

Marion County Democratic Central Committee

Newsletter

February 2008



DEMOCRATIC VALUES

- Affordable Health Care
- Quality Education
- Fair & Equitable Taxation
- Healthy Air, Water, Land
- Family Wage Jobs
- Accountable & Fiscally Responsible Government

Richard Riggs Will Run for District 20 House Seat

By Adrienne Pauly

Retired after a 20-year career in the U.S. Navy, Richard Riggs will challenge Vicki Berger for the house seat in District 20. Currently a law student at Willamette Law School, Riggs last year won a seat on the Chemeketa Community College Board of Directors, beating West Salem City Councilman Dan Clem.

While teaching a course at Chemeketa in government to drop-out pregnant girls trying to complete their high school degrees, he realized these students had never been exposed to a civics class and knew nothing about the three branches of government. "It was shameful. That was my Aha! moment," says Riggs. "I decided I needed to get involved in the state legislature that controls education funding."

He adds, "I do have a lot of government background. My last tour in the Navy was in Victoria, British Columbia, where I served as senior staff officer for exercise planning for the Canadian-Pacific Fleet. I had to work with many different government agencies in both Canada and the United States, and in other countries. I worked with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, their Coast Guard, immigration and customs people, and our parallel agencies. I really understand how agencies communicate."

"I also had an internship in the governor's office this year where I observed the legislature, attended countless hearings, and sat in on policy meetings with Danny Santos, senior policy advisor to the governor."

To confirm his decision to run Riggs contacted Tina Calos who had compiled data on the voting records of the past few elections. "The media has painted Vicki as a moderate and I didn't want to tilt at windmills, but Tina's numbers showed Paul Evans had come within just a couple of hundred votes of winning District 20 in the last

election. Tina also pointed out that District 20 has a large number of independents that vote heavily for Hooley and Kulingoski and overwhelmingly for progressive ballot numbers. Tina says these nonaffiliated voters will be key. Basically, I saw that this is a very winnable district. When I saw the numbers I said to myself, I know I can win."

Riggs set about building a campaign staff. Michael Dougal, a field organizer for Measure 49, will serve as campaign Manager. Linda Williams has signed on as treasurer. In the first hour he spent raising funds from family and friends, Riggs generated \$1,100. Several hosts promised to hold introductory coffees for him. He will withdraw from the fall semester at law school to concentrate in the campaign.

"Berger's image as a moderate is deceptive," he says, "I will point out that she voted against healthy kids, against the rainy day fund, against the pay day loan bill. And, she's below the house average on environmental issues."

Issues Riggs says he will promote during his campaign include expanding the bottle bill, finding a dedicated funding source for our police, setting up a larger rainy day fund, and closing some tax loopholes. "Also, the corporate

minimum tax of ten dollars is ridiculous," he says.

Riggs does not duck the Iraq issue. He greatly admired Colin Powell, and his testimony before the United Nations convinced Riggs the war was justified. "In 2003 I fired missiles into Iraq. By January of '04, however, I had doubts and wrote an essay asking, 'Where are the WMDs?' I went over there on a lie and killed people. It makes me madder than hell." He admits that because of his allegiance to his military comrades, "I'm torn, but we should do everything possible to bring the troops home as soon as possible."

While in the military, Riggs followed Oregon issues by reading *The Oregonian* and *The Register Guard* online. He is married, has two children, and lives in West Salem.

Riggs's campaign will be launched officially at a kick-off party Wednesday, February 13, at the Blue Pepper coffee house between 6 and 8 P.M. All are invited. With enough support, Riggs is convinced a Democratic win in District 20 is definitely "doable."



February 20th Auction Benefit Needs You!

There's still time to reserve your place at our biggest and most exciting fundraiser, the Annual Auction on February 20. And there's still time to make donations to the auction or sign up to help.

Ideas for donations include political memorabilia (buttons, stickers, etc.), homemade goodies and crafts, tickets for sports or arts events, and gift certificates.

This event is central to our fundraising efforts. In this important elec-

tion year, our money could make the difference for local Democratic candidates and help us get a Democrat into the White House.

Last year's event was a sellout, so don't wait to reserve your seat. Call 503-370-2906 or use the attached form. The reservation deadline is February 14.

To help out in other ways (setup, cleanup, etc.), contact Claudia Baum at 503-364-9741.

See page 3 for more information about the auction.

A Great Opportunity

By Rich Harisay

The Bush Administration, because of its thievery and its failed policies, has handed us an opportunity to set things right. As we know the proposed “economic stimulus” package will do little to change the fact that we are in a recession. The trillions of dollars that either have been stolen or spent foolishly (such as for the Iraq war) cannot be replaced by a 150 billion dollar *loan*. The only place that the government can get this money is by borrowing it and increasing the national debt. So let’s spend it on something that will give us the greatest benefit.

We all know that elections cost a lot of money and that the Republicans usually have the advantage because they are funded by big business. However, they have now handed us enough cash to defeat them. If one million of us donated the \$600, that we are supposedly getting, to Democratic local, state, and federal senate, house or presidential candidates, it would create a \$600 million war chest. If ten million of us donated \$600 each, that war chest would grow to \$6 billion, enough to gain a super majority in congress and state governments as well as the presidency.

Having achieved this we can begin changing the disastrous policies that have made us a debtor nation. We can repudiate NAFTA and the WTO and other agreements that robbed us and future generations of decent jobs. We can enact tariffs that cancel the advantage of offshore manufacturing. We can strengthen the Constitution and our democracy by enacting amendments that will make another neocon administration impossible.

The Republicans think that this check will “buy” your vote and, personally, I would be happy to accept it if it came out of George’s and Dick’s pockets. But this money comes from George’s credit card, and who makes the minimum payment on that bill each month? You and I do!! (That is why he doesn’t care how much he spends.) So why not get the biggest bang for your buck.



From Where I Sit

By Wayne Baum, MCDCC Chair

February 20th will soon be upon us. It is the date for our single most important fundraiser of the year—The Live and Silent Auction of the Marion County Democrats. This event, which will include: KPOJ radio personality Carl Wolfson; live music; gourmet appetizers and deserts from Occasions Caterers; and auctioneer Ralph Groener; is more than just a fun night on the town. The money raised that night will

determine, in large part, what we as a county party can do this year to help elect and retain Democrats at all levels of government. As the late California Speaker of the Assembly Jesse Unruh famously said: “Money is the mother’s milk of politics.”

One major objective is to raise sufficient funds to open an office by late May. Many factors will determine what kind of office we will have. Ideally, there would be sufficient space to enable several local candidates to operate an office in the same space. We could have meeting rooms, phone banking lines, printers, computers and desks available to the campaigns. The office would give Marion County Democrats a physical presence—a gravitas—they have not had before in Salem. It will be a magnet for recruiting, training, and retaining volunteers. The possibilities are endless, limited only by the energy and imagination of our membership . . . and by available funds.

Let’s all do our part to make the Annual Auction Benefit a huge success. If you haven’t already sent in your reservation, please do it now. If you won’t be able to attend the event, consider a generous donation to Marion County Democrats.

Initiative Process Needs Overhaul

By Trudy Margules

They are at it again. Bill Sizemore, Russ Walker, and Kevin Mannix—the perennial Republican initiative pushers—have collected enough signatures to put nine initiatives on the November ballot, according to the *Statesman Journal* (1/8/2008).

Sizemore and Walker are chief petitioners on five proposals each (not described), and Mannix is the chief petitioner on two: one on mandatory prison sentences for a (long) list of crimes and the other, on requiring 15 percent of the state lottery profits for public safety programs. (The *Statesman’s* arithmetic is a mystery to me. I am also stumped by how the signatures have been collected since I haven’t encountered a signature gatherer for some time now.)

Most of the initiatives that have come out in the last many years have been proposed by these three who have made a business of petitioning for changes, most of which tend to savage state government or promote their own party’s interests.

The original idea behind the initiative process was to let citizens create solutions to problems when the legisla-

ture failed to act. By getting enough of their fellow citizens to sign an initiative petition, concerned citizens could place a measure on the ballot for the electorate to decide. We have come a very long way from the original idea. Now we have a group of people, supported by out-of-state ideologues, who make a career of proposing initiatives, mostly toxic to state government and their political opposition.

I wish the State Democratic Party would propose an initiative to outlaw initiatives that are funded beyond an absolute minimum, such as for printing forms, buying pens, and the like. No one would be able to receive compensation for proposing an initiative or for collecting signatures. Only a truly grass roots effort would be able to propose an initiative and collect signatures.

What do you think?

**Visit Our
New Web Site:
mariondemocrats.org**

Film Addresses Global Water Issues

The monthly film and community discussion event features *Thirst* at Salem's Grand Theater (191 N High St.) Thursday, February 14 at 7:00 P.M.

Is water part of a shared "commons," a human right for all people? Or is it a commodity to be bought, sold and traded in the global marketplace. *Thirst* tells the stories of communities in Bolivia, India, and the United States that are raising these fundamental issues.

Over a billion people lack access to safe drinking water. Each year, millions of children die of diseases caused by unsafe water.

These facts drive a debate in the opening scenes of *Thirst* at the 2003 Third World Water Forum in Kyoto, Japan. Politicians, international bankers, and corporate executives gather to decide who will control global fresh water supplies. Their consensus for large dams and privatized corporate water systems is challenged by experts and activists who assert that water is a human right, not a commodity.

In Bolivia, India, and around the world, grassroots movements are opposing governments' efforts to sell water sources to companies like Coca Cola and Pepsi. The central story in *Thirst* takes place in Stockton, California, where Mayor Gary Podesto, proposes to give control of the city water system to a consortium of global water corporations, without the approval of the citizens. No one anticipates the outcome.

Guest speakers will be Peter Fernandez, City of Salem's Public Works Director, and Professor Aaron Wolf, Oregon State University. Doors open at 6:15 P.M. for lobby networking and information resources. The film starts at 7:00 P.M. with post-film speakers and audience discussion.

We will be having a "water tasting survey" with 3 samples of water. One will be the City of Salem's tap water, the second will be local well water, and the third will be bottled water. We will also be serving chocolates and desserts to celebrate Valentine's Day.

For more info:
www.salemprogressivefilms.net,
Cinda Kimball 503-588-8713.

JANUARY 28 MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Excerpted from the minutes submitted by Sean Stewart & Monica Moran, co-secretaries.

Election Organization Focus of Meeting

The focus of the program, presented by Tina Calos and Sarah White, was the local and national efforts of the Democratic Party to organize from a "bottom-up" model. At least 1,000 local volunteers will be needed for the 2008 election.

Tina mentioned Bill Burgess, Marion County Clerk, and stated that she believed he would be targeted this year by the Republicans. She spoke about the positive changes Bill has implemented.

The committee was broken up into their house districts. The goal of the breakout session was to help organize people from the different districts and give them the necessary skills and tools to better implement the neighbor-to-neighbor model of voter contact.

Tina shared Measure 49 voting results by House District, showing that Marion County strongly supported Measure 49.

Kasia Quillinan was nominated and unanimously approved to serve as a PCP and to replace Cindy Kimball as treasurer for the MCDCC.

Aileen Kaye proposed a resolution to thank Darlene Hooley for her voting record, which has consistently opposed the agenda of the Bush administration. Representative Hooley, along with

Representative Peter Defazio, has been recognized for having the best "anti-Bush" voting record, opposing the president 99.1 percent of the time. Sarah moved to send a letter of commendation to Representative Hooley for her voting record. [Editor's Note: To see the letter we sent, go to mariondemocrats.org.]

Sarah spoke about the ongoing search for office space for the MCDCC, and asked for volunteers to help with the search.

Wayne reminded the group that only elected PCP's can vote for committee leadership. The filing of candidacy for a precinct committee person must be sent in by March 11.

Dave and Kathy Philbrick and Frank Pauley spoke about the intent of the Keizer city council to allow development sizes to increase, presumably to allow for the construction of a Wal-Mart near Keizer Station. Attendees were asked to write letters to the editor and come to meetings on February 13 and 19 at 7:00 p.m. at Keizer City Hall.

Jason Brown passed out information about a fundraising event at Pentacle Theater on Wednesday, June 4. Proceeds support the local Democratic Party and Democratic candidates.

Annual Auction Benefit: Make Your Reservation by February 14!



Wednesday, Feb 20, 2008
6-9 P.M.

Grand Ballroom, 187 High St NE

\$30 per person
Tables for 8: \$240



- ◆ Catered hearty appetizers and delicious desserts
 - ◆ Wine by Willamette Valley Vineyards
 - ◆ Live auction with professional auctioneer
 - ◆ Silent auction
- ◆ Featured speaker Carl Wolfson (from KPOJ)

Contact Claudia at claudiabaum@msn.com or 503-364-9741 for information or to make reservation or to donate an auction item.

MCDCC CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 2008

February 11 ★ Monday ★ 7 P.M. ★ Executive Committee. Home of Wayne Baum, 3435 Fir Tree Dr. SE, Salem. Ph. 503-364-9741.

February 14 ★ Thursday ★ 7 P.M. ★ Salem Progressive Film Series. *Thirst*. Grand Theater, Court & High Sts., Salem. Admission \$3. Ph. 503-588-8713.

February 19 ★ Tuesday ★ 12 noon ★ DemoForum ★ Bill Burgess. Kwan's Cuisine on Commercial at Mission. \$11 includes buffet, tea, gratuity. RSVP 503-363-8392.

February 20 ★ Wednesday ★ 6:00 P.M. ★ Annual Auction Benefit. \$30 per person. Grand Ballroom, Salem. Ph. Claudia, 503-364-9741

February 25 ★ Monday ★ 7:00 P.M. ★ Central Committee. Willamette Democrats. Salem Heights Hall, corner of Liberty & Madrona.

February 27 ★ Wednesday ★ 12 noon ★ DemoForum ★ Greg Macpherson. Kwan's Cuisine on Commercial at Mission. \$11 includes buffet, tea, gratuity. RSVP 503-363-8392.

MARCH 2008

March 12 ★ Wednesday ★ 12 noon ★ DemoForum ★ Rick Metzger. Kwan's Cuisine on Commercial at Mission. \$11 includes buffet, tea, gratuity. RSVP 503-363-8392.

March 13 ★ Thursday ★ 7 P.M. ★ Salem Progressive Film Series. *Independent Intervention*. Grand Theater, Court & High Sts., Salem. Admission \$3. Ph. 503-588-8713.

For more calendar events and information, visit mariondemocrats.org

Note: To get involved with Marion County Dems, contact the committee chairs listed at the right.

Next MCDCC Meeting
February 25, 7:00 P.M.
Salem Heights Hall (corner of Liberty & Madrona)
Program: Student Forum—Young People in the Political Process

**MARION COUNTY DEMOCRATIC
CENTRAL COMMITTEE**

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