at 360 647-7661.

Who is on the Whatcom County Democratic Central Committee?

The WCDCC ("Central Committee") includes both elected Precinct Committee Officers (PCOs) and non-PCOs. PCOs stand for election in their precinct every even year, during the September primary. The WCDCC Chair can fill interim vacancies by appointing a volunteer. You do not need to be a PCO to join the WCDCC.

What's the connection between the national Democratic Party and the Local WCDCC?

The WCDCC is at the root of a democratic decision-making tree that leads up to the Washington State Democrats and then to the Democratic National Committee. All "upward" representatives are elected democratically within the "lower" body.

Is the WCDCC part of the state-run election system?

Precinct Committee Officers (PCOs) are elected in a primary that is sanctioned and run by the Secretary of State with the County Auditor. A PCO is in that sense a "public official."

How is the WCDCC governed?

Officers are elected by the PCOs. Many other decisions are made by a vote of WCDCC members. We are guided by our Bylaws (viewable on our website).

What is the Executive Board?

Officers and the Chairs of various committees comprise the "E-Board." The E-Board implements ("executes") the overall program adopted by deliberations of the WCDCC.

What are Legislative Districts?

Legislative Districts (LDs) are electoral boundaries. Whatcom County contains all of the 42nd LD and part of the 40th LD. Each LD has its own Democratic organization, known simply as an "LD," parallel with the County's Central Committee. There is close coordination between the two LDs and the WCDCC.

40th Legislative District: Washington State's 40th LD includes San Juan County, Skagit County northwest of Mt. Vernon, and southern Whatcom County. The 40th LD meets at least quarterly. Meeting locations move from county to county to accommodate the membership. PCOs are automatic members of their LD organization. Dues are \$10 per year payable to 40th LD Democrats, c/o Whatcom County Democrats, P.O. Box 3095, Bellingham, WA 98227. Visit <http://wa40dems.net>, or contact Roni Beall (756-1405) for information.

42nd Legislative District: We are active in the northern areas of Whatcom County. The 42nd stretches from Lummi Island in the west past Mt. Baker in the east, and encompasses Ferndale, Lynden, Blaine, Birch Bay, Everson, Nooksack, and Custer. Frances Badgett (527-1097), the Chair, lives in Bellingham. Bob Hendricks and RB Porter, the Vice Chair and State Committeeman, live in Blaine. Peggy Borgens and Steve Lydolph, Treasurer and Secretary, live in Ferndale. Janet Lutz-Smith, State Committeewoman, lives on Lummi Island. Our goals for the coming year include aiding the campaign of (we hope) a Democratic challenger in the 42nd against incumbent Doug Ericksen, voter identification, and regular programs about issues and ballot measures important to our membership. Our meetings are typically on the second Saturday of the month at the Ferndale Machinists' Hall. Visit us at: www.wald42democrats.org

Whatcom Democrats Executive Board

Chair	Natalie McClendon	671-6851
Vice Chair	Abe Jacobson	734-5019
Treasurer	Peggy Borgens	384-0861
Recording Sec.	Joan Ging	758-4190
Corresponding Sec.	Roni Beall	756-1405
Affirmative Action	Rosalinda Guillen	738-0893
Campaign	Dave Willingham	
Candidates	John McGarrity	738-9695
Finance (Co-chairs)	Roni Beall	756-1405
	JoAnn McNerthny	441-2728
Issues/Resolutions	Tim Douglas	676-8530
Membership	Steve Schuck	733-1063
Communications	Stephanie Kountouros	734-2686
Technology	Satpal Sidhu	398-7906
State Committeewoman	Maggie Hanson	733-2539
State Committeeman	Hue Beattie	671-5597
Women's Club	Catherine Chambers	360 381-5091
Western Democrats (WWU)	Annie Jensen	wwudems.org
42nd Legislative District Rep.	Frances Badgett	527-1097
40th Legislative District Rep.	Tom Pasma	(360) 661-4485

Meet our Whatcom Democrats E-Board

Natalie McClendon (Chair, 360 671-6851), has been active for three decades in a variety of social and political action roles, including stints with the Sierra Club, non-commercial community radio, and alternative education. She stepped up in 2004 to help organize and train precinct-level leaders, and has been involved in the party ever since. She and her husband Mark Turner have raised two sons in the Lettered Streets neighborhood of Bellingham, and she helps Mark with his photography business. In her very spare time, she enjoys gardening and genealogy, and hopes to finish building a kayak this spring and get it on the water.

Abe Jacobson (Vice Chair, 360 734-5019), splits his time between Democratic volunteering, research with the Earth and Space Sciences Dept. at UW, and spending as much time near the coast and islands as he can finagle. Also likes to hike, kayak, fish, ski, and look at birds. Enjoys yoga.

Peggy Borgens (Treasurer, 360 384-0861), reports "I joined Whatcom Democrats after the election in 2004. Since then I have done many things I never imagined I would. A few months after joining it was noticed my precinct didn't have a PCO. I like to say 'I didn't know what one was, and now I am one.' Since then I have worked on campaigns and issues and just finished my first year as Treasurer. I especially enjoy the association with like-minded people who hope and work for a better future for our country."

Joan Ging (Recording Secretary, 360 758-4190) is well-known in Whatcom County for her acting and web- and graphics-design accomplishments and has been with the WCDCC for several years.

Roni Beall (Corresponding Secretary and Finance Co-Chair, 360 756-1405) reports "I looked forward to retirement as a time to reinvent myself. Before my husband and I moved to Bellingham, I was an overworked rehabilitation consultant. Relocating was the perfect excuse to close my business and start a new chapter. Like many, my interest in political involvement massively increased after the 2000 presidential election. Helping Washington stay Blue would be one of my top priorities. Health and fitness, friends and family, travel and relaxation, plus our two adorable toy poodles would also be priorities. But if we lose our Democracy while I'm off having 'fun,' that's not OK. So I split my time. And the balance feels great."

Rosalinda Guillen (Affirmative Action, 360 738-0893) has a strong background in labor, social-justice, and immigrant-rights work. She is Executive Director of Community To Community Development, a local nonprofit.

Dave Willingham (Campaign), our youngest member, is variously a student, a campaign worker, and a full-time employee of a downtown business. In his spare time he does website software.

John McGarrity (Candidates Chair, 360 738-9695) reports: "Married: 26 years. Children: 2 boys. My library: over 2,000 books. First job action: age 13. In Merchant Marine: 9 years. Brothers who were in Viet Nam when I was there in 1968: 2. Years someone in my family was working as a weaver (currently known): 1710-1970. Moved to Bellingham: 1990. First visited: 1978. Peak number of local family at Thanksgiving: 27. Chair of Cornwall Park Neighborhood Association last 10 years (in leadership 17 years). Number of City of Bellingham committees served on: 3."

JoAnn McNerthny (Finance Co-Chair, 360 441-2728) report: "I am a recent John McGarrity recruit to the E-Board. I have lived in Bellingham since 1973. My volunteerism has included work with Central American solidarity groups, Whatcom County Rainbow Coalition, Community to Community Development, the Community Food Co-op and very recently Circle of Life, an emerging worker-owned in-home caregivers cooperative. By profession, I am an accountant with a focus on non-profit organizations."

Tim Douglas (Issues & Resolutions, 360 676-8530) and his wife Joanne came to Bellingham in 1967 for his first job at WWU. They immediately liked the sense of place, history and mix of incomes and backgrounds that distinguished Bellingham from suburban Seattle. While Dean of Students, Tim was elected to the City Council in 1978. He helped balance budgets that maintained programs and services despite tough economic times. Bellingham elected Tim to his first of three terms as Mayor in 1983. After leaving office, he was appointed Director of the State's Community Trade and Economic Development Department by Governor Locke. He then was appointed Peace Corps Country Director in Russia. Joanne and he lived for two years in Moscow, where their understanding of the value of American civil liberties and responsibilities to the rest of the world deepened. Tim last November completed a one year repeat term as Mayor. In retirement he serves on several boards and is President of the North American Institute in Santa Fe, an organization fostering cooperation between the U.S., Canada and Mexico. The Douglas' daughter Erika and her husband Rick live in Bellingham. So Joanne and Tim have a great opportunity to spend time with Dakota, their two-year-old granddaughter.

Steve Schuck (Membership, 360 733-1063), after a career with "big iron" computers, was encouraged by the PC revolution to retire, which provided time to get involved in progressive politics. Howard Dean's campaign in 2003-4 and its demise at the hands of Corporate Media prepared Steve for arrival in Bellingham in 2004, and his "residence" at the Coordinated Campaign Headquarters on State Street until the November election. The next CC meeting introduced him to the Whatcom Democrats' new database, which he spent the next several years learning (kudos to the designers). Improving computer services to the Party remains his primary interest. **(continued p.4)**

WCDCC Calendar

Whatcom Democrats (WD) office is at Bay and W. Holly, B'ham.

February

- 4 Caucus Steering Committee mtg, 5-7 PM, WD office.
- 6 Election-observer training, 2-4 PM, RSVP to Roni Beall, 756-1405.
- 9 Sat. Precinct Caucuses. Doors open at 12 noon, convene at 1 PM.
- 11 Democratic Women's Club, 11:30 AM, back room, Arlis Restaurant, Cornwall across from Public Market. Program: "Women's Vote 2008". Carolyn, 734-2740.
- 11 Convention Planning Committee mtg, 5-7 PM, WD office.
- 13 Central Committee mtg, 7 PM, Brigid Collins House, corner of N. Garden and E. Holly, Bhm. All Democrats welcome. Program: **Growth management in Bellingham**. (See p 1)
- 18 Washington State Democrats Crab Feed and PCO Training, RSVP shawna@wa-democrats.org, 206 583-0664.
- 20 Credentials Committee meets, 7 PM, WD office.
- 27 E-Board mtg, 7-9 PM, WD office.

March

- 1 1:30 -4 PM, Platform mtg, Brigid Collins House, corner of N. Garden and E. Holly, Bhm. Tim Douglas, 676-8530. All Democrats welcome.
- 3 Rules Committee mtg, 5-7 PM, WD office.
- 12 Central Committee mtg, 7 PM, Brigid Collins House, corner

Allied group events in Whatcom County

February

- 5 Whatcom County for Obama Super-Tuesday Returns Party, 6-9 PM, Quarterback Pub and Eatery, Sehome Village, Stephanie Kountourous, 734-2686.

Democrats E-Board (from p. 3)

Stephanie Kountourous (Communications, 360 360-734-2686) has been an active Democrat since the day she explained Watergate to her second grade class during show and tell. While her colorful professional history includes work at a chocolate factory and llama ranch, her career focus has centered on broadcasting and social work. After studying Radio-Television at Eastern Washington University, Stephanie worked as an NPR jazz host and news anchor. Local positions included KVOS Television and as a news reporter for a local rock radio station, which fired her for her inability to "dumb down for the audience." Stephanie also worked at Womenscare, Sean Humphrey House and Northwest Youth Services, and she plans to complete her Masters in Social Work by June of 2008. Her vision for the Communications Committee is to "punch up the newsletter, ensure clear communication channels within the party and for its members, reveal that the Whatcom Democrats are more fun and interesting than they let on, and help to create new and exciting memorabilia." She lives with her domestic partner and two cats.

Next month: Satpal, Maggie, Hue, Catherine, & Frances

Whatcom for Obama: We are a grassroots, not-for-profit group working to support Barack Obama in Whatcom County. Check us out! www.whatcom4obama.com
Join our local group: www.mybarackobama.com/page/group/WhatcomCountyforObama, call 360-734-2686, or email whatcom4obama@gmail.com



Want to be informed about Whatcom Democrats events? Sign up for email Announcements at whatcomdemocrats.com

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Whatcom4Edwards: We have just put together a Google Group for the local John Edwards for President campaign, and if you email me and I will send the links directly to you. Michele Kämmerer, 360.393.2121, Whatcom4Edwards@gmail.com

Thanks to our Caucus volunteers!

To **Mica Meitel-Wade**, who volunteered to spend her college's 1-month winter break working for the Caucus and voter-identification projects. You're inspiring!

To **Kathryn Hanowell and Laurel Cook** for their shouldering the weighty burden of Caucus Logistics.

To **Carole Jacobson** for her tireless contacting of caucus volunteers.

To **Natalie McClendon** for her patiently overseeing and coordinating all the many Caucus efforts.

To **Steve Schuck** for always being there with a helpful hand when volunteers needed a list or a copy made, or had a computer problem.

And to all those many volunteers, site leaders, caucus leaders, and PCOs who helped folks make the Caucus a success!