

34th District E-Board

Convened at 7:05 PM

Les Treall, Walter Sive, Allan Munro, Jackie Dupras, Les Harris, Richard Bartlett, Greg Doss, Bill Schrier, Marcee Stone, Mitch Feller, Ivan Weiss, Robin Harris, Ann Martin, Margaret Ceis, Beth Grieser, Peggy Abby, Lucy Krakowiak, Cherisse Luxa, Jeff Upthegrove, Laura Feinstein, Tim Nuse, Bruce Stotler, Dan Fievez, Steve Karbowski, Maria Ramirez

Chair's report

Dec 3rd we talked about Back Office software for improving the way the district operates. Jeff is here tonight and can talk a bit about it.

We appointed two PCOs at the January meeting, and two resigned - Georgie Kunkel and Phil McEachern, so the total number of PCOs is constant. Ivan received an email from another potential who wants to be appointed a PCO.

Caucus training will be Saturday evening for the 19 Vashon precincts at the Vashon Dems meeting.

Committee Reports:

Treasurers: \$13,223 balance last year. Greg Doss. Walter and Greg will pull together a budget for 2008 and bring to the next E-Board meeting. Greg has a set of checks to be deposited. Caucus costs will eat up a lot of the balance, so we should try to raise replace dollars during the Caucuses. "What is raised in the District stays here." Any contribution of \$25 or more needs a name and address attached. Any contribution of \$100 or more requires employer, too.

Membership: Jackie Dupras. 184 paid members as of today. Last year we were just shy of 500 paid members, about 540 including PCOs who did not pay. Last year we had 186 at this time, but we also had sent an envelope in the newsletter, which we won't do until March, when we send the newsletter out to everyone who attended the caucuses. We also need to encourage membership during the caucus. And if name/address are required for contributions, that info will already be on the membership form.

Caucus planning: Tim Nuse. There are only 23 days left until the caucus. Area Caucus coordinators have already been assigned for each caucus location. In the next couple of days Tim will explain the ACC duties to each one. Each location has a pretty strong set of staff to support the ACC although we still need additional volunteers to support each location. We still need about 50 precinct captains to lead caucuses in precincts without PCOs - for those precincts with no PCO or captain the ACC will need to arrange for a precinct captain to be elected at the caucus. Next caucus training is January 26th (see website). We've had good attendance at the training so far. 50-60 at the January regular meeting and 32 at last Monday's training. There is also a good video explaining how to conduct the caucus. Canvassing day planned for January 27th concentrating on White Center precincts without PCOs. Location for canvassers to meet yet to be determined (maybe Liz Giba's place). Caucus outreach committee meets Saturday January 19th at Uptown Espresso 11A.M. to plan the canvass day.

State Committee: Bruce Stotler. The County convention is on the 19th of April which is the beginning of Passover - the Seder dinner is that night. The WSDCC is concerned about this and will try to address it at their meeting on the 25th of January. Election of DNC members - lobbying for these positions is starting, there are two open seats, and three candidates. The State Central Executive Committee elects the DNC members. The Executive Board meets quarterly but probably should have regular teleconferences too, which it has not historically done.

King County Committee: Next meeting is Tuesday the 22nd. LAC is this Sunday 2PM Rainier Beach library. Marcee Stone will attend LAC. Rep. Larry Springer of the 45th will be the featured speaker. He is on the wrong side of the Maury Island issue. Probably also will talk about Maralyn Chase's condo conversion bill, endorsed by the 34th at our January meeting. The resolution/by-laws committee meetings tomorrow and will consider at least a resolution on impeachment. Robin Hess will attend. The KCDCC decided that all resolutions will go through the by-laws/resolution committee prior to being considered by the KCDCC for endorsement. All resolutions turned in at precinct caucuses will be forward to the County Convention for action. But how do they/we reconcile resolutions with different wordings? Unknown. Also, the script provided to PCOs says all resolutions will be "thoroughly discussed" at the County convention, which is quite unlikely. Can people submit resolutions online at the KCDCC website? We'll have to check that out. Note: For our 34th LD Convention we'll need rules, by-laws, resolution and affirmative action chairs at a minimum.

By-Laws: Richard Bartlett. The smaller changes throughout the document have been incorporated and the two rejected changes in Article 7 (resolutions) and Article 9 (accounts and contributions) have unchanged wording. Richard has sent the document to Bill for uploading to the website. Should we re-submit those two rejected changes? Probably not at this time - consider this at the next E-Board meeting.

Back Office: Jeff Upthegrove. These are software tools which could streamline the processes of filing PDC, managing finances, and membership lists. There is a product from a company called "Complete Campaigns" which will do this. Back office integrates with finance software. It also integrates with our website, and allows download of data to Excel, Access. Back office has the ability to allow multiple levels of access by different officers. There is also a cost - \$75 a month plus 5% or 7% of online donations (which includes the credit card processing fee) and pays for customer support and regular backups. Jeff will send out a demo logon/password to E Board members, and we may have Jason Bennett of the 36th which uses the product to come in and talk to us about it at some point. Jason's consulting firm Argo provides the software at a discounted price to campaigns and some districts in the state. It is \$900 a year - lots of bucks. We need to take full advantage of the application. Greg Doss enthusiastically endorses it, Walter thinks it is a good idea but wants to know the exact cost, Jackie has not seen it and wants to hear from Jason, Ann (former treasurer) thinks it very well could save multiple overlapping data entry, Ivan knows there are donors who would contribute if they had an easy mechanism, Cherisse and Greg think that our ability to take credit cards will significantly improve the levels and kinds of donations (esp. people could do a monthly

recurring debit or credit). Action item: this needs to go to the membership. We'll put it on the agenda for the February meeting. Jeff is willing to do a private demo and set up a meeting for folks who do a lot of the manual work now (i.e. Greg, Jackie).

February agenda items:

- 1) Hoping to have a legislative report from Joe, Eileen or Sharon; if they are available.
- 2) Debrief the caucuses and do post-caucus organizing, e.g. voter-id, phone banking, canvassing.
- 3) Discussion Back Office.
- 4) Since some caucus attendees would be attending in February, we should explain the next steps in the caucus and convention process. Explain precinct, LD, county, state and national Democratic organizations as a party-building and welcoming process.

Discussion of leadership issues: there will be a 2 minute limit per person

Lucy: When she came as a candidate there was more outreach and she received an invitation. This time around, with re-election, there was no invitation. She was not put on the slate for automatic endorsement but had to work for it. This is a more abrasive environment rather than working together.

Cherisse: I resigned from the E-Board. I came to the E-Board but never walked out with any tasks. Our E-Board meetings became angry and toxic as have the general membership meetings. Drinking Liberally folks who went to the general membership meeting did not like them. The Chair did not respect her or other E-Board members. She attributed this quote to Ivan: "Everyone on that E-Board is a bunch of lamers." Cherisse thinks it is a good board. That kind of internal disrespect has leaked out to the members. The Democratic party's strongest resource is its people.

Peggy: Peggy has a resolution/proposal to present to help heal. Peggy read her statement. Many members want to make a contribution to a strong Democratic community but are frustrated. Fifteen convened at Dan Fievez's home and decided to ask the Chair to step down, a letter signed by ten of them - see letter. Ivan agreed with some complaints and disagreed with others - see his response. There is a lack of general respect of individuals and a Machiavellian disrespect for rules and procedures. There is a constriction of access to membership information for most, but available to some. The Chair has bullied and browbeat speakers at meetings, and gaveled down others. Information distribution is controlled. The Board agreed to certain by-laws language and it was changed later. The vote on delaying the election of officers in January was not done or credentialed as required by the by-laws. Weiss puts in a lot of time and effort into his position, but there is too much disregard for members and rules. Peggy asks that no volunteer hold more than one job at a time, rules need to be followed rigorously. She asks for a task team be convened to work on guidelines and close monitoring of progress over the next few months leading up to the next election.

Beth: We as an E-Board need to serve the best interests of the membership. With Ivan in control there is not even a pretense of fairness. Our district is bleeding talented members,

some of whom Beth has recruited. Some quotes from them: "I can't stand the feeling - it is way too angry." "This is the most undemocratic organization I've ever been involved in". Their identities have been kept confidential so Ivan does not call and browbeat them.

Robin: This meeting has vetted even more anger than he heard at the first meeting. He's been in the Democratic Party active from 1964 until now. I have never seen any chairman organize and conduct the business of the district any better than Ivan. He is not supposed to swear or tramp on people at meetings and he is getting the idea that this is important.

Marcee: I have experience working in other organization and people become very identified with organizations and it is sometimes hard to separate personal feelings from the work of the organization. We could spend this time so much more productively.

Greg: I am disappointed in how the fall has gone and I'm sorry to see my friends leave the organization. I would have hoped they could have stayed and worked through the issues. This has become the business of the district. There are personality issues and transparency issues.

Les: I always have been able to call Ivan and talk through issues. We need to change, but it has to be done one-on-one and we have to call each other on our stuff. The lack of trust between us is disturbing and needs to be addressed.

Jackie: A lot of this seems to be a problem with me. Signed ballots in January work in lieu of credentials. I don't know why people are disturbed that she has more than one job.

Tim: He and Ivan disagree on an approach to gain more members - Tim supports getting people who want to have an amicable discussion. Ivan seems to want to get people who are fighters. We need to show ourselves accountable and be open to disagreement. People have resigned because they no longer are able to work through the issues.

Alan: He's been working in the party since 1944 and he's seen fights which make this look like a Kindergarten day. As parliamentarian he's tried to make sure the meetings run according to rules, but he does not make rulings - he only gives advice to the chair on parliamentary procedure. Ivan brings decisiveness and strength and a strong personality to the group.

Walter: Some of the accusations give him great pause. These are not just issues of insulting behavior or foul language but of misuse of power. We need to get to the bottom of these issues. We're trying to save the free world. We need to move ahead with all the important things we need to do as Democrats. But we need also to get to the bottom of these issues.

Les Treall: Was involved in the Sierra Club years ago and saw things much worse in terms of manipulation of the agenda there. He's had a hard time breaking into the organization.

Laura: Finding the root cause is not necessarily a productive activity, but addressing the symptoms might be worthwhile.

Jeff: yield to Cherisse

Cherrise: In 2005 there was a similar situation and a facilitated retreat but yet all the problems are still here today. She brought copies of the notes and distributed them. We need to get to change. I don't want to stay in the organization the way it is now. I spent all spring, summer and fall talking one on one to Ivan and it usually came down to him saying "I don't care".

Margaret: I've seen worse things happen too, like Alan, but these are different generational lifestyles - people will leave if they don't like what they hear. Ivan is short on praising people publicly for what they've done. She's seen districts split apart and doesn't think we are at that point.

Bruce: Trying to understand how people are upset and so bitter about this. Knives in the back don't help. Don't ask for resignation but pitch in and help and make things work.

Ann: I don't think this is personality conflict. I think this is leadership issues. There needs to be more delegation. People need to be allowed to grow with their position. If I talk really tough, I'm not attacking you.

Bill: I am reminded of the story about the Democratic Party forming a firing squad. We are in the fight of our lives - 2008 and John McCain and Dino Rossi and Sharon Nelson. We need every possible member and worker. Nevertheless, these are disturbing accusations. Ivan's made it clear he is not resigning. In many respects, he has done a great job, specifically in attending meetings, and running meetings and organizing the work of the district. Ivan does need to delegate more and to empower. I want a definitive action plan to move forward. A definitive statement from Ivan, and from those who feel wronged, that we all can live with - a signed agreement which we can mutually enforce is one possible action item. Consensus doesn't work.

Ivan: This is the beginning of a process. To Beth: we probably cannot resolve this to your satisfaction at this meeting. It will avail us nothing to rehash past arguments and avails us nothing to argue about this. Everyone should ask themselves: can we work together and do we hold the District's business hostage to this? He is looking for solutions and is open to all arguments. He wants people to call him on the telephone and talk about it.

Dan: read "Conservatives Without Conscience", critical of the authoritarian behavior of the Republican Party. Authoritarian behavior doesn't work in the Democratic Party or in our community. So we don't behave like Dick Cheney.

Ivan: I can agree that we disagree on styles and approaches. Is it authoritarian behavior? I am committed to the process.

Walter: Ivan can't chair this meeting - someone else should facilitate. Fear that this will degenerate.

Lucy: Code of conduct, how the duties and responsibilities of the organization are distributed and third policies or agreement on how the meetings are run, so we can support each other in this process.

Richard: Every E-Board meeting have a "good of the organization" agenda item.

Ivan asked for copies of Peggy's document.

Elaborate on how the meetings are being run improperly:

Ann: When you are at the front of the room in the meeting, you are supposed to be impartial - not rolling your eyes or holding your arm up looking at your wristwatch while the person is speaking. Any of us acting as officers of the organization also need to be impartial and inviting and welcoming of different viewpoints as we can be. This is one of the Code of Conduct pieces which has caused a lot of the problem. You- Ivan, have strong feelings and sometimes that rubs people the wrong way because people don't see it as your personal opinion but as the opinion of the leader of the organization.

Ivan: I've heard this from enough people that I won't dispute it. I resolve to start doing this tonight. Rolling the eyes and muttering under my breath has got to go. I'm reminded of the incident that I allegedly muttered (something) under my breath while Tanya and Sharon were at the table that caused Tanya to resign.

Cherisse and Richard: Everyone sees the muttering.

Cherisse: You always interrupt.

Cherisse: What can the E-Board do to help you with these ingrained habits? Accountability, what will it look like?

Ivan: "longer term" lasts until the November general election is certified and his term comes to an end.

Peggy: People have talked about accountability and delegation. Ivan - delegate to a smaller group of Board members and members at large to come up with action items. Not being browbeat at meetings, following the by-laws.

Les: Red paddles if Ivan is slipping we can hold them up.

Greg: Some issues are substantive – people don't feel they can bring them up at good of the order. We need a system for professional accountability, lodging a complaint read before the eboard, whistleblower.

Richard: Task force idea. People walk away from the E-board and we didn't know why until they are gone.

Ann: Suggests a small group for action planning and work plans. And, jobs to be done and people to do them. There should also be mentoring of people to fill positions.

Ivan - mentoring: Steven Dagadakis will help with website. Bill will mentor Mitch with minutes. Need to find number cruncher to help Greg.

Walter: Action items - people need to make the issues known. There is a strong feeling that there are substantive issues which need to be aired. There needs to be a report back to the next membership meeting about next steps.

Greg: Ethics chair or complaint box on the wall. We are going in circles with no answers.

Tim: We don't want to vet this situation at the next meeting because we'll have so many new members there from the caucuses. Action item: committee to clarify roles.

Steve: (Holds yellow sheet) – This is Groundhog Day. The yellow sheet contains a lot of the action items already.

Robin: Let's get a small group together - Peggy Abby, Les Harris, Beth Grieser, Walter Sive, Steve Karbowski, Robin Hess, Richard Bartlett. Who to chair? Ivan Weiss is an ex-officio member of all committees.

Les: We need to have a Chair, a Secretary for minutes, and public minutes. And name. And scope of work. Scope: action plan, role, leadership development.

Tim: I move that we create a task force that looks at an action item list to optimize our procedures and make the district more effective and as strong as it can be in 2008 and beyond. Ann seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion: Ideal to have something at next e-board meeting. Beyond 2008. Develop leadership and support each other in trust. There are ongoing and systematic problems. Have the group start to work after the caucus, first report at the March E-board. Ivan will make opening remarks at the February meeting and will run these remarks past the E-Board first. Steve Karbowski will chair.

New item: Credentials. Ivan did make a decision that we'll have credentials for every member at every meeting so we avoid the appearance of misconduct.

Ivan: I need people to engage with the process.

Les Treall: What roles and tasks need to be filled and completed in the LD? There are already definitive lists in other LD's.

Tim and Ivan: let's do this - compile the list on the e-mail monster. Post on the website. Auction, endorsements, convention, etc. Auction: request to Bob Watt to auctioneer and Maggie Larrick to chair.