



THE DEMOCRATIC REPORTER

The Voice of Benton County Democrats



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www.bencodems.org

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FROM THE CHAIR

At the beginning of my term as your chair, I appeal to all of you to be more active in the party. Whether you are a current or past PCO or an inactive Democrat, your ideas, your energy, and your presence are necessary. Making the Democratic Party a viable entity in elections is not the work of one person as chair or a particular candidate. We have all heard the phrase; "every vote counts." In politics, it is not just the vote, but the people working for the cause that make a difference.

I begin this term with no illusions about the position of the party in Benton County. Democrats in this area have little success of which to be proud. Currently, one Democrat holds elective office, and it has been more than a decade since a Democrat was elected to the state legislature or to Congress. However, this does not have to be a permanent status. With appropriate work by every Democrat we can begin the process of change. It will not be an overnight process. It has taken many years to lose political viability. It will take many more to regain stature.

Every Democrat must be accountable. If you cannot give of your time, your ideas, or your energy, the process will be delayed. Expecting election results to change while staying on the sidelines is a sure solution for continued Democratic

failure. As a Democrat, are you prepared to accept permanent minority status or do you want to do something about it?

In January, I offered some thoughts on beginning the change. I also opened the meeting in an open forum for Democrats to offer their own suggestions and solutions. I would like to continue the dialogue and have everyone find their own particular niche. Your skills are valuable. You just may be the one who holds the key to success.

I'll see all of you at the April 20, 2011 meeting at the Richland public library.

Regina Speer, Chair BCDCC

YOUR NEW STATE COMMITTEE WOMAN

George Fearing, 4th CD Chair, has already provided great detail on the first State Committee meeting 2011; I cannot add much. As State Committeewoman (SCW) for BCDCC, I would like to share my goals for the upcoming term and to solicit your input.

My primary goal is to bring nuclear power into the discussion in the State Committee meetings. And I think that as Benjamin Franklin would have said, no subject is so dangerous that it cannot be talked about. Even the Sierra Club is engaging in a serious dialogue concerning nuclear power.

However, talk in this state is never easy, due to the polarization between East-side and West-side on the nuclear issue. The State Committee leadership can be dismissive because they know that it is hard to discuss anything nuclear with West-side Dems, who are fearful of it. Our East-side *Republicans*, on the other hand are scornful of West-side fears and generally believe that "anything goes" in the nuclear industry. They resist regulations even though the American Nuclear Society, itself, firmly believes that any nuclear accidents must be prevented, or the US nuclear industry will be finished forever. Even so, many *Republicans* in the nuclear field feel that the nuclear industry is over-regulated compared to the petroleum sector for

example; they argue for the reduction of nuclear safety controls to a similarly low level. However, why should we be down in the weeds with them? It would be better for the nuclear industry to set a high standard and then expect other energy sectors to rise to meet it, rather than the reverse.

I have seen most of our high-level state Democratic politicians act dismissive and evasive on this issue on various occasions – obviously unwilling to take a stand. Like most of our Democratic politicians nationwide, they do not seem to feel free to take a position for fear of losing ground among the anti-nuclear camp. (We all understand the rules of the political game.)

A happy exception to this is Jay Inslee. Only when I was told that he would be running for governor was I willing to put my name into the ring for State Committeewoman – he is a politician I can cheerfully support in the gubernatorial campaign. After meeting with him on nuclear issues, I have found him to be open-minded and able to think both East-side and West-side. He even carved out a chunk of time for discussion, despite dire warnings from his DC staff that he was late for other meetings.

If everyone continually avoids political risks in order to hold office and to keep our party in power, then we may as well capitulate to the conservatives now. Courage is required to promote wise policy in the face of throngs who oppose you from both sides. However, that is what succeeds, and that is what the famous win-wins of history were made of. I think we need to ask our state party and our representatives to *really* represent our *future* interests – to think beyond what is popular now and do what is best for following generations (as the French have successfully done). It means truly *leading* on energy policy in a way that truly makes nuclear part of the equation.

In closing, we need to push our party to support safe, regulated nuclear power. Otherwise, we will be left it out in the cold and desperate to do what Big Oil tells us. Meanwhile, France will be warm and free with a successful energy policy that really does “include nuclear” -- and they’ll be fully prepared, between bites of brioche and cheese and sips of wine, to tell the oil producers to just eat cake.

Ginny McIntyre SCW Benton County

YOUR NEW STATE COMMITTEE MAN

As your new State Committeeman for Benton County, I had the privilege to attend the first Washington State Central Committee Meeting of the year. This was a reorganization meeting, meaning we had the opportunity to vote for new officers in the State party, we do have a couple of new people, Valerie resenBrady-Rongey Vice Chair and Rob Dolin

Secretary, Dwight Pelz won his bid for re-election as Chair and Habib Habib was re-elected as Treasurer. Since this was the first meeting of the year and a re-org meeting at that not much regular business took place,(caucus assignments, committee assignments).

I now have another title, Labor Caucus Executive Board 4th CD Representative. Hopefully this will allow labor east of the mountains to have a voice when it comes to issues like nuclear power and the importance of keeping the Snake River Dams not only for affordable electricity but also for irrigation. I will also serve on the Eastern Washington Committee.

Now on to another subject, as many of you know the Gov. in Wisconsin has declared war on the middle-class in his state with the help from the Republican controlled House and Senate not to mention the backing of corporate America, aka Koch brothers. The reason for taking on the unions is so that they will have free run on elections by flooding their candidates with cash while the rest of us in the Democratic Party dig deep into our own pockets and lowering our standard of living just to try to get our candidates elected. Collective Bargaining has nothing to do with a state budget. As someone who works for the public sector, I know firsthand that the employees in management get better benefits than those in the bargaining units. There have been rallies locally to show our support and solidarity for the people in Wisconsin so please check to find out when and where the next event is happening and remember to wear red on Tuesdays.

Thank You

Brad Taylor SCM Benton County

YOUR NEW 8TH LD SECRETARY

Hello everyone! My name is Kevin Moran and I have been appointed as the 8th Legislative District secretary. While attending my final year at Kamiakin High School, I am balancing school, family, friends, and now my position as secretary.

It is great to know that while I am still considered “young”, I play an important role for democratic community here in the Tri-Cities. Getting the youth involved is important if we want to turn our community “blue”. The youth should be taught that being a Democrat is more than just a label, but rather getting involved in the community to express one’s perspective with how our political officers are helping out the community to grow. Creating scholarships, fundraisers for schools, and family-oriented events will attract the youth in becoming interested and involved with

our establishment. Sure one might seem skeptic about this but as long as we create ways in attracting the youth, we will reach our important goal of involving the youth and in the end, help create a path for our future democratic community.

Kevin Moran 8th LD Secretary

It's NEVER TOO LATE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

I always wanted to play an active part in government. Which is why at 72, I attended a Democratic reorganization meeting thinking I could volunteer to help with menial tasks. To my surprise, I left that Jan. 15th meeting as the 8th LD committeewoman Two weeks later I was attending the WSDCC meeting in Olympia.

The first day I settled in a lovely room at the Red Lion. Later it was time to investigate my surroundings and get to know my fellow Democrats. Everyone I met was friendly and helpful. My very first task was holding up the 8th district sign so that our people would know where to go to be photographed with Gov. Gregoire. Brad Taylor, his wife and Ginny McIntyre joined me and we were photographed. Gov. Gregoire was really nice and I admired her willingness to do this task.

Afterwards, I visited the hospitality suites, visiting most of them. Met with the candidates talking briefly with them. The hors d'oeuvres and the drinks were delicious. Really glad I did not eat dinner. At times I met up with Brad and then later on George Fearing. I also read and signed a few resolutions being brought up that I thought were worthwhile. Retired around ten o'clock as I'm old and an early riser.

The next day I woke early, had breakfast, and then enrolled for the day's activities. At the morning sessions, I first attended the Ag and Rural Caucus. It was well organized and I had my first insight into how the democrats handle issues on problem solving. Next the Eastern Washington Committee Meeting was mainly a discussion on what they do, introducing ourselves and learning about future issues. Before lunch I attended the Health Insurance Reform Workshop and had fun learning about active listening. We practiced a scenario with another member on how to handle the public when approached on health problems they are facing, pointing out how the Health Reform Bill will help them.

After a good lunch, the committee meeting began. We voted on the new officers and resolutions that were presented. The participation was inspiring, so many informative people expressing their viewpoints in an intelligent, confident manner. I learned that nothing is simple, that knowledge must be gained, revisited, and then added to the whole picture of the resolution. Until it is brought up for voting, one must keep an open mind because a piece added to the puzzle can be significant enough to change the picture.

I left Olympia determined to be of value to our party and work earnestly to benefit this great country we live in so it will enrich my family, friends and the connection we have with all others.

Barbara O'Brien 8th LD Committeewoman

SENATOR CANTWELL INTRODUCES NET NEUTRALITY BILL

Protestors in Egypt can send Twitter messages to friends in Libya or Tunisia or even Wisconsin. Everyone with a connection can participate, put up a website, seek information and communicate with any other user. But many internet providers don't like this successful model. They want to be able to speed up or slow down or even block delivery of some sites. These middlemen want to charge a premium on our communications, not because they are not making money, but because of greed.

In January Senator Cantwell introduced S74: Internet Freedom, Broadband Promotion, and Consumer Protection Act of 2011. According to FreePress.net, an organization devoted to promoting free and independent press, "Senator Cantwell's bill would strengthen the weak, loophole-ridden Net Neutrality rules that the Federal Communications Commission enacted in December by establishing a clear standard against discrimination online and protecting wireless users."

Senator Cantwell should be commended for her work to protect our intellectual freedom and for keeping a public resource out of commercial control.

NEWSLETTER GOES QUARTERLY

Starting in April, the newsletter will become a quarterly edition due to budgetary constraints. When the BCDCC financial position improves, the newsletter will return to monthly production.

COMING IN THE NEXT NEWSLETTER

The Health Care Reform law has engendered hours of discussion in the media and among citizens. Too often those discussions don't get any good traction because the bill itself is complicated. Unfortunately, that complexity has provided a fertile ground for confusing myths and misinformation by the opposition. Stay tuned for a primer about the law.

MARCH – APRIL – MAY 2011 CALENDAR

Fri Mar 11	6 – 8 PM	Tri-City Dems Potluck & Meeting, Richland Labor Temple
Sun Mar 13	2 AM	Daylight Savings Time Begins
Tue Mar 29	8 PM	Last Day for APRIL Newsletter Submissions
Thu Mar 31	10 AM	Newsletter Assembly at Shilo Inn
Wed Apr 20	7:00 PM	Democratic Central Committee Meeting, Richland Public Library
Fri Apr 22		Earth Day
Sun Apr 24		Easter
Thu May 5		Cinco de Mayo
Sun May 8		Mother's Day
Wed May 18	7:00 PM	Democratic Central Committee Meeting, Richland Public Library
Mon May 30		Memorial Day