

GRASSROOTS

The Newsletter of the
Whatcom County
Democratic
Central Committee

Membership Meeting

Thursday, February 18

7:00 – 9:00 pm

Norway Hall
1419 N. Forest St, Bellingham
(between Champion & Magnolia)

All Democrats Welcome

PROGRAM:

Virtual Lobby Day
WTA Levy Endorsement Consideration

Our Virtual Lobby Day will be an opportunity to get up-to-date legislative reports, write letters and make calls.

There will be a special presentation by Craig Salins of WA Public Campaigns with a fresh report on legislation regarding public campaign financing and how the Supreme Court's recent decision regarding corporate spending affects those efforts. We guarantee that this membership meeting you'll have another exciting opportunity to engage in the political process.

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County Council's ignorance of the law is not the public's bliss

by Shane Roth

We are no longer wondering if the newly conservative County Council, headed by Chairman Sam Crawford, will ignore the Charter and the County Code at a council meeting. It is now only a question of when will they learn what the law actually allows, and how much taxpayer time and money will they waste before they figure it out.

Sam Crawford, aided by Barbara Brenner, Ward Nelson and the two new members of the council, Bill Knutzen and Kathy Kershner, have managed to stumble blindly into conflict with various state laws, city statutes and their own county charter in the course of the last month, forcing needless and embarrassing 'do-overs' on what should be routine matters, like filling vacancies in Commissions, and posing a very real threat to public health with clumsy attempts to pass feel-good legislation that appears to conflict with State law.

It isn't the new council members that are stumbling; they are simply following the lead of Crawford, Brenner and Nelson who have a combined 44 years of council experience. Experienced leadership that ignores laws and fair public process is what we are getting from this council.

Previous articles have touched on the fact that Ward Nelson was not eligible to be appointed by the Council and that he voted against numerous qualified Council nominees despite his own financial interest in the outcome, but in the last month the County Council has disregarded the spirit and letter of its own charter to pack the planning commission with hard-line conservatives. Barbara Brenner accepted an application for failed conservative candidate Michelle Luke literally the day of the meeting, after the publicly announced deadline for applications had elapsed by more than one month. This was in spite of the fact that there were already over a

dozen other qualified candidates for the position who actually met the application deadline. In their zeal to appoint Ms. Luke, the Council made a simple but crucial procedural error that rendered the entire appointment process invalid. The process had to be repeated at the next meeting.

Next Sam Crawford and Barbara Brenner proposed an ordinance that suspended the requirement for septic tank inspections. The language in the ordinance directly contradicted state health laws and common sense. Apparently the health and environmental quality of our community are not of concern to Brenner and Crawford. When asked about this motion, Carl Weimer

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Democratic Grassroots Strategy Sessions March 6th

Grab your thinking caps, fellow Democrats, because it is time for our Grassroots Strategy Sessions. On March 6th, each precinct will meet and discuss the various parts of the Whatcom Democrats platform and how it can best represent our values. We hold these caucus-like events on off-years to evaluate our party platform, strategize with fellow democrats, and as always, get to know our neighbors better.

Strategy Sessions will be held in all corners of the county, similar to the 2008 caucuses. Locations will be published on our website and via email by mid-month, as well as in the March newsletter.

These strategy sessions will be relaxed and informal, but are absolutely vital to the party. We need to know what values make us Democrats, what sort of ideals our candidates should commit to, and how to best share those with the rest of the county.

So come one and all, bring your ideas so that we can relish what our party can become with your help.



County Council, continued from page 1

summed it up best, "It stinks!"

Once the fatal flaws in the language of the ordinance were discovered, there was another last minute change. Once the new Council discovered that they couldn't pass an ordinance without giving notice to the public, they slapped together some flimsy feel-good resolution on the spot and passed it, without any consideration as to its validity.

In the latest meeting, Crawford took a break from stepping on legal rakes long enough to attempt to slash funding to the Bellingham Food Bank, and remove vital funding for the water projects budget. Water projects include testing Lake Whatcom, and the rechanneling of the Jones Creek to prevent flooding the nearby elementary school and town of Acme.

A certain amount of inexperience was to be expected from the newly elected members of Council, but how do Sam Crawford and Barbara Brenner not know how their own Municipal laws work? These "rookie" mistakes weren't made by rookies. They were made by some of the most experienced members of the Council. How many more years are Sam Crawford and Barbara Brenner going to need to be in office before they figure out how to do the people's business?

Having done damage to the hungry, the flood-prone and those who drink water in this county, we can only hope that the newer members of the council will give pause to these reckless moves. If you would like to tell Sam Crawford and the rest of the County Council what you think of these and other decisions, or if you just want Carl Weimer and Ken Mann to see a few more friendly faces, you can attend their meetings on Feb. 9th and 23rd at 7pm in the Whatcom County Courthouse.

Health Care Reform, Rick Larsen, and Options

by Richard May, 42nd LD State Committeeman

Rep. Rick Larsen attended the State Democratic Party meeting on January 30 and spoke to state committee members from the 2nd Congressional District. Rep. Larsen openly and brazenly said he supports the public option. No ifs, ands, or "gotta think about it some mores" about it. He is fully on board.

Months ago, Larsen read the whole lengthy health bill that the house passed, the one with the public option, and voted yes for that bill. It's the Senate bill that expelled that part. Congress as a whole is looking at a variety of options for what to do with Health Care.

Here are some options that are being discussed:

1. Accept the Senate version in conference, so that at least the foot is in the door, and the federal government will then be officially in charge of health care (Sean Hannity's worst fear). The hope would be to tweek and fix it later, as an already mandated program in need of more cost efficient versions.

2. Use "the Nuclear option" of reconciliation, to bend the Senate bill as far towards the house bill as possible, an immediate partial victory that also breaks the Nuclear barrier, meaning that future Republican majorities will use this method as often as they currently filibuster. You can't go back once the Nuke precedent is set.

3. Just ditch the whole flawed bill, forget passing it now. This would mean holding out in hopes that some circumstance would some day happen that is even better than having the White House, the House, and increasing from 52 real Democrats to 60 liberal Dems in Senate. If you think that we can get Montana to replace Baucus with a Liberal, Lieberman etc. and that we can hold onto the White House and both houses of Congress for more than 2 years at a time, then take that gamble.

As always, I urge everyone to contact our representatives and let them know how you feel. Only with good feedback can the best represent us.

International Women's Day 2010

This year's celebration of International Women's Day will be held March 8th at St. Luke's Health Education Center in the main auditorium from 5-8pm. The theme of our celebration is Women's leadership and civic engagement. There will be workshops on the topics of Women's civic participation in honor of the centennial celebration of suffrage in Washington State.

For the first time, the City of Bellingham is co-sponsoring the event this year. There will be a short program with speakers and a reception at City Council Chambers from 12-1pm on March 8th to kick things off.

Whatcom Democrats Executive Board

email: add @whatcomdemocrats.com

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40 th LD Representative	Bob Burr	671-8862	
42 nd LD Representative	Steve Lydolph	384-5414	

Larsen is Democratic Party Nominee; Dem Challengers Will Continue Campaign

At its quarterly meeting Jan. 30, the WA State Democratic Party nominated incumbent Rep. Rick Larsen as the Democratic Party candidate for the 2nd CD. All other Democratic congressional incumbents in Washington were also nominated.

In January, two Democratic challengers announced they were running for the 2nd Congressional District seat, as well as at least one Republican. The Democrats are Larry Kalb and Dianna McGuiness, both of Bellingham.

The Whatcom Democrats endorsement process, as well as a resolution adopted in November 2009, supports a level playing field for all legitimate democratic candidates to compete for the support of the voters and party activists prior to the Primary Election. This holds true to the values we all share as Democrats.

Our endorsement and certification rules allow for legitimate Democratic candidates to access the Whatcom Democrats' non-consumable resources prior to endorsement.

Washington State Legislature

Key Deadlines:

February 16: Last day to consider bills in house of origin. Meaning if a bill has not been passed by one of the two houses, it dies.

March 5: Last day to consider opposite house bills, with some exceptions for budget bill, etc.

March 11: Last day allowed for regular session under state constitution.

State Legislators

40th District

Sen. Kevin Ranker
Rep. Dave Quall
Rep. Jeff Morris

42nd District

Sen. Dale Brandland
Rep. Doug Ericksen
Rep. Kelli Linville

Leave message for your legislator at the in-state toll-free Hotline number:
800-562-6000

To email your legislator, go to their webpage at www.leg.wa.gov/pages/home.aspx

Lots of information on bills, hearings, committee schedules, etc, at www.leg.wa.gov/pages/home.aspx

Track Legislative Action

State Senate Democratic Caucus

<http://blog.senatedemocrats.wa.gov/>

State House Democratic Caucus

<http://hdcadvance.blogspot.com/>

This means that while Rick Larsen is the nominee of the Democratic Party, the Whatcom Democrats may certify other Democrats for Whatcom Dems resources. We have no authority over access to State Party resources, including the voter database - Votebuilder. But in general, the State Party's nomination has little effect on the Whatcom County's endorsement process.

We can, if the membership so chooses, endorse one or more candidates, or no candidate in this race. Under our endorsement rules, this would mean from that point forward, all other candidates would not receive Whatcom Democrats resources, and the endorsee would appear on our campaign communications as the endorsed candidate(s) in the race, and benefit from our GOTV efforts. Our rules allow for endorsement only after the filing deadline which is early June.

See our website for the text of these policies under the menu item Elections/Running for Office.

Democratic Reps working hard in Olympia

Our Democratic elected officials have been hard at work in Olympia this year representing the 42nd and 40th Legislative districts. Rep. Kelli Linville, as Chair of the influential Ways and Means committee, has been hard at work developing a state budget that will reflect our values as Democrats. Sen. Kevin Ranker has sponsored a bill to create a farmer internship program that will encourage the next generation of local farmers. Rep. Jeff Morris and Dave Quall have been working with the house leadership to pass the Jobs Act of 2010, a vital measure that will create 38,000 new jobs by fixing up our schools and universities with modern energy efficient technology. This act would save the school system over \$190 million in lower power costs each year.

By comparison, Republican Rep. Doug Erickson sponsored a bill to remove the Department of Health's ability to inspect septic tanks thereby putting our water quality in danger and Republican Sen. Dale Brandland sponsored a bill allowing police to use silencers. Clearly, protecting and helping the people of Whatcom County is not their first priority.

Will County Council's conservative majority ruin your life?

**42nd Legislative District Democrats
Saturday February 13, 10AM-noon
Machinists Hall, 2064 Vista Dr., Ferndale**

February's topic is "Current Issues in Whatcom County Government; will the County Council's 'conservative' majority ruin your life?"

The new 'conservative' majority on the Whatcom County Council, with Republican Party operatives in the lead, are moving at breakneck speed to reshape county government. They have already begun their agenda of reducing services, eliminating programs and undoing safeguards, without the slightest regard for the will of Whatcom County's citizens. Ignoring State law and the County Charter they are ramming through fair reaching changes that will profoundly effect the quality of life in Whatcom County.

At our February meeting, we will have a panel of well informed citizens who will bring us up to date on the actions of the conservative/Republican county council members and how those actions may effect life in Whatcom County. Our panel will include current and past County Council members.

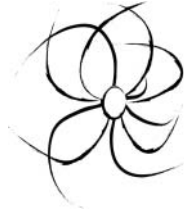
This is a countywide issue and you're invited to attend; The 42nd LD Democrats monthly meeting is open to all Democrats.

For more information, contact Steve Lydolph, 384-5414 or <stevl@comcast.net>

New Council Gets Down to Business

With the new members sworn in, the Bellingham City Council went straight to work, tackling a number of issues. They renewed the Railroad Museum's lease for another two years. They considered Mayor Dan Pike's proposal to ease the big box store ban and put in place green energy and living wage considerations on each new store. They approved a Parks plan and considered various property acquisitions. They formally approved spending some of the stimulus money the city has received on repaving portions of Bakerview and Hannigan roads.

2nd Annual
**Plant
Sale**



Whatcom County Democrats

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

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Time to Dig for Democrats

Help us reach our 2010 fundraising goal by potting up your extra plants. We'll even help you if you've got a lot to offer us.

The date and location have yet to be arranged.

Peggy Borgens will be leading the digging and potting crew again this year, 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, email office@whatcomdemocrats.com or call our office at 647-7661.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

February 2010 Check whatcomdemocrats.com for details

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
31	1 Reproductive Health Lobby Day	2 6pm- Young Dems Mixer, check web for location	3 12n- World Issues Forum, Fairhaven College Aud 5:30pm- WTA Transit Levy Kickoff, 301 W. Holly St. 7pm-Afghanistan Lecture, Bellingham City Hall.	4	5	6 1pm- 40 th LD Dems Mtg, Skagit PUD, 1415 Freeway Dr. Mt. Vernon
7	8 11:30am-Women's Club Mtg, On Rice, 1224 Harris Ave.	9 6pm- "Poisoned Waters", 2309 Meridian St, Bham. 7pm - Drinking Liberally, Horseshoe Café SPECIAL ELECTION	10 12n- World Issues Forum, Fairhaven College Aud	11	12 Olympics Start, Vancouver	13 10am- 42 nd LD Dems Membership Mtg, 2064 Vista Dr., Ferndale, see page 3
14	15 Jobs Lobby Day Young Dems Lobby Day Lobby Day for Kid's Needs	16 1pm - Great Decisions, 1 st Cong. Church, 2401 Cornwall Ave, Bham. 6pm- Young Dems, Rudy's Pizza, 1232 N. State, Bham	17 12n- World Issues Forum Fairhaven College Aud 5:30pm- "Homegrown" Screening, 5659 Bartlett Rd, Ferndale	18 7 pm- Monthly Membership Mtg. See Page 1	19	20 9am-Lynden Dems Mtg, 115 E Homestead Blvd, Lynden 9:45am-League of Women Voters, Bham Public Library, 210 Central Ave, Bham
21 10am-Global Domination for World Peace, 1317 Commercial St	22	23 6pm- Puget Sound Bites, Sustainable Living Center, 2309 Meridian st, Bham 7pm - Drinking Liberally, Horseshoe Café	24 12n- World Issues Forum, Fairhaven College Aud 12pm- City Club, , 3240 NW Ave, Bham 7pm- E-Board Mtg, Whatcom Dems HQ	25 6pm-NSEA 20 th Anniversary	26	27
28	March 1	2 8pm- Young Dems, Rudy's Pizza, 1232 N. State, Bham	3 12n- World Issues Forum, Fairhaven College Aud 5pm- Green Drinks	4 9am-Project Homeless Connect	5	6 Democratic Grassroots Strategy Sessions, See page 1