

Marion County Democratic Central Committee

Newsletter

August 2008



DEMOCRATIC VALUES

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

Barack Obama "Campaign for Change" Opens Salem Office

by Adrienne Pauly

Obama campaign staffers have leased office space at 210 Liberty St., second floor, and are now setting up for business. The campaign plans a grand opening Saturday, August 9. "We've had tremendous response," says campaign field director Patrick New. "Over 100 people have volunteered so far."

The grand opening will begin at 10 A.M. with coffee and donuts, followed by a canvass starting at 11, and ending with a party in the new office.

Volunteer training is already underway. The campaign organizes

volunteers into small groups of individuals who are already familiar with their neighborhoods and communities. These groups are called "OATS" for Obama Action Teams. By the end of July three OATS groups were active in Polk County, and five in Salem/Keizer. Basic training involves about three hours of learning basic campaign skills and another two hours to learn data management. After training, some individuals will be "specialized volunteers" with expertise in voter registration and canvassing, or as data managers.

"The truly unique feature of this campaign is that we empower the volunteers by training them to use the VAN (voter registration file) system rather than just handing them the lists and telling them where to go. This way, the volunteers compile their own lists and define their own area to cover."

"Teams like the idea that they are working on their own turf," says New. "It places more value on volunteers by

raising their level of involvement and responsibility and makes them really feel part of something." The teams like to create names for themselves—the Obamacrats, the Obaminators, and the Keizerites. "Another benefit of this system is that from the election results they'll be able to see exactly how well they did in their specific area," New says.

Once a sufficient number of volunteers have been trained, they will be commissioned to train newcomers. This will free up staff like New to reach out to outlying communities like Woodburn, Silverton, and Stayton. There are already "seeds" in those communities that need nurturing.

Another bonus of this campaign system is that when the next election rolls around, skilled and experienced cadres of volunteers will be ready to step into action.

Anyone interested in volunteering for the Obama Campaign can contact Patrick New at 1-503-753-4538.

August Pie Social with Schrader

Our monthly meeting on August 18 will include a Pie Social with special guest CD 5 candidate Kurt Schrader. This is your chance to meet Kurt and find out about other Oregon campaigns.



Kurt Schrader

If you would like to show off your pie-making skills, contact Carolyn Estelle at 503-364-5228.

The meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. at our campaign office, 250 Liberty Street SE, in downtown Salem, across from the Phoenix Grand Hotel.

Marion Dems Still Happy

Monthly Happy Hour for Happy Dems is moving to Bentley's Grill, across the street from the MCDCC office. Your next chance to get happy will be Thursday, Aug. 21, 4:00–6:00 P.M. (earlier time!)



Candidates Hanten Day, Richard Riggs, Dan Thackaberry, and Jim Gilbert at the MCDCC Ice Cream Social in July. Photos by Evelyn Smith.

JULY 21 BUSINESS MEETING

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

Short Meeting After Ice Cream

Meeting began with an ice-cream social, and was followed by the business portion.

Claudia Baum, speaking for the fundraising committee, discussed the MCDCC booth at the recently held Art Fair. Topics included revenue raised and potential volunteers.

Claudia stated that a waiting list is being compiled for people who want Barack Obama yard signs. The goal is to fill the orders for the current waiting list and have a few extras left over for sale in the office. A motion to increase the budget of the fundraising committee for the purpose of purchasing more Obama yard signs was passed unanimously.

The office still has need for an apartment-sized refrigerator (in working order). People who can help provide these items should contact Wayne or Claudia Baum, Tina Calos, Carolyn Estelle, or Claudia Kyle.

A discussion was held regarding the use of the MCDCC office by the Barack Obama campaign and the Coordinated Campaign, which includes all nonpresidential Oregon campaigns. A motion to empower the Executive Committee to negotiate with the Obama campaign and coordinated campaign for use of the MCDCC office was passed unanimously.

Bill Dalton recommended that a contingent of Marion County Democrats be present at the grand opening of the Polk County Democrat's new office on August 7 from 4:30–6:30 P.M.

Rich Harisay spoke regarding platform meetings being held by the Obama campaign. Those interested in making suggestions and comments about the platform issues should attend the meeting, to be held at the MCDCC office at noon on Monday, July 28.

Tina Calos was to convene a meeting to review the by-laws, but nobody contacted her.

All meetings to be held at the MCDCC office need to be set up through Carolyn Estelle in order to avoid conflicts.



From Where I Sit

By Wayne Baum, MCDCC Chair

If the road to Hell is paved with good intentions, surely former Oregon Secretary of State Phil Keisling has been working on the road crew these past few years. Keisling, who once championed vote by mail, has since turned his attention to promoting some form of “Open Primary” since 2004. He failed to garner enough signatures for “Petition 86” in 2006, but he returned in 2008 with the so-called “Top Two Initiative” which was qualified for the ballot in November.

Measure 65 would permit any voter in the primary to vote for any candidate regardless of party affiliation except for the presidency (Federal law supercedes state law in that case). To many “independents” and fair minded progressives this would appear to be a great way to increase voter participation and provide more candidate choice to the disaffected. Closer scrutiny suggests otherwise. It is likely that this approach would weaken organized parties. It could also be argued that it restricts a person's right of free association. However, the real kicker is the second part of the initiative Only the two candidates with the most votes advance to the general election. The possible consequences of this measure are truly worrisome:

- Significant increased cost—candidates would need to reach all voters rather than just those in their party—the equivalent of running two general elections. Undoubtedly this would boost the role of big money in the process.
- Minor party candidates, lacking the resources of the major parties, would not likely make it onto the general election ballot. It would also be possible for voters to end up with having to choose between two candidates from the same party in the general election. Both major parties as well as the Libertarian and Pacific Green Party are on record as opposing this measure.
- Multiple candidates from the same party could divide the base making it easier for a radical “spoiler” to advance to the general election.
- To avoid the “dilution factor,” a more organized, tightly controlled party could choose one official party candidate “behind closed doors” and the rank and file party members would have little say in the matter.
- Tactical voting—whereby the opposition supports the other party's weakest candidate, would be much easier than in a closed primary election.

The “Top Two” primary has been in practice in Louisiana since 1976. It has contributed to the domination of one party over the state—in this case, the Democratic Party. In one part of the state, however, where Republicans dominate, white supremacist antisemite David Duke was able to get successfully elected as a state representative in 1989, in part because of this method's deficiencies. Voter participation? Louisiana ranked in the bottom one third of states for voter turnout in the past decade.

Most of us want to see the electoral process be as open, fair, and accessible as possible, but this proposal will not get us there.

Dem Volunteers Needed for State Fair

The State Fair is coming soon and Marion County once again will be helping to staff the Democratic Party of Oregon's booth. Individuals have been signing up to do four-person 4-1/2 hour shifts on Wednesday, August 27, from 9:30 A.M. to 10:30 P.M., but there may still be slots available if you would like to volunteer. There may also be opportunities on other days of the fair as well if counties have not filled their roster completely. The fair runs from August 22 to September 1. Participants get a pass to the fair on their day and parking is free. If interested, contact Carolyn and John Estelle: 503 364-5228.

Betty Komp Holds Town Hall in Salem

Rep. Betty Komp is hosting a town hall meeting on employment and workforce development. The meeting will be held at McKay High School, 2440 Lancaster Dr. NE, Salem, August 21, 6–7 P.M.

Questions to be discussed include: How can the legislature attract more renewable energy companies to Oregon? What kinds of workforce training do we need to help people find good-paying jobs? How should the legislature reduce the amount of red tape that small businesses have to deal with?

If you have questions, contact Betty at 503-986-1422.

Are 5 Commissioners Better Than 3?

Friends of Marion County is sponsoring an evening discussion about county governance in the Anderson Room of the Salem Public Library on Tuesday, September 23, 7 to 9 P.M.

The event will feature a series of speakers addressing how Marion County can better meet the challenges of the Twenty-First Century.

Except for Marion County, all of Oregon's larger counties use a charter form of government. Twenty-five years ago, Marion County voters decided against changing their form of government. Is it time now to look at what's worked well in the past and ask whether it will work well in the future?

Guest speakers are Marion County Commissioner Patti Milne, former State School Superintendent Vern Duncan, and Portland State faculty member and small-business owner, Ron Johnson.

Catch Howard Dean and Merkley Live in Salem!

The Jeff Merkley Campaign has announced that our national party leader Howard Dean will be joining Jeff Merkley on August 19 for a statewide conference call. The call is part of the campaign's 100 Homes for Change house party effort.

If you want to register to host or attend a house party for change go to jeffmerkley.com. Join Governor Dean, Speaker Merkley and everyday Oregonians across the state as we work to put Oregon back on track.

Conservatives Sponsor Most Measures

by Trudy Margules

Who are the chief sponsors of the current set of ballot measures?

Nine of the ten ballot measures qualified so far in 2008, were initiated by the perennial right wing activists: Kevin Mannix, Bill Sizemore, and Russ Walker. Mostly they are backed by Loren Parks of Nevada, who likes to dabble in Oregon government. According to Democracy Reform, Oregon, a nonprofit that tracks campaign contributions, Parks gave more than \$1.1 million for eight separate initiatives proposed for 2008, about 50 percent of the entire amount raised for all 10 measures. Mostly they alter the constitution so that the legislature cannot fix or delete them if they are bad for Oregon.

Sizemore is a chief petitioner for five 2008 ballot measures. His specialties are anti-tax and anti-labor measures, but he is not above moving into other areas such as education. He is also not above a little illegal activity in connection with his measures, as Don McIntosh reported in the *Northwest Labor News*:

On Sept. 27 a Multnomah County Circuit Court jury of 15 announced its verdict: A set of groups created by union foe Bill Sizemore "engaged in a pattern of criminal activity" to place two anti-union initiatives on the ballot in 2000, and [Sizemore] would have to pay \$842,000 in damages to the Oregon's two largest teachers unions. Under state anti-racketeering statutes, that amount would then be tripled by the judge to \$2.52 million.

So far, Sizemore has paid none of it—although the right wing press says that he did.

Kevin Mannix began his political life as a Democrat but changed to Republican. He is well known for running for various state offices and losing. He did, however, win the position of head of the Republican Party in Oregon. He recently ran (and lost) in the Republican primary for representative of the Fifth Congressional District.

Mannix specializes in measures relating to "crime," like increasing prison space and mandatory sentencing. He appears not to have any interest

in rehabilitation for drug users or prisoner education. He is chief sponsor of two measures in 2008.

Libertarian and tax opponent Russ Walker is the Oregon director of a Washington, DC-based conservative advocacy group and is vice chairman of the Oregon Republican Party. This year Walker is sponsor of two initiatives that relate to trial lawyers' contingency fees and sanctions for what he deems to be "frivolous suits."

The tenth measure is for "open primaries," the only measure sponsored by Democrat Phil Keisling and Republican Norma Paulus. Keisling started out as a journalist and served in government as Secretary of State. Currently he is the Vice President for Marketing for Hepieric Inc., as well as serving on various boards of private and government agencies. He is a proponent of open government. (See page 2 for more about Phil Kiesling's ballot measure.)

Search on line for more information on the measure sponsors. Next month the measures themselves will be discussed.

Stay tuned.

Website Policy Approved

A website policy has been approved by the MCDCC executive board:

The webpage for the Marion County Democratic Party is a communication vehicle for the party focusing on events and positive information to entice people into action.

Opinions about issues and candidates need to be placed on the blog page. Blog page entries should be fact-based and well reasoned, focusing on positions and issues with no name calling. All blog page entries must be signed with the full name of the author. Blogs are closely monitored.

Any Democrat in good standing may receive a password that allows posting on the blog. That person may post freely unless they abuse the privilege by posting personal attacks, engaging in name calling, using abusive or profane language. A person abusing the privilege will have their password withdrawn.

MCDCC CALENDAR

AUGUST 2008

August 11 ★ Monday ★ 7 P.M. ★ Executive Committee. MCDCC Office, 250 Liberty St SE, Salem. Ph. Wayne Baum, 503-364-9741.

August 18 ★ Monday ★ 7 P.M. ★ Central Committee. Pie Social with Kurt Schrader. MCDCC Office, 250 Liberty St SE, Salem.

August 19 ★ Tuesday ★ 100 Homes for Change. Conference call and house parties with Howard Dean and Jeff Merkely. jeffmerkely.com.

August 21 ★ Thursday ★ 6–7 P.M. ★ Betty Komp Town Hall. Employment and Workforce Development. McKay High School, 2440 Lancaster Dr. NE, Salem.

August 21 ★ Thursday ★ 4–6 P.M. ★ Happy Dems Happy Hour. Bentley's Grill. Across the street from the Dems office.

August 25–28 ★ Monday–Thursday ★ Democratic National Convention. Denver, Colorado.

August 27 ★ Wednesday ★ 9:30 A.M. to 10:30 P.M. ★ Marian County Dems at the State Fair. To volunteer. call Carolyn at 503-364-9741.

SEPTEMBER 2008

September 8 ★ Monday ★ 7 P.M. ★ Executive Committee. MCDCC Office, 250 Liberty St SE, Salem. Ph. Wayne Baum, 503-364-9741.

September 15 ★ Monday ★ 7 P.M. ★ Central Committee. Program TBA. MCDCC Office, 250 Liberty St SE, Salem.

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.

MARION COUNTY DEMOCRATIC CENTRAL COMMITTEE

MCDCC Officers

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Vice Chair: Sarah White
Secretary: Sean Stewart & Monica Moran
Treasurer: Kasia Quillinan

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Next MCDCC Meeting

August 18, 7:00 P.M.

*MCDCC Office, 250 Liberty St SE, Salem
Program: Pie Social with Kurt Schrader*

Next Newsletter Deadline: August 29
Newsletter labor and printing donated.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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