OUTSPOKEN

The Newsmagazine Serving Lane County Democrats

Volume 2000, Issue 1

Message from the Chair

by Phil Barnhart



I am writing this on the last day of the year 1999. The Ducks have just won the Sun Bowl. They always make it exciting right to the end. Go Ducks!

I have lost the usual New Year's Eve argument with my

now 18 year old son about his curfew. I won't see him until 2AM (realistically, I will not see him until daylight tomorrow morning, but he probably won't see me until tomorrow afternoon). I hope you will forgive me for sometimes feeling that changing the age of majority to 18 was a mistake. Yes, I know, I'm showing my age.

Elsewhere in this issue you will read about the death of Bill Holser after a long illness. Bill, we will miss you. Mary Anne and Tom, our condolences to you.

I have been reading the last few days hoping for inspiration for this column. I got my inspiration today from Slashdot.org, an internet site for discussion about matters of interest to computer experts who are interested in innovative, stable, and useful computing (hackers). The quote comes from lOpht, a well known group of internet consultants:

"While both Governments and multinational corporations are detrimental to personal liberties on the Internet, one must not overlook the greatest danger of them all. The uninformed citizen. In democracies, this is problematic, where governmental policy typically follows public opinion" – 12/31/1999

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Special points of interest:

Memorial Service Celebrates
 Bill Holser's Life

2000 Platform of the Democratic Party of Lane County Adopted December 11, 1999

by Roberta Schneck

As Democrats, we believe that in our representative democracy "we, the people" are the government. We therefore reject the view that government is our enemy. As Democrats, we view government as our vehicle to better ourselves and our community. On this basis we therefore declare the following planks to be the platform of the Democratic Party of Lane County.

Education:

Education is the key to a participatory democracy and to healthy economic competitiveness. We support a public education system, kindergar-

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Democratic Party of Lane County P.O.Box 11138, Eugene, OR 97440 329 West 13th Avenue, Suite F telephone: (541) 484-5099 www.dplc.org

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Hart Williams, Webmaster (DPLC web Page) 465-8961 OUTSPOKEN STAFF

Editor: Frank Vignola and Mary Lou Mansfield

Production: Mary Olsen, Shirley Favier, Nancy Welch, Roberta Schneck. Darelle Baker. Barbara Stair

OFFICE VOLUNTEERS & HOURS

Monday Tuesday

Roberta Schneck Wednesday 1 PM - 4 PM
Shirley Favier Thursday 1 PM - 4 PM
Mary Olsen Friday 1 PM - 4 PM

329 West 13th Ave., Suite F Telephone: (541) 484-5099

DPLC Central Committee Meeting

Thursday Jan 20, 2000 7:00 PM Harris Hall

AGENDA

I.	Call to Order; Adoption of Agenda
II.	Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

III. Treasurer's Financial Report

IV. Committee Reports

V. Unfinished Business

VI. New Business

VII. Announcements

VIII. Adjournment

DPLC Executive Committee Meetings

January 13, 7:00 PM Union Hall Springfield

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DO NOT PATRONIZE BI MART

Lane County Labor Council Organizing committee 1116 South A Street Springfield, Or. 97477 (541) 741-4770

Pat Riggs-Henson, Executive Secretary-Treasurer

The Florence Area Democratic Club holds a noon meeting the first Saturday of every month. For more information call Margaret Atwood at 997-2403.

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Media Echo the Rich and Powerful

Excerpts from Norman Solomon's commentary in the December 26, 1999 Register-Guard



With the 1990s passing into memory, it is time to reflect on the deadening routines that squander our time and evasions and excuses that keep up from acting.

Much of this comes from our own choices, but everyday, a nationwide media barrage encourages us to be cynical and passive. Rarely do we find a true representation of diverse view and real discussion of the issues.

A Boston-based organization, United for a Fair Economy (www.stw.org), offers a reality check that is not found in the media spotlight.

- In 1989, the United States had 66 billionaires and 31.5 million people living below the official poverty line. A decade later, the United States has 268 billionaires and 34.5 million people living below the poverty line—about \$13,000 for a three-person family.
- At the dawn of the 21st century, the distribution of wealth has regressed to the perilous inequality of the 1920s.
 The top 1 percent of households has more wealth than the entire bottom 95 percent combined.
- Since 1977, the top 1 percent of households has doubled its share of the nation's wealth. The top 1 percent holds 40 percent of the nation's wealth.
- Together, the 400 richest Americans are worth more than \$1 trillion—about one-ninth of the total gross domestic product (GDP) of the United States, the world's richest economy. The people in the Forbes 400—they could all stay at New York's Plaza Hotel at the

same time—have about as much wealth as the 50 million households in the bottom half of the population.

- The pay gap between CEOs and workers is five times wider than it was at the start of the decade, and ten times wider than it was two decades ago.
- In 1998, CEOs made 419 times the pay of workers (\$10.6 million compared with \$25,300). A worker who earned \$25,000 in 1994 would earn \$138,350 today if their pay had grown as fast as the average CEO, according to the AFL-CIO.
- The percentage of people in extreme poverty-less than 50 percent of the poverty level-rose from 4.9 percent in 1989 to 5.1 percent in 1998, and is way up from 1975, when it was 3.7 percent.
- The ranks of those without health insurance swelled during the decade, rising from 13.6 percent in 1989 (33.4 million people) to 16.3 percent in 1998, or 44.2 million people.
- As Yale sociologist Dalton Conley has shown in his new book *Being Black:* Living in the Red, if the test scores of black students are compared to the scores of white students with the same family wealth, the achievement gap between black and white students disappears.
- Concentrated wealth is concentrated political power. According to the Center for Responsive Politics, some 80 percent of all political contributions now come from less than 1 percent of the population. If the Congress were truly representative of the people we would have implemented campaign finance reform by now. Big donor contributions to political campaigns are the obvious, but certainly not the only, example of how wealth holders exert inordinate influence on our democratic institutions.

Solutions:

• Expand Earned Income Credit and Raise Minimum Wage and No-Tax Threshold:

- Affordable Housing:
- Broadening Employee Ownership:
- Progressive Tax Rates:
- Maintain Strong Estate and Inheritance Taxes:
- Taxing Capital Gains Like Wages:

These issues are rarely raised or discussed in the national media and candidates rarely are confronted with such economic realities.

Instead repeated question have a scope matching the slightly zombie-like verbiage of many politicians.

Quoting George Orwell: "When one watches some tired hack on the platform, mechanically repeating the familiar phrases ... one often has a curious feeling that one is not watching a live human being but some kind of dummy."

Faced with a nonstop swirl of media coverage, it is tempting to succumb to chronic cynicism, but we can be better off if we can develop an attitude of idealistic skepticism.

We must speak up. "I have come to believe over and over again," poet Audre Lorde said, "that what is most important to me must be spoken, made verbal and shared, even at the risk of having it bruised and misunderstood. ... For it is not difference which immobilizes us most but silence."

To criticize the institutional madness that ignores the 14 million people in the US living in extreme poverty can seem bold, even brave. How sad.

"One day posterity will remember," wrote Russian poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko, "This strange era, these strange times, when / Ordinary common honesty was called courage."

Hopefully, we'll find more strength for such honesty in the 21st century.

[Norman Solomon of San Francisco is a syndicated columnist specializing in media criticism.]

2000 Legislative Agenda of the Democratic Party of Lane County Adopted December 11, 1999

by Roberta Schneck



<u>Labor & Government Operations:</u>

- 1. We support legislation to make it illegal for any employer to require, as a condition of employment, that an employee forfeits the right to organize.
- 2. We support legislation giving Foster Care workers the right to Worker's Compensation coverage.
- 3. Any Governor-appointed positions which have not had a Senate confirmation vote within sixty (60) days should automatically become approved.
- Worker's compensation laws must be changed to better protect the rights of injured workers to;
 - a. choose their health care provider,
 - b. require employers to provide "suitable & available" work for compensable injuries that is adequate to constitute as full employment as possible for the employee,
 - c. provide an expedited system for contested hearings,
 - d. litigate if the employer willfully violated the law.
- Workers compensation law must be readdressed to look at the fairness of the standards required in order to receive compensation.
- 6. Unemployment compensation should be extended to all employees.

Agriculture, Natural Resources & Environment:

- 1. We continue to support tax credits for renewable energy systems.
- 2. We support reform of the 1872 Mining Act to protect our resources.

Water & Land Use:

 We support continued funding of the "Oregon Plan for Salmon & Watersheds".

Education:

- 1. We support an increase in faculty/ teacher salaries for Oregon University System employees, with the goal of being 25th in the country in funding salaries.
- 2. We support a tuition rollback for instate and out-of-state students at four (4) year institutions.
- 3. We support fully funding the Oregon State Need Grant.
- 4. We oppose any attempt to restrict students' recommendation power of the incidental or building fee.
- We support reauthorization of the Federal Higher Education Act of 1965, and within that act support a redistribution from loan programs to grant programs.
- 6. Our school facilities and education programs have deteriorated from lack of funding and our children have suffered. Therefore, we support the restoration of stable and adequate reserves to provide buildings, staff, appropriate class size, breadth of instruction, and adequate planning and training for a comprehensive K-12 education.
- We support the teaching of the scientific theory of evolution as a noncontroversial science issue in public education.
- 8. We oppose the use of part time employment in our educational institutions as a tool to avoid paying benefits.

 We support teacher accountability & evaluations on a broad based criteria.
 We oppose efforts to link teachers' evaluations to students' statewide outcomes.

Health & Human Services:

- 1. We reaffirm our commitment to guarantee a woman's right to safe, legal, accessible abortion.
- 2. We support increased funding for HIV research.
- The State of Oregon should maintain and expand the Oregon Health Plan and should regulate the growing health care industry in the best interest of our citizens.
- 4. We support cigarette settlement fund expenditures to support health care and tobacco prevention and cessation, instead of locking the funds into a trust fund supposedly for the Oregon Health Plan Emergency Fund, when in fact, this trust fund would exist for backfill purposes to fund future general fund budgets.
- 5. That the primary budget of the state's activity to mitigate the effect of drug use in society be directed through education and public health.
- We support a Joint Resolution to Congress opposing television advertising of prescription drugs.

Transportation:

- 1. We support continued development and improvement of passenger and freight rail transportation along the I-5 corridor.
- 2. Repair and maintenance of existing state highway infrastructure shall be given priority over new construction.
- 3. To set a lawful example for our government officials, we propose compliance with all traffic laws, by trucks, autos, bikes, and pedestrians.
- 4. We support the expanded use of alternative energy and energy efficient ve-

(Continued on page 5)

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2000 Legislative Agenda of the Democratic Party of Lane County

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hicles.

Rules & Elections:

- We support changing term limits to 12 years total service in the state legislature.
- We support a public campaign financing system for the state legislators and statewide elected offices similar to the Maine Clean Election Act.

Government Finance & Tax Policy:

- 1. We urge elimination of the 2% kicker.
- 2. We urge formation of a rainy day fund funded with excess tax revenue.
- Our progressive tax system, while not perfect, is the best attempt at fair and equitable thus far enacted, and we oppose a flat tax.

Ways & Means: no proposals

Judiciary:

- Provide for increased penalties and mandatory counseling for persons with repeated domestic violence convictions.
- 2. Provide for increased penalties for crimes committed while violating the conditions of a restraining order.
- 3. We oppose anti-camping and other ordinances which penalize the homeless for harmless, non-criminal activity such as eating and sleeping.
- 4. We oppose "daytime curfew" laws as an infringement on people's constitutional right to free travel, and their right to be protected against unreasonable search & seizure.
- 5. We urge the Oregon Legislature to pass a Joint Resolution requesting the U S Congress redefine corporations as non-persons.

- Sovereign Indian Nations should be subject, in non-tribal businesses including gaming, to all state and federal laws.
- We oppose the weakening of the Miranda warning right for Oregon citizens.
- 8. We oppose limitations of any kind on recovery of damages in civil actions.

Business & Consumer Affairs:

- 1. We support the employment non-discrimination act (ENDA).
- 2. We support tighter regulation of the consumer finance industry to protect financially vulnerable citizens.

Trade & Economic Development:

1. We oppose the sale or privatization of the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), except to the state of Oregon or an interstate compact including Oregon.



Memorial Service Celebrates Bill Holser's Life

The memorial service celebrating Bill Holser's life will be Sunday, 9 January, from 2 - 4 PM, in the Browsing Room of the Knight Library in the University of Oregon Campus. A reception at the Holser home, 2620 Cresta de Ruta, will follow.

Message from the Chair



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They went on to talk about governmental and corporate dangers to privacy as they affect the internet. Their concerns apply equally well to the current situation in Oregon with the initiative and referendum. These now venerable methods of getting direct citizen involvement in law-making depend upon the citizen being informed and interested in the issues involved.

Our most important task as Democrats is to elect Democrats. Concurrently, our most important task as citizens is to inform ourselves and help others to become informed about the great public issues of our time. I believe that the first task is easier if we do the second well.

Bill Sizemore is so dangerous precisely because he has an uncanny knack for the turn of phrase which triggers bias and prejudice and seems to inform but does not. Well informed citizens will not fall for his nonsense. His initiative to "end double taxation" is one such measure. The idea has superficial appeal until one learns that the only people who will benefit at all will be those who report taxable income of over \$40,000 a year. The more you make the greater your tax savings. The top one percent of incomes will receive more than half of the benefit. The loss to the state treasury will be between two and three billion dollars a biennium (out of a general fund of about \$11 billion). The cuts in services will

destroy health care for the poor, make the measure five cuts in education look mild. Tuition cuts at our state universities will occur when Mr. Sizemore's destination freezes over. More likely some will close. The state cannot sustain such cuts without a triple decimation of most programs. In other words, those who can afford to pay get a short term windfall, those who need public services take it on the neck. That anyone would take this measure seriously is terrifying and appalling. No citizen who wishes the future of our civilization well will favor such a measure.

The wealthy have as great an interest in the government services that their taxes buy as the poor. Those government services pay for roads and schools, the regulation which keeps economic activity predictable and safe for those with money to invest, health care for those who might otherwise spread disease, and environmental regulation – the rich have to breath too.

Mr. Sizemore also wants us to vote on all fee increases by any governmental body. He wants the rule to be retroactive. Public agencies looking at fee increases are affected now even though the measure has not yet been placed on the ballot! He wants us to call an election to approve a nickel increase in school lunches, a dollar added to the fee to learn to canoe on the Willamette if the lessons are offered by Eugene Parks and Recreation an increase in fees to approve building plans, etc, etc. These are fees which fund the activity involved. Without timely changes in fees the underlying program cannot be operated well or at all. There are many such programs. Again, Sizemore seems to propose something populist - the involvement of voters directly in what fees they pay. Instead, what such nonsense will lead to is the degradation or destruction of programs. The school lunch program cannot pay for the cost of an election. It would forgo the nickel and thin the gruel instead - not a good service to the children who need that hot lunch. Measures which are so uncontroversial that they pass on the consent agendas of city councils and school boards will not happen at all or will clutter the ballot chasing a few

more voters away. I thought Sizemore disliked inefficiency in government.

Sizemore has also proposed measures attacking workers - again. Labor provides one of the few counterbalances to big business when it comes to political activity. Business is an order of magnitude bigger than labor in its political activity already. It needs no additional help. Ordinary workers have few organized friends. Sizemore's measures look like they add freedom for the worker. What they really do is remove the worker's voice from the deliberations of power.

Informed Citizens realize that Sizemore's initiatives are attacks on public services, public planning, public regulation. He cannot win by direct attacks against schools, health care services, highways, youth services, regulation of land use and business activity. He thinks he can win by attacking taxes and funding, by pretending to espouse freedom when what he really wants is destruction of public institutions which provide services to ordinary citizens.

Informed Citizens understand that our system is a sort of mutt. Our economy is mostly capitalist, but we depend on government regulation to keep business honest and give the little guy a chance to have his disputes with the big guys handled appropriately. You cannot do whatever you want on your land because what you there do affects everyone else. Some things only government does well so we have government do them. If that is called "socialist" so what. If the public approach works best we want to do it that way. Americans are very good at figuring out, with fits and starts, what actually works. Sizemore wants us to move to a tired ideology of purity which ignores what works and moves to an ideologically pure and quite destructive result. I am sure he would hate to be compared to the 1920s Bolsheviks who were also politically and ideologically pure, but he reminds me most of them, idealistic rhetoric hiding a destructive and nihilistic core. He would destroy what is useful and good about our institutions without replacing them with something better (or

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Lobbyist pays travel for GOP legislators' wives

Story from www.south-coast-advocate.com

Thousands of dollars were spent on behalf of the spouses to attend beer and wine industry meetings

Thursday, January 6, 2000

From The Associated Press

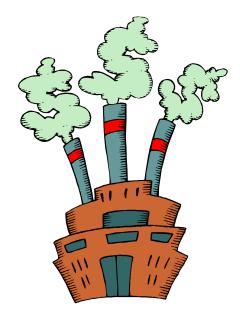
SALEM -- A lobbyist for the beer and wine industry has spent thousands of dollars on travel for legislators' wives, possibly violating an Oregon ethics law that limits gifts to public officials' family members to \$100 a year, a Eugene newspaper reports.

The Register-Guard reviewed expenditure reports that show lobbyist Paul Romain spent \$12,944.09 for travel, lodging, food and golf on behalf of seven legislators and their wives who attended Oregon Beer and Wine Distributors Association meetings in Palm Springs, Calif., in 1994 and 1996 and in Hawaii in 1998.

Interviews with Romain and lawmakers indicate the wives received about \$5,500 worth of free food, airfare and lodging.

The newspaper said possible ethics law violations were among thousands of lobbyist expenditure reports it reviewed covering 1994 to mid-1999.

"I know a lot of folks who end up doing this stuff and just don't report it," Romain said. "We report it. We're not trying to hide anything."



Ethics laws allow lobbyists to pay politicians' travel and lodging if they appear in an official capacity. But lobbyist-furnished travel for spouses is considered a gift and is limited to \$100 per person.

"Our position on this issue has always been . . . steadfast: It's OK for the public officials. It's not for the spouses," said Patrick Hearn, executive director of the state Government Standards and Practices Commission.

If the commission finds ethics laws were violated, Romain and each legislator could be fined \$1,000 per violation. The legislators also could be sanctioned for

twice the value of any financial benefit their relatives improperly received.

Romain reported expenditures ranging from \$245 for Edna Timms, wife of Sen. Gene Timms, R-Burns, to travel to Palm Springs in 1996, to \$1,565 for Mary Bryant, wife of Sen. Neil Bryant, R-Bend, to accompany him to two beer and wine distributor meetings.

Romain also reported treating Sen. David Nelson, R-Pendleton, Sen. Tom Hartung, R-Cedar Mill, Rep. Lane Shetterly, R-Dallas, and former Sens. Paul Phillips of Tigard and Ken Baker of Clackamas, both Republicans, and their spouses to trips so the lawmakers could speak at conventions.

Most of the seven legislators were on committees that controlled bills affecting beer and wine taxes and laws affecting alcohol consumption.

Most said there was nothing wrong with letting a lobbyist pick up the tab for their wives.

"I wouldn't consider that a gift at all, just part of the cost of getting me there," said Hartung, whose wife, Beverly, had \$415 in travel costs covered for a 1996 trip to Palm Springs.

Message from the Chair

(Continued from page 6)

in his case anything at all).

The upshot of all these words is the Informed Citizens do not let their friends vote Sizemore; they make them Informed Citizens too, instead. Our work as Precinct Committee Persons to inform and organize is as important now as it ever was. If your walking lists are out of date, ask and we will get you a more recent

one. Walk your precinct. Find out what the voters are thinking. Inform them.

The Chair's Bookshelf:

Lest you think that we are facing an insurmountable struggle in the future with the big fund raisers, read Dick Morris' new book Vote.com. This book has a positive and optimistic vision of the future of political ideas and discourse based upon the ease of getting informa-

tion out on the internet. As I look at the great changes in the cost of real and informative communication thanks to the world wide web, I agree. It's short, read it.

I hope you all have a happy and healthy new year. Victory to Democrats! Up with the Informed Citizen.

2000 Platform of the Democratic Party of Lane County

(Continued from page 1)

ten through higher education, which is excellent in content, responsive to the variety of student needs, adequately funded and available to all. Because we are sensitive to the diverse beliefs of our society we support the historic separation of church and state.

Rights of Workers:

We support the rights of workers to organize, to bargain collectively, to strike if necessary without the threat of permanent replacement and to hold jobs that provide essential benefits and family wages. We oppose attempts to weaken Labor Unions through the pursuit of right-to-work-for-less initiatives or legis-



lation.

Public Safety:

Personal safety is a fundamental right. We believe that parental responsibility, prevention programs, economic opportunity, education, and community involvement are key elements to preventing crime. We believe that justice for personal and corporate crime should be swift, sure, fair, and equally applied. We support proven rehabilitation programs. We support victim restitution where appropriate.

Health Care:

We believe all people should have access to affordable, appropriate, comprehensive health care. We believe abortion should be legal, safe, and available to all who choose this option. We believe that clinic personnel and patients have an inalienable right to freedom from harassment, intimidation, and physical harm. We support programs which protect public and personal health and the rights of injured workers.

Environment & Natural Resources:

We support a natural resource management program that provides for a sound economy and a sustainable environment. We must continue to support policies which ensure clean air and water, safe waste disposal practices, community recycling, and land use planning. We support the development of renewable energy resources.

Human Rights & Justice:

We oppose all forms of discrimination and reject any attempts to limit protection from discrimination for any group. We oppose all laws which deny some segments of the population the right to be in public places and engage in harmless, non-criminal behavior. We oppose laws that criminalize poverty and homelessness. As Democrats we oppose the erosion of citizens' rights to redress grievances through our court system.

Tax Policy:

We support a progressive tax system in which individual and corporate taxes are based on the ability to pay. We support a tax system that is simple and which rewards thrift and individual initiative. We favor the restoration of balance between corporate and individual tax rates. We oppose a general state retail sales tax.

Election Laws:

Free and honest elections are essential to a democracy. Campaigns should be financed in a manner which protects the integrity of the election process.

Economic Opportunity:

A healthy and growing economy is essential to Oregon. We support diversity in the Oregon economy, policies that provide family-wage jobs, incentives to small business, programs that promote a skilled and educated work force, and maintenance of sound infrastructure to support these goals.



Family & Community:

Government has an obligation to address the needs of those who need help providing for themselves. This assistance must be provided at a level that maintains individual dignity and initiative while providing the necessary tools for selfsufficiency and independence.

As government has responsibilities to its citizens, citizens have responsibilities to their government. We believe all citizens must: keep informed, participate in government, and seek non-governmental solutions to problems in society when appropriate. As Democrats seeking to live up to our responsibilities, we pledge to support this platform.

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Legislative Connections

U. S. Senate	Ron Wyden	431-0229 (202) 224-5244	151 W 7th Ave, Suite 435, Eugene, OR, 97401 717 Hart Senate Office Bldg, Washington, DC 20510 email senator@wyden.senate.gov
4th Cong. Dist	Peter DeFazio	465-6732 (202) 225-6416	web: www. ron98. com 151 W 7th Ave, Suite 400, Eugene, OR, 97401 2134 Rayburn Office Bldg, Washington, DC 20510 email_peter.defazio@mail.house.gov
Governor	John Kitzhaber	(503) 378-3111	254 State Capitol, Salem, OR, 97310 web: www.governor.state.or.us
Oregon Legisla	ture:		
Senate District 2	20 Susan Castillo	343-1581	P.O. Box 5891, Eugene, OR, 97405 email castillo.sen@state.or.us
Senate District 2	1 Lee Beyer	746-5889	1439 Lawnridge, Springfield, OR, 97477 email beyer.sen@state.or.us web: darkwing.uoregon.edu/~lbeyer
Senate District 2	22 Tony Corcoran	942-1213	34475 Kizer Creek Rd, Cottage Grove, OR, 97424 email corcoran.sen@state.or.us
House District 3	9 Kitty Piercy	484-9720	1371 W 4th Ave., Eugene, OR, 97402 email reppiercy@aol.com web: www.efn.org/~kpiercy
House District 4	0 Floyd Prozanski	342-2447	P.O. Box 11511, Eugene, OR, 97440 email floydp@darkwing.uoregon.edu
House District 4	1 Vicki Walker	302-9533	web darkwing.uoregon.edu/~floydp/index.html P.O. Box 10314, Eugene, OR, 97440 email vwalker@continet.com web www.continet.com/walker
House District 4	2 Bill Morrisette	746-1378	348 G St, Springfield, OR, 97477 email morrisette.rep@state.or.us
House District 4	4 Al King	685-2015	36890 Edgehill Rd, Springfield, OR, 97478 email admking@jb.com
House District 4	7 Mike Lehman	269-5950	P.O. Box 1476, Coos Bay, OR, 97420 email mlehman888@aol.com

Thanks should be given to Phil Barnhart and Roberta Schneck for their contributions to this newsletter. This is your newsletter and the success of this newsletter depends upon team effort.



Latest Information on the Web

Thanks to the hard work of Hart Williams everyone can get the latest DPLC information on the DPLC web site at: **www.dplc.org**

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January

The Newsmagazine Serving Lane County Democrats (www.dplc.org)

2000

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

9 Jan Democratic Party of Oregon Central Committee

13 Jan Executive Committee meeting20 Jan Central Committee meeting

10 Feb Executive Committee meeting

17 Feb Central Committee meeting

Coos County Democrats
Will once again host a wonderful dinner at Gregson's Fine Dining.
The guest of honor will be our new Secretary of State Bill
Bradbury. Saturday January 29, 2000.

January 2000							
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