



GRASSROOTS

The Newsletter of the
Whatcom County
Democratic
Central Committee

Membership Meeting

Wednesday, February 11, 2009
7:00 – 9:00 pm

Shuksan Middle School

2713 Alderwood Avenue, Bellingham
(on Northwest Ave,
half-mile south of I-5 exit)

All Democrats Welcome

Agenda: An exploration of what might stimulate our national economy and how that could affect us in Bellingham and Whatcom County

Prayer Wheel Project

Mark the historic inauguration of Barack Obama as President of the United States by placing your prayers, best wishes, thoughts, hopes, and dreams in a prayer wheel to be delivered to the White House after February 16th, by Rep. Rick Larsen.

Bellingham potter, Chris Moench, who has created prayer wheels for His Holiness the Dalai Lama, has made a unique prayer wheel for this special occasion.

Visit mlkcob.org to submit a message or mail to: Presidential Prayer Wheel Project, PO Box 3056, Bellingham 98227

The prayer wheel will be on display February 6 at Blue Horse Gallery, 301 W Holly, during the Downtown Gallery Walk.

February 2009

Vol 5, Issue 2

info@whatcomdemocrats.com

www.whatcomdemocrats.com

360-647-7661

Candidate Diversity: Are We There Yet?

by John J. McGarrity

Almost. Increasing the diversity of our candidates has long been a goal of our party, and it's one with varying degrees of success.

It naturally follows from a diverse party where all kinds of people are empowered to participate and take leadership roles. The candidacy of both Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton have helped energize people within the party, and realize that – yes *they* can, too. This was reflected in the great diversity of our party's County Convention delegation last year.

The harder step is convincing people that getting elected is possible, that they can grow into the public role, and that the party will provide support. Our best evidence is that we have done this and continue to do it.

Real progress toward greater candidate diversity is emepified by the election of three Native Americans to office here in Whatcom County in 2007. Of these, we

have the first elected to a county council (Bob Kelly) and the first member of a county executive branch (Steve Oliver), in all of Washington State. Women have served in county, city and school board positions for years, many with strong Democratic Party support.

But it's an ebb and flow. With three long-time women retiring in the last two years (Spanel, Caskey-Schreiber and Ryan), it's time for the next generation to step up and run.

The Whatcom Democrats' Candidates Committee includes a number of past elected officials and experienced campaign managers who can help a prospective candidate explore their chances of winning and what to expect. The party doesn't decide who can run and who can't, but we are a great resource for prospective candidates. We want to hear from you. Please call John McGarrity at 738-9695, to arrange to meet with the Candidates Committee.

Voters will choose new local leaders in '09

Odd years are for local elections. This year we have at least two open seats on the county council, which should make those races lively. Ward Nelson (Dist 1 – generally south of Alabama St and Mt Baker Hwy) and Laurie Caskey-Schreiber (Dist 2 – east of Guide Meridian, and generally north of Alabama St and Mt Baker Highway) have both announced they will not be running for re-election.

In 2008 voters reinstated county-wide election of each council position. (The 2007 election was limited to voters within each district). District 1 is a majority democratic area, encompassing all of liberal south Bellingham. District 2 is a swing district, with some very high Republican precincts in and around Lynden. Only the district's voters will vote in the Primary, narrowing the field to two candidates. With county-wide voting in the General election, and a majority Democratic county, we should

have a good chance of electing candidates that share our values. But we can never take this for granted.

A majority of the Port of Bellingham commissioners are up for re-election, also. The port has been in the news lately because of the current planning to redevelop Bellingham's waterfront. All county voters will decide these races, and all county taxpayers support the Port of Bellingham. Port Commissions are charged with promoting economic activity along the coastline, and the Port of Bellingham manages the airport and the Blaine port facilities as well.

Also up for election this year are half of all city councils in Bellingham as well as the small cities of Whatcom County; mayors of Blaine, Lynden, Everson, Nooksack and Sumas; and half of all Board members in all school districts.

Check whatcomdemocrats.com for a complete list of positions up this year.

42nd LD Leaders Elected

At the reorganization meeting of the 42nd LD Democrats on Saturday, January 10, the 2009 leadership was elected:

Chair: SueEllen Lawton, Bellingham

Vice Chair: Steve Lydolph, Ferndale

Recording Secretary: Kathy Hopkins, Ferndale

Treasurer: Sherry Zeilstra, Ferndale

State Comm. Woman: Janet Lutz-Smith, Lummi Island

State Comm. Man: Richard May, Blaine

The first full-membership meeting will be February 14th at 10 AM at Machinists Hall, 2064 Vista Dr., Ferndale. All Democrats in the 42nd LD are invited to attend as we will be forming Committees and electing Committee Chairs at his meeting. We need all of the help we can get, so come on over (and bring your sweetheart!)

The 42nd LD Dems now have a general email list for any Democrat interested in keeping in touch with their activities. Sign up at their website: wa-ld42democrats.org

PCO Steering Committee to Plan Training

The PCO Steering Committee will assemble for an eating meeting 5:15 PM at the new Food Co-op, corner of Westerly Rd. and Cordata Parkway (near WCC) prior to the membership meeting on Wednesday, February 11. ALL PCOs welcome. Help plan training and support activities for PCOs and precinct-level organizing. INFO: Carole Jacobson, 734-5019.

Please welcome new PCO appointments: 123 Martha Dearstyne, 132 Roger Woods, 137 Pam Mueller, and 224 Raymond Wilson.

Lynden Dems Organize

While Republican outnumber Democrats in Lynden by about three to one, there's still hundreds of Democrats there. But it's been hard for the Dems to find each other. Now they are really energized, and are meeting monthly.

Democrats in the Lynden area are invited to meet-up at Dutch Mother's Restaurant, 405 Front Street, Lynden, on Saturday, February 21, starting at 9 am.

To communicate with other Lynden-area Dems, you can sign up for their Google Group, at whatcomdemocrats.com/pcos.php, or contact Alyce Werkema at 354-4397.

Inauguration 2009

Thank you, Barack Obama...

For assuming the reins of power, ego in check

For demonstrating civility throughout the campaign

For showing us it is possible to be both smart and humble

For reminding us we have a past to overcome and live up to

For restoring hope and courage in the midst of challenge and chaos

For honoring your own faith without excluding those of other beliefs

For moving us to give our own personal best to family, community and country

For inspiring poets, preachers and musicians to express our joy and hope

For making us proud of our differences and colorblind at the same time

For the pleasing diversion of a graceful and charming first family

For surrounding yourself with the best and brightest

For the promise of power that hears truth speak

For renewing pride in our country

Thank you Barack Obama!

—Therese Holm

Membership Fees Revised

At our January membership meeting, members approved increasing the minimum per-year membership fee from \$7 to \$10, and delegated to the Executive Board decisions about higher fee levels. The Membership Committee proposed eliminating the penalty for people who choose to live alone by dropping the \$30 household fee and instead all individuals would pay the same standard yearly rate of \$20. This was adopted by the Executive Board at its January meeting.

While the \$10 fee level remains for those feeling unusual economic stress, we very much appreciate larger contributions and strive to put them to the best available use in electing progressive policymakers.

Dwight Pelz Re-Elected

The State Party's Central Committee met in Olympia earlier this month to reorganize and elect officers for the next two years. Virtually all of the Party's 176 Committee-people were present.

In officer elections, Dwight Pelz was re-elected as Party Chair, overcoming a challenge by former Snohomish County Chair Mark Hintz. Former Spokane County Chair Sharon Smith defeated incumbent Eileen Macoll for the position of Vice Chair. Secretary Luis Moscoso and Treasurer Habib Habib were re-elected without opposition. Todd Nichols, of Everett, was re-elected as 2nd Congressional District Rep to the State Executive Board.

Whatcom Democrats Executive Board

email: add@whatcomdemocrats.com

Chair	Natalie McClendon	671-6851	demchair
Vice Chair	Bill Newmon	733-5386	demvchair
Treasurer	Peggy Borgens	384-0861	treas
Recording Secretary	Michele Kammerer	398-2878	recsec
Corresponding Secretary	Carole Jacobson	734-5019	corsec
State Committeewoman	Stephanie Kountouros	734-7340	staterwoman
State Committeeman	Hue Beattie	671-5597	stateman
Affirmative Action	Monica Gunderson	(425) 351-9477	
Campaign	(Vacant)		
Candidates	John J. McGarrity	738-9695	
Communications	(Vacant)		
Finance	Roni Beall	756-1405	
Issues and Resolutions	Tim Douglas	676-8530	
Membership	Tim Schuck	733-1063	
Technology	(Vacant)		
WCD Women's Clubs	Catherine L. Chambers	647-3888	
Young Democrats	Andrew Lamb	(425) 374-9686	
40 th LD Representative	Bob Burr	671-8862	
42 nd LD Representative	SueEllen Lawton	sueellenlawton@mac.com	

Participate in Changing Course

President Obama is counting on us. In late January, he announced a new organization built on the success of the election campaign that will keep us informed of the action citizens can take to move the Democratic and Obama agenda through Congress. Organizing for America (OFA) will partner with the Democratic National Committee and its new chairman, Virginia Governor Tim Kaine. This new organization will utilize the millions of email contacts and networking structure that helped get Obama elected.

Local support for President Obama is strong, but they are not all Democrats. As a party, we will be taking a leadership role in promoting the president's agenda, but have designed a structure for our efforts so that non-democrats will not feel shut out. The structure is also decentralized, much like the Obama campaign structure, so that many people can jump in and help without some committee directing the work.

Structure for Coordinating with Other Groups

Umbrella email Groups hosted at MyBarackObama.com, using existing "affinity" groups, plus new ones, such as Whatcom for Education or Whatcom for Health Care Reform. People can create/join groups that are more specific, but our focus of the umbrella organizing will be on



our main platform issues. The idea is to create broad groups that share information and form coalitions as specific legislation comes up.

Recruit local groups and individuals to participate in the Umbrella Groups:

There are many local organizations already working on issues, and have "experts" and activists. Different groups have different policy positions or preferred methods of action. We are not trying to get everyone to agree on one plan or piece of legislation, but to empower them to work together when they can.

Set up Wikipedia pages for each local umbrella issue. If someone wants to get involved in the health care issue, this page would tell them all the activist and education groups in Whatcom County working on the issue. People may be thinking nationally, but they are more likely to act if they are working with others locally. The idea is to provide an individual with a place to start in figuring out where to be involved, can get up to speed on the issue as it stands at that time, and how to do it, on a local level. By being a Wikipedia page, any local organization can add their information and update it.

We will need writers, researchers, Wiki editors, and of course, issue experts and activists. Please go to our website, whatcomdemocrats.com, to volunteer, or call our office at 647-7661.

40th LD Dems Discuss Top-Two Primary

The first membership meeting of the 40th LD is scheduled for February 7, 1:00–3:00 PM at the Fairhaven Library. The topic will be **The Top-two Primary System**, its current legal status, and its ramifications for local party organizations

For more information or to join the 40th LD Democrats, go to www.wa40dems.net. To join our Yahoo Group, email wa40ld-dems-owner@yahoogroups.com.

The 40th LD held its Reorganization Meeting on January 10 and elected the following officers:

Chair: Roni Beall, Bellingham

Whatcom Vice-chair: Bob Burr, Bellingham

Skagit Vice-chair: Erna Berghuis, Mt. Vernon

San Juan Vice-chair: Jamie Stevens, Lopez Island

Secretary: David Narsico, Sudden Valley

Treasurer: Phillip Dryer, Mt. Vernon

Committeewoman: Catherine Chambers, Bellingham

Committeeman: Tom Pasma, Bow

Budget Adopted; Fundraising Begins

The membership adopted a 2009 budget at the January membership meeting, totalling \$49,000. The Finance Committee has already begun planning how we will raise \$15,000 this year from events, and needs volunteers to help. An additional \$34,000 will be raised through direct donations and memberships.

The budget supports a wide variety of projects and the work of many volunteers all over the county, but a major portion pays for one part-time staff person to hold it all together, and an office to provide a central location for our work.

The first project of the year will be a plant sale, which should be fun, productive, and get us away from our computers. See more information in the box at left.

We're also looking the May 15, Kids Ski to Sea Parade. If you can help with this event, please call the Whatcom Dems at 647-7661. Finally, it's not too early to start saving things for our annual yard sale tentatively set for September 12 (location & time TBD)

Finance Committee meetings are held monthly, usually the 3rd Monday. Just show up, or call Roni Beall at 756-1405.

Plant Sale

Time to Dig for Democrats

tentatively set for April 17-18

Help us reach our 2009 fundraising goal by potting up your extra plants. We'll even help you if you've got a lot to offer us.

Peggy Borgens will be leading the digging and potting crew, and we need someone to coordinate the sale itself.

To let us know you will have plants to donate, if you would like help digging, and to volunteer for this project, call our office at 647-7661 or email event@whatcomdemocrats.com

Membership Meeting

Wednesday, February 11, 2009
7:00 – 9:00 pm
Shuksan Middle School
2713 Alderwood Avenue, Bellingham

PROGRAM:
Economic Stimulus Plan



Whatcom County Democrats

215 Holly Street, Suite B-27
P.O. Box 3095
Bellingham, WA 98227

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Why am I getting this newsletter?

Because you are a paid member, or have volunteered with the campaign in recent months, and we want to keep you up to date.

Can I get the newsletter via email?

YES. Sign up at whatcomdemocrats.com/maillist/lists.php

You have a choice of a monthly newsletter plus a weekly update.

How can I Join the Democrats?

You can pay your membership on our website (whatcomdemocrats.com) or call our office at 647-7661.

February 2009

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
We don't have room to give you lots of details on these community events, so go to our website calendar (whatcomdemocrats.com) or call our office 647-7661 for more information.						
1	2 5-7pm — Communications Cmte Work Session, office	3 8 pm – Young Dems, Rudy's Pizza, 1232 N. State, Bham	4	5	6 6-10pm – Gallery Walk, Bham	7 1-3pm – 40th LD Dems, see page 3
8	9 11:30-1pm – Women's Club, Panda Palace, Sunset Square 5-7pm – Communications Cmte Work Session, office	10	11 5:15 pm – PCO Steering Cmte, SEE Page 2 7 pm – WDems Membership Mtg, SEE PAGE 1	12	13	14 10 am – 42nd LD Dems Membership Mtg, SEE PAGE 2
15	16 5-7pm – Comm. Cmte, office 7-9 pm – Finance Cmte mtg, office	17 8 pm – Young Dems, Rudy's Pizza, 1232 N. State, Bham	18 12n – Engaged Citizen Book Group, Village Books, Bham	19 7 pm – Bellingham Human Rights Film Fest	20 Newsletter copy deadline	21 9am – Lynden Dems, 405 Front Street, Lynden 9:45 am – Global Health Care Forum, Bham Library, downtown
22	23 Reproductive Health and Rights Lobby Day, 360- 603-7705 5-7pm – Comm. Cmte, office	24	25 7 pm – Whatcom Dems E-Board Mtg, Office.	26 7pm – United for National Healthcare, 1700 N. State St, Bham	27	28