

# 31<sup>st</sup> Democrats Newsletter

## AS UNIONS GO, SO GOES THE MIDDLE CLASS

(Organized by R. Craig Sanders-email: [z1n45rgjarc@netscape.com](mailto:z1n45rgjarc@netscape.com) and Patricia Szot)



The 31<sup>st</sup> L.D. Democrats will meet on Wednesday:

April 15, 2009 At:

Marion Grange

27725 Buckley-Sumner Hwy E, Buckley

Coffee Hour 6 PM

Meeting 7 PM

Committee Meeting 6:30-7:00 PM

Program for April:

1. **Larry Phillips:** is 1 of 3 (so far) “Democrats” running for King County Executive to replace Ron Sims (<http://larryphillips.com>). The other two candidates are Dow Constantine and Fred Jarrett. This is supposedly a non-partisan position, but as we all know everything is political.
2. **Lisa Parsons:** of the Middle Green River Coalition (<http://www.mgrc.org>) will present a video that our very own Chair (MJ) had done and update the status of the organizations activities on enhancing the preservation of the Middle Green River.
3. **Jeffrey Possinger:** Executive Director of King County Conservation District (<http://kingcd.org>). This organization determines how land is developed/used in King County.

## PAST EVENTS

**Democrats Work**, working with Pierce Stream Team, organized a function to plan a 200’ buffer along salmon-bearing South Prairie Creek. It was two Saturdays (March 14 and 21) and there were several 31<sup>st</sup> members that showed up and got very muddy, members include Karen Willard, Kathy Lorimer, Dale Clark, Brian Gunn, Craig Sanders and Patti Szot. Also **Suzan DelBene, a Democratic candidate for the 8<sup>th</sup> CD** (against Dave Reichert) was there on Saturday March 21<sup>st</sup> getting very muddy (picture to the right). It was ***GREAT*** to see an 8<sup>th</sup> CD candidate down in our neck of the woods working on such an important environmental issue. Picture below is a group shot of several of the volunteers (including Suzan DelBene) at the March 21<sup>st</sup> Stream Team Project. You won’t see Dave Reichert getting down on the ground to plant a tree. See “Clean Sweep” under Upcoming Events for the next Democrats Work function.





## LEGISLATIVE ACTION ALERT

### Reichert Watch

Dave Reichert's home district will be getting federal money from the economic stimulus package in spite of the fact that Reichert twice voted against this bill. The stimulus bill will provide federal dollars for major improvements to the E Sammamish Lake Parkway, Route 162 in Orting and to the transit network in Eatonville (from horsesass.org).

### Bailey-Boushay House in Enumclaw needs our Help

By Linda Rutenberg

Bailey-Boushay House is supported by Virginia Mason Foundation and has provided support and care for people living with HIV and AIDS. The outpatient programs are in danger of being eliminated from the 2009-11 State of Washington Budget.

#### **What people can do:**

Call the Legislative Hotline: (800) 562-6000.

Tell the operator you would like to leave a message for your elected officials.

Message "Continue the Bailey-Boushay House funding placed in the Governor's Budget in the Senate and House versions of the 2009-11 State Budget." Give your name, address and phone number share this information with others

Also, the Adjust Day Health Program at Bailey-Boushay is asking for donations. People can call Virginia Mason Foundation at (206)583-6083 or make a payment online at <https://www.virginiamason.org/home/body.cfm?id=1222&action=donate>. I've been told that every penny goes to the program. Of course people can check with BBB.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

(If anyone has upcoming events that they would like to have posted, please email me.)

1. Washington State Democrats Central Committee Meeting is to be held on April 24-25 in TACOMA at the Hotel Murano (1320 Broadway Plaza, Tacoma, WA 98402). As a Democrat you can attend many things that are occurring at this meeting, go to the website for details.
2. Rosellini Dinner (By Karen Willard).  
Here's the website that makes it easy to purchase tickets to the Rosellini Dinner: <https://secure.blueutopia.com/piercecountydems/ticket/116>. Dinner tickets will specify whether you want Prime Rib, Halibut, or a Vegetarian meal.

2009 Rosellini Dinner & Silent Auction  
7:30 pm Friday, April 24, 2009

Check in and no-host bar from 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm  
Hotel Murano, Venice Ballroom, 1320 Broadway Plaza, Tacoma

\$75 per person / \$125 per couple

Tickets must be purchased by April 20, 2009

Sponsorship options: \$750 Table Donor (receives 10 tickets, name in program)

\$1500 Major Donor (receives 10 tickets, 10 drinks, name in program)

\$2500 Event Donor (receives 10 tickets, 10 drinks, logo in program)

(All profits from the Dinner will benefit Pierce County Democrats)

State Committee Men and Women, Chairs, and Vice Chairs of LD, County, or Young Democrats organizations receive special rate of \$55 for their ticket.

3. Democrats Work would like to recruit people to work on "Clean Sweep" which is May 9.

7:30-8:10 Check in City Hall, 25 West Main Street

7:30-8:30 Breakfast at City Hall, prepared by Kiwanis Club

8:15 Welcome by Auburn Mayor

8:45 Teams go to 1 of 4 pre-assigned project locations

This is a function in Auburn to help clean up and beautify different regions of the city. The idea is to recruit different organizations from the area to get involve and we work as a group. Volunteer groups will work on painting over walls that have graffiti, clean highway on/off ramps, and work along Interurban trail and Veterans Memorial Park. The 31<sup>st</sup> Democrats have a friendly challenge with the 47<sup>th</sup> Democrats (they also have precincts in Auburn) as to who can get the most people involved. So if you are interested please go to Democrats work website and sign up (<http://democratswork.org>).

4. Buckley Log Show- June 27 (Saturday): we will have our usual 31<sup>st</sup> Democratic booth at the Buckley Log show. If you are interested in helping with this fair please contact Patti Szot at [szot.patricia@gmail.com](mailto:szot.patricia@gmail.com).
5. 4th July Fair in Auburn- we will have our usual 31<sup>st</sup> Democratic booth at the 4<sup>th</sup> July Fair. If you are interested in helping with this fair please contact Patti Szot at [szot.patricia@gmail.com](mailto:szot.patricia@gmail.com).

## What is a PCO?

*[Our Newsletter Chair, Craig Sanders, asked me to write on this topic. We already have a very good description of what a PCO is on the website of the 31<sup>st</sup> Legislative District Democrats ([What Are Precincts and Precinct Committee Officers?](#)). That fine article was written by Sharon Hodgins, one of my predecessors in the chair I hold, that of PCO Relations and Recruitment for the 31<sup>st</sup> LDD. So, instead of re-writing Sharon's article, I'll tell you why I became a PCO, and why I think you should become one, too.]*

Not long ago, I was one of those people whose political involvement got me as far as the polling booth every couple of years, but no farther. I would occasionally shout at the television, but that changed nothing and disturbed no one but my wife. To preserve her sanity (and protect her eardrums), she told me I should do something a bit more constructive; when the 2008 presidential precinct caucuses approached, I made a commitment to learn about the process and attend. I remembered my frustration upon learning that my vote in the 2004 presidential primary sent exactly zero delegates to the Democratic National Convention, and I was determined not to allow my ignorance of the political process to disenfranchise my vote again.

When I arrived at the caucus, I was surprised by two things: first, that there were any other people in my neighborhood who considered themselves Democrats (and there were 30 of them there!), and second, that there was no one to chair my precinct's caucus (i.e., there was no elected Precinct Committee Officer). I suppose, given my expectation not to find many fellow Democrats in attendance, I should not have been surprised by the fact that no one was there to lead the caucus, but assumptions based on too little real information are oftentimes contradictory. I raised my hand, told the folks I had been to caucus training, and next thing I knew, I was elected chair. Then we all spoke about why we were supporting either Hillary or Barack. The speeches were not polished or TV-ready, but they were intensely personal and deeply moving. I found out that I shared a common goal with my neighbors: we all wanted to make our country and our community a better place. We sent 4 delegates for Obama and 2 for Clinton to the 31<sup>st</sup> Legislative District Caucus.

But I did not immediately hang out a sign saying, "Mission Accomplished", and call it a day. I contacted the chair of my legislative district's Democratic organization and volunteered to become a PCO (and was appointed shortly thereafter). I began attending the monthly meetings of the 31<sup>st</sup> LDD (every third Wednesday at the Marion Grange in Buckley). At the LD and CD caucuses, I tried (unsuccessfully) to get elected as a national delegate for Obama, but went to Spokane for the State Democratic Convention anyway. I canvassed my precinct, called my neighbors, and campaigned door-to-door for Obama, Burner and Gregoire. I put my own name on the ballot and was elected PCO for my precinct in August. I participated actively in the 31<sup>st</sup> LDD re-organization and was elected to the Executive Board in January. All of these things, I learned, are part of being a PCO.

As I made many missteps along the way, I listened to the advice of other PCOs in the district, and I found that they all were passionate about certain issues, and often it was this passion that kept them from becoming discouraged and kept them involved. Some want to see our veterans treated better, others are environmentalists who want to see us be better stewards of our natural resources, and others are union members working every day to improve the quality of life for working people. I have joined Democrats Work organizing volunteers for work projects benefiting homeless shelters, food banks, elementary schools, and conservation projects. I have committed myself to the mission of making the Democratic Party the Party of Service, and these other committed people have listened and encouraged me to pursue my passion, and that, too is part of being a PCO, although you won't find that one as a bullet point in the PCO Handbook.

A PCO is a well-informed citizen, an actively participating member of our democratic society, and someone who is willing to work a little harder than most to make our world a better place. That's what I signed on for, and you should, too. Give me a call, we have lots of openings!

Brian Gunn  
253-334-8614  
[gunnbl@comcast.net](mailto:gunnbl@comcast.net)

## Border Patrol Checkpoints

We have received disturbing reports of Border Patrol agents setting up random checkpoints to challenge the citizenship of travelers on our highways and back roads. This would be fine if this were occurring at the border. But these reports have come from areas such as Forks, Hood Canal, Sequim and Quilcene. Apparently, the Border Patrol feels that they have jurisdiction as far as 100 miles from US borders. While we may think that this means the northern and southern borders, their interpretation is the borders around the land mass of the United States. They could set up

checkpoints in Corvallis, Oregon or Virginia Beach, Virginia. Did you know that 2/3 of the entire US population live within 100 miles of the coastal areas of the United States?

The Washington State Constitution prohibits such activities for its own security forces (police, etc.), but the Border Patrol agents are Federal officers. In this case, Federal authority trumps State authority. Senator Cantwell has even written a letter to Secretary Napolitano about her concerns. Random checkpoints are indicators of authoritarian societies and somehow seem un-American.

## EDITORIAL-As | See It

By Craig Sanders

Organized Labor had a tough month in March. A number of bills favoring labor (We the People) were not so much defeated as not even considered this month. Ironically, bills favoring business (the rich corporations) were not only considered, but passed. One very important bill (sponsored, in part, by Christopher Hurst) supporting We the People was the Worker Privacy Act (SB5446 and HB1528), which would have allowed employees in Washington the choice of whether they wanted to participate in communication from the employer regarding such issues as unions, religion, political issues, etc. You may be surprised to find that, currently, the choice of participation is not an option. Among other bills, this one died without being voted on (WSLC Legislative Update 3/13/09).

On the national scale, the big fight is going to be the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA). Similar to 1929, we have seen declining wages, a growing trade deficit, CEO salaries through the roof, incredible household debt and roller coaster booms and busts. In the past, this country has done well when there was more of a balance between Labor and Management. The last three decades have seen a decline in this balance to where it's more of a David and Goliath scenario. Ronald Reagan signaled an open-season on labor and since then companies have actively waged warfare on the working people and especially unions. Pro-business people have been appointed to head agencies like the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). These, historically, pro-labor positions have become anti-labor, working for business and against labor, resulting in non-enforcement of pro-labor laws that are already on the books. Unions have declined from 25-35% of the working population to the present 7.5-12 % of the work force. When union participation was greatest, the middle class felt like a part of this success and blossomed. As unions lost ground, we witnessed the decimation of the middle class. Now, the middle class is on its last legs. Wages have stagnated over the last 30 years while the costs of food and energy have increased. Effectively, our wages are buying less today than we could buy 30 years ago. Productivity, on the other hand, has increased dramatically over the last decade. This means that We the People are working harder and harder to buy less, and are not sharing in the benefits of increased productivity. The EFCA would change all that. It would return the balance between Labor and Management, to where the middle class would have a chance to blossom again. EFCA allows workers to choose a union either by a closed election or by a majority signing pledge cards, effectively making it easier to form a union.

In the past, unions have had to fight to get representation in the workplace. People have died in this country fighting for such now commonly-accepted advances as an 8-hour workday, the 40-hour work week, work breaks, prohibition of child labor, etc. We all benefit from unions. Even if we're not in a union, we benefit by the presence of a union in the community. To be competitive companies will often pay equal to unionized pay and may even pay more to prevent the employees from considering unionization. If a union didn't exist in the community, then there is no incentive for the employer to pay a fair wage. This may be the reason that wages are so low in the southern United States. The goal of business is to pay as little as possible. This serves to increase their

profits. If there are plenty of people applying for a non-union job, this tends to drive down the prevailing wage that will be paid. In a country without a minimum wage, this would be a very low wage. Unionization would tend to keep wages up.

If we're looking for something to hope for, we should be hoping that the Employee Free Choice Act passes. This innocent sounding bill strikes terror into the heart of the business elites. It means that there will finally be hope of rebuilding the middle-class after 30 years of its being torn down. We're all in this together.

## Our Representatives-how to get hold of them

**Senators: Patty Murray (D) and Maria Cantwell (D)**

Patty Murray- DC office phone: (202) 224-2621

Seattle Office

2988 Jackson Federal Bldg.

915 2nd Avenue

Seattle, Washington 98174

Phone: (206) 553-5545

Fax: (206) 553-0891

Maria Cantwell- DC office phone (202) 224-3441

Seattle Office

915 Second Avenue

Suite #3206

Seattle, WA 98174

206-220-6400

206-220-6404 – FAX

Tacoma Office

950 Pacific Avenue, Suite #615

Tacoma, WA 98402

253-572-2281

253-572-5879 FAX

8<sup>th</sup> CD Representative-Dave Reichert (R)

Dave Reichert- DC Office phone (202) 225-7761

District Office

2737 78th Avenue, S.E. Suite #202

Mercer Island, WA 98040

(206) 275-3438

(206) 275-3437 Fax

9<sup>th</sup> CD Representative-Adam Smith (D)

Adam Smith-DC office phone (202) 225-8901

District Office

2209 Pacific Ave, Suite B

Tacoma, WA 98402

(253) 593-6600

(253)593-6776

State Senator-31<sup>st</sup> LD

Pam Roach (R)

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## 6 years too Long

By Patricia Szot

March 19 marked the 6<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of the Iraq war. Despite the fact that the reason for this war was a total pile of you-know-what, we should all pay homage to the number of military persons that gave their life and served honorably for our country. Remember to HONOR the TROOPS, but Hate the WAR. I feel publishing these numbers monthly is my way to keep the public aware that our military persons are still facing grave danger in Iraq and Afghanistan and that we should make sure that President Obama keeps his promise to bring the troops home. These numbers should also remind us that the troops coming home need to be taken care of. We need to make sure their mental as well as physical needs are addressed. Recently, a NOW episode (PBS April 3, 2009) and article by Robert Burns in the Associated Press (4/3/09) talked about the great number of suicides of Iraqi veterans coming home. We need to make sure the VA hospitals are fully funded and that all issues concerning our vets are met. As of today (4/8/09), the Republicans have finally allowed the nomination of Tammy Duckworth to the Veterans Administration. She is an Iraq veteran that had 3 limbs amputated due to wounds inflicted in Iraq. Veteran's issues for me are a major issue as a Democrat. They deserve so much from us.

Occupation Statistics (<http://www.antiwar.com>)

**4265 US Military Deaths (Iraq)**

**673 US Military Deaths (Afghanistan)**

**31153 US Military Wounded (Iraq)**

**151,000-1,320,110 Iraq Civilian Deaths**

## ONGOING FOOD DRIVE

**Please bring any food item (especially baby food) or toilet paper to the monthly grange for our ongoing food drive to help others in our hard economic times.**

***Please email us if you would like to contribute to the newsletter. A democracy is only as strong as its arguments can be supported.***