

The Voice of Benton County Democrats
THE DEMOCRATIC REPORTER



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WWW.BENCODEMS.ORG

HOTLINE 585-7682

2009/10 Officers

Chair	Bob Parazin	chair@bencodems.org 946 6363
Vice Chair	Regina Speer	vicechair@bencodems.org 946 5744
Treasurer	Malakay Betor	treasurer@bencodems.org
Secretary	Ann Parazin	secretary@bencodems.org 946 6363
Editor	Steven Link	newsletter@bencodems.org 948-0054
SCW	Mimi Latta	scw@bencodems.org 627 2679
SCM	John Latta	scm@bencodems.org 627 2679

From the Chair

Spring is here. Soon the weather will be moderating and before long it'll begin to get warm enough to relax outside. One of the related decisions that has to be made regarding the **First 100 Days Celebration** on **May 1st** is whether to house it inside or with an option to go outdoors a bit. The **Tri-Cities Democrats**, who are coordinating the event, are wrestling with finalizing the location for the event. As of this writing they're still searching for that optimal site. So please stay tuned. You'll be hearing more in the coming weeks via the website or **HOTLINE**, but **PLEASE** mark it on your calendar. **MAY 1st!** And **NOTE** if you'd like to help with the preparations and planning please call Ginny at 628-2871. This will likely be our biggest spring event!

The **Mid-Columbia Community 4 Change** is off and running as well. The Tri-Cities United for Obama organization has been reconstituted into a more community outreach organization. They had their first meeting on March 16th and are hoping to gain traction with a more community support grassroots message. Their website is <http://www.mcc4c.org/> for more information.

We're pleased to announce that we've expanded our website calendar to a monthly calendar that can be moved forward for the next 9 months. It's been placed on our website's **calendar page**. Look for it. It's a bit easier to read if displayed as a weekly calendar but currently we're

showing the entire month. You can look ahead to future months for upcoming meetings, events, holidays, community events etc. Please e-mail us any comments you have. OR if you'd like something posted, send it to us. Please click on the event to bring up the details of the event.

We had a nice turnout for our **March Central Committee Meeting** with our featured guest, Sharon Smith, our State Party Vice-Chair. She was engaging and took many questions from the audience as she laid out her plans for organizing and revitalizing Eastern Washington Democrats. We were pleased to see the large turnout of Labor Union representatives; we had two-area labor councils represented in addition to a number of individual unions. We know that negotiations are going on with HAMTC, the Teamsters and UFCW locals and we wish them well in their efforts to secure decent wages and benefits for their membership.

Upcoming events include a **Spring VoteBuilder Training** class that's going to be held in Yakima on Saturday, April 4th at the Yakima Downtown Red Lion. There'll also be a **Campaign & Candidate Training Workshop** to be held on Saturday, April 18th at the Walla Walla Regional Airport Conference Hall. Both events are sponsored by the State Democratic Party, with the latter conducted by MoveOn.Org. Find out more details through our **NEW Website Calendar**. Go to the date and click on the event. If you're considering getting more active in campaigns and/or considering a run for any office, even non-partisan, please consider both of these opportunities.

Tid Bits

Laurel Piippo

A union member at the March BCCC meeting said the Democratic Party statewide needs to support nuclear energy, and that we need to educate THEM on the west side.

Saturday Dr. Darrell Fisher told a group of scientists about various kinds of medical isotopes, how they are produced, and their success as a diagnostic tool and treatment for cancer and other diseases. He said, "Laurel what I want you to take from this meeting is that **THESE ARE WORKING.**" He mentioned pain relief when cancer goes into the bones, treatment for select leukemia patients

after chemo has failed, clearer diagnostic pictures with isotopes, 100,000 people who would otherwise lose their sight because of macular degeneration, etc., etc." More information will come.

Is this taught in medical schools? No, says Dr. Fisher, but there is a network among physicians with information. Do we need to educate the legislators? We need to educate the general population. Dr. Fisher has been working with the Hutchinson Cancer program at UW for 25 years. Let's invite him to present a program.

As a new member of the NAACP I attended part of their spring conference in Pasco this weekend, where the Tri-Cities Chapter was reactivated. We celebrated "100 years of hope, faith, courage."

Regarding my campaign for accountability and citizen input at WSU, my folder with 140 protest signatures fell off the trunk of my car last week. Gulp. But I quickly gathered 160 signatures and will collect more before the Friday morning meeting of the WSU Board of Regents where I will not be allowed to speak at the "public meeting." I plan to carry a sign saying, "Resign, Chairman Forgette." Others opted for "Resign, President Floyd."

What a shame "our" university has become an authoritarian, undemocratic institution. We pay, and they decide.

If possible, please show up at 9:30 AM at the CIC Building on the Tri-Cities campus Friday, March 27, just to sit and listen and let them know WE'RE PAYING ATTENTION.

Dwight Pelz

Sharon Smith, Jaxon Ravens, and I attended a meeting in DC on March 21 with the new leadership of the Democratic National Committee (DNC). At that meeting we learned more about the new strategies and organizational structure that the DNC will assume under the Obama Presidency.

When we win the White House, the new President's people take over the DNC. Barack Obama has appointed Virginia Governor Tim Kaine as Chair of the DNC, and Jennifer O-Malley Dillon as the Executive Director. No doubt David Plouffe is playing a major role in setting the direction of our national party, in consultation with Rahm Emmanuel and David Axelrod and the rest of the Obama political team.

The DNC is now an extension of the Obama Presidency and the Obama strategy for changing the nation, and I believe this is a good thing. We have all come to admire the skill of the Obama team and the canniness of their political strategy, even at times that we see them stumble.

Barack Obama is truly trying to change the direction of our nation, by leading an economic recovery while addressing health care, education, and energy.

Amazingly people accuse him of having too broad an agenda in the midst of Recession. In fact we cannot escape our dependence on a bubble economy – hi-tech or phony mortgages or sheer government borrowing – until we re-build our economy. We cannot re-build our economy until we control health care costs while providing access to all families. We cannot re-build our economy while we are importing oil and waging war to protect it. A strong America in a global economy must lead with better-educated workers and scientists and engineers building new industries that can export products in emerging industries such as energy alternatives.

Obama is clearly facing opposition – from Republicans only concerned about their short-term partisan position; from ideological right-wingers still fighting the New Deal; and from cautious Americans who would move too slowly at a time when bold action is needed.

ORGANIZING FOR AMERICA

So, the DNC will become one component of the Obama political strategy, and this will affect our work as Washington State Democrats. The DNC is launching Organizing for America (OFA) an effort to build grassroots political support for the President's agenda. OFA staff will be employees of the DNC, working out of every state in the nation. Their Number One mission will be to build support for the President's agenda, not to build state and local parties -- but I believe the Washington State Party can benefit from the work of OFA.

<http://my.barackobama.com/page/content/pledgeprojectcanvass/>

<http://www.cnn.com/2009/POLITICS/03/22/democrat.agenda/index.html>

This decision has been made by the DNC. I believe it has tremendous merit, and I hope we can embrace it and move forward together. This will not be easy for everyone in the Party, because OFA is a very different animal than past collaborations with the DNC.

We have been told there will be six OFA staff in Washington, a State Director, a Communications Director, and four regional staff, operating out of three offices. These OFA staff will be recruiting Democrats within our counties and legislative districts to work on OFA projects. Rather than seeing OFA as competition for our parties and our volunteers and our potential recruits, I believe we can see them as giving Democrats one more option for ways to participate as Democrats. I believe OFA will be more attractive to the young Democrats we try so hard to involve in our local parties.

DISCUSSION AT THE APRIL STATE CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Our next Central Committee Meeting will be April 25 in Tacoma. In the morning Suzie Sheary and the Washington State Democratic Chairs Organization will be hosting training for new and returning chairs and party leaders from 9:15 to 10:30. From 10:45 to noon I am convening a joint session of the Chairs and the State Central Committee entitled "New Options for Organizing Democrats". One item in that discussion will be OFA.

Democrats and Dams:

John Latta, Benton County Democratic State Committeeman

Fly your Democrat flag and let people know you support keeping the Snake River dams!

The Tri-City Herald and Representative "Doc" Hastings have recently publicized the Boise, Idaho group Snake River Salmon Society as "well funded, well organized" and "anti-dam." If we give the newspaper the benefit of doubt we can assume they are simply reporting the news. But as a Republican, Hastings loves this news because he knows that a majority of Washington's 4th Congressional District is opposed to destroying dams, and he wants to associate this or any other anti-dam group with the Democratic Party. It may be true that some individual members of the Idaho group are Democrats, but we need to make it clear that the Democratic Party in Washington supports the dams! Local Democrats have gone on record to say they oppose removing the Snake River dams, and the State Party has recently soundly defeated an anti-dam resolution, effectively killing the issue.

If you want Eastern WA Democrats to continue to lose to the Republicans in local elections, then sit quietly and allow others to define your position on this important issue.

If you're a Democrat then don't be shy! If you want Democrats elected to local positions, and if you want Democrats to represent you in Olympia or DC, then let people know who you are. Let them know you are proud to be a Democrat, and let them know what you think. Let them know that you support the dams. Democrats built those dams. Democrats Don't Breach Dams!

**Yes We Can! Yes We Did!
Yes We Will!**

Gail Blegen-Frost

Many months ago a diverse group of Tri-City area residents began working together to help elect Barack Obama as our 44th president. Inspired by his message of hope and change, members of Tri-Cities United for Obama (TCU4O)

registered hundreds of voters, spent many hours working phone banks, walked miles to canvas door-to-door, and donated much time and money to the campaign. They also acted on Obama's message to serve our community by collecting many pounds of food for the local food banks and raising several hundred dollars, which benefited both the food banks and the American Red Cross. In the end, victory was celebrated by one and all!

Throughout his campaign and since taking office, Barack Obama has consistently asked that each of us help make change possible. He has asked that we all help 'to meet the challenges that lie ahead'. Motivated by his call to action and the desire by several TCU4O members to keep our energy alive Mid-Columbia Community for Change (MCC4C) has been born.

Mid-Columbia Community for Change seeks ways to build a stronger community through positive political action, community service, education and social interaction. The first MCC4C meeting was held March 16th with over 30 people turning out to learn about the new organization, to help identify issues that need attention and to offer ideas on how to approach them.

The next meeting will be held Monday, April 13th at 7:00 p.m. in the meeting room at the Keewaydin branch of the Mid-Columbia Library (located at 405 S. Dayton in Kennewick, across from Kennewick High School). MCC4C welcomes anyone with a desire to make a positive change in our community and world, regardless of political affiliation.

Contact Gail Blegen-Frost at gail.blegen-frost@mcc4c.org or call 509-586-3251 for more information, or visit www.mcc4c.org.

Calendar

<http://www.bencodem.org/calendar.shtml>

Please look at our NEW calendar format on our website. It's an extended calendar that provides our schedule for planned events, into next year. We welcome your comments.



HOTLINE 585-7682

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4 VoteBuilder Training in Yakima, 10 am, Red Lion
5	6	7* Drinking Liberally	8	9 EBoard Mtg 6:30 IBEW77	10 NO Tri-City Dems this month in lieu of First 100 Days Celebration! May 1	11
12	13 Mid-Columbia Community 4 Change, 7 pm, 405 S. Dayton, Kennewick	14*	15 Cntrl Comm. Mtg. 7 pm, IBEW77	16	17	18 Workshop Campaign/Candidate Training in Walla Walla, 10am – 4pm, 310 A Street, Walla Walla
19	20	21*	22	23	24 Spring State Committee Meeting, 5 pm – 9 pm, , Tacoma	25 Spring State Committee Meeting, 7:30 am – 5 pm, 1320 Broadway Plaza, Tacoma
26	27 Newsletter Submissions due	28*	29	30 Newsltr assembly and mailing	First 100 Days Celebration! Time & Place Pending	

* **Drinking Liberally** - Every Tuesday at the Shilo/O'Callahan's in Richland - 7 pm soft drinks and water are always available
RCC -- Richland Community Center, IBEW77 – 2626 W. Clearwater, Ken, RLT. Richland Labor Temple. Goethals and Knight St. behind Albertsons's