

31st Democrats Newsletter

Meetings are held at the Marion Grange, 27725 Sumner-Buckley Hwy E, Buckley
www.31stdistrictdemocrats.org

(Organized by R. Craig Sanders-email: z1n45rgiarc@netscape.com and Patricia Szot)

ONGOING FOOD DRIVE-We are collecting for local food banks

Monthly Meeting-March 17th

6-7 pm Social Hour; 7 pm General Business Meeting

At the present time there is no formal presentation. There was a mix up with scheduling (on our part) and Suzan DelBene will be at the April monthly meeting.

However, come and let's discuss what ever issue may interest you.

2010 Democratic Caucus

When: March 14, 2010 (Sunday)

Where: Enumclaw Library (1700 First St, Enumclaw, WA 98022)

Time: 1 pm (doors open at 12:30 pm)

Yes, it is an election year. At this function delegates will be chosen to attend the State Democratic Convention in November 2010 and to discuss party platform and resolutions. For more details see website (www.31stdistrictdemocrats.org)

FYI-Just letting people know that the 31st District Democrats have changed our address. Our new address is: 31st District Democrats, P.O. Box 7231, Bonney Lake, 98391. We have also changed our banking from one of the big banks to Harborstone Credit Union with locations in Bonney Lake, Sumner and 10 other local towns and cities

Democrats Work- This is a great organization for people who want to help their local communities. They should be ramping up soon for their spring and summer activities. Democrats work was awarded **Volunteer Organization of 2009** for Pierce County Conservation Stream Team. Upcoming events are March 20th and April 17th for the Duwamish River. **Contact Brian Gunn or go Cascade Land Conservancy's web site.**

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Past events:

Our **Progressives on the Plateau** function was a great success. Those that attended February 27th function seemed to have a good time. There was plenty to eat and drink and everyone went home happy. The music, provided by Eric Stevens' (Enumclaw) trio **Swingin' Soire**, was absolutely fabulous. Both **Ron Weigelt**, who will be running for **State Senator** and **Ray Bunk**, who will be running for

State Representative were there to express their views and answer questions. Sorry if you missed it this year. Maybe we'll have an even better one next year. Pictures of the function are shown below.



Ray Bunk



Ron Weigelt



Ron Weigelt for State Senate Campaign Events

March 20, 2010

On March 20th from 10:30 to noon we will be having a campaign and issues workshop at the Muckleshoot Library, 17102 SE 400th Street, Auburn Washington 98092, come on by and participate.

Mark Your Calendar for April 10, 2010
One Day, Two Options

Spring Bazaar

The Spring Bazaar will be held on April 10th from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. at the Veterans of Foreign Wars hall in Enumclaw. The address is 44426 244th Avenue Southeast Enumclaw, WA 98022. **No entry fee, come during the day and check out our many vendors.**

There will be many types of vendors plus some raffles (no need to be present to win). Mark your calendar, come on by and check out the local vendors and raffle items.

If you would like a table contact: Jane Barsi, 253-447-7787, or email jane@thewinequeen.com

April 10th - AN EVENING TO RELAX
FOOD, DRINK, MUSIC, ENTERTAINMENT

6 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

April 10th from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Veterans of Foreign Wars hall at 44426 244th Avenue Southeast, Enumclaw, WA 98022

Reserve a spot; send a check for \$17.50 per person to FORWSCC, mailing address 17701 101st Street East, Bonney Lake, WA 98391

Contact: Jane Barsi, 253-447-7787, or www.jane@thewinequeen.com

The 2010 census forms will be arriving soon at everyone's home. The Census is mandated by the Constitution and has been performed every ten years (in year ending in 0) since 1790. The census is essentially a snapshot of the United States on April 1, 2010. The census consists of 10 basic questions summarized here and should take about 10 minutes to complete. The census cannot be filled out on-line because of privacy concerns. Your answers are held in the strictest of confidence.

1. How many people were living or staying in this house, apartment, or mobile home?
2. Were there any additional people staying here April 1, 2010 that you did not include in Question 1?
3. Is this house, apartment or mobile home owned, owned with a mortgage, rented or rent-free?
4. What is your telephone number?
5. Names of people living here (Last, First and MI)?
6. What is the sex (M/F) of the people living here?
7. What is the age of the people living here (age, date of birth)?
8. Is this person of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin?
9. What is this person's race?
10. Does this person sometimes live or stay somewhere else?

The reasons for doing the census are at least three-fold. First, the census count is used to determine the proportion of the representatives in the Federal House of Representatives. Secondly, the census is used to proportion out Federal Spending (400 billion dollars). Thirdly, census data can be used for future planning for such things as schools, police departments, libraries, shopping areas, etc. More information

can be obtained at www.2010.census.gov. If people choose to not fill out the census, they are potentially harming their community by depriving it of needed funds.

Capitalism: A Love Story has just been released on DVD. I've done a review on the movie in a previous newsletter, so maybe I'll reprint it here. I've already watched it again, and it's even better the second time around.

CAPITALISM: A LOVE STORY

Everyone needs to go see Michael Moore's new move "Capitalism-A Love Story". I went to see it just so that I could recommend everyone else seeing it. The movie relates how, historically, America was doing pretty well after World War II. At this time, the income of one person would be enough to have a home, have kids and send them to college. The tax rate on the rich back then was about 90%. In spite of that high tax rate, there were plenty of wealthy people. Not as many people were wealthy then as there are now, but that's probably because now, the tax rates on the wealthy have been dropped lower than they have been since the "roaring twenties". You remember what happened after the roaring twenties, don't you? So, since Reagan, worker productivity has been increasing dramatically while wages have remained relatively stagnant. The price of most commodities has also increased, so that now, a worker is more productive and yet able to buy less goods and services than (s)he could 30 years ago. No wonder that it now takes two incomes or two jobs to live decently anymore. Meanwhile, the rich have enjoyed great increases in their wealth. This disparity between the rich and the poor has not been seen since, you guessed it, the roaring twenties. Anyway, go see the film. There's a lot more in it than I've discussed. If Republicans aren't afraid to go see a Michael Moore movie this time, they may finally learn that the real battle is between the rich and the rest of us.

R. Craig Sanders

Health Care Around The World

Perhaps the reason that people in the United States are reluctant to change our health care system is fear. Fear of the unknown is a very powerful emotion. It seems that all we are hearing is that there is no point trying to change the system because change won't work or that the system is working fine. But the truth is the system has been getting worse for years now and will continue to get worse if we don't take some measures to fix it. At the present time some 45 million Americans and growing don't have health care. When these people get sick, they have to go to the Emergency Room. It ends up being a lot more expensive and taxpayers end up paying for it anyway. If I have to pay for it anyway, I'd just as soon have it be more economical. Presently, Americans spend about 17% of the GDP on health care.

Did you know that all other developed nations in the world have decided to make sure that their citizens have access to affordable health care and that they still pay about half or less of their GDP than the U.S. pays? These countries made the conscientious decision that it would be immoral if they didn't insure that everyone was covered. In other words, they believe that health care is a right, not a privilege. How a nation cares for its citizens is a statement of how that nation values its citizens.

Information presented here is largely taken almost verbatim from "THE HEALING OF AMERICA" by T.R. Reid. I've tried to summarize the information into short snippets out of the book. This is an excellent book discussing the various healthcare systems around the world (both advantages and disadvantages). **T.R. Reid has suggested that all the U.S. needs to do is decide which system works best and then adopt it and perhaps, even improve upon it.** It isn't as though the U.S. has to totally invent a new health care system.

This month we will review the health care system in CANADA

The best description of Canadian health care is that emergencies are handled quickly and quite well, but that any procedure that isn't urgent has a lot of waiting associated with it. The health care system in Canada may be attributed solely to the efforts of one person. Tommy Douglas was the Premier (kind of like a U.S. Governor) of Saskatchewan, and in 1944 he introduced **government-run, single-payer, private provider, health care** to that province. The rest of Canada saw that this system of health care worked well and, by 1961, everyone in Canada was covered by this same system, which was called "Medicare". In 1965, the United States adopted Medicare (both system and name) to cover the elderly and disabled with the intention that it would evolve to cover everyone. The Canadian health care has been so successful that both Taiwan and South Korea have adopted this system. Although it is a great system, like the others, it has its problems. Currently, the system is not particularly healthy.

In Canada, there is a collectivist spirit [we're all in this together], which is the idea that anyone who needs health care can get it, and get it for free. Unlike the United States, no Canadian dies because of lack of health care and no Canadian goes bankrupt because of illness. Canadians have a longer healthy life experience and a lower infant mortality rate, all for about ½ of the cost of the United States. The reasons cited as to the low cost of Canadian health care are attributed to their more-efficient payment system and the clout of an entire nation in price negotiations. Canada spends only 8% of its GDP on health care and covers everyone (compared to 17% of GDP in the U.S. for incomplete coverage-48 million uninsured).

Make no mistake, if it's not an urgent case, you will almost always WAIT. It can take 10-12 months just to get a consult. If the consult reveals that surgery is in order, it will then be another 6-8 months until the surgery. Other examples of services where there are waiting lists are CAT scans, heart by-pass, cancer radiation and cataracts. There have been stories that, because of this waiting, massive numbers of people have been going to the U.S. to have their procedures done. The truth is, however, that the actual number of people doing this is tiny. The Canadian people are very fair, in that citizens, in general, don't mind waiting as long as the wealthy have to wait just as long as the poor.

Tommy Douglas came from a poor family. His family settled in Canada before World War I, at a time when the rich could get all the care they wanted, but the poor could only go to very few, widely-scattered public clinics. In 1944, he ran for Premier of Saskatchewan with the goal of heading "the first socialist government in North America". Once in office, he enlisted the help of Henry Sigerist of Johns Hopkins Medical School to promote "socialized medicine" [in this case, government payment of medical bills from private providers-not really socialized medicine]. In 1947, hospital care became free for every resident of Saskatchewan. Eventually, all of the provinces adopted his hospital insurance system. Going even further, in 1961, he introduced Medicare in Saskatchewan, which was a tax-funded, public insurance plan that would cover all treatments, whether hospitalized or not. Again, the rest of Canada watched closely. In a 1964 report, the pro-business conservative Supreme Court Justice Emmett Hall said "Economic growth is not the sole aim of our society. The value of a human life must be decided without regard to ... economic considerations. We must take into account the human and spiritual aspects involved." With that endorsement, a bill to establish Saskatchewan-like health care passed unanimously in both houses of Parliament. The resultant Canadian Medicare is considered so important to Canada that Tommy Douglas was recently (2004) voted "the greatest Canadian of all time" by the citizens of Canada.

To call Canada's government-financed Medicare program a single-payer system is technically inaccurate. It is actually a 13-payer system (1 payer for each province or territory). Each province and territory has its own Medicare plan-some provide 100%, some have co-pays, and others require a deductible amount to be paid before activation.

The combined government system has clout for negotiating prices and fees for treatments, medical equipment and drugs. Because of Medicare, Canadians pay ¼ to ½ of the price of the U.S. for the same drug, even if paid for out of pocket. This helps to explain why Americans have been going to Canada for cheaper drugs.

The Canada Health Act of 1984 set up rules that each province and territory have to satisfy to get Federal help, making it effectively mandatory. The hallmarks of the Canadian health system include: 1. It is operated by a public body which is non-profit. 2. Each plan has to cover all “medically necessary” services, 3. Every resident has equal access, 4. Each plan is completely portable whether the person is out of province or even out of country and 5. Doctors must charge the same fee for everyone.

Most Canadians pay nothing for doctor visits, emergency room visits, hospital visits, injections or vaccinations, and nothing for MRI/diagnostic scans. A mental health situation may require some waiting. Preventative dental care is not covered, but dental surgery in a hospital is free. Ambulance services are free in most provinces. However, people in most provinces have to pay out of pocket for their drugs, excepting the poor, the elderly and people suffering from chronic illness. The Canadian Medicare does not pay for Viagra because it’s considered a “lifestyle” drug. AIDS medications are completely covered.

Most basic medical costs are covered by the Canadian Medicare system. However, most Canadians also have private health insurance to pay for things not covered, like dental, private rooms, prescriptions, and childbirth classes. While private insurance doesn’t allow people to cut to the front of the line, it does allow for the nicer things if admitted to a hospital (private room, etc.). Supplemental health insurance also tends to pay for any huge bills. Because basic health care is free, supplemental private insurance is very cheap; so cheap that it’s often included as a fringe benefit by many employers. The fear about supplemental insurance is that the rich will use it and turn away from Medicare, resulting in a 2-tier system where the rich get better care and get it sooner. This idea is repulsive to the average Canadian. To prevent this, it has been made illegal for patients or insurance to pay for anything that is covered by the Medicare system. Any doctors or hospitals which accept Medicare (almost everyone) are not allowed to also practice privately or bill patients directly. The resultant problem is that there is a lot of waiting. If it’s covered by Medicare you have no choice. However, a recent (2005) Canadian Supreme Court case decision agreed that the patient should not have to wait, stirring fears that the 2-tier system is looming in the near future. This has stirred the provincial governments to improve the present system by bringing in more money, more doctors and setting specific time limits in order to reduce waiting lists.

For the doctors, it’s rewarding to provide medical care without paperwork, but there are still the waiting lists. At times the waiting is almost scandalous. Family practices typically have a cramped office with charts on the wall listing prices of procedures. Because of the egalitarian nature of the Canadian health care system, a doctors office may have both middle-class and destitute patients sitting next to each other. Offices also usually have boxes of free drug samples from the drug representatives which are given out to patients that don’t have the supplemental insurance. The Canadian government does pay for malpractice insurance and there are no file cases because everything is digital. Doctors don’t have to deal with billing or money because the patients don’t pay. Medicare pays all bills at the end of the month. Because of the low pay that health care workers receive in Canada, medicine is a less desirable occupation than other countries. Doctors in Canada earn about ½ as much as doctors in the U.S. Tuition for medical school is about ½ the price of public schools in the U.S.

The advantage of this system is that patients will seek needed medical care if it’s free (unlike the U.S., where people without means wait until it’s sometimes too late). If people seek help early, then the outcome is usually better and the problem may be caught when it’s not as expensive to fix.

The Canadian Medicare system is great if you have an emergency. If it’s not an emergency, then there tends to be a lot of waiting involved. Officials overseeing Canadian Medicare are currently attempting to alleviate the problem of waiting lists. Canadian Medicare is also an example of a country in which universal health care started out in a localized area (Saskatchewan) and then, because of its success, eventually spread to cover the whole country.

As I See It

By Craig Sanders

Below is a response from a disgruntled American when the 31st LD Democrats sent out requests for renewal of membership. I know that you might expect me to argue with this person's point of view, but, in fact, I'm glad that someone took the 44 cent effort to try and tell the people currently in power that a hard rains a'gonna fall. I totally agree with this person and can only add that I am trying hard to persuade the Democratic Party, as a whole, that the direction they are headed is down a dead end street.

31st District Democrats

I backed and voted for Democrats last year. Obama's Message of Hope, Change, and Transparency was the same as I hear it today. The problem is the actions by the Democrats as Deficit, Lack of Transparency, and business as usual. Not that the Republicans are any better. What happened to Leadership and Integrity?

A Confirmed Independent

I used to be an Independent voter. When George Bush got elected, I hid my head in the sand and just hoped that he wouldn't mess America up too much. Fortunately, my wife chose to get active. She joined the local Democratic branch and actively participated. She kept me up to date with Bush's antics. Finally, I figured out that I wasn't doing any good by being in denial and that everything was going to keep getting worse. Then I, too, joined the Democrats. But the Democrats seem like they have drunk the Kool-aid too. The Democrats seem to be headed for the same cliff that I think the Republicans are headed for. The only difference is that the Democrats are walking while the Republicans are running. I say, turn around and head the other way. The Democratic Party has to start sticking up for "We the People" if they hope to survive.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not trying to sabotage the Democratic Party. I'm trying to save the Democratic Party (along with the rest of the world). A lot of Democratic Party people seem to be oblivious to the anger that is present in this country. Senator Obama was elected to be President Obama because he told the rabble ("We the People") that he knew what was wrong and that he would fix it. Apparently, he either didn't really know what was wrong or he was just telling people what they wanted to hear to get elected.

Our Representatives-how to get hold of them

Senators: Patty Murray (D) and Maria Cantwell

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

8th 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

9th 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

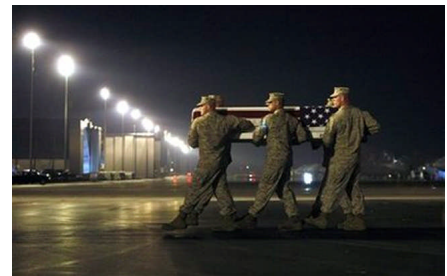
State Senator-31st LD
Pam Roach (R)
POB 40431
Olympia, WA 98504
Office: 360-786-7660
Fax: 360-786-7173
Email: Roach.Pam@leg.wa.gov

State Representatives-31st LD
Chris Hurst (D)
POB 40600
Olympia, WA 98504
Office: 360-786-7866
Fax: 360-786-7317
Email: Hurst.Christopher@leg.wa.gov

Dan Roach (R)
POB 40600
Olympia, WA 98504
Office: 360-786-7846
Email: Roach.Dan@leg.wa.gov

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

- 4,382 US Military Deaths (Iraq)
- 1016 US Military Deaths (Afghanistan)
- 31,706 US Military Wounded (Iraq)
- 151,000-1,366,350 Iraq Civilian Deaths



DO YOU WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN OUR LOCAL POLITICAL SYSTEM?

YES!! Join us

Fill out the form below (questions are required by the state Public Disclosure Commission) and hand it in to one of our volunteers at our monthly meeting or mail it in (31st District Democrats, PO Box 7231, Bonney Lake, WA 98391). You can pay 2010 dues now or later by check (made out to 31st District Democrats) or on-line by credit card. Dues are \$31 per year (January-December), but members can pay what they can afford with a minimum of \$5.

NAME _____

Street Address _____

Mailing Address (if different from above) _____

Telephone # _____

Email _____

Occupation _____

Employer _____