

*The Voice of Benton County Democrats*  
**THE DEMOCRATIC REPORTER**



**May 2009**

[WWW.BENCODEMS.ORG](http://WWW.BENCODEMS.ORG)

**HOTLINE 585-7682**

**2009/10 Officers**

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## From the Chair

The Tri-City Democrats are wrapping things up for Obama's First **100 Days Celebration** on **May 1<sup>st</sup>**. By the time you read this it will likely be too late to make it to the Hampton Inn in Richland for the 5:30 start, but don't worry about coming late. We'll be there for a while, or until the food runs out! It should be a well-attended event.

I just returned from the Party's quarterly state Central Committee Meeting held in downtown Tacoma. I had the pleasure to hear **Jim Hightower**, the progressive author and radio talk show host give a dinner presentation. He implored his audience to keep the pressure on our Democratic politicians to foster the kind of promised changes that swept them into office. And he has a valid point. Just because we have a Democratic President, control the House and an almost filibuster-proof Senate, we're still dealing with lobbyists and monied interests that continue to pervade our political system and mute the will of the voters, you and I! When our representatives at both the Federal and State level make decisions that don't reflect your beliefs, it's your obligation to let them know via phone, e-mail or FAX. Take a page from the **Laurel Piippo** playbook; overcome any reluctance or laziness and **DO IT!**

At our General Session we heard the Executive Director of **Democrats Work**. This is an organization that supports community activities as part of a general Democratic outreach to the community. They believe it's a way to engage in activism and not just sit around in business meetings and fundraisers; they want to do something meaningful for their communities, their region, and their environment. And it appears they've made some good progress. For more information go to [www.democratswork.org](http://www.democratswork.org) and find out more.

We also heard from the State Director as of April 27<sup>th</sup> for Organizing For America, OFA. This is the DNC funded organization that's been influenced strongly by Obama and his team's perspective on party organization. You will be hearing much more about OFA in the near future. In a sense, it's replaced the 50 state strategy pushed by the DNC in prior years. Read more about it at [www.barackobama.com](http://www.barackobama.com) and see what it's all about.

And speaking of community activism, **Mid-Columbia Community For Change** [[www.mcc4c.org](http://www.mcc4c.org)] is getting very close to a sustainable critical mass. They've already participated in a number of community activities and are planning much more in the future. Their monthly meeting participation is growing with many, new faces. Read their update article elsewhere in this issue.

Please send your comments on our rolling Monthly Google Calendar on the bottom of our website calendar page. We'd like to make it the best source of party information at your finger tips for time, place, location, maps and information on all things Democratic in Benton County.

## Candidate & Campaign Workshops

Over 55 people attended an excellent all day Candidate & Campaign Workshop in Walla Walla a few weeks ago. A number of folks from the Tri-Cities attended including former candidates, office holders, some that want to run for office, and others that want to support them. One of the leaders was none other than the **Executive Director** of **Move-On.org** a pleasant surprise. Both leaders were experienced organizers and campaign managers and tailored

the mix of the presentation to the needs of the audience quite well. . We have electronic copies of the proceedings. If you'd like the file, please let us know.

There's ANOTHER Candidate/Campaign Workshop on Saturday May 2<sup>nd</sup> in Yakima. It's identical to the one presented in Walla Walla. There are more details on it at our home page [www.bencodems.org](http://www.bencodems.org). Also look for upcoming PCO and VoteBuilder training locally in the Tri-Cities in the near future.

## Tri-City Democrats

The Tri-City Dems will be meeting on Friday May 8<sup>th</sup> at the Richland Labor Temple, Goethals and Knight St. The evening's program will include a presentation by two volunteers from Switzerland who are working on the **McNary National Wildlife Refuge** who will share their perspective on activism and public service. There may be additional speakers on this topic as well. Potluck at 6 pm. Program at 7 pm.

## Bylaws Update

The Bylaws Committee under the direction of **John Latta** has completed their work. The new bylaws and related documents will be distributed to the Central Committee including PCOs for final review and approval at our next Central Committee Meeting on May 20<sup>th</sup>. We're currently planning on a separate mailing to Central Committee members prior to this Meeting and we'll post the draft documents on our website in the coming days. If you have any questions on this process please contact John Latta. [contact info on page 1].

## Update – Caucus vs. Primary Issue

Rick Lloyd who's on the State Party's Caucus Task Force will be in attendance at our May 20<sup>th</sup> Central Committee Meeting to hear your thoughts on the Caucus vs. Mail-In Primary debate. He's traveling all around SE Washington to get our opinions first hand. If you'd like to contact him directly to share your thoughts, he can be reached at [washingtoncaucusfix@gmail.com](mailto:washingtoncaucusfix@gmail.com).

## April State Committee Meeting in Tacoma

**Mimi Latta**

There were many issues to address at the quarterly

meeting of the Washington State Central Committee. John and I went early in order to sit in on the Executive Board meeting Friday afternoon. We aren't able to participate, but it gave us an idea of how the Exec Board was leaning on some issues.

The first thing you should know is that the State Party is having financial difficulties. Many people gave large donations last fall so this year they are holding back. It makes it hard to implement programs and has caused Dwight Pelz, the State Chair, to lay off several people – including Erik Horeis, our Eastern Washington rep. Our online database of voter information could be improved, but the funding isn't there. The Central Committee members have suggested that Dwight ask the Democratic National Committee (DNC) for additional funding for that project. Everything is impacted by the economy, however. Money for rent on the building in Seattle is tight, training dollars are hard to come by, etc. etc. If you have considered making a contribution to the State Party, this is a good time to do it.

There were other issues that came before the body for a vote. We discussed whether to allow sanctioned caucuses and committees to issue press releases and statements as long as they were accompanied by an unambiguous disclaimer, but after debate that failed. We voted to refer the issue of Primary Vs Caucus to committee for more study, we passed resolutions supporting public campaign financing, public transportation in more rural areas, more transparency in Party communications, more consumer protection for credit card holders, opposed gutting the estate tax, supported tax exemptions for farms & small businesses from the estate tax, natural methods for wildfire reduction, supported universal access to health care & more. It was a very busy session and I am proud to be able to represent Benton County at these meetings. Please contact me if you have any questions or if you'd like to come to the September meeting in Walla Walla.

## Mid-Columbia Community for Change

**Gail Blegen-Frost**

Mid-Columbia Community for Change (MCC4C) continues to hold monthly meetings of those who are interested in making positive changes in our community. After two well-attended meetings we have a host of ideas and in time these will be evident in the form of positive political action,

education, community service and social interactions.

MCC4C has two community service projects scheduled in the month of May. On May 2nd, MCC4C will be commemorating President Obama's first 100 days in office by answering his call for us to serve our country. We are teaming up with Habitat for Humanity to help build affordable housing in our community. Contact Gail at [gail.blegen-frost@mcc4c.org](mailto:gail.blegen-frost@mcc4c.org) for information about this effort. On May 9th, MCC4C is sponsoring a work group to help clean up Sacajawea State Park. We are also encouraging citizens to contact our elected officials in Olympia and ask them to keep this state park open, as it is a valuable asset to our community, one with historical significance. For more information contact Chuck Eaton at [chaneaton@gmail.com](mailto:chaneaton@gmail.com).

MCC4C will be holding its May meeting on Monday, May 18th at the Pasco Public library located at 1320 W. Hopkins. The meeting will start at 7:00 p.m. Please join us!

## Labor Asking for our Help!

Those of you that have been following negotiation on the contract between **Tri-Cities Laboratories** and the United Food & Commercial Workers, **UFCW Local 21**, know that they've reached a crucial period in their bargaining process. Some folks believe that once a union is recognized through the NLRB to represent employees that the fight for fairness in the workplace is over. That couldn't be further from the truth as shown by this current situation with Tri-Cities Laboratories.

Two issues are stalling their bargaining effort; one related to establishing guaranteed wage ranges and the other management's desire to change or gut the health care plan at their sole discretion with an insistence on contract language that erodes overall union strength. A federal mediator has been called in so we are really entering a crucial period in the bargaining process.

Both Benton and Franklin County Democrats stood with UFCW employees on April 10<sup>th</sup> to protest this impasse in their negotiations and they're asking for our help again. See details at

[:http://www.ufcw21.org/2009/04/10/tri\\_city\\_lab\\_workers\\_eject\\_management\\_s\\_contract\\_proposal\\_more](http://www.ufcw21.org/2009/04/10/tri_city_lab_workers_eject_management_s_contract_proposal_more)

On **Saturday May 9<sup>th</sup>** they're asking Democratic supporters to again stand with them for an informational picket in front of TCL's Stevens Drive office in Richland, **953 Stevens Dr.** The event will start at 8 am and conclude with a BBQ at noon.

Help your Democratic brothers and sisters in this protracted

struggle for fairness. **See you there.**

## Calendar

### [Fri May 1](#)

[6:30pm – 9:30pm First 100 Days Celebration](#) - Hampton Inn, 486 Bradley Blvd, Richland, WA 99352

### [Sat May 2](#)

[10am – 4pm Workshop Campaign/Candidate Training in Yakima](#) - 507 South Third Street, Yakima, WA 98901

### [Tue May 5](#)

[7pm – 8:30pm Drinking Liberally .....](#) - Shilo Inn - O'Callahan's, 50 Comstock, Richland

### [Fri May 8 6pm – 8:30pm Tri City Democrats](#) -

Goethals Dr & Knight Street, Richland

### [Sat May 9](#)

[8am – 11am UFCW Solidarity March](#) - 953 Stevens Drive, Richland, WA

### [Tue May 12](#)

[7pm – 8:30pm Drinking Liberally .....](#) - Shilo Inn - O'Callahan's, 50 Comstock, Richland, 99352

### [Thu May 14](#)

[6:30pm – 8:30pm E Board Meeting](#) - IBEW Local 77, Kennewick

### [Mon May 18](#)

[7pm – 8:30pm MCC4C, Mid-Columbia Community 4 Change](#) - PASCO LIBRARY, 1320 W. Hopkins, Pasco, WA

### [Tue May 19](#)

[7pm – 8:30pm Drinking Liberally .....](#) - Shilo Inn - O'Callahan's, 50 Comstock, Richland

### [Wed May 20](#)

[7pm – 9pm BCDCC Central Committee Meeting](#) - IBEW Local 77, Kennewick

### [Mon May 25](#)

[8pm – 9pm Last Day for Newsletter Submissions](#)

### [Tue May 26](#)

[7pm – 8:30pm Drinking Liberally .....](#) - Shilo Inn - O'Callahan's, 50 Comstock, Richland,

[Thu May 28 10am – 11:30am Newsletter assembly and mailing](#) - Shilo Inn Board Room .. in Richland GW

Way and Comstock

**HOTLINE 585-7682**

**Website [www.bencodem.org](http://www.bencodem.org)**

# May 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					<b>1 First 100 Days Celebration, Hampton Inn, 5:30 pm</b>	<b>2 Campaign/Candidate Workshop, Yakima Carpenters 10 am</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5* Drinking Liberally</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8 Tri-City Dems. 6 pm potluck, 7 pm program, RLT</b>	<b>9 UFCW Solidarity Picket, 953 Stevens Dr, Richland, 8 am – noon w/ BBQ ! ! !</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12* Drinking Liberally</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14 E Board Meeting, 6:30 IBEW77</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>18 Mid-Col Community 4 Change, 7 pm Pasco Library</b>	<b>19* Drinking Liberally</b>	<b>20 Central Committee Mtg. 7 pm, IBEW77</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b>	<b>25 Newsletter Submissions due</b>	<b>26* Drinking Liberally</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28 Newsletter assembly and mailing</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b>						

- **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.