

## GRASSROOTS

The Newsletter of the  
**Whatcom County  
 Democratic  
 Central Committee**

### Membership Meeting

#### NEW DAY & LOCATION

Thursday, May 21

7:00 – 9:00 pm

Norway Hall

1419 N. Forest St, Bellingham

(between Champion & Magnolia)

All Democrats Welcome

**PROGRAM:** Health Care Reform will be on the Congressional agenda in June. We'll review the consensus points found in the first round of public forums the Obama Administration conducted on Health Care, with Larry Kalb, President of *Health Care for All – Washington*.

### 42nd Legislative District Democrats Meeting

Saturday, May 9, 10am-Noon

Machinists Hall, 2064 Vista Dr. Ferndale

**PROGRAM:** 42nd LD Rep. Kelli Linville with a Legislative Report. See page 2 for more Legislative news.

### 40th Legislative District Democrats Meeting

Saturday, May 9, 2-4 pm

Public Utilities District, 2415 Freeway Dr, Mt Vernon

**PROGRAM:** Caucus vs Primary - pros and cons; 40th LD Dems Endorsement Policy discussion and vote.

May 2009

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www.whatcomdemocrats.com

360-647-7661

# Why Local Democrats Must Be “On Time” in the “Off Year”

by *Tim Douglas, Issues Chair*

With workable majorities at the local, state and national level, Democrats now can demonstrate their leadership and problem-solving capacity. The issues are by far the most daunting in memory. As we tackle these challenges, voters will observe and evaluate our performance. Never has an “off year” in the election cycle been a more critical moment to be on time with our best efforts.

Pres. Obama has set a clear agenda. It calls for sacrifice, imagination and commitment. The office-holders we have elected and those we are recruiting need our support and action. This November’s election and the primary leading up to it require a campaign effort every bit as rigorous as last year’s! We pulled out the stops, and look what happened: a whopping 89% Whatcom County voter turnout. Democrats won most races, and generally by wide margins. We gained some valuable lessons:

- We turned out almost as many Democrats for the caucuses just in Whatcom County as the Republicans did for the entire state!
- Recruited and trained more than 3,500 volunteers for an intensive outreach and get-out-the-vote drive.
- Registered new voters across the County
- Distributed thousands of yard signs
- Identified progressive voters, and contacted thousands of them to make sure they voted
- Made sure that Whatcom Democrats’ positions on issues and candidates became well known

To accomplish all this, we created tools to ensure that every volunteer had a clear task, technical support and the walking lists, phone banks and printed materials necessary to succeed. These same tools are available again this year to repeat this success.

Today’s tough economy and the pri-

oritizing of programs and services will confront all those considering a run for local office in 2009. The record they establish in handling these questions will provide a talent pool for further office. And the breather that this recession provides us from surging growth is an unexpected opportunity to lay further foundations for prosperous, livable communities in our area.

*continued, page 2*



## On Building a Lasting Progressive Majority

*Keynote Speaker Adam Bartz,*

*Executive Director, Progressive Majority*

### Eleanor Roosevelt Luncheon

Friday, May 29, 2009

11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

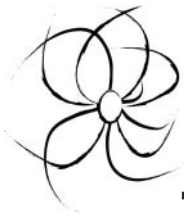
Program begins at 12 noon

Northwood Hall

3240 Northwest Ave, Bellingham

**Purchase Tickets on-line** at whatcomdemocrats.com or call 647-7661. Tickets start at \$20 per person.

This is the major annual fundraiser for the Whatcom Democrats. We hope you will join us as we prepared for the 2009 local elections.



## Plant Sale Brings in the Green

Our first annual plant sale raised \$546 for the party, which we think was pretty good for our first effort. The big credit goes to Peggy Borgens for organizing all the potting and preparing the plants for sale.

In addition to many plant donations for a lot of our own members, we received the leftovers from the Birchwood Garden Club sale. Then we passed on our leftovers to the Master Gardens' sale on May 2.

Thanks also go to Dianne Foster, Kathy Hopkins, David Dopps, Ronalee Kincaid and Natalie McClendon for helping with the sale.

We will definitely do a plant sale next year, so as you tidy up your garden over the summer and fall, tuck those extra seedlings and divisions in pots, and they'll be ready for next spring's sale.

## Local Progressive Activists Start Networking Group

PCO Dianne Foster said it best -- we need to "protect Obama for the outside, and push him from the inside." After some months of strategizing within the party, not surprisingly, others were doing the same without our knowledge. Now we are all (we hope) coming together to figure out how to harness the collective energy of many, many progressive organizations and activists in Whatcom County to support the Obama agenda, and to influence it.

Stay tuned for further developments and collective action.

## Off-Year Election

*Continued from Page 1*

To help President Obama pursue the change voters demanded last November, to see that crucial issues like health care reform, education and economic health are pursued, and to get progressive candidates elected to achieve these goals, mark time right now on your summer and fall calendar to commit some of your energy to the Whatcom Democrats' campaign. Call our office, 647-7661, to let us know you're interested!

# 2009 WA Legislative Wraps Up

by Steve Lydolph

Here are some of the things that did (and didn't) happen in the Legislature this session. You can learn more Saturday, May 9th when Rep. Kelli Linville meets with the 42nd Legislative District Democrats (details on page 1).

**Domestic partners:** bill that grants domestic partners virtually all of the rights and responsibilities of spouses. The changes include labor and employment rights and public-employee benefits, including inheritance of pension benefits.

**College tuition:** Budget writers assumed a tuition increase of nearly 30 percent at the state's four-year universities over the next two years. Until now, tuition hikes were limited to 7 percent a year. It remains to be seen whether college officials will raise tuition that high.

**Unemployment insurance:** Labor unions won some temporary increases in unemployment benefits, but failed to win permanent changes. The bill would save businesses hundreds of millions of dollars.

**K-12 schools:** the plan boosts high school class hours, increases all-day kindergarten, and would broaden state support for things like preschool and gifted education.

**WASL:** Lawmakers agreed to plans to revamp the state's controversial Washington Assessment of Student Learning tests.

**Payday lending:** tougher regulations on the payday loan industry. The changes

include limits on the size of loans and forcing lenders to accept payment plans from struggling customers.

**Voting rights for felons:** felons can register to vote once they're off probation. For years, Washington has barred convicted felons, even after release from prison, from voting until they've paid off all their court-imposed fees. For poor people, this can amount to a lifetime loss of the right to vote.

**Newspapers:** a temporary tax break for newspapers; cuts the state's business tax on papers by 40 percent until 2016.

**Political lies:** Candidates lying during political campaigns, which the courts have said is hard-to-touch free speech even if false, will now find themselves running afoul of a new state law. Gregoire has signed a bill making certain false political ads illegal. Violators could face fines.

**The home buyer's warranty bill (SB 5895):** passed in the Senate but not in the House.

**The Retro Bill** didn't pass - Retro is a program that lets employers in a group self-insure for workmans-comp purposes. The Bill would have required more transparency and limited administrative fees. During the 2008 campaign, the state Democratic party raised concerns about the Building Industry Association of Washington (BIAW, the largest retro program) using some of its retro refund for political activity — something that is not illegal.

### Whatcom Democrats Executive Board

email: add @whatcomdemocrats.com

Chair	Natalie McClendon	671-6851	demchair
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Young Democrats	Andrew Lamb	(425) 374-9686	
40 <sup>th</sup> LD Representative	Bob Burr	671-8862	
42 <sup>nd</sup> LD Representative	Steve Lydolph	384-5414	

# City & County Races Shape up

Louise Bjornson's surprise retirement announcement has set in motion a game of musical chairs as local electeds decide to run for a different office. Laurie Caskey-Schrieber, previously saying she would retire from the County Council, has decided to run for the At-Large County Council seat being vacated by Seth Fleetwood, who is running for the Bellingham City Council.

Prior to making endorsements, the Whatcom Democrats will publicize campaign events of any candidate who asks us, so that our membership can get a chance to learn about each candidate. Our membership will consider endorsements at our June meeting.

Below is a list of the races that the Whatcom Democrats will be focused on this year, with a goal of recruiting at least one good Democrat to run in each race. Potential candidates need to make up their minds by June 5. The party does not decide who runs, but, of course, is very interested in finding good candidates.

Candidates previously endorsed by the Whatcom Democrats are indicated by an asterisk. All current announced candidates are listed.

**Bellingham City Council Ward 6:** Incumbent Barbara Ryan\* is retiring. Michael Lilliquist is running.

**Bellingham City Council Ward 4:** Incumbent Stan Snapp\* is running for re-election.

**Bellingham City Council Ward 2:** Incumbent Gene Knutson\* is running for re-election.

**Bellingham City Council At-Large:** Incumbent Louise Bjornson\* is retiring. Seth Fleetwood\* is running.

## Track the Recovery

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act is now law. While the federal economic recovery package will pump billions of dollars into our state and local economies to support and create jobs, the federal stimulus package is not a cure-all for our economy or closing the state budget shortfall.

The [recovery.wa.gov](http://recovery.wa.gov) website is designed to help Washingtonians understand the recovery package and will serve as a "one-stop" location for accountability information so residents can see that the recovery money is being spent wisely.

**County Council Dist 3, Position A:** Incumbent Carl Weimer\* is running for re-election.

**County Council Dist 2, Position A:** Incumbent Laurie Caskey-Schrieber\* is running for the At-Large seat. Ken Mann\* is running.

**County Council Dist 1, Position A:** Incumbent Ward Nelson retiring.

**County Council At-Large:** Incumbent Seth Fleetwood\* is running for the Bellingham City Council At-Large position. Laurie Caskey-Schrieber is running.

**Port of Bellingham District 2:** Incumbent Douglas Smith. Doug Carlberg is running.

**Port of Bellingham District 1:** Incumbent Scott Walker\*. John Blethen and Hamilton Hayes are running.

## Endorsement Policy Change Gives Dem Candidates a Leg Up

At the May meeting, the membership adopted a new policy that will get Party resources in the hands of Democratic candidates much earlier in a campaign season. Our endorsement policy has been fairly strict in limiting resources to candidates only after endorsement, which can happen as late as after the August Primary.

The new policy creates a process for certifying candidates as democrats, without endorsing them, as early in the election cycle as possible, in order to provide party resources for these Democratic candidates vying for the party endorsement and nomination. Once certified, they will have access to all party resources that can be shared equally amongst the competitors including, but not necessarily limited to: voter file, membership lists, fundraising lists, office space, and internal email communications.

The goal of the new policy is to get resources to Democratic candidates early, so they are competitive with non-Democratic candidates. A second goal is to provide a level playing field to all Democratic candidates, including challengers of Democratic incumbents running for re-election.

Certification does not necessarily mean a candidate will be endorsed. After the filing deadline, the membership, in accordance with the current Endorsement Policy, may endorse one or more candidates, or none.

## New Webmaster Named

We are happy to announce that the Whatcom Democrats now has a webmaster — Ellen McDermott. Ellen is retired from WWU where she was involved in managing the university's website. Ellen has been active in the last few years with Move-On.

The Whatcom Democrats upgraded it's website in April to make it much easier for leaders and activists to contribute and maintain content.

This upgrade has been two years in the making, with a long break in the middle to get Barack Obama elected. The technical work was done by Ian Turner, son of our chair, Natalie McClendon.

The webmaster will help train party activists on the use of the new website, so that we can continue to develop it as a valuable resource on issues and party activities.

## Join Suffragettes in Local Parades

Whatcom County Democratic Women invite the women of Whatcom to participate in re-creating the Suffrage Parade Entries from the early 1900's. This year marks the beginning of the Centennial Celebration for Women's Suffrage in Washington State.

We will march in the Ski-to-Sea Parade, May 23rd, and the Old Settlers Parade, July 25th, in costume.

Contact Catherine Chambers, 647-3888, for more information or to sign up.

Collecting  
Now  
for Fall Sale!



Household Goods, Working Electronics, Smaller Pieces of Furniture, Clothing in Good Condition, Collectibles

Drop off at 215 W. Holly Street, Suite B-27 (enter on Bay) M-F, 10 am to 2 pm

For details call 647-7661 or email [events@whatcomdemocrats.com](mailto:events@whatcomdemocrats.com)



## Whatcom County Democrats

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

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# MAY 2009

Check [whatcomdemocrats.com](http://whatcomdemocrats.com) for details

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
3	4	5 Dine Out for Maple Alley Inn  8 pm – Young Dems, Rudy's Pizza, 1232 N. State, Bham	6 5-7 pm Green Drinks	7	8	9 10 am– 42nd LD Dems Membership Mtg, SEE PAGE 1 2-4 pm– 40th LD Dems Membership Mtg, Mt Vernon, See P. 1
10 Mother's Day	11 11:30-1pm – Women's Club, Anthony's Hearthfire Grill	12 7pm – Drinking Liberally, Horseshoe Cafe	13	14 6 pm – Michael Lilliquist Campaign Kick-off, Blue Horse Gallery	15 Bike to Work & School Day	16 9am– Lynden Dems, Fairway Cafe, Lynden  12pm - 3:30pm State Budget Crisis LWV, YWCA Ballroom
17	18 7-9 pm– Finance Cmte mtg, office	19 1 pm – Great Decisions, 1st Congregational Church, B'ham  8 pm – Young Dems, Rudy's Pizza, 1232 N. State, Bham	20	21 4:30 pm – PCO Steering Cmte, Cordata Food Coop  7 pm – Whatcom Dems Members Mtg, SEE PAGE 1	22 Newsletter copy deadline	23 12pm - Ski to Sea Grand Parade, Cornwall Ave, Bham
24	25 Memorial Day	26 7pm – Drinking Liberally, Horseshoe Cafe	27 12n– City Club, Northwood Hall, Bham  7 pm – Whatcom Dems E-Board Mtg, Office.	28 7pm – United for National Healthcare, 1700 N. State St, Bham	29 11:30am– Eleanor Roosevelt Luncheon, Northwood Hall 7pm - Becoming a US Citizen	30 7pm – Faith Based Advocacy Wksp, Whatcom Peace & Justice Ctr.
31	JUNE 1 Candidate Filing period begins	2 8 pm – Young Dems, Rudy's Pizza, 1232 N. State, Bham	3 5-7 pm Green Drinks	4	5 Candidate Filing period ends	6