



Stonewall Trumpet

Volume 2, Issue 1

News From the Washington State Stonewall Democrats

May 2008

Spokane Pride Coincides with Democratic Convention

The Spokane Pride parade and Festival is on Sat, June 14—the same day as the State convention and Salmon Feed in the evening.

The Democratic Party will be in the parade and have a booth at the festival. The parade starts at noon--downtown on Wall St and Spokane Falls Blvd--is only 20-30 min long and ends back at the Park (west end in Gondola meadows). This is within walking distance from the Convention center. (Straight west on Spokane Falls Blvd--3+ blocks) We are hoping that some of our West side LGBTQI brothers and sisters will come and join us during the Convention lunch break. The event runs from noon until 5:30 pm.

If you're in the Spokane area or can travel there, or are attending the state Democratic convention, why not join the Spokane Democrats in the Pride parade? Let's turn out in force and show Spokane that Democrats really do value ALL families.

Out Lesbian Phyllis Huster Runs for State Senate

Phyllis Huster of Snoqualmie, Washington recently launched her campaign for State Senate in the 5th Legislative District which includes Covington, Fall City, Issaquah, Maple Valley, North Bend, Sammamish and Snoqualmie. Phyllis, a passionate advocate of social justice for all, has a proven record of problem solving as a 20 year telecommunications executive and former Microsoft procurement manager. Phyllis' focus for the 5th district are fiscal responsibility, transportation options, affordable healthcare, higher pay for teachers, 100% funded schools and sustaining the environment.

If elected, Phyllis brings much needed diversity to the Senate, as the first out lesbian to serve in the Washington State Legislature. Her win would also give the Senate democrats a 60% majority and the option of rewriting the constitution. Phyllis is using an innovative method of town hall forums to gather the wishes of her district to form the basis of her legislative agenda in January because she sincerely thinks the Citizen voice must be put back into Government. Phyllis has a history of winning campaigns, as campaign manager she helped re-elect State House Representative Karla Drenner from Georgia, the first out lesbian legislator in the Southeast. She also directs volunteers to offer literature bags door to door which invite citizens to the townhall forums and for the transportation focused month of May, she includes a bike map and bus/transit map for citizens to enjoy. With vision, integrity, fiscal responsibility and results, Phyllis Huster has an exciting plan for the 5th district making it the race to watch. For more information call 425.577.1018, email phyllis@phyllisforsenate.com or visit her website at <http://www.phyllisforsenate.com>

Come to a fundraiser for Phyllis!

The Washington State Stonewall Democrats are holding a fundraiser for Phyllis Huster on Sunday, June 1, 2008, from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., at the home of Rod Hearne, 905 12th Ave E, Seattle, WA. Expected dress is casual. Please RSVP to Rod Hearne at rodh@mac.com. Come and bring all your LGBTQI and straight ally friends with you.

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Join Washington State Stonewall Democrats!

Ralph Gorin, gorin@xkl.com
Director, Membership

WSSD is a membership organization. Participation at Pride, participation with the state Democratic Party, phone banking and other activities in support of candidates are all costly.

We look to your membership contributions to fund our continuing efforts to elect Democrats who support legislation and action sought by the LGBT community.

Annual membership in your state organization is \$35, or \$10 for students or people of limited means. Membership for Democratic Precinct Committee Officers is free.

To join, please send a check with the form below payable to Washington State Stonewall Democrats to our treasurer, Ralph Gorin, at PO Box 2631; Redmond, WA 98073-2631. Please include your phone number and email. State Public Disclosure Commission rules also require that we request your occupation, employer, and city of employment. WSSD does not share membership lists with other organizations. WSSD membership dues are not deductible for federal income tax purposes.

The National Stonewall Democrats would like you to join them too.

For more information on the National Stonewall Democrats, visit www.stonewalldemocrats.org
For more information on the Washington State Stonewall Democrats, and to order a cool t-shirt, visit www.stonewalldemswa.org

Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Occupation: _____

Employer: _____

City of Employment: _____

This contribution is not deductible for federal income tax purposes.

Seeking the Stonewall Democrats' Endorsement

Endorsements

In order to be considered for endorsement, the Endorsement Committee needs the following:

- 1) Statement that the candidate is a Democrat (in Judicial races only, this can be waived)
- 2) Candidate's Bio/CV
- 3) Statement of candidate's legislative/policy/leadership goals
- 4) Statement of candidate's support for LGBT issues and plans to achieve them
- 5) Short overview of campaign strategy to win, including positioning against primary opponents (if any), and general election opponents.

It is preferable that this information comes directly from the campaign, though anyone can make this information available to the Committee provided it is well-sourced. *Individuals will be accountable for the information they provide, so please be sure of the source(s) of any information you provide to the committee about a candidate.*

For initiatives, referenda, and propositions, pretty much the same process applies except that rather than approaching the information as a candidate, we need to know the context of who is proposing the initiative, who will be affected, and what it will have on the LGBT community.

Once in the hands of the Endorsement Committee, in accordance with our by-laws, and after some examination and discussion of the endorsement we'll take a vote. In non-contested primaries, a majority of votes of the Endorsement Committee will forward the endorsement to the General Board, two-thirds is required in contested primaries. The General Board with a majority vote will approve the endorsement.

A justification of this process

In the context of politics, an endorsement is a statement of support for a candidate, policy or political initiative by a person or a group. In the context of politics today, endorsements by a constituency group show support for a candidate by lending the credibility of the organization to the candidate. Individuals typically don't have endorsement processes, they simply decide to announce their support for candidate, and that is that. Organizations, on the other hand are accountable to their members, and/or have agendas that they want to hold their candidates publicly accountable to once in office. For instance, the AFL-CIO uses endorsement questionnaires to embarrass candidates who stray once in office, by showing that prior to election they stated their support for Davis-Bacon, or what-have-you. SEAMEC, a non-partisan LGBT organization, has an elaborate endorsement process that includes a questionnaire, an interview by a board and what amounts to a test of understanding on the subject of LGBT issues and orthodoxy. Stonewall Democrats, as

a caucus of the party, has a mandate to advance the LGBT cause by getting sympathetic Democrats elected to office. We're more concerned with getting candidates elected and holding them accountable at the next election.

It can be informative to have an understanding of a candidate's perspective when we establish an endorsement process. Candidates tend to win elections by doing the following: raising money, doorbelling, garnering the support of key constituency groups, and PR, with the overall goal being maximizing voter contact. Different types of races often call for different approaches and at various points in the race candidates may stress fundraising over doorbelling, then later doorbelling over fundraising. In some races, like statewide races, candidates don't doorbell at all, but fundraise almost all the time.

Endorsements fall in the category of garnering support from constituency groups. From a candidate's perspective this can be an incredibly daunting task and they have, by necessity, to go through a kind of triage when seeking an organization's endorsement, and their decisions about what endorsements to seek are governed by three main questions:

- how many voters will this endorsement effect?
- how much money will this endorsement bring to the campaign?
- how much of the limited candidate and campaign resources will it take to win this endorsement?

Keeping in mind that there are thousands of groups, labor organizations and individuals that make endorsements, but only some of them are worth spending a lot of time on. Some organizations can afford to have elaborate endorsement processes, others cannot. However, from a candidate's perspective, the best kind of endorsement is one that brings the support of a lot of voters, but takes the least time away from the campaign. Candidates appreciate organizations that have endorsement processes in line with the votes and money they bring to the election.

FAQ

Why don't we ask the candidates questions about LGBT policies?

Candidates can provide their views on LGBT issues in their statement. It will be illuminating what candidates present to us on LGBT issues, and possibly, what they don't. Also, Candidates will need to work through their policy position on LGBT issues to get elected as Democrats anyway, so what they provide to us will be useful to their campaign as they approach others for endorsement.

This process seems less open than SEAMEC's process?

It is less open. We are an unabashedly partisan, Democratic, caucus within the Democratic party. SEAMEC has notoriously, and occasionally endorsed Republicans. We are accountable only to our membership. While we need a process that gives us enough information to make a decision, we want to make it as easy as possible for our candidates.

Besides, why reinvent the wheel? SEAMEC has it's process and we'll have ours.

What's wrong with endorsing Republicans?

The Republican Party has made discrimination against lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgendered people part of their party platform. They use bigotry to inflame the electorate and draw votes elections. Candidates who are Republicans vote for their leaders who have made bigotry part of the party machinery. Candidates who affiliate with Republicans need to be accountable for that affiliation and this is one way to hold them accountable. Also, incidentally, we are Stonewall Democrats!

What about having an Endorsement party/fundraiser where the participants vote for endorsements?

We can still do that. For the purposes of the endorsement process, the participants of the meeting become the Endorsement Committee.

Barack Obama on LGBT issues

From Q-Notes, North Carolina

For the rest of this interview, go to <http://www.q-notes.com/2008/04/30/obama-change-comes-from-the-bottom-up/>. Thank you to Q-Notes for letting us reprint part of it.

Many LGBT activists will say that neither the Democrats nor the Republicans have our community's best interest at heart. What do you say to such statements?

SENATOR OBAMA: I have had a clear and long-standing commitment to LGBT equality. I worked for many years as a member of the Illinois Senate to enact a fully inclusive anti-discrimination law, the Illinois Human Rights Act, which protects against discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity in the workplace, housing and places of public accommodation. We succeeded in enacting that law just as I was leaving for the U.S. Senate. I support the complete repeal of the federal Defense of Marriage Act and the complete equalization of rights and benefits for same-sex couples at the federal level. I will work to eradicate the Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy and enact the Matthew Shepard hate crime law and a fully inclusive Employment Non-Discrimination Act.

The second thing I will say relates to the priorities of people who advocate for the LGBT community. I have always said that I don't think that the LGBT community should take its cues from me or some political leader in terms of what they think is right for them. Real change comes from the bottom up, not the top down. As your President, I will fight to make LGBT equality a reality at the federal level. But it is the LGBT community that has to decide what is in their best interest, and to help make it happen by engaging actively with the political process.

Are there any out LGBT citizens in the running for possible presidential appointments should you win the nomination and general election?

SENATOR OBAMA: It is premature to talk about presidential appointments while we are still determining who will be the nominee, but I can certainly say that out LGBT citizens will be included in the appointments to my administration.

“Hot Mess” Brewing at Kitsap County Caucus

by Andrew Miller - Special to the SGN

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On April 28, 2007, the State Democratic Central Committee approved a Delegate selection plan for Affirmative Action, which was later adopted by the DNC rules and Bylaws Committee on June 30th, 2007. As with most Affirmative Action plans, the intentions are to include more individuals that are historically underrepresented by virtue of race/ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, or disability. For those of you who did not attend a caucus, or who did and forgot, your vote was cast on a sign-in sheet where you provided information about yourself, including you candidate preference choice. How many noticed the LGBT check box? At my caucus I know I did, and I checked it off proudly. There were also other boxes available to check, including ethnicity, and a place to include age and other related information. While this was completely voluntary, the information would help track and ensure that these historically underrepresented people would be included in the delegation to the National Convention in the summer, so it would really represent America. We are not trying to fulfill quotas. In fact Rule 6.A. of the code prohibits it, but we are trying to make every effort to see if in fact we are trying to include underrepresented individuals. However, we have, as Christian Siriano of famed Project Runway would say, a "hot mess" brewing in Kitsap County.

Kitsap Democrats substituted a different sign-in form instead of using the one supplied by the state party so as to eliminate the option of folks self-identifying ethnicity, LGBT and/or disability on an optional basis. They made a unilateral change without the consent of the state, which they are within their right. In the rules and by laws, that is not actually a requirement that participants be provided the opportunity to declare status. Basically they "win" when it comes to down to black and white (no pun intended) rules, but this shouldn't be a question of rules. It should be a question on integrity and proper democratic intentions.

Although the cut and dried rules may have not been broken, there are many clauses and phrases in the code that were. As part of Rule 7, "every effort will be made to clue senior citizens, youth, and diversity of cultural, religious, and social backgrounds in the delegation." To not include ways to track underrepresented individuals is to not put in every effort. It may be a seemingly small part of that effort, but to not include it is not "every effort." In addition, this sign-in sheet is a form of recruitment. We want to get more people involved in making a change, especially in specific cause or caucus, which might include an ethnic or LGBT caucus group. We also use this information to find these individuals that are interested in running to be a delegate and give them the necessary tools and training. It can be difficult to run out and proud about whom you are, but it can be a tool used in your favor if trained well. We want to be present to help those individuals break down any barriers that prevent them

from running as a delegate. In Rule 5.C. and Reg. 4.7, "Washington State has developed outreach programs. Such programs include recruitment, education and training, in order to achieve full participation by such party groups and diversity in the delegate selection process at all levels of party affairs." How can we train and recruit effectively if we do not have a way to track or contact the individuals who may need it most? Basically we want to include, rather than exclude. The sign-in sheet is one way we can know and work on effective inclusion.

What the Kitsap County Democratic Leadership did purely unacceptable. No excuse could justify the actions. They could argue down to basic rules. They could argue that ultimately we don't need to track or use an Affirmative Action because we Democrats are "color blind." Now, while this a well intentioned idea and concept, it is antediluvian. Why should we blind our eyes from people's differences? Instead, we need to be "color conscious," and lift up people's identities. The Affirmative Action plan, if implemented, will do this and create a Democratic delegation that reflects America in Washington State.

Current Endorsements

The Washington State Stonewall Democrats have endorsed the following candidates and issues:

For Congressional District National Delegate:

Adrienne Amar
River Curtis-Stanley
Anita Latch
Azziem Underwood

For elective offices:

Daryl Daugs
Tim Farrell
Phyllis Huster
Vincent Stewart
Dave Uptegrove

Ballot initiative endorsed:

Initiative 1000 (Death with Dignity)

This is YOUR newsletter

To submit an article, opinion piece, cartoon, photo, etc. to the newsletter, email River@stonewalldemswa.org