



GRASSROOTS

The Newsletter of the
Whatcom County
Democratic
Central Committee



Holiday Party

**Celebrate '09 success
& launch a successful 2010
Join us**

**Sunday, December 6,
5 - 9 PM
Melody Hall
4071 Home Rd, Bellingham**

Ticket includes dinner,
beverage, program &
dancing. Other events:
Silent Auction and Dessert Dash



To donate auction items or desserts
call our office at 647-7661

**Buy tickets on-line at
whatcomdemocrats.com**

Remember to bring canned goods for
our food drive.

**There is no membership
meeting in December**

*December 2009
Vol 5, Issue 12
info@whatcomdemocrats.com
www.whatcomdemocrats.com
360-647-7661*

Campaign '09 – the Good and the Bad

Election 2009 is history, and we won some really important races and issues, and lost some real heartbreakers. Whatcom County voted strongly with the state majority on both state-wide ballot measures, approving Referendum 71 by 53.5%, and defeating the Eyman anti-tax initiative, 1033, by over 55%. In rural Whatcom County, voters even approved new taxes to support the library system.

The races for the County Council and Port of Bellingham were not so clear cut. They were more like split decisions. Two of our endorsed candidates won - Ken Mann and Carl Weimer - and two lost - Dan McShane and Laurie Caskey-Schreiber. This means there is no longer a progressive majority on the county council.

The Party's campaign organization made great strides this year, building on the technology and tools of the Obama campaign. We ran our own homegrown operation like pros, and even produced our very first TV ad, which aired on cable. We particularly want to acknowledge Campaign Committee chair Adam Day, Jason Heck, Lisa McShane, John McGarrity, and

office manager Rebekah Lee for their vision and drive to get the job done.

We hope everyone will extend their thanks to the candidates who put their lives on hold for this crazy campaigning stuff. Hundreds of volunteers and contributors round out our team of winners. Thanks to all!

Thoughts From Laurie

By Laurie Caskey-Schreiber

Now that the dust has settled and there's time to engage in some reflection it's important to recognize the areas of success and acknowledge areas of weakness that need to be addressed.

I've given our county council races considerable thought, and I think it's really important to remember that the environmental issues still play strong in voter's minds. The most effective hit piece was the attack by my opponent on my record for protecting farmland and Lake Whatcom. He claimed the 40,000 loss of farmland acres happened under my watch, as well as, Lake Whatcom not improving in water quality.

Both of these were half-truths. The farm

Continued, page 3

Endorsed Candidates and Ballot Measures

✓ if our position or candidate prevailed, and final percent of vote

Initiative 1033	✓ NO	Whatcom Co. 55.29%
Referendum 71	✓ APPROVE	Whatcom Co. 53.48%
Port of B'ham Comm Dist 1	John Blethen	47.44%
Port of B'ham Comm Dist 2	✓ Michael McAuley	54.31%
County Council Dist 1 Pos A	Dan McShane	49.73%
County Council Dist 2 Pos A	✓ Ken Mann	51.99%
County Council Dist 3 Pos A	✓ Carl Weimer	50.76%
County Council At-Large	Laurie Caskey-Schreiber	46.23%
B'ham City Council Ward 2	✓ Gene Knutson	100%
B'ham City Council Ward 4	✓ Stan Snapp	100%
B'ham City Council Ward 6:	✓ Michael Lilliquist	56.56%
	Catherine Chambers	43.44%
B'ham City Council At-Large	✓ Seth Fleetwood	77.00%
B'ham School District Pos. 5	✓ Scott Stockburger	60.58%
Whatcom Library Proposition 1	✓ YES	51.41%

Women's Club

Whatcom County Democratic Women's Club Holiday Party will be on Monday, December 14 at Anthony's Hearthfire Restaurant at 11:30 a. m. Special menu items will be served. Please bring a white donkey gift for exchange and a food bank or any other bank donation.

42nd LD Dems

The 42nd's December membership meeting will be a Holiday brunch, Saturday, Dec 12th from 10 am to noon.

Come enjoy a snack and conversation: join in a discussion of the year that's ending and help make plans for the year ahead. We meet at the Machinists Hall, 2064 Vista Dr. Ferndale, WA.

Dear Members,

Your membership runs for 365 days. The month before it lapses, we will notify you. If you lose the notification, we will remind you one month after the lapse. We hope that you will continue to support our important work, but if you prefer not to receive reminders, please tell us so we don't waste your time with useless mail. Our yearly membership rates are \$20 for all individuals, half price for students and seniors in need. As the recent election showed, we badly need all the help we can get, and greatly appreciate any additional contribution. Thank you for supporting the Whatcom County Democratic Party.

– Steve Schuck, Membership Chair

Caucus 2010 up next

Now that the election is passed, we are entering the half-year period of reflection, re-grouping, planning and training, in preparation for the 2010 elections. Every election is practice for the next, so we want to build on what we learned this year.

A major activity for this coming spring will be holding informal precinct caucuses to gather input from rank-and-file Democrats in our communities on the values and priorities of the Party. This process involves all aspects of the party, and we need to fill our Committee Chair positions so we have the capacity to do it effectively.

Note the vacancies on the Board at the right, and we anticipate vacancies in Campaign and Issues & Resolutions. We are looking for people who can commit to one year at least. Please call Natalie at 671-6851 to discuss these opportunities.

Current Health Care Legislation – An Overview of Improvements

The House passed HR 3962 on November 7, 2009. The Senate bill is still pending. With the Senate voting Nov. 21st to begin debate, chances are strong that the Senate will pass a bill similar to the House version.

The House and Senate bills will then be combined (reconciled), and the reconciled bill will be voted on by both houses of Congress. With majorities in both chambers, the democrats will control this reconciliation process. A reconciliation bill isn't subject to the Senate's cloture rule. That means that it only takes a 50% majority to get the bill to final consideration and passage in both the House and Senate.

While the current bills for national health care reform legislation will benefit many U.S. residents there are still key problems left unresolved. Some provisions are effective immediately, but others will not take effect until 2013 and some will not be entirely phased in until 2019. By most reports the danger to our economy from rising health care costs is imminent. We need stronger action sooner, but this is a start.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that between 29 and 31 million of uninsured Americans will gain health insurance. Insurance companies will no longer be able to deny coverage for pre-existing conditions and will not be able to cancel policies except for fraud or non-payment of premiums.

Affordability credits, to be paid directly

to insurance companies, will help subsidize the cost of premiums and out-of-pocket expenses (deductibles/co-pays) for persons with income under 400% of the Federal Poverty Level (\$88,200 for a family of 4 in 2009). Affordability credits will be based on a sliding scale tied to income levels. Bankruptcies will be reduced as a result.

Many Medicare recipients will pay lower drug costs: The donut hole, which leaves some drug costs uncovered, will be reduced \$500 in 2010 and phased out in 2019. Effective in 2010, brand name drug prices will be lowered 50% for those in the donut hole.

A national high risk pool, with available affordability credits, will be established in 2010 to cover those with serious medical conditions who have been denied insurance or who have been uninsured for six months.

Troubles Remain

Because the bills retain private health insurance companies and establish only a weak public option with premiums as high as or higher than current private insurance company premiums, and because they do not provide full health care coverage to all U.S. residents, the following problems will remain:

1) Many U.S. residents will not receive adequate coverage. According to the

Continued, page 3

Whatcom Democrats Executive Board

email: add @whatcomdemocrats.com

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Young Democrats	Andrew Lamb	(425) 374-9686	
40 th LD Representative	Bob Burr	671-8862	
42 nd LD Representative	Steve Lydolph	384-5414	

'09 Voters Support Protecting Farmland, Just Might Be Confused as to Who Can Deliver

Continued from page 1

land loss was due to our county's huge problem of having farmland zoned for development; that's why I worked so hard to develop our Purchase of Development Rights program, which has protected approximately 1,000 acres of farmland. I personally, have never voted for any loss of farmland.

Regarding Lake Whatcom, if we stopped everything negative that was affecting the lake today, it would still continue to deteriorate due to the continued existence of phosphorous in the Lake. While serving on the council, I was part of a downzone effort that removed approximately 2,500 homes from the watershed,

Health Care

continued from page 2

Congressional Budget Office 4% to 6%, approximately 12 to 18 million people, will still not have health insurance.

2) Currently 31 cents of every health care dollar is spent on administration due to profits, overhead costs, and the burden on health care providers by unique filing requirements for reimbursement. Many policy experts doubt that provisions to lower costs will result in substantial savings. (Compare to Medicare at 2-5%)

3) Except for those in the national high risk pool, affordability credits will not be available until 2013. People will remain uninsured for the next three years.

4) The high risk pool is underfunded - \$5 billion has been appropriated for the high risk pool but it is estimated that \$15 billion is needed.

5) Medical bankruptcies will still exist for those ineligible to benefit from affordability credits. Out-of-pocket costs can be as high as \$10,000 for a family, per year—figures high enough to result in bankruptcy, especially if paid over several years (\$10,000 times 5 years = \$50,000 medical debt).

6) The Stupak Amendment bars any federal funds to pay for abortion services except for cases of incest, rape, or where the mother's life is endangered. This includes any affordability credits which would be issued to private insurance companies. Effectively, this requires low income families to pay for abortion services out-of-pocket.

we adopted new development standards, seasonal land clearing restrictions, purchased development rights to eliminate 500 additional homes from being built, and actively pursued a halt to logging in this vulnerable watershed, however in spite of all of these worthy actions the lake is still degrading. My point being that attack ads can be very misleading and damaging.

Two candidates won who have strong environmental records, and two others won portraying themselves as caring about farming, and protecting water quality. So I don't think it's wise to say we should focus less on one area over another.

The county council job is almost 80% related to land use issues, that affect almost everyone at some point in time. What we could do better is work on educating the community as to why our way is better than what the conservatives propose. A cautious approach to expanding city boundaries makes fiscal, aesthetic, quality of life, and environmental sense, and we need to engage the public to make sure that we aren't moving too far ahead of them. What's at risk is huge...ending up like Snohomish county, where their budget deficits are huge, quality of life down from long commutes and a high crime rate.

I'm not saying social issues aren't important, they are! I've championed the mental health sales tax and believe our criminal justice system must move toward reforming people versus the punitive formula. Both will save money in the long run. Marketing this concept to the general public is difficult. I think we are on the right track, and to simplify the results to questioning our issues is a bit like chasing your tail. I believe our opponents handlers have been working on building an atmosphere of discontent for so long that it was almost insurmountable to overcome. That's where the work lies, undoing some of the damage that they have done with their misinformation campaign. I think it's healthy to process where we've been and to chart a course as we move forward. Thank you all!



We don't do it alone

Thanks to the almost 250 volunteers who we know helped in the 2009 campaign. We know we've missed some people, plus there are those who helped individual candidates' campaigns directly. THANK YOU ALL!

Nancy Adair, Sharon Alford, Donna Allen, David Anderson, Tina Anderson, Judy Anderson, Frances Badgett, Patrick Baker, Fred Bannister, Judy Barton, Kathryn Batchelor, Roni Beall, Shelly Bernstein, Bruce Berry, Elizabeth Berry, Barbara Bessire, Louise Bjornson, Wendy Bohkle, Eleanor Bonner, Peggy Borgens, Marian Boylan, Zetta Bracher, Marta Brand, Janet Brandow, Robert Brandow, Elisabeth Britt, Ellen Broad, Jeremy Brown, Marilyn Brown, Jerry Brownfield, Zack Bruner, Rick Bullman, Kinsey Burke, Nancy Burnett, Martha Burns, Bob Burr, Jill Burton-Dascher.

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More volunteers on page 4

More and More Volunteer Thank-yous

McGarrity, Lili McGovern, Dan McShane, Lisa McShane, Arria Merrill, Connie Meyer, Meridith Moench, Bert Monroe, Sati Mookherjee, Lisa Moss, Judy Mullenix, Nicole Murray, Shirley Murty, Cail Musick-Slater, Leslie Myers, Bill Newmon, Nan Nielsen, Irma North.

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Whatcom County Democrats

215 W. Holly Street, Suite B-27
P.O. Box 3095
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December 2009 Check whatcomdemocrats.com for details

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
29	30 Buy Local Week	1 11:45am – Afghan Surge Protest, Red Square, WWU 8 pm –Young Dems, Rudy's Pizza, 1232 N. State, Bham	2 5 pm – Green Drinks 5-7 pm – LWV Talk with Electeds, YWCA 7 pm – Progressive Net, 13 Prospect St, Bham 7 pm – Whatcom Dems E-Board Mtg, Office.	2 3-5 pm – PCO Steering Cmte, Cordata Food Coop	4	5
6 5-9 pm – Holiday Party, See page 1 6 pm – MoveOn meeting, 100 E. Maple, Bham	7	8 7 pm – Drinking Liberally, Horseshoe Cafe	9	10 7 pm – Legislative Issues Mtg, office, 215 W. Holly	11 Chanukah begins sundown	12 10 am – 42 nd LD Dems, Machinists Hall, 2064 Vista Dr. Ferndale, See Page 2
13	14 11:30 – Women's Club, See page 2 7-9 pm – Finance Cmte mtg, office	15 8 pm –Young Dems, Rudy's Pizza, 1232 N. State, Bham	16	17	18	19 9 am – Lynden Democrats, Homestead Farms restaurant
20	21	22 7 pm – Drinking Liberally, Horseshoe Cafe	23	24	25 Christmas	26
27	28	29	30	31	1 New Year's Day	2