

KITSAP DEMOCRAT



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INITIATIVES 2006: ABSTINENCE HAS ITS PLACE

Jim Sharpe

In an effort to use the voter's ignorance against them, signatures are being gathered to put four really bad ideas on the ballot in November. You may see some of your fellow citizens sign these petitions. Just because your friends do it is no sign you should. You can just say "NO" to each of these:

Referendum 65 - In Washington State, you can't be refused credit, housing, insurance, public accommodations or fired because of your race, color, creed, national origin, sex, or disability. It's taken 30 years, but the 2006 Legislature added "sexual orientation" to that list. This referendum would require a public vote on that law in an effort to overturn it. The measure is sponsored by Tim Eyman, who is either A) nostalgic for a return to the traditional values of his youth, where people who are gay were discriminated against legally, or

B) using prejudice to get conservative republicans to the polls this fall.

Initiative 917 - Another Tim Eyman offering, this measure removes the ability of local and regional government to use vehicle registration to raise funds for transportation; repeals taxes and fees currently based on vehicle registration; and changes the way vehicle taxes are calculated. The bottom line is that Washington loses 2.7 billion in funding currently pledged to transportation and the ability of local government to fund transportation improvements is permanently crippled.

Initiative 920 - This initiative would repeal Washington's estate tax, which imposes a graduated tax on the transfer of those estates having a taxable value of more than 2 million dollars. This is about the only "progressive" tax we have left in Washington - progressive in that the "poorer rich" pay less while the "richer rich" pay more. That alone makes it a target for the GOP. Their other argument is, of course, that axiom of Republican political thought: "We have a budget surplus, we should give the money to the rich!"

Initiative 933 - Modeled after the Oregon law that passed two years ago, this measure requires government to allow land owners to violate land use regulations or pay them to follow the rules. The Initiative will pretty much get rid of those pesky requirements from the Growth Management Act - like planning to pay for the new sewer, the new roads or the new schools required by new growth. It puts an end to the ability of local communities to control their growth and puts that control firmly in the hands of developers. The public's role in land use issues will be reduced to its place in the Republican vision - it either pays the costs of uncontrolled development or pays individual landowners not to develop.

If you see someone gathering signatures for these ballot measures, be friendly. Ask them how much they get paid per signature and if they would sell the signatures to you instead of Tim Eyman. You might consider donating some time to help the overworked signature gatherer explain the ballot measure to the other citizens passing by. Just remember, a signature is a terrible thing to waste!

Marie Greer and Lillian Walker were awarded the Kitsap Democratic Party Lifetime Achievement Award. The plaques read: "For a lifetime of service in support of America's most cherished principles of equality and liberty. For nearly 50 years of consistent, selfless service to the Democratic Party and to the community. For leadership with unswerving optimism and faith that working together we can advance the causes of justice, fairness and equality. In recognition of your dedication to the above qualities, the Kitsap County Democrats bestow upon you their award for lifetime achievement. 2006" Both have been active in their community, their church and the Democratic Party since coming to Bremerton in the 1940s.



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Meetings and Events

April 3 (Mon) - KCDCC Executive Board Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Machinests Hall, Bremerton.

April 4 (Tues) – 26th Legislative District Meeting, 6 p.m. dinner; 7 p.m. meeting; South Kitsap High School, Stage 2k Auditorium, Port Orchard.

April 8, (Sat.) – Kitsap County Democratic Convention, Olympic High School, 7070 Stampede Blvd. NW, Bremerton, for delegates selected at precinct caucuses. Registration at 8 a.m., Convention starts at 9 a.m. Platform and resolutions will be discussed and delegates selected for the State Party Convention. Come early and bring your own lunch and beverages. There will be no formal lunch break..
23rd, 26th and 35th Legislative District caucuses to choose State Party Convention delegates meet the same day in the same place as the County Convention.

April 17 (Mon) – Kitsap Democrats General Meeting; 6 p.m. buffet; 7 p.m. meeting. Events Center, Kitsap Fairgrounds; invited speakers: Christine Rolfes, candidate for State Representative, 23rd LD, and Larry Seaquist, candidate for State Representative, 26th LD.

April 26 (Wed) – Kitsap Democratic Women, All Stars Bowling Lanes; 11:30 lunch, 12:30 meeting

April 27 (Thurs)– Young Democrats, 7 p.m., LanWerx Café, 10600 Silverdale Way (across from Kitsap Mall); kitsap@ydwa.org

May 1 (Mon) - KCDCC Executive Board Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Machinests Hall, Bremerton.

May 2 (Tues) - 26th Legislative District Meeting, 6 p.m. dinner; 7 p.m. meeting; South Kitsap High School, Stage 2k Auditorium, Port Orchard.

May 7 (Sun) – 23rd Legislative District Meeting, 4:00 to 6:00 p.m., legislative wrapup by Sen. Phil Rockefeller and Rep. Sherry Appleton; Poulsbo Fire Hall.

May 15 (Mon) – Kitsap Democrats General Meeting; 6 p.m. buffet; 7 p.m. meeting. Events Center, Kitsap Fairgrounds

May 24 (Wed) – Kitsap Democratic Women, All Stars Bowling Lanes; 11:30 lunch, 12:30 meeting

May 25 (Thurs)– Young Democrats, 7 p.m., LanWerx Café, 10600 Silverdale Way (across from Kitsap Mall); kitsap@ydwa.org

June 2-3 –State Democratic Party Convention, Yakima Convention Center.

June 5 (Mon) - KCDCC Executive Board Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Machinests Hall, Bremerton.

June 6 (Tues) - 26th Legislative District Meeting, 6 p.m. dinner; 7 p.m. meeting; South Kitsap High School, Stage 2k Auditorium, Port Orchard.

June 19 (Mon) – Kitsap Democrats General Meeting; 6 p.m. buffet; 7 p.m. meeting. Events Center, Kitsap Fairgrounds

June 28 (Wed) – Kitsap Democratic Women, All Stars Bowling Lanes; 11:30 lunch, 12:30 meeting

June 29 (Thurs)– Young Democrats, 7 p.m., LanWerx Café, 10600 Silverdale Way (across from Kitsap Mall); kitsap@ydwa.org

July 28 – PCO filing deadline.

Aug. 20 (Sun) – Annual KCDCC Picnic, Jarstad Park in Gorst.

Sept. 19 – State Primary

Nov. 7 – State General Election

Admonition From the Past

Bob Dietz

The bi-annual ritual of partisan political conventions is already under way. Beginning at the county level, it consumes an inordinate amount of energy from early spring to the fall elections. We Democrats seem to be especially ecstatic over the chance to produce a document that represents our political values, the party platform. A number of us argue that it serves little real purpose. That's not quite true, of course. It gives the Republicans something to rant about. Sometimes it even serves as a true platform on which a few courageous Democratic candidates can take a stand (a plank here, a plank there).

In this "off-year" election year I fear some of our candidates could fail to be elected or re-elected. Not by Republicans, but by progressives within and outside the Democratic family. They could just stay away from the polls. It has happened before. It could happen again. Consider the rise and fall of a man who had an enormous influence on Democratic politics and platforms as early as the late 1940s: Hubert H. Humphrey.

I first came to know about him when I was on the faculty of North Dakota State in the 1950s. He was easy to get to know because he seemed to be in a constant state of campaigning—Mayor of Minneapolis, U.S. Senate, Vice President, and, finally, the Presidency.

Two positive events stand out in my "Humphrey memory book." First, there was his fiery speech in favor of civil

rights at the 1948 National Democratic Convention. It totally alienated the racist "Dixiecrats" and produced a revolutionary party platform. I realized then that he stood for something solid and that he wasn't afraid to declare his political principles, win or lose. The second event was much less profound, but I remember it fondly. He was speaking to a group of farmers somewhere in Minnesota while campaigning for some office or other in the 1950s. Humphrey decided to make himself more visible to the crowd by jumping up on a manure spreader parked in the farmyard as he declared, "I never thought I'd be campaigning on a Republican platform!"

I had enormous respect for Hubert Humphrey. Until 1968, that is, when he was a central figure in the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. TV crews showed us the violent counter-convention demonstrations outside the convention center. And they exposed the foul-mouthed Mayor Dailey and other Democratic Party "leaders" shouting obscenities at any Democrat who dared to come to the podium to speak in favor of the candidate-of-principles, Eugene McCarthy.

It was also the convention that showed us a Hubert Humphrey more interested in his political party's nomination for the Presidency than in fighting for what he truly believed. He refused to jump off the Vietnam War "bandwagon." As a result, the Dailey machine gave him the nomination, but he lost the election. The country got the 1970s version of George W. Bush, Richard M. Nixon, for President. Naturally, Democratic regulars blamed

progressives for Humphrey's defeat because they refused to vote for the pathetic ghost of a once-great liberal.

What is relevant about these events today is that the Republicans continue to fertilize the seeds of the disasters of current American domestic and foreign policies they planted, just as they did when Humphrey stood on their platform decades ago. What is also relevant is that many of our current national Democratic Party leaders jumped on the Iraq War "bandwagon" and now don't have the courage to get off (think Reid, Pelosi, Lieberman, Clinton, Cantwell, etc.).

As the next major election appears on the horizon, we see candidates from so-called third parties beginning to appear (we resent them as "spoilers"). Joined with progressive Democrats and independents who are disillusioned by Democratic standard bearers, the Republicans might just defeat Democrats—especially those who tell us that we should "move to the center" (wherever in hell that is!).

We have a county platform of which we can be proud. And we have three national congressional representatives of whom we can be mighty proud (especially Congressman Inslee, who knows what it means to stand for something solid at the cost of defeat). That leaves us with the confounding case of Maria Cantwell who is progressive on so many issues, but still rides in the Iraq War wagon with Bush-Cheney-Rumsfeld. Perhaps we should send her a copy of the Kitsap County Democratic Platform. With a suggestion that she also read a brief biography of Hubert Humphrey.



Thanks to Marilyn Boynten (left) and her planning committee, the annual Jefferson-Jackson Dinner was a sell-out success. According to Marilyn, we cleared about \$11,000. The money will be used by the Kitsap County Democrats to help elect Democrats.

Our keynote speaker was U.S. Representative Jay Inslee, pictured right with State Committeewoman Joyce Merkel. He spoke about our energy future and his innovative Apollo Program.

David Peterson conducted the auction with his usual flair and humor.



Platform Politics

Jim Sharpe

Once every two years, political parties come together for conventions. And once every two years, we engage in the manufacture of a platform. This is usually a matter of great debate, and in the spirit of that debate we should ask ourselves: What is the purpose of a platform?

In the world of politics, documents can be separated into two types. One is a policy document designed to introduce a policy change, convince people of a policy change, or enact a policy change. Examples of a policy document: A letter to a government official demanding / supporting / proposing a policy; a petition; a bill or amendment; a white paper on an issue. The second type is an electoral document, designed to help convince people to vote for your candidate (s) or position on a ballot issue. Examples of an electoral document: A flyer / brochure / mailer / doorbell piece (slimjim), a letter to the editor, a bumper sticker, and (sorry, but it's true) a party platform.

At their best, platforms are short documents that give broad policy outlines and a vision of the party's future direction. Items included should be crafted in such a way that they achieve broad public support. At their worst, platforms are long, 20 or 30 page documents that outline a wishlist of policies in minute detail with little thought or effort towards convincing

voters of those positions.

Enacting a platform is a far different (and far easier) matter than enacting a policy. When crafting a platform bear the following in mind:

- 1) The purpose of the platform is not to change policy, but to help elect candidates so that policy can be changed.
- 2) The platform should frame the Democrat's vision of the future in such a way as to attract a majority of voters.
- 3) Language is important; you are trying to appeal to people - a majority of people - for their support.
- 4) Finally, remember that the person most likely to read your platform is your opponent, who will be searching for an unpopular platform plank.

They following are three examples of platform language that cover some of the more contested ideas in American political life. I gathered these from public polling data, and they all polled close to or over 70% in 1997. They may not totally satisfy Democratic ideology; but they come close and they do put ideas important to Democratic ideology in language acceptable to most voters. They sound reasonable; they sound American.

Gun Control

We believe in the basic right to bear arms, but are willing to accept the responsibility for public safety that comes with that right. Registration/ regulation of some types of weapons and a waiting period before purchase is acceptable in the interest of community safety.

Abortion

The question of abortion is not one

that government can decide. It is a decision that a woman should make with her family and her conscience and with necessary guidance provided upon request from her physician and her clergy.

School Prayer

Children have the right to offer personal prayers as they wish, and we have no problem with a "quiet moment" for children to use for prayer or contemplation or as they desire. However, a governmental policy that dictates to anyone in our society "You will pray now" is unconstitutional and against basic American values.

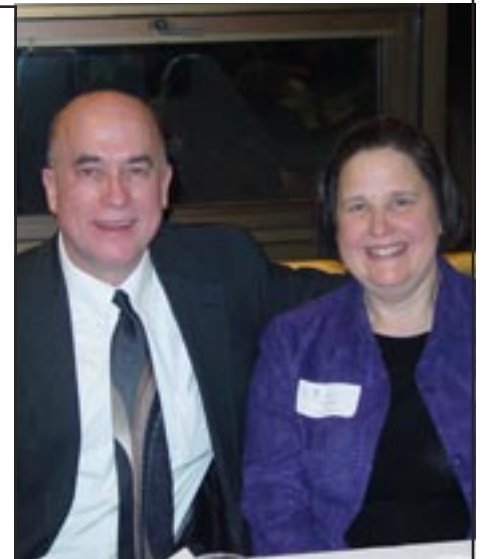
One final note: Haste makes waste, and debates over platform amendments frequently get carried away. In 1996, a huge debate in Kitsap County over gun control resulted in the following amendment to the platform being passed by the County Convention: "Registration of all weapons should be required". Registration of all weapons? Guns, knives, clubs, the kitchen skillet?

As we move into the 2006 Convention cycle, bear in mind the purpose of your party platform. Think broadly, as a representative of all Democrats first, as a representative of all voters second, and finally as a campaigner who is trying to attract support for candidates. It might feel good to enact a carbon tax or outlaw the use any weapon in your platform, but that doesn't make it so. Real policy change is a much more difficult, long term process and depends upon your ability to elect candidates and to convince people your position is correct.



As emcee for the J-J Dinner, State Representative Derek Kilmer (shown left with his wife Jennifer) entertained the crowd with stand-up comedy before introducing the keynote speaker. The popular first-term Representative recently announced his candidacy for the State Senate. The Kilmers may be new parents by the time you read this newsletter.

Shown right are special J-J guests Dwight Pelz, our new State Democratic Party Chair, and his wife Beth Brunton.



Why Strong Unions Are Essential

John Piety

Since humans are risk adverse, how then do we as individuals take the necessary risks to advance as a society? We need to live, but in doing so we do our utmost to reduce risk. Some do this by going along to get along and some by controlling others and their environment. I suspect most are somewhere in the middle, control what they can and give in when they must.

Even if everyone could overcome their aversion to risk, not everyone has the social connections or mental/physical capabilities to achieve the necessary condition, safe and secure. The concept of the commons comes to mind.

The option is to work with someone else, or many others, to achieve the power we need to have more control over our lives. One irony is that the rich demonstrate a much greater display of solidarity, and often work better together than the poor.

Individuals who own their business, and feel they are quite independent, are controlled in some percentage and manner by their customers, suppliers, their funding sources and hopefully when necessary their unions.

The myth of a "right to work" makes it easy to play workers off against each

other. As an individual, a worker can be paid less because there is always another person willing to take their job in order to survive.

Please remember that the social structure we live in can be quite violent and we live by whatever strength we can muster. Only by the strength of our numbers can we beat those who have the power to control our lives. Successful unions have been those whose leaders were willing to stand up and fight back. No one in the super-rich class, or who runs a business, is going to go quietly into the night. It is about power and who has control.

The majority of those who trade their labor for a form of economic security have neither the ability nor the political clout to determine their own working conditions, except in rare circumstances if one has a unique skill.

When guilds, the precursor of unions, first formed they were protective societies. One community could only support so many tailors, butchers or carpenters if any one trade was to make an adequate living. Of course, a progressive and capitalist argument against protective societies is that the best in any trade would succeed and the less capable would find another trade where they can be successful.

Guilds were exclusive. If you were not part of the family or specially selected as an apprentice, it would be almost impossible to enter that trade. This type of exclusion has always existed in one form or another. The *Tacoma News Tribune* printed a recent article about the longshoremen's practice of nepotism.

Governor Howard Dean, Chairman of the National Democratic Party, delivered a rousing speech to some 1300 Washington State Party Democrats at the annual Crab Feed in Lacey. Earlier in the day, Governor Dean spoke to nearly 350 attendees at a day-long training session for new precinct committee officers (PCOs) in Lacey.

To effectively integrate the carpenter's union in Seattle, we had to put our futures on the line. A conviction, for criminal trespass follows one around for life, no matter how just the cause. The founders of this country would probably have been executed if they had not won.

This is the heart of this discussion on unions. No societal change will occur if no one is willing to put their future economic life on the line to advance the progressive agenda! There is no easy way to advance any cause. The question is what does the progressive movement need to do to meet this need?

Why has an imperfect, but fairly successful union movement gone into such steep decline? I believe it is quite simple. Today's union leaders will not put their lives on the line, period. Since the days of Jimmy Hoffa, Dave Beck, Harry Bridges or Eugene Debs, what union leaders have spent any time in jail or been seen with a bloody nose? In fact, I have experience with a union official who actually talked more than once about hurting the workers he represented in order to get along with management.

I believe that when Reagan busted the Air Traffic Controllers Union the entire country needed to come to a stand-still if the union movement was to survive. Well the country continued operating and union strength continues to go into the toilet.

How many Americans are aware that labor unions won the eight-hour work day in 1886, I think on May Day. Before that, work hours were whatever the boss demanded. With the new overtime laws, we are moving back to pre-1886.



Politics is so darned, well, Political

Fran Moyer

Senator Maria Cantwell now has three opponents for the Senate seat she currently occupies and her re-election must be a priority for every Democrat.

Mike McGavick says he is running to change the terrible atmosphere in the Senate. Will he emulate Sen. Ted Stevens or how about Newt Gingrich, who initiated this modern version of gutter politics. McGavick has taken no public policy stand except he is for drilling in ANWAR and being a nice guy while doing so.

Senator Cantwell's votes against both Alito and Roberts, her filibuster that caused the removal of ANWAR from a defense bill, her fight against the polluters, her votes for increased wilderness in our state, and her work for a 21st century energy policy have shown an intelligence and leadership few junior Congresspersons display. But for some, the only vote of hers that counts is the Iraq vote.

Some say they will either not vote for her or they might vote for the Republican. OK, I understand anger,

but what does that vote, or lack of same, actually accomplish? Will it make you feel better, by an "I'll show her" attitude? That feeling will be very short lived, I can assure you. Because when you wake in the morning and everything is still controlled by Republicans, it is then you can start to hyperventilate.

Isn't it time to devote our energies to defeating the most incompetent cast of characters in this Republican Party? Both Houses of Congress are controlled by Republicans. I shouldn't have to say that, but I am because the next question is, "what is it you do not understand about being the party without any power?" Democrats have no power to investigate, subpoena, pass bills out of committee, or have any say at all about the agenda for this country. Even the calendar is controlled by the majority party. The House now meets about 2 1/2 days a week. Of course, when the Republicans do not allow Democrats to even look at the bills before they are passed, I guess they don't need more time.

But to some, this is all the Democrats fault. I have been told by these same folks there is no difference between the two major parties. It wouldn't have mattered if Gore or Kerry had been declared President instead of Bush. Nonsense. Total nonsense.

Osama bin Laden would be on trial now, not Saddam Hussein. Diplomacy is

more than a word to use when convenient; it is the civilized way to prevent war and Democrats understand that. Our National Parks would not be heading towards privatization ("welcome to McDonald's Olympic National Park) but would have funding to ensure the future of our national treasures. Gore wrote "Earth in the Balance"; this administration rewrites science and admonishes those who speak about global warming. Democrats would have embraced Congressman Jay Inslee's Apollo energy project because Democrats understand there must be long term solutions to right our skewed consumption of energy. The "culture of fetus" folks are in control. Maternal life is disregarded as being irrelevant by them except and only, when the uterus feeds, houses and nourishes the fetus. Democrats have always known the hypocrisy of Republicans on this issue because they would remove prenatal care to the indigent mother and health care from the newborn as soon as the cord is cut. Tough to pull up those bootstraps as a newborn.

Having said all that, Senator Cantwell, your base wants to re-elect you, but I can tell you, it is tough in the trenches right now. When Republicans are saying what an incompetent disaster Iraq is and the public erosion of support is staggering, you must address Iraq. You must lead on this issue as you have so courageously on others.

How Would Whats-His-Name Have Done?

Jim Sharpe

Two years ago, Democrats worked hard on elections across Kitsap County and Washington State. After the election, we worked hard some more to get the best account of votes possible in the tightest gubernatorial race ever held in the United States. As a result, Christine Gregoire became Governor and we won a working majority in both Legislative branches. We should all ask ourselves "Was the

effort worth it?" For an answer, we need look no further than the 2006 Legislative Session.

Governor Gregoire defined her role as a chief negotiator, personally mediating some issues, prodding legislators and using her office's access to the public to good effect. Legislators were focused and refused to be distracted by dirty campaign tactics from the Republicans. The outcome: After 30 years of effort, Washington civil rights law now includes sexual orientation. Lawyers, doctors and patients were forced to negotiate in good faith for a medical liability agreement. The unemployment insurance system was reformed with support from both labor and business. Education was expanded to include a Department of Early Education. And finally, an agreement was reached in a stalemate over Columbia River water that has gone on for generations.

Accomplishments also included help for heating costs for low income families, more caseworkers for children, beefing up Washington's emergency response capacity, increased penalties for sex offenders, steps toward energy independence and a biofuel industry, a number of measures to clean up and protect Puget Sound and Hood Canal, help for students struggling with WASL, and expanded college opportunities. There was a tax break or two for business, and repeal of the fees for day use of State Parks. And did I mention that \$935 million was put aside for the future?

We should congratulate ourselves for the outcome of our work in the 2004 election cycle, from the first phone call to counting the last ballot that beat what's-his-name in the Governor's race.

Is everybody ready to do it again in 2006?

Democrats just want to have fun!

(Title thanks to Madonna)
Jim Herron

You should have been there! More than 100 other Democrats were. They had a nice Irish-theme dinner (corned beef and cabbage furnished by Lillian and Murray Crawford), and heard Legislators from three districts recount accomplishments of the recently-closed session. (Now that's what I call an omnibus lead—the only thing I didn't mention was the weather!) (It was dry but cool.)

There we were at the Eagles' Nest at the Kitsap County Fairgrounds where the Kitsap County Democrats meet the third Monday of each month. The meeting is open to all Democrats, and it's a real deal. For \$5, you get a good dinner and don't have to tip the waiter.

State Senator Phil Rockefeller talked about his collaboration with the House of Representatives to establish a Department of Early Childhood Education, and provide more help to students struggling with WASL. He tried to talk about environmental gains but ran into County Chair Sharon Peterson's three-minute limit.

State Senator Tim Sheldon said he voted against the final budget, one of the few Democrats to do so, but did manage to get the \$5 entry fee at State

Parks rescinded. He's personally against building a NASCAR track in Kitsap County.

State Representative Bill Eickmeyer talked about studies of sea life in Hood Canal, which is in danger of becoming a "dead zone" for fish, shellfish and other aquatic life.

Rep. Derek Kilmer said he got his Workforce Training bill passed and worked to raise the exemption from state taxes for small business from the \$3,000 it's been for many years.

This will require a change in the State Constitution. He also got support for small businessmen who were called up for Reserve service.

Rep. Pat Lantz is another legislator against a NASCAR track. She worked with Governor Christine Gregoire to get the medical establishment and trial lawyers together on a plan to reduce personal injury suits and doctors' insurance.

Rep. Sherry Appleton worked for an increase in health care funding for low income; managed to get financial support for foot ferries and got funds for visiting nurse visits for newborn infants.

Kilmer asked that his intention to run for retiring Sen. Bob Oke's seat not be announced, but the news turned up in the Kitsap Sun Wednesday morning.

The Legislature passed:

-- Limits on donations to judicial candidate from local district judges to the state Supreme Court.

--Increased support for state production

of bio-diesel fuel.

--Passed the toughest sex offender law in the U.S.

--Changed geoduck harvesting limits.

--Pushed for license requirements for effluent discharge sources in the Hood Canal.

--Toughened the penalty for Driving Under the Influence for multiple offenders.

In answer to a question from the floor, all agreed that federal curtailment of college students was a bad idea—counterproductive to the need for more, rather than fewer college students.

Sharon Peterson announced that the Kitsap County Democratic Convention will be held at Olympic High School beginning at 9 a.m. on April 8. Delegates and alternates are named by legislative districts, and the convention is open to everyone. There will be no break for lunch. A \$10 fee is charged.

The State Democratic Convention will be June 3 in Yakima.

Former Bainbridge Island City Councilwoman Christine Rolfes is seeking the 23rd District State House of Representatives seat now held by Republican Bev Woods. Rolfes has a long history of public service.

(Editor's note: If, after reading this, you wonder what amused those attending so much, all I can say is—you should have been there! A similar period in American history was called the Era of Good Feeling—this meeting was more like an Evening of Smiles—not a sour face there. For Democrats, it was really quiet.)

dozens of coworkers. It's very good for profits – and very good or those on the receiving end of corporate campaign contributions. It's a cheap alternative to moving operations overseas, so Republicans are in no hurry to end such hiring practices.

Labor unions have always been in the front lines, protecting and preserving the American dream and the democratic process. It's sad that so many union members have been duped into siding with the political party that is out to destroy their unions.

If corporations and their Republican operatives are successful, people may wake up too late to the final passing of our democratic process.

Thank A Liberal!

Gene Bullock

The next time you leave work after only eight hours, take a weekend or holiday off, go on a company-paid vacation, use your family health-care benefits, cash a Social Security check or send your children off to a publically funded school, you might want to thank a liberal.

Corporations are not benevolent. They happily offshore jobs to third-world sweatshops and countries with no benefits, job safety or environmental protections. Corporations are run for profit, not people. But liberals have forced them to treat people justly and fairly. Liberals have always fought for humane treatment, equal rights and fair pay.

No longer the party of Lincoln, Republicans now fight human progress every step of the way. And no wonder. Their corporate benefactors have been very good to them. Through them, unfortunately, corporations are taking ownership of our election machinery and our government.

Illegal immigration is another of their ugly secrets. Republicans can rail publicly about illegal immigration, but they are notoriously lax about clamping down on the companies that lure these immigrants north. Who else can they get to work for less than minimum wage, without benefits of any kind? These are people who don't dare complain about being cheated out of overtime pay, housed in boxcars or sharing porta-potties with

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