



DEMOGRAM

Lewis County Democrats

417 N. Pearl #9 Centralia, WA 98531

www.lewiscountymocrats.net

August 2005 Issue

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"Christian and Democrat - But You Can't Be Both!"

By Deanna Zieske

I don't know about you, but in recent discussions I've heard people ask: "How can you be a Christian and a Democrat?" Or worse yet, I've heard folks "You're a Democrat, you can't be a Christian!" Such outrageous statements really irritate me – to the point that I believe we as Democrats need to begin challenging them.

I was asked to write on this subject because I am active in our party, in my church and am known as a Christian. I consider myself a practicing Christian, not an expert. In my church family I am friends with many Republicans who I know do not believe statements like those deplorable quotes about Democrats and Christians mentioned above.

And when I hear such statements I want to ask, "Who died and left you boss?." Of course, I mean that in the Biblical sense of when did God give you authority and permission to make judgments? It's my understanding of Christianity that only God is in the business of making moral judgment, not you, me, the far right or the media.

Obviously, if we are hearing people questioning whether Democrats can be Christians, then there are people out there that actually believe it. And if that is the case, why aren't we out there making a case for ourselves?

Now obviously not every Democrat is a Christian. Some are Jews, some are atheists or agnostics, some are Hindu, Moslem, or any one of the multitude of other religions that exist in this world. The Democratic Party is complex and we celebrate its diversity. Because of its diversity the Democratic Party welcomes individuals of varying views and we support and openly take a stand on critical issues. But no individual or group within a nation like ours that was founded on principles of individual rights and religious freedom should ever be marginalized by any group of religious extremists whatever their political affiliation may be.

Religious beliefs can have a positive impact on our society. Just think about the impact of Martin Luther King, a magnificent and religious man, who led a movement that had at its base our U.S. Constitution. As a Christian he was leading a movement to insure individuals received the civil rights guaranteed to them by our constitution. Where would we be today without his "I have a dream"? And isn't that much different than the recent efforts by the far right to impose their religious beliefs on other people?

Could religion divide our country? Is religion dividing the United States? Of course! It's happening

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"HOWDY PARDNER, JOIN THE PARTY!"

Lewis County Democrats will once again be at our traditional location under the grandstand August 16 through August 21 during the SW Washington Fair . Democrats will host visitors to our booth through three shifts a day. If you would like to be one of those hosts, give the scheduler a call at 360-245-3269. In any case be sure to stop by during your visit to the fair. We'll have some materials available for you to take with you that will help you answer the question, "Why are you a Democrat?" when you are talking to someone who believes another political perspective's definition of a Democrat. And you can get a drink of water. See you all at the Fair!

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A Rose By Any Other Name

By Stephen Martin

What's in a name? Quite a lot, apparently. There has been no end to name-calling in the political arena lately, and there are some astonishing new twists. When, for example, did liberal become a dirty word? "Liberal elite", "latte liberals", "limousine liberals" are terms which conservatives have used to brand and denigrate liberals, and we have not yet figured out how to respond effectively.

In his book *Don't Think of an Elephant*, George Lakoff speaks of "framing," or the ways in which conservatives and liberals position issues to fit their respective moral worldviews. Conservatives have been working hard on framing for over thirty years, and quite simply, they are better at it than we of the "liberal" elite" are.

The paradox is that conservatives are the elite. The whole idea of conservative doctrine is that some people are better than others, that some people deserve more.

To conservatives, if you're poor it's because you deserve it, you're not disciplined enough to get ahead. Conservative doctrine requires that there be an elite: the people who thrive in the free market have more money, and they should. Progressives say, "No, that's not fair. Maybe some should have more money, but no one should live in poverty. Everybody who works deserves to have a reasonable standard of living." These are ideas that are progressive or liberal ideas, and progressives aren't getting them out there enough.

What progressives are promoting is not elite at all. Progressives ought to be talking about the conservative elite. They shouldn't be complaining about "tax cuts for the rich," they should be complaining about "tax cuts for the conservative elite," because that's who's getting them.

Taxes, as Lakoff and other thoughtful liberals see them, are investments for the common good. In the past the government made certain wise investments in things like the interstate highway system. You just get in your car and drive; you don't think about how every time you use the highways you're getting a dividend on that previous investment—and so is every business that



The Internet is another example. It started out as a network funded by the Defense Department--by the government investing taxpayers' money. Now, every time you surf the Web, you're getting a dividend. Drugs and medical advances that come out of National Institutes of Health grants are financed by taxpayers. Computer chips in our computers and cars exist because of the government's early investment of taxpayers' money in semiconductor research.

We Democrats stand for a wide range of worthy social, moral, and human values. We must learn to define them with precision and articulate them with energy. We must learn to define ourselves and make our definition stick! Otherwise, just be content to settle back in your limousine with your latte and enjoy being a member of the Lewis County Liberal Elite!

Salmon Tale



By Norma Schanz

Fairly regularly, I hear a local talk show host indignantly exclaim, “Those tree huggers believe salmon are more important than people.”

I wish a wise old logger would call the show to say “Well, if you want my opinion, salmon have done a heckuva lot more for us loggers than most people!”

This old logger might tell us a story.

“Contrary to popular opinion, I wasn’t here when the Ice Age ended. However, I’m told that the glaciers had scraped off the trees and soil of the great northwest forests. Nothing left but rocks. Nothing much moving except the rivers and streams.

“Lucky for us, over hundreds of years, hundreds of thousands of salmon worked their way up the streams to spawn and die. This huge mass of dead salmon provided food for the hatchlings and for other life.

“Then an amazing digestive process began.

“Migrating birds and other critters ate the salmon and wandered off to digest it. Their droppings formed little pockets of rich nutrients across the barren land.

“The droppings also contained seeds. The seeds sprouted, did their best to grow, then died. Decaying plants joined the decaying droppings to slowly build the soil. After a long time, tree seedlings could grow to maturity. Eventually, the great northwestern forests were restored.”

“But do we still need the salmon?” the talk show host might persist.

“Well, the forests still need the droppings,” the wise old logger might reply, “so I reckon the droppers need the salmon.”

The talk show host might chuckle to himself, then say, “If droppings are so important, do the forests need the droppings of the spotted owl?”

Maybe the logger would pause a few moments, gathering his thoughts.

“I figure nature is like a big jigsaw puzzle,” he says, choosing his words carefully. “Throw one piece away, and the picture has a hole in it. If the hole is way over in a corner, maybe the puzzle is still worth working.

“But throw away enough connecting pieces, the

Salmon spawn tree growth, healthy forests benefit salmon, a new study shows.

Researchers studying rivers in Alaska have found that salmon and forests help each other out. Riparian forests keep streams how salmon need them-cool and clear-by providing shade and stabilizing riverbanks with their roots. Salmon, in turn, give critical nutrients back to the surrounding vegetation when they die.

Tracing a heavy form of nitrogen most abundant in marine environments, scientists from the University of Washington, Seattle, were able to measure the amount of nitrogen in freshwater streams that originated in the ocean. They found that this heavier form made up nearly a quarter of the nitrogen in trees and shrubs along salmon streams, and that these plants grew more than three times faster than vegetation along the banks of salmon-free waters. For example, Sitka spruce, which may take up to 300 years to reach 50 centimeters in diameter, take an average of only 86 years to thicken up along salmon streams.

The study emphasizes the connected nature of nature and suggests that forest and fish management should be unified.

Source: www.calacademy.org

picture is ruined and the whole puzzle falls apart.

“I don’t know which pieces of nature are holding the forest puzzle together. Me, I don’t want to throw away the salmon or the owl pieces.

“But I can think of some people pieces that might be expendable!”

Initiative: Tool, or Weapon?

By Larry Cook

When we look at the current ballot coming up this fall we see what has become more and more common, a variety of Initiatives. Like the gradual erosion of so many of our other freedoms, I believe this valuable process has become depleted.

The constitution of the state of Washington clearly sets out in the first sentence of the LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT description,

“...but the people reserve to themselves the power to propose bills, laws, and to enact or reject the same at the polls, independent of the legislature.”

This process is a protection for the people. However, like other protections, the greedy, the politically vindictive and the unscrupulous very easily abuse it.

We must first accept that we are in a representative government, and this requires our legislators to govern. When they do not do so effectively, we must remove them and select others who will do a better job. This is our job, as participants in this representative government. When we do not do our jobs... well, – to quote Pogo – “I have seen the enemy and they is us.”

I see the initiative process as a tool that should be reserved for the extreme needs and concerns of the citizens. Lately it has become the weapon of choice for special interest groups. These “constitutional anarchists” use feel-good language in promoting their agenda in order to shame us into support for their position, and we become co-conspirators in this act of effectively hog-tying

our legislators.

Single-issue initiatives rarely take into account the larger picture of the presenting problem. They tend to be superficial quick-fixes and sadly done with a “that’ll show ‘em” attitude. WE are THEM, and there is no free lunch! When we allow are ourselves to be seduced by this simple rhetoric, we are responsible for the political mess we so often rail about.



WE are THEM and there is no free lunch!

Having said this, what should we do?

First and foremost, I believe we must hold our elected officials and legislators responsible for what happens in Olympia.

We must regularly and consistently engage them to explain, and be accountable for, their part in what happens within the session.

I am regularly told that “it’s too hard!” Is it now? Is it easier to do their job yourself? That is what you are doing through the initiative process, you know.

This is also what we do when we fall for the siren song of the “constitutional terrorist” whose simple solutions and quick fixes are

really a “paper blizzard” that clogs up, confuses and frustrates the legislative process in Olympia.

The initiative system should be used very sparingly and as an item of last resort, not as the first shot, in order to reap the true value it holds as a proper tool of the people.

Christianity and Democrats, continued

right now. The far right is seizing political power and pushing its narrow-minded agenda.

Where did the far right come from? Remember the 1980s and 1990s with Pat Robertson’s Christian Coalition and Jerry Falwell’s Moral Majority? Over time

and by over-simplifying issues these two religious movements became strong, politically powerful and rich. Some would say through their evolution those far right groups became corrupt (wow, did they raise the money!).

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Lewis County Democrats 2005 Annual Salmon Barbecue

**Saturday, September 10th,
starting at 3 p.m.**

**Hosted by the Zieskes,
647 NW St Helens, Chehalis**

Adults: \$25 (prepaid by 09/05)
\$30 (purchased after 09/05)

CHILDREN: Under 14: \$10.00
Under 5: Free

WE'RE STARTING NOW!

Eight Lewis County offices are up for election in 2006.

All monies from this Non-Exempt Fundraiser will go into our candidates' fund. Order your advance tickets NOW and help support our Democratic Candidates!

Contact: (360) 740-9729

(360) 748-1444 (after 6:00 p.m.)

SAVE THE DATE!

Lewis County Democrats -- 417 N. Pearl #9 -- Centralia, WA 98531

(360) 330-5006 -- www.lewiscountymocrats.net

Christianity and Democrats, continued

The suggestion they became corrupt is introduced by Jim Wallis in his excellent book, God's Politics – Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It. Wallis says powerful becomes corrupt, that the religious right went for political power putting aside its religion, morals and goals.

Wallis also speaks of presidential candidate George W. Bush making moral promises during his campaign and then not following through.

On dangerous religion Wallis says, "In Christian theology, it is not nations that rid the world of evil – they

are too often caught up in complicated webs of political power, economic interests, cultural clashes, and nationalistic dreams. But God has been given the responsibility of overcoming evil to any nation-state, much less a superpower with enormous wealth and particular national interests. To continue to confuse the roles of God and the church with those of the American nation, as George Bush seems to do repeatedly, is a serious theological error that some might say borders on idolatry or blasphemy." Pretty strong words? Get the book, read the book and let's begin the debate.

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Candidates FUNd Kickoff

Beginning on Saturday, September 10th with the **Annual Salmon Barbecue**, the Lewis County Democrats have set out to raise \$\$\$\$\$\$ for the 8 Lewis County Elected Offices open for Democrats to take back in the 2006 Election. Our current 2006 goal is \$16,000 — \$2,000 per office. These offices are up for grabs! Democrats take heart...we can take back these offices by raising money for candidates.

1. Lewis County Assessor
2. Lewis County Auditor
3. Lewis County Clerk
4. Lewis County Commissioner - District 3
5. Lewis County Coroner
6. Lewis County Prosecutor
7. Lewis County Sheriff
8. Lewis County Treasurer

You ask, "How can I help?" Well, here's how! Save the Date and mark your calendar for the **Annual Salmon Barbecue**. Then send in your \$25 for each adult plus \$10 for each of your children under 14 years of age (we know you'll be bringing them). Demo Buddies under 5 years are free! Take advantage of the prepay option by paying for your tickets before September 5th. After the 5th, adult tickets increase to \$30.

The Zieskes -- Deanna, Lew, and Kelly -- are our hosts. We will be serving up luscious Salmon with all the trimmings starting at 3 pm Saturday, September 10th, at their home — 647 NW St. Helens Avenue, in the Chehalis Westside Historic District. Rain or shine...just got a new roof on the Carriage House...plenty big enough for our gathering if for some reason it rains.

Who ever said that fund raising has to be hard work or boring? With the **Annual Salmon Barbecue** the Lewis County Democrats are out to make it FUNd Raising Bucks. Come to the Kick-off! Hey, maybe your ticket will win the free drawing.

**WE'RE STARTING NOW!
IT'S NOT TOO SOON TO
MAKE SOME \$\$\$ FOR
OUR CANDIDATES**

Please fill out the coupon, cut it out, then send it in with your check. Help us build the Candidates Fund.

Count Me In!

I can't come to the Salmon Barbecue, but I am pleased to send you this check for the Lewis County Democrats' Campaign Fund!

Name: _____

Address: _____

Employer: _____

Please make checks payable to Lewis County Democrats
Mailing address: 417 N. Pearl # 9, Centralia WA 98531

The Chair's Corner

Are You A Lewis County Democrat, Too?

By Jan Nontell, Lewis County Democrats Chair

Personally, I believe that many Lewis County residents are actually Democrats--they just don't know it yet.

Too often people are told that all Democrats are extremist lefties. Sure, there are extremists on both sides of the political spectrum, but that just makes life a bit more interesting for those of us not on the extreme edges.

It is time that the Lewis County Democrats let the community, if not the entire world, know why we are Democrats and what it is that Democrats believe. So we sat down together and talked about what is important to us as a political party, what we believe and why we vote the way we do. Here it is straight from the donkey's mouth, a partial list of what we, the Lewis County Democrats believe in – and if you believe in the same things then you just might be a Democrat too.

If you believe in the Constitution, the Bill of Rights and due process under the law, you just might be a Democrat.

If you believe that our families deserve affordable health care so Moms and Dads don't have to worry about how to pay for the doctor when their child is sick, you just might be a Democrat.

If you believe in making our families, communities and nation stronger, you just might be a Democrat.

If you believe in freedom, liberty and equality, you just might be a Democrat.

If you value opportunity, prosperity and economic responsibility, you just might be a Democrat.

If you support our troops and understand that we as a nation have the responsibility to take care of them when they come home from overseas in need of medical care, you just might be a Democrat.

If you believe that a day's work should be paid with a living wage rather than subsistence-level wages, then you just might be a Democrat.

If you believe that a good education is the right of every person – and that education is important for the future of this county, this state and this nation you just might be a Democrat.



If you believe that every person has the right to worship (or not worship) as their heart and conscious lead them, you just might be a Democrat.

If you believe that the child, adult, and elderly are as important as the fetus, you just might be a Democrat.

If you believe that the truth is important for a democracy, you just might be a Democrat.

If you believe in a free and fair press that is willing to investigate the issues and that the news should be more than what is happening with Michael Jackson or the latest celebrity scandal and if you believe that the American people are able to comprehend facts rather than conjecture, hyperbole and spin, you just might be a Democrat.

If you understand that a solid infrastructure and services that benefit the entire community need to be paid for by the community, you just might be a Democrat.

If you believe in diversity of thought, opinion and ideology you, just might be a Democrat.

If you realize that there are consequences for every action and that what seems best for the moment is not always best for the long-term, you just might be a Democrat.

And if you are a Democrat, or even if you think you might be a Democrat, we invite you to join with us as we work to make this community and this nation a better place for all people.

If you have questions or need information, feel free to email me at chair@lewiscountymocrats.net

Christianity and Democrats, concluded

There's little question that the far right has been successful in recent years. They have helped win elections by focusing on abortion and gay rights. We say: 'but we only support pro choice – advocating the right to legalized abortion as always safe, legal and rare.'

They say: 'gay rights erode family values.'

We know that is not true.

Enough for you?

Why is it that Democrats can't or won't talk about their faith regardless of their religious affiliation? We can and we now must, or we will continue to lose elections.

Democrats must BEGIN THE DEBATE! We must make it clear that faith is not a political tool: it is private and must be kept private. We must also make it clear that there is nothing wrong with my faith leading me to a conclusion about a moral issue that differs from your conclusion about that same moral issue.

Most importantly, we must not let our opponents define us. We must define ourselves!

Dues Payment

*Yes--I want to support the Lewis County Democrats!
Here are my \$10.00 Annual Dues for 2005 .*

Please use this coupon to send in your Membership Dues. Make your **\$10.00 (per-person)** check payable to:

Lewis County Democrats
417 N. Pearl #9
Centralia, WA 98531

Your Name: _____

2nd Person: _____

3rd person: _____

Your Address: _____

City: _____ ZIP: _____

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____ (We will gratefully accept a larger amount)

Your contribution helps support the Demogram, our web site and other party-building expenses.

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"Howdy, Pardner--See You at the Fair!"