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NEWS FROM AROUND THE STATE FOR 8/18/08 provided by the Associated Press

By Dedrick Allan 18/08/2008

VOTERS SENT IN BALLOTS WHILE TOP TWO PRIMARY'S FATE STILL UNCERTAIN

Washington's contested "top two" primary election makes its debut tomorrow, with state officials predicting near-record turnout and political parties waiting in the wings for another possible court challenge. Ballots went to voters on Aug. 1. For the first time since 2003, voters can skip back and forth across party lines as they pick finalists for governor, Congress, the judiciary, the Legislature and other statewide offices. Under the top two system, the two candidates for each office who receive the most votes, regardless of party, will advance to the general election ballot. That means two candidates from the same party could advance to the general election, while others are shut out. But not everyone is happy: The state Republican, Democratic and Libertarian parties' legal challenges of the new system still linger in the background. State Democratic Party Chairman Dwight Pelz says the candidates' ability to decide how they are identified will confuse voters. Some of the labels candidates have pinned on themselves are Progressive Democrat, G.O.P and Salmon Yoga Party.

HELICOPTER CRASH VICTIM IDENTIFIED

The Kitsap County sheriff's office says a pilot killed in a private helicopter crash is believed to be 68-year-old Myron Aadland. Deputy Scott Wilson said Monday that Aadland's family had been notified of the crash, but authorities were still searching for Aadland's identification in the helicopter's wreckage. Wilson says the body of the pilot was recovered after Sunday afternoon's crash in the Olalla area. There was no fire. Wilson says Aadland owned the helicopter. Wilson says the Kitsap County coroner's office will conduct an autopsy and make the official identification. Wilson says Aadland took off from the Bremerton National Airport Sunday afternoon in a Robinson R-22 helicopter. Wilson says authorities believe Aadland was flying to his house in Olalla where he had built a helicopter landing pad.

SILVERDALE HOTEL FIRE BLAMED ON BEAUTY BARK IN VENTILATION SYSTEM

Beauty bark that somehow fell into a hotel's ventilation system and caught fire is being blamed for smoke that filled parts of the hotel in Silverdale and led to the evacuation of about 130 guests. No injuries were reported from Saturday afternoon's two-alarm blaze. The guests of the Oxford Suites Hotel were able to return to their rooms after the building was checked. Central Kitsap Fire and

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Rescue spokeswoman Theresa MacLennan says smoke traveled through the building's heating and air-conditioning system. She says how the beauty bark caught on fire is under investigation.

70-YEAR-OLD MOTORCYCLIST DIES IN PIERCE COUNTY

A 70-year-old man riding a motorcycle died when he attempted to pass an SUV, hit the vehicle and crashed near Elbe, Wash., in Pierce County. The State Patrol says Harold G. Zoll was killed in Saturday afternoon's accident along State Route 7, a twisting, two-lane highway. The driver of the Toyota 4Runner, a 19-year-old Kent, Wash., woman, was not injured.



FORMER CONGRESSWOMAN WINS 2008 MADISON AWARD

Former Washington Democratic congresswoman Jolene Unsoeld will receive the 2008 James Madison Award for her dedication to the First Amendment and the cause of open government. The award is given annually by the Washington Coalition for Open Government. Coalition president Toby Nixon says the selection committee picked Unsoeld for her "consistent commitment to the cause of the public's right to know what its government is doing, as she has demonstrated throughout her career in words and actions." Unsoeld, 76, represented District 3 in Washington state from 1989-1995. Unsoeld will be honored at a breakfast at the Washington Athletic Club in Seattle on Sept. 19.

COOLER TEMPERATURES EXPECTED

Washington's weather is cooling down after a weekend of record-setting heat. The National Weather Service posed "red flag" warnings for additional thunderstorms over all of Washington except the coast last night. Officials said lightning in those storms could pose a risk of sparking wildfires. But the forecast calls for cooler temperatures working their way eastward. Seattle recorded a high temperature of 87 degrees yesterday, tying a record set in 1997. It also recorded record highs of 88 degrees on Saturday and 92 degrees on Friday. Temperatures on Saturday reached 94 in Shelton, 91 in Puyallup and 98 in Vancouver, Wash. Eastern Washington hit the triple digits, with Ellensburg at 105 and Walla Walla at 104. On Tuesday, a storm system is forecast to move into the state, bringing the possibility of up to two inches of rain to the southwest-facing slopes of the Olympic and Cascade mountains. A smog watch for the Puget Sound area - King, Pierce, Snohomish and Kitsap counties - was canceled yesterday because an onshore flow helped to disperse pollutants.

FEDS SAY I-5 BRIDGE COULD HARM SALMON

Federal fisheries officials say a proposed new Interstate-5 bridge across the Columbia River between Oregon and Washington could promote development harmful to fish. Plans are being considered to build the bridge to ease a bottleneck. The National Marine Fisheries Service says it wants a better study of development and other potential impacts on protected species. They say in a letter to the Oregon Department of Transportation that a seven-year construction project, if not timed right, could bring pollution and underwater noise lethal to fish. And they say once it's built, the storm water running off of the more than 40 acres of new pavement could send oil and chemicals into streams fish depend on.

TRAFFIC CHANGES AT PEACE ARCH

Drivers traveling into Canada will face a traffic change beginning today at the Peace Arch crossing in Blaine. All northbound border traffic crossing at the Peace Arch will be detoured to the

southbound Interstate 5 lanes just south of the D Street exit to Blaine. The detour will remain in place until September 2009, while crews build a new northbound I-5 freeway portion and bridge. Blaine's D Street exit will remain open but there will be no access to northbound I-5. Instead, drivers will be detoured east and then north to the Pacific Highway crossing, often called the truck crossing, to Canada.

I-405 PROJECT IN BELLEVUE ENDING A WEEK EARLY

The Washington State Department of Transportation says a project to widen heavily traveled I-405 in Bellevue has been completed a week ahead of schedule. The Wilburton Tunnel was demolished in two weekends, not three as had been anticipated by the WSDOT. The department said the stretch of freeway between Southeast Eighth Street and Interstate 90 would reopen in time for this morning's commute.

COLLISION NEAR SPOKANE KILLS ONE

A Spokane Valley man was killed yesterday when his Chevrolet Tahoe was hit by an SUV along U.S. Highway 2 near Spokane. Sixty-five-year-old Dennis L. McGaffee died at the scene of the 11:50 a.m. collision about three miles east of Airway Heights. The Washington State Patrol says a 57-year-old passenger was taken to Sacred Heart Medical Center. Also injured was a 22-year-old Spokane man driving a 2001 Ford that collided with McGaffee's vehicle.

Return

Le Post-Intelligence

SEATTLE DESK AT 206-448-8030

Editorial: Washington state should empower the public by providing detailed online information about state and local tax rates. It's a natural next step for a state that leads in both technology and transparency. **B5**

COMING UP
The ongoing conflict of private property rights vs. urban trees considered beneficial to the local landscape continues to build with several new disputes, unsettled.

TUESDAY

On Tuesday, Washington state holds its primary election, much earlier than the usual mid-September primary voters are used to. Lawmakers opted to move the primary date ahead to make it easier to count ballots, deal with recounts or contested primary contests and to get the absentee ballots out in time for the November general election.

Each candidate for partisan office may state a political party that he or she prefers, but a candidate's preference doesn't imply that the candidate is nominated or endorsed by the party.

The top two applies only to elections for partisan office. This includes the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, the Legislature and the governor. But it doesn't apply to the nonpartisan race or to nonpartisan races for the Judiciary or School Board.

To find your polling place go to: www.kingcounty.gov/elections.aspx or call **206-296-VOTE (8683)**. Or visit www.sectate.wa.gov (click on "Elections & Voting"). Absentee ballots must be postmarked by Aug. 19.

<p>SAMPLE</p> <p>OFFICIAL BALDWIN COUNTY, GEORGIA</p> <p>PRISONER IDENTIFICATION CARD</p> <p>INVESTIGATION</p> <p>DATE: 11/15/2008</p> <p>PRISONER NAME: STEVEN L. BROWN</p> <p>INMATE ID: 12345678</p>	
<p>1. NAME: STEVEN L. BROWN</p> <p>2. DOB: 01/15/1975</p> <p>3. SEX: M</p> <p>4. RACE: W</p> <p>5. HEIGHT: 5'10"</p> <p>6. WEIGHT: 180</p> <p>7. EYES: B</p> <p>8. HAIR: B</p> <p>9. SCARS/SCARS: 1</p> <p>10. TATTOOS: 1</p> <p>11. ALIASES: 1</p> <p>12. CURRENT ADDRESS: 1234 Main St, Atlanta, GA 30301</p> <p>13. PHONE: 404-123-4567</p> <p>14. EMPLOYER: ABC Company</p> <p>15. EDUCATION: High School</p> <p>16. RELIGION: Christian</p> <p>17. MARITAL STATUS: Single</p> <p>18. CHILDREN: 2</p> <p>19. PARENTS: 2</p> <p>20. SIBLINGS: 2</p> <p>21. ANCESTRY: American</p> <p>22. ETHNICITY: White</p> <p>23. LANGUAGE: English</p> <p>24. SPECIAL NEEDS: None</p> <p>25. MEDICAL HISTORY: None</p> <p>26. PSYCHIATRIC HISTORY: None</p> <p>27. SUBSTANCE ABUSE HISTORY: None</p> <p>28. CRIMINAL HISTORY: None</p> <p>29. CURRENT CHARGES: None</p> <p>30. CURRENT STATUS: Inmate</p> <p>31. CURRENT LOCATION: Inmate</p> <p>32. CURRENT ROOM: Inmate</p> <p>33. CURRENT CELL: Inmate</p> <p>34. 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Adding to the discussion

Today, 11:15 AM · **NEW**

The primary election is under way. The League of Women Voters forums have ended, voter's pamphlets have been received, ballots are in thousands of Island County homes and some people have already voted. To add to the public discussion, here are some thoughts on the races that will be decided in the Aug. 19 primary in Island County.

Coupeville Library expansion

Sno-Isle Regional Library, working with the Town of Coupeville and the public, has come up with a very affordable way to expand the town's library. Costs were kept down by the decision to increase the size of the present library rather than build a new one.

Residents are being asked to vote on two issues. First, should the service area should be expanded to the boundaries of the school district, to assure that every household that is likely to use the facility helps pay for it? The answer to this is an obvious "yes."

Second, voters are being asked to approve a very modest property tax increase of 7 cents per thousand to finance the expansion. The library will approximately double in size, giving it the room it needs to expand programs for children and adults, enlarge its collection, and add a much-needed public meeting room for the town.

Both proposals deserve overwhelming support from the community. A library is a treasure and must keep pace with growth. For 7 cents a thousand, the Coupeville Library proposal is a bargain.

Superior Court judge

The primary election will decide the race for Island County Superior Court Judge. Incumbent Vickie Churchill is being challenged by local attorney Craig Platt.

Whether judges should be subject to elections is a controversial matter. Platt, in fact, told the Whidbey News-Times that he disagrees with it. But still he's challenged an outstanding judge who easily deserves another term.

Requiring judges to face the electorate is a good thing. If any misconduct is alleged, then voters can judge the judge. And elections force judges to get out of their comfort zone, meet the people, and explain what they've been doing the last four years.

In Judge Churchill's case, that's a lot. Not only does she preside over half of the Superior Court cases, she has been instrumental in launching the successful drug court, the future mental health court, and in building the new juvenile detention center. She's a tough judge, but one with a heart for giving willing people the help they need to keep them out of prison. Her work has been exemplary and she should be a shoo-in for another term.

Platt is bright, experienced and devoted to justice. Some day, he could make an outstanding judge in his own right. But we don't need a new judge at this time.

District 1 commissioner

The race for Island County Commissioner, District 1, is fascinating. South and Central Whidbey have four candidates to pare to two in the primary, and no elected incumbent with a heavy advantage. Throw in the fact that one serious candidate, Curt Gordon, is not affiliated with a political party, and you have one of the most interesting elections in years in Island County.

The "Top Two" in the primary election outcome should certainly include Democrat Helen Price Johnson, an outstanding leader on the South Whidbey School Board with extensive experience in small business and community volunteerism. She's too good a candidate

<http://www.printthis.clickability.com/pt/cpt?action=cpt&title=Adding+to+the+discussion+-+PNWLocalNe...> 8/8/2008

to pass up.

The other primary favorite isn't so easy to decide.

Phil Bakke, the affable appointed Republican incumbent, is the former planning director with extensive knowledge of the minutiae of planning. Reece Rose, another Republican, is intent on not raising taxes whatever the cost, and Curt Gordon, the independent, has a long history in private business, with the South Whidbey Parks District, and as a community volunteer.

Rose, a former Libertarian, is too prickly for the job. Good labor relations is important, and she's too quick to blame spending on employees for the county's upcoming budget woes.

That leaves Bakke and Gordon, both of whom are quite qualified. But from the District 1 perspective, Gordon is the better choice. He'll bring a new approach, he's got deep roots in the community through his family, business and volunteer efforts, and he's not afraid to propose new ideas, such as allowing higher densities along transit routes.

Sending Helen Price Johnson and Curt Gordon to the finals in November would assure District 1 a fresh start on the Board of Island County Commissioners.

Find this article at:

<http://www.pnwlocalnews.com/opinion/26327794.html>

☐ Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

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18th District race catches parties' attention

Thursday, August 07, 2008

By KATHIE DURBIN, Columbian Staff Writer

A lively race is shaping up in the 18th District between Republican Jaime Herrera, the appointed incumbent in House Position 1, and Democrat VaNessa Duplessie, the public relations manager who is challenging her.

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Both political parties are putting money into the race, an indication that they consider the seat competitive.

When Duplessie filed for the seat last year, she thought she would be challenging Rep. Richard Curtis, a La Center Republican. "I had already filed for the seat. Then things changed," she said.

After Curtis resigned last October in the midst of a sex scandal, Clark and Cowlitz county commissioners appointed Herrera, former legislative assistant to U.S. Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, to fill out his term and represent the 18th District in the 2008 Legislature.

Now Herrera, 29, and Duplessie, 36, are competing for a full two-year term representing the 18th, which includes Ridgefield, La Center, Camas, most of Washougal and unincorporated areas of north Clark County and south Cowlitz County.

Under Washington's top two primary, both will advance to the general election regardless of the outcome of the Aug. 19 primary.

In the 2008 session, Herrera quickly aligned herself with the House Republican Caucus and her fellow 18th District Republicans, Sen. Joe Zarelli and Rep. Ed Orcutt. She voted the party line on budget and social issues while learning the ropes as a member of the House Transportation, Education Appropriations and Technology, Energy and Communications committees. She hopes to win a seat on the Health Care and Wellness Committee if voters send her to Olympia for a full two-year term.

Herrera has raised \$79,000 to date, including \$2,500 from the House Republican Organizing Committee and \$1,000 from 18th District Republicans — an impressive number for a candidate running her first campaign.

That may reflect the advantage of incumbency.

"I've had tremendous reception on the doorstep," she said. "People say, 'I saw you on TV. That's been a bit of a surprise. I feel like I'm running my first race.'"

What she's hearing on those doorsteps, she said, is that homeowners feel overburdened by taxes.

The candidates

VaNessa Duplessie

- **Party:** Democrat
- **Residence:** Ridgefield
- **Job:** Public relations manager for technology company
- **Quote:** "I think the 18th needs balanced representation and someone who is able to provide information from the inside."
- **Campaign funds raised:** \$46,913

Jaime Herrera

- **Party:** Republican
- **Residence:** Ridgefield
- **Job:** State representative
- **Quote:** "There's nothing but challenges ahead of us."
- **Campaign funds raised:** \$79,028

"I continue to hear that the number one issue is property taxes, and I'm in affluent neighborhoods that have been around for a long time," she said.

The 2009 Legislature will face significant challenges, Herrera said. "Sometimes I think there's nothing but challenges ahead of us. We have a deficit to deal with. But I have already said I won't raise taxes to get us out of it."

Herrera's endorsements include the Human Life PAC, the Washington Farm Bureau PAC and the National Federation of Independent Business.

Duplessie, the mother of two young children, says she's running in part to advance children's issues in the Legislature. "I'm passionate about children's issues," she said.

A resident of Clark County since 2001, she ran for the Ridgefield school board in 2005 but was disqualified after it was determined that she was not a resident of the school district. In 2006, she won the George C. Marshall Public Leadership Award for her work as a youth advocate. She continues to volunteer at her son's school while telecommuting to her job with a Bellevue software development company.

A district in flux

It's been 14 years since a Democrat was elected in the conservative 18th. But Duplessie said the district is changing with an influx of new residents, and she believes they would benefit from having a representative who is a member of the party in power in Olympia.

"I think the 18th needs balanced representation and someone who is able to provide information from the inside," she said. "I want to help the 18th by being in the room."

Duplessie touts her background in the private sector and as a wife and mother. "I have spent my life in small business," she said. "My grandparents owned a business. I bring to the table a great knowledge of building coalitions. I've done that in my career and in my volunteer work. I feel that as a parent and a property owner, all my experience in life will help me."

In contrast, Herrera is single and spent a good share of her 20s working in the Bush White House and as a congressional staffer. That prepared her to be an effective legislator, she said. "I think my federal experience helps. I worked on policies that affect Washington."

Herrera noted that she grew up in Clark County and graduated from Prairie High School, while Duplessie has lived in the county for only seven years.

Dealing with the state's projected \$2.7 billion deficit will require "prioritizing the dollars that are spent, making sure we fund essential state services," and providing a supportive environment for small businesses, Duplessie said.

At the same time, she supports Gov. Chris Gregoire's decision to invest the state budget surplus of the past three years in roads and schools. "The residents of this state have benefited," she said.

Duplessie has received \$2,000 from the Washington State Democratic Central Committee, \$3,500 from 18th District Democrats and \$500 from Cowlitz County Democrats. She's been endorsed by Washington Conservation Voters, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, and several elected officials, including Washougal Mayor Stacey Sellers and Vancouver City Councilman Tim Leavitt.

Kathie Durbin covers politics and the Legislature. Call her at 360-735-4523 or e-mail kathie.durbin@columbian.com.

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The Seattle Times

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Prentice, Martinez in Legislative District 11

Sen. Margarita Prentice's two decades in the Legislature and leadership of the all-important Ways and Means Committee positions her as one of the state's most immovable elected officials.

Voters deserve to have entrenched politicians challenged, though. District 11 voters should send Prentice, D-Renton, and fellow Democrat Juan Martinez through to the general election.

Democrat Scott McKay, the third candidate in the race, should not be considered beyond a name on the ballot. McKay is raising no money and is vague on what he wants to do if elected.

The new top-two primary allows two very different politicians of the same party to thrash it out in a reliably Democratic, working-class district. The 11th District includes parts of south Seattle, south Renton, Burien, SeaTac and Tukwila.

Prentice is a tough politician who has served her district well, which is all the more reason she should be able to engage Martinez in a substantive campaign.

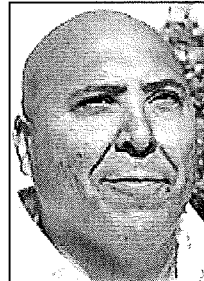
Martinez — who has worked as a pastry chef for nonprofits and the state Department of Social and Health Services — has taken his challenge seriously and has knocked on more than 5,000 doors. Martinez has a lot more work ahead of him if he wants to beat Prentice. Sore knuckles will take him only part of the way.

What Martinez needs now are more substantive solutions to the issues he has said will be his priorities in Olympia: transportation, education, health care, the environment, homeownership and financial accountability. Martinez has yet to flesh out any real concrete plans to address these oft-used buzzwords.

Prentice has a solid track record to campaign on and has a grasp on the importance the private sector plays in the economy. She must remind voters of that record while also explaining what it is she believes she can still accomplish after 20 years on the job.



Margarita Prentice, Democratic incumbent



Juan Martinez, Democratic challenger

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http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/local/374841_toptwo14.html

Voters will cast ballots in unloved 'top 2' primary

Thursday, August 14, 2008

Last updated 7:54 a.m. PT

By GREGORY ROBERTS
P-I REPORTER

The "top two" primary, which makes its debut Tuesday, could be the voting solution that nobody much wants.

And although the U.S. Supreme Court resolved - at least for the time being - a long-running legal struggle when it ruled in March in favor of the top two system, the decision may have raised more questions than it answered.

Such as, will it stick? And if it does, how will it affect politics in Washington state?

"The top two primary is just silliness piled on top of silliness," state Democratic Party Chairman Dwight Pelz said recently - a view shared by Pelz' Republican counterpart, Luke Esser.

But Secretary of State Sam Reed, a Republican who is the state's top elections officer, said, "I think the people of the state are really going to like it."

Nonetheless, Reed said, the top two set-up is "very much my second choice."

"I think it's still a little strange to have potentially two people of the same party in the general election," he said.

That outcome is certain in several state House races that attracted candidates from only one party, and it's likely in other districts that drew both Democrats and Republicans but are dominated by one party's supporters.

Under the top two system, all candidates for a given office are grouped together on the ballot. Under rules promulgated by Reed, each candidate can choose - or make up - whatever party label appears by his or her name: Democrat, Republican, GOP (the choice of gubernatorial candidate Dino Rossi), Salmon Yoga (state Senate candidate Timothy "Cleaver" Stoddard of Anacortes) or "no party preference" (among others, state insurance commissioner candidate Curt Fackler, the chairman of the Spokane County Republican Party). The first- and second-place finishers in the primary advance to the November general election, even if both claim the same party affiliation.

Reed would prefer the now-outlawed blanket primary, which for decades in Washington state allowed voters to pick freely among candidates on the ballot, with the top vote-getters in each major party moving on to November. So would the Washington state Grange, a politically active, nonpartisan, rural advocacy group, spokesman Dan Hammock said. But the Grange nonetheless spearheaded the 2004 citizen initiative that established the top two system.

"This is the one we figured would fly," Hammock said.

It's unclear, though, how long it will stay airborne.

One reason the Supreme Court ruled against the political parties and upheld the top two system is that it hasn't been tried yet, so whatever damage it might cause the parties is speculative. After Tuesday, party leaders say, they'll have evidence with which to renew their legal attack.

"I have a continuing concern with Democrats or others who don't have the best interests of the Republican Party in mind selecting Republican Party candidates for the general election," Esser said.

Beyond that, he said, the system "deprives the people of choice in the guise of giving them more choice." Esser argues that even if a Republican candidate for the Legislature stands little chance of winning a seat in central Seattle, for example, a bipartisan general election allows for the clash of ideas.

"We water down that debate, and we water down those choices with the top two when you have two candidates from the same party (in the general election), and you're just arguing over which flavor of vanilla is the best," he said.

Both Pelz and Esser argue that a wide-open primary can't compensate for a potentially narrow-spectrum general election, because the November balloting draws more voters and more attention and actually determines who takes office.

"If you're a Republican in Seattle, you may never get a chance to vote for a Republican for the Legislature, because the top two candidates might be Democrats," Pelz said.

And when there are both a Democrat and a Republican in the primary field, the chances of a Green Party, Libertarian or other minor party candidate making it to the November ballot are virtually nil, Pelz and Esser say.

Other, broader effects of the top-two system are harder to predict because it's untried. But drawing at least in part on the experience of Louisiana, which has operated a top-two system since the 1970s, politicians are imagining several possible outcomes, including:

- *Manipulation of the procedure.* "You're going to see people start trying to game the system, and trying to get the right combination of people to file (their candidacies) to keep their strongest opponent off the (November) ballot," former state GOP Chairman Chris Vance said. Both Esser and Pelz worry about scheming crossover voters who will vote for a weak candidate they don't like in order to elevate that candidate into a November showdown with the candidate they actually favor - a phenomenon of blanket primaries that could be intensified under top two. And, Vance said, "You're going to start seeing people who really are Republicans run as Democrats in Seattle."
- *The clash of extremes.* Although blanket primaries can produce a similar result in the general election, the top two system seems ripe for it, especially if there's a crowded field of legitimate candidates. Consider a lineup of one hard-right candidate, one far-left candidate and four moderates: With the moderates splitting the majority in the middle, the two extreme candidates could ride the support of their zealots - potentially less than 20 percent of the vote on each side - into a November face-off.
- *A dilution of the influence of the regular Democratic and Republican organizations.* Top two removes the "official party nominee" label from the primary winners, a point spelled out on the ballot itself. Parties can hold conventions to choose favored candidates, but that equates only to an endorsement. It will be up to the parties to establish their clout - through campaign donations, use of sophisticated voter data bases or publicity - with a primary electorate expanded beyond committed partisans.

"The biggest impact is going to be the continued ambiguity over the role of the party in determining who their candidate is," Democratic campaign consultant Christian Sinderman said.

One of Sinderman's clients this year is Reuven Carlyle, who says the top-two primary gives him a huge boost in his effort to defeat fellow Democrat John Burbank, a longtime party insider who has been endorsed by Pelz, in their bid for an open state House seat in the solidly Democratic 36th District. But Sinderman doesn't like top two, if for no other reason than that it changes the rules of a game he's used to playing.

"It definitely raises some new challenges," he said.

TOP TWO PRIMARY

- The top two primary allows voters to choose among all candidates running for each office. Voters do not have to declare a party affiliation to vote. The two candidates for each office who receive the most votes in the primary - regardless of party affiliation - advance to the general election. That means two Republicans or two Democrats could face off in November.
- Each candidate for partisan office may state a political party that he or she prefers, but a candidate's preference doesn't imply that the candidate is nominated or endorsed by the party.
- The top two applies only to elections for partisan office. This includes the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, the Legislature and the governor. But it doesn't apply to the presidential race or to nonpartisan races for the judiciary or school board.

ELECTION '08

- The primary is Tuesday.
- For information and to find your polling place go to www.kingcounty.gov/elections.aspx or call 206-296-VOTE (8683). Or visit www.secstate.wa.gov (click on "Elections & Voting"). Absentee ballots must be postmarked by Aug. 19.

P-I reporter Gregory Roberts can be reached at 206-448-8022 or gregoryroberts@seattlepi.com.

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Thursday, August 14, 2008 - Page updated at 12:00 AM

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McDermott faces 5 challengers but no real re-election challenge

By Emily Heffter
 Seattle Times staff reporter

U.S. Rep. Jim McDermott drained his campaign coffers this spring to pay \$1 million in legal fees to House Minority Leader John Boehner, finally ending a decadelong dispute over an illegally taped telephone call.

That blow came just weeks after news broke that an alleged Iraqi spy had paid for a 2002 trip McDermott took to Iraq.

The combination should have made McDermott, who has served 20 years in Seattle's heavily Democratic 7th Congressional District, more vulnerable to political challenge than he's been in years.

On top of that, this year's new top-two primary system could allow a Democratic challenger to face McDermott in the general election.

Still, his five opponents in Tuesday's primary election all agree they are the longest of longshots to topple the 71-year-old congressman.

"I started this more or less as a lark," said one candidate, 82-year-old Al Schaefer. "I figure there's no way I can unseat him. That was not my goal."

Even Republican rising star Steve Beren, who got 16 percent of the vote when he challenged McDermott in 2006, said his ultimate goal is to help Republicans statewide. He doesn't necessarily believe he can unseat McDermott, who has gotten at least 75 percent of the vote in each of his re-election bids.

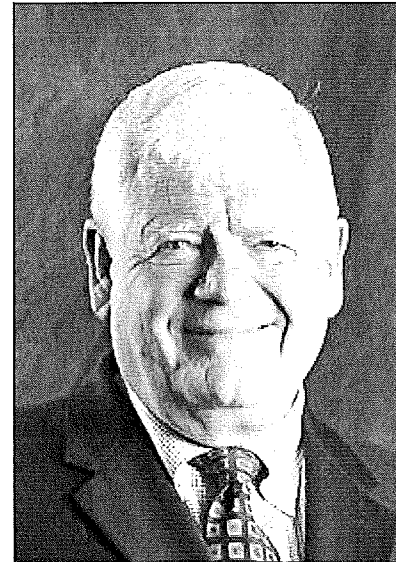
Washington State Republican Party Chairman Luke Esser is more blunt about his party's chances.

"The demographics of Seattle are such that I do not believe that if I could bring Abraham Lincoln back to life, that he could be elected in the city of Seattle," Esser said. "People reflexively vote Democrat."

The 7th District is one of the five most Democratic districts in the country, said University of Washington political-science professor Mark A. Smith.

"People here, they know [McDermott] pretty well, and he has all the advantages of name recognition," Smith said. "He's about as safe a congressional incumbent as you could find."

Beren, 56, is a native New Yorker who was a socialist and Vietnam War



DEAN RUTZ / THE SEATTLE TIMES
 Congressman Jim McDermott

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protester in the 1960s and '70s. Later, after settling in Seattle and marrying, he became a Democrat, voting twice for Bill Clinton and once for Al Gore. But after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, he said, he "came to see that the Republican Party was far superior on foreign policy."

Beren's speech at this spring's state Republican convention earned him support from across the state, and Esser regaled him as "a team player" for being willing to run in a liberal stronghold like Seattle.

As for McDermott, he says Seattle voters understand and agree with his positions, particularly his opposition to President Bush and the Iraq war.

"I'm not sailing into very tough wind in that kind of district," he said.

The other candidates in the race are:

- Schaefer, an independent from Lake City who said he was inspired to run by Republican presidential candidate Ron Paul. He is concerned about the federal deficit and said his campaign is mostly intended to educate voters about the nation's debt.
- Donovan Rivers, 52, a South Seattle Democrat who ran against McDermott two years ago, capturing 10 percent of the primary vote. Rivers, a consultant and small-business owner in Rainier Beach, is a community activist who has served on numerous city and nonprofit committees to help underserved people.

He said McDermott hasn't worked to meet the diverse needs of his constituents. The congressman should be working to fund community events, health clinics and businesses in Seattle's poor south end, Rivers said.

• Vashon Island financial planner Mark Goldman, an independent who is running to the left of McDermott. He's upset that McDermott hasn't pushed harder to impeach President Bush. Goldman says he once handed McDermott a list of about 20 reasons he feels Bush should be impeached, and was disappointed when McDermott put the list in his pocket and wouldn't answer questions about it.

• Goodspaceguy Nelson, a perennial Democratic candidate whose platform rests on the U.S.' making more efforts toward space colonization, is also on the ballot.

Emily Heffter: 206-464-8246 or eheffter@seattletimes.com

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Editorial: Top Two Primary provides you with freedom of choice

Published: 02:33PM August 13th, 2008

It's been four years since voters approved Initiative 872, which created the Top Two Primary system in our state. A lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of I-872 put the system on a temporary holding pattern, but this past March, the U.S. Supreme Court rightfully upheld voters' voices.

Now you get to experience it for the first time.

The Top Two Primary is light years ahead of the previous pick-a-party system, when voters were forced to swear allegiance to one side of the aisle or the other and vote accordingly. In fact, the Top Two Primary puts more power in your hands: You get to choose who qualifies for the general election, not just the top Republican and the top Democrat.

The parties, successful in their fight to overturn the "blanket primary" system that allowed voters to make their choices regardless of party affiliation, fought the Top Two idea in the same manner. They say they should be the ones to choose who represents their specific organization. They want to make it clear to voters — on the ballot — which candidate they support.

But isn't advertising enough? Aren't their messages painfully clear with each political ad you see in newspapers, on television or radio? We think so, and we're not the only ones.

Immediately following the Supreme Court decision in March, state Attorney General Rob McKenna said there is no evidence that political parties would be harmed in the Top Two process. McKenna said the ballot is not the only source of information voters have about any candidate.

Outside of advertising, news coverage highlights platforms and differences between candidates. In this day and age, nearly all of the candidates have their own Web sites. There are also blogs, voters guides with official candidate statements, as well as public forums or debates, where you can hear candidates speak for themselves.

The bottom line is you have the freedom to choose the candidate you prefer, whether it's a Democrat in one race and a Republican in another. And the two candidates with the most votes — regardless of party affiliation or endorsement — will advance to November.

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From the YakimaHerald.com Online News.

Published on Friday, August 15, 2008

Campaigns going down to the wire
Candidates knock on doors and pound pavement in search of votes

by Pat Muir

Yakima Herald-Republic



GORDON KING/Yakima Herald-Republic

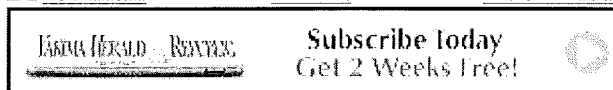
Political signs dominate the southeast corner of the intersection of 16th Avenue and West Lincoln Avenue in Yakima as Renita Kemp and her granddaughter Yariah Hall wait to cross the street on Aug. 14, 2008. Political signs will soon become less numerous as candidates are weeded out in Tuesday's primary election.

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Don't be surprised to see candidates for the state Legislature or the Yakima County commission waving signs on street corners over the next few days.

With thousands of primary ballots still out there and precious little time before they are due Tuesday, local candidates are trying to squeeze out as many last-minute votes as possible.

In addition to their street-corner politicking, they'll be knocking on doors, making phone calls and straightening fallen campaign signs -- all in effort to be among the top two candidates in a couple of crowded fields.

"It's definitely a sprint to the finish at this point," said Al Schweppe, a Yakima attorney running as a Republican for the open 14th District state House seat.

That race, which will determine a successor for retiring veteran lawmaker Mary Skinner, R-Yakima, features a particularly crowded field of five Republicans and one Democrat. Only the two highest vote-getters among them, regardless of party, will advance to the November general election under the state's new top-two primary system.

Besides Schweppe, the Republican candidates are Norm Johnson, a Yakima city councilman and retired school administrator; Bob McLaughlin, a former Union Gap school superintendent and Yakima principal; Aubrey Reeves, a former Union Gap mayor and owner of Aubrey's RV; and Scott Hess, who works for the National Federation of Independent Business. The Democrat is Vickie Ybarra, president of the Yakima school board and director of planning and development for the Yakima Valley Farm Worker's Clinic.

A seventh candidate, Republican attorney J.J. Sandlin will appear on the ballot. But he dropped out of the race in June,

about two weeks after filing to run.

Ybarra jumped out to an early fundraising lead in the race and never looked back. She heads into the primary having raised more than \$45,000, more than a third of the \$114,000 total contributed to candidates in the race.

The race for the District 2 seat on the county commission is only slightly less crowded, with one Democrat and three Republicans, including incumbent Ron Gamache. Besides Gamache, the Republicans are Toppenish farmer Kevin Bouchee and Union Gap Councilman Dan Olson. The Democrat is Wapato Mayor Jesse Farias.

That race, too, has been big with donors, bringing in more than \$111,000. The bulk of that has gone to Bouchee, who is headed to the primary with more than \$73,000.

Those two races are predicted to resonate with voters as well as donors. Their drawing power combined with the popular new top-two primary system has county elections officials predicting 48 percent participation, a sharp jump over the 33 percent turnout for 2006, the last even-year primary, and the 37 percent in 2004, the last presidential-year primary.

The bulk of those predicted votes have not been cast yet. As of Thursday, only 20,703 of the 93,989 ballots sent out by the county auditor to registered voters had been returned. That's about 22 percent. There are more than 230,000 residents in the county, a number that includes children and noncitizens who are ineligible to vote.

And each of the 10 candidates for the two positions has his or her own last-few-days strategy. Johnson is running ads featuring endorsements from 14th District state Sen. Curtis King and 14th District state Rep. Charles Ross. He's also doing the street-corner sign thing, although he concedes that most voters probably aren't going to be swayed by seeing that.

"You might get one or two, though," Johnson said.

McLaughlin is running print and radio ads and is still out there knocking on doors -- "hundreds and hundreds and hundreds," he said.

"I'll continue up to the end," he said. "I am starting to find people who have already voted, though."

Reeves has been standing on the corner with a sign and plans to ramp up his own doorbelling efforts, which he said he hasn't done as much of as he'd like.

"I'm going to hit it heavy," Reeves said.

Schweppe launched a new TV ad this week, critical of Gov. Chris Gregoire and House Democrats, and he's still doorbelling despite having already reached between 3,000 and 4,000 doorsteps.

"I'm looking for voters who have not sent back their ballots yet," he said.

Ybarra has been doorbelling every day and last weekend sent 58 volunteers out on a massive doorbelling mission. All told, she and her volunteers have knocked on more than 5,000 doors she said. That will continue right up until Tuesday.

"We're spending more time -- if it's possible to spend more time -- in direct contact with voters," she said.

Hess said he is switching from a doorbelling emphasis to phone calls and sign-waving in the final days of the campaign. It's quantity over quality at this point, he said.

"They're getting tons of cars as they go by," Hess said of his sign-waving volunteers.

Among the county commission candidates, it's more of the same. They all have their last-minute plans.

Bouchey is running print and radio ads and is still out there in the mornings and evenings, knocking on doors.

"We have not let up," he said.

Farias, too, has been a regular on local streets. And a local Vietnam Veterans of America group plans to help him hold signs on street corners Monday.

"We've also been hitting the phones pretty hard the last few days," Farias said.

Olson has been out straightening fallen campaign signs and knocking on doors.

"There's a lot of (ballots) left out there," he said.

Gamache, who is seeking his third term on the commission but is well behind in fundraising, said he doesn't want to tell all his campaign secrets. But he doesn't have any dramatic last-minute stunts planned, either.

"I'm stepping back and taking a breath," he said. "Most of the hard work is done, and I'm just waiting for the results."

** Pat Muir can be reached at 577-7693 or pmuir@yakimaherald.com.*

The top-two, mail-ballot primary

* Voters have until Tuesday to return their ballots to the Yakima County Auditor's Office on the main floor of the county courthouse, 128 N. Second St. They may be delivered or mailed by that day. If mailed, they do not necessarily have to arrive at the county office by that day.

* Voters may select candidates from any party and do not have to declare an allegiance to one or the other.

* Candidates list their preferred party, but that does not mean they are endorsed by that party.

* The top two candidates, regardless of party, advance to the Nov. 4 general election.

* For more information, go to www.yakimacounty.us/vote or www.vote.wa.gov

* People with questions can call the county auditor's office at 509-574-1400 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.



Wednesday, August 13, 2008 - Page updated at 12:41 AM

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What you need to know about Washington's top-two primary

By Susan Gilmore
Seattle Times staff reporter

Washington state's first top-two primary election will be held Tuesday. We solicited questions from readers about the new primary, and added a few of our own. Here are the answers:

Q: Why are we having a primary in August? Isn't that early?

A: The state used to have its primary in mid-September. But elections officials said they need more time between the primary and the November general election. That's especially true because mail-in ballots only have to be postmarked, not delivered, by election day. So workers were tabulating the primary votes long after election day, and then needed to quickly start getting out the general-election ballots, particularly to military personnel overseas. The state Legislature voted in 2006 to move the primary back to August.

Q: What happened to the primary we used to have?

A: For the past few years, the state has used a "pick-a-party" primary style. Under that system, voters had to choose one party's ballot and could vote only for that party's candidates in partisan races. The system was supported by the political parties, but was unpopular with voters.

Q: How did we end up with the top-two primary?

A: For decades, Washington had what's called a blanket primary, which allowed voters to vote for any candidate in the primary election, and the top Democrat and top Republican moved onto the general election ballot, along with some independent party candidates. However, the political parties didn't like this system because they said it violated their right to decide who runs for office under their labels. So they sued.

In 2000, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled a similar primary system in California was unconstitutional and, in 2003, the 9th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals ruled the blanket primary was unconstitutional. In 2004, the Washington State Grange put Initiative 872 on the ballot, calling for a top-two primary. It passed overwhelmingly.

Q: If the initiative passed in 2004, why is this the first year it is being implemented?

A: The political parties, which sued to get rid of the blanket primary, also sued to block the top-two primary. In 2005 and 2006 federal courts ruled the top two violated the parties' First Amendment right of free association by allowing candidates to specify which political parties they "prefer" without necessarily being party members. That's when the state started using the "pick-a-party" primary system, which required separate party ballots for voters.

The U.S. Supreme Court in March upheld the top-two primary, which opened the door to the state to use it for the first time this month.

Q: What do the parties think about this?

A: They're not happy and have vowed to keep fighting it.

Q: Does this mean I can vote for Republican John McCain for president, but Democrat Christine Gregoire for governor?

A: No. The presidential race will not be on the primary ballot. We had a presidential-primary election and Democratic and Republican caucuses last February.

Q: With the new primary, could we see two Democrats or two Republicans running against each other in November?

A: That's very likely, particularly in areas such as Seattle, which votes heavily for Democrats, and some Eastern Washington districts that strongly favor Republicans.

Q: How will third-party candidates fare under the new primary?

A: In theory, third-party candidates have the same chance as anyone else to make the November ballot. But in practice, it will be difficult for those candidates to advance. In legislative races, only one Libertarian and one Green Party candidate are expected to make it to the general election because they're in two-person primary races. The top-two primary doesn't affect the presidential race. Six minor-party presidential candidates have qualified to appear on the November ballot by submitting 1,000 voter signatures.

Q: Which offices are affected by the new primary?

A: All partisan offices are affected. It doesn't affect nonpartisan positions, such as the superintendent of public instruction and judicial races. In the primary, if a candidate in a nonpartisan race gets more than 50 percent of the vote, the race is over.

Q: Can I still write in a candidate?

A: Yes. There will still be a line on the ballot for write-in candidates.

Q: Why does the ballot say "prefers" Democrat or "prefers" Republican?

A: The top-two primary allows a candidate to self-describe his or her party preference. But those descriptions aren't meant to suggest the candidate has the party's blessing.

Parties are free to nominate or endorse their favored candidates, but that information isn't included on the ballot. It may, however, be used in campaigns and in voters pamphlets.

Q: What is the difference between Dino Rossi's "prefers G.O.P. Party" and John W. Aiken Jr.'s "prefers Republican Party"? Can candidates use any party description they want?

A: Candidates have up to 16 characters to say which party they prefer. Some Republicans, such as gubernatorial candidate Rossi, have chosen to use "GOP" instead of "Republican." Others are more creative. One candidate said he prefers "Salmon Yoga Party." Candidates also may list no party preference.

Q: Does any other state use a top-two primary?

A: Our new system is similar to Louisiana's primary. But there are two big differences: Louisiana requires party registration, which Washington doesn't; and in Louisiana, if a candidate gets more than 50 percent of the vote in the primary — even in partisan races — he or she wins the seat and there is no general-election runoff.

Q: In races where only one or two candidates file, will those candidates skip the primary and appear only on the general-election ballot?

A: No. Even in races where only one or two candidates file for a partisan office, the race will still appear in the primary election.

Q: What happens if a candidate for partisan office is one of the top two vote-getters in the primary but dies or is disqualified before the general election? Will the party be allowed to name a replacement?

A: No. In the top-two primary, a candidate's party preference is purely for informational purposes and a party is not allowed to name a replacement candidate. The law that previously allowed the political parties to replace deceased or disqualified candidates was repealed by the initiative that established the new primary.

Susan Gilmore: 206-464-2054 or sgilmore@seattletimes.com

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Top 2 cuts the clutter

Today, 12:00 AM · **NEW**

One of the benefits of the new Top 2 Primary in Washington is that it cuts the clutter on the November ballot.

Minor parties have been complaining about the Top 2 because they no longer get an automatic entry on the general election ballot. Now, only the top two primary vote-getters for each race will be listed. That leaves out the Greens, Libertarians, Socialist Workers and other small parties.

As a result, the general election ballot will be much simpler, with two choices for each office. The vast majority of the time there will be one Democrat versus one Republican, although the Top 2 allows the possibility that two members of a single party could make the finals. Since there are so many variations of thought within the two major parties, this is hardly a disaster and doesn't mean there will be no choice in the general election.

The minor parties will lose out on the free publicity, primarily through the local and statewide voter's pamphlets that list all the candidates for each office. But they stand no chance of winning anyway, so spare the voters the expense of providing a forum to every group that wants to spout off about their political views.

Serious minor parties will have to get to work and make a more concerted effort in the primary election. The Libertarian Party didn't even field a candidate in this year's Island County primary. That's sad to see for a party that once made a real effort to be heard. They should reorganize and make an all-out primary effort next time around. The new Oak Harbor-based "American's Third Party" candidate for State Senate, Sarah Hart, made very positive presentations at recent forums. It give the tiny party something to build on in the future.

Voters who attend political forums will be much better served by the results of the Top 2 Primary in the weeks before the general election. In the past, half a dozen candidates would get their say for a specific office, leaving little time for the two major party candidates to differentiate themselves. With only two candidates for each office, future forums, beginning this October, will be much less cluttered and far more informative for voters.

The state's first Top 2 primary started with the mailing of ballots last week. Secretary of State Sam Reed reports that local auditors have reported few if any complaints to his office. That's because voters like the freedom of choice provided by the new primary. So don't forget to vote. Your ballots must be postmarked no later than election day, Aug. 19. You'll see the surviving two candidates for each race in November.

Leave baby

seals alone

The saga of a baby seal that became known as "Concho" underscores the importance of leaving the cute creatures alone if you find one on the beach.

Concho's story started when a boater picked up the 5-day-old seal and later gave her to someone else. That person put Concho in her car, which was stopped by a Coupeville police officer for running a red light. Eventually the seal ended up in the care of Wolf Hollow Wildlife Rehabilitation Clinic in Friday Harbor. She will be tube fed until she's three weeks old and later released in the San Juans with a group of seals there.

Sadly, Concho will probably never be reunited with the mother that left her on the beach in Penn Cove. Even if the exact spot she was left was known it's no doubt too late now, and besides, it would be too stressful to return the seal all the way from Friday Harbor. All we can do is hope that she adjusts well to her new life in the San Juans.

People should remember that it's unlawful to pick up a baby seal from the beach. Their mothers leave them there while they go fishing and return later to pick them up. Violations of the Marine Mammal Protection Act can result in a penalty of up to \$10,000. If it's considered a criminal matter, that increases to as much as \$20,000 and up to a year in jail.

An investigator is trying to track down the person who interfered with Concho's life by taking her from the beach. Hopefully he or she will be found and given a fine heavy enough to deter others from doing the same.

Find this article at:

<http://www.pnwlocalnews.com/opinion/26891389.html>

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PRINTER FRIENDLY FOR JAIL

Tacoma, WA - Wednesday, August 13, 2008

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Simpson faces two foes in primary

JOSEPH TURNER; joe.turner@thenewstribune.com

Last updated: August 13th, 2008 01:24 AM (PDT)

Leslie Hamada thought state Rep. Geoff Simpson's political career was toast after he was arrested and charged with domestic violence this spring, so she decided to run for his House seat in the 47th Legislative District.

She filed her paperwork, thinking Simpson would not run again, then left for a vacation in Germany. When she returned, she learned that charges against Simpson had been dropped and that he had, indeed, filed for re-election.

"I honestly thought Geoff Simpson's career was dead after the domestic violence charge," she said. "I thought it would be an easier road to go down. I thought I would have Democratic Party support, which hasn't happened. It's kind of an uphill battle."

Simpson, D-Covington, a Kent firefighter, has raised \$140,000 in his bid for a fifth two-year term, in contrast to Hamada's \$5,000 in campaign contributions.

Republican Mark Hargrove, a pilot who teaches other pilots how to fly Boeing aircraft, is the third candidate in the Aug. 19 primary election. The top two vote-getters will advance to the Nov. 4 general election.

If not for Simpson's arrest, this might have been an uneventful race. Although it's still regarded as a swing district, the 47th has Democrats in all three of its posts in the Legislature.

The 47th Legislative District encompasses Covington, Black Diamond and parts of Auburn, Kent, Maple Valley and the unincorporated communities on each side of Highway 167 east of Federal Way.

Simpson said he was arrested because his ex-wife said he hurt her hand while retrieving his cell phone, grabbing it from her hand. The incident occurred in April, three days after their 25-year marriage ended in divorce, while his wife was collecting items from their home.

In dismissing the case, the Covington prosecutor said there was nothing to substantiate the initial charges of fourth-degree assault and interfering with the reporting of domestic violence. But Simpson did spend a day in jail.

"Once that call is made, somebody is going to jail because that's how our laws are written," Simpson said. "The fact is, the charges were dropped because I didn't do anything wrong. It all worked out how it was supposed to: I got arrested. I got charged. And after the prosecutor reviewed the case, all the charges were dropped."

This is Hamada's first venture into politics. She graduated from college with a bachelor's degree in political science and had at first hoped to seek elective office in the City of Covington, but she lives just outside the city limits.

Hamada, 60, is a retired sales and marketing manager. She has been a volunteer in South King County for many of the past 17 years. She was director of Shared Bread, a program for Kent United Methodist Church that provides help to people who are facing eviction or whose utilities are about to be shut off.

Annual donations for that program have risen from \$8,000 seven years ago to \$27,000 now, she said.

Hamada said she also works with felons who are getting out of prison. She's a member of the community accountability board, which advises the state Department of Corrections on offenders' plans to turn their lives around.

She wrote a children's book, "Pee Wee's Adventure in the Woods," which was published in 2006.

She is most critical of Simpson for his vote against restoring the tax limitations of Initiative 747, which limited the growth in local government property tax collections to no more than 1 percent a year. The Supreme Court overturned I-747 last year, but the Legislature and governor reinstated it during a special session last fall.

Simpson was among a handful of lawmakers who voted against the reinstatement.

"It was a poorly written initiative that offered false hope to people," Simpson said. "It doesn't help the people who need help."

He also said he favored a limit pegged to the rate of inflation rather than a flat 1 percent so local governments can take in enough money to pay for important public safety programs.

Hargrove, the lone Republican, is a 1979 graduate of the Air Force Academy and an Eagle Scout. At Boeing he teaches pilots how to fly the company's 777s and 747s.

His priorities for the district are traffic congestion relief, fair property taxes, restrained government spending and more efficient use of money spent on public schools.

He contends that Simpson is out of step with constituents of southeast King County and votes far too often with the downtown Seattle special interests. He also points to Simpson's vote against reinstating the 1 percent property tax cap.

"There were only eight votes against it, and six were downtown Seattle (legislators), who are a little different in the way they think," Hargrove said. Simpson was one of the other two votes against the tax lid. Hargrove said Simpson's votes for both recent gas tax increases also "are the kinds of things that are out of touch with our local community."

Joseph Turner: 253-597-8436

blogs.thenewstribune.com/politics

Candidates for state house seat in district 47

Leslie Hamada

Age: 60

Home: Covington

Occupation: Account manager for mass merchandisers

Political party: Democrat

Campaign: 253-631-3895 or leslie.hamada@yahoo.com

Money raised: \$5,000

Geoff Simpson

Age: 45

Home: Covington

Occupation: Kent firefighter, state representative

Political party: Democrat

Campaign: 253-630-3498 or geoff@votesimpson.com

Money raised: \$140,000

Mark Hargrove

Age: 51

Home: Covington

Occupation: Boeing pilot instructor

Political party: Republican

Campaign: 253-630-3064 or hargrovemd@aol.com

Money raised: \$25,070

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First Run at Top-Two Primary Expected to Draw More Voters

By Steven Gardner
Monday, August 11, 2008

Kitsap County elections officials are expecting far higher voter turnout for the Aug. 19 primary than what's projected across the state.

Dolores Gilmore, county elections manager, said her office is expecting between 60 percent and 65 percent turnout in Kitsap County, while Secretary of State Sam Reed is guessing statewide turnout will be about 46 percent.

Gilmore said the county being one of 37 counties going with an all-mail voting system should boost numbers. The contested races should also influence turnout.

"Ours will be one of the higher ones," she said.

Kitsap County saw 52 percent voter turnout in the September 2004 primary, in which South Kitsap County Democrats picked Charlotte Garrido to run against Jan Angel and Legislative District 23 Republicans picked Frank Mahaffay to run against Democrat Sherry Appleton.

This year voters in the 35th District will pick the top two among Republicans Herb Baze and Randy Neatherlin and

Democrats Daryl Daugs and Fred Finn in one race, and between a Democratic incumbent, Kathy Haigh, and Republican challengers Marco Brown and Brad Gehring in the other.

In South Kitsap it will be two Democrats, Charlotte Garrido and Monty Mahan, on the ballot with one Republican, Tim Matthes. The top two vote-getters in each race move on to the November general election, regardless of party affiliation.

Voters in Kitsap will also narrow down the list of candidates for the 6th District congressional seat held by U.S. Rep. Norm Dicks, D-Belfair.

Almost 138,000 voters are registered to vote in Kitsap County, a figure that is about 5 percent higher than for the primary in 2004. Statewide registrations of about 3.4 million are up about 4 percent since 2004.

Statewide, voters will have a say in the races for governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, treasurer, auditor, insurance commissioner and superintendent of public instruction.

Reed's predicted 46 percent statewide turnout is far lower than what's expected in Kitsap, but the statewide figure is higher than past primaries.

In 2004 statewide voting reached 45 percent, with only five counties going the all-mail voting route and voters being forced to pick a party.

This time around only two counties, King and Pierce, have yet to go with the all-mail system. The new top-two primary system doesn't seem to be confusing or angering voters at near the levels the pick-a-party system did, Reed said.

Reed said he came up with the 46 percent prediction by measuring past elections, looking at the number of "hot" races and noticing whether voters are angry.

"I think 'guessing' is a pretty good word for it," he said.

Gilmore said the top-two primary system doesn't seem to be worrying too many voters.

"So far we're not getting that many phone calls on that," she said. "It seems they're understanding it just fine."

The top-two primary system was approved by voters in 2004, but it was shelved while the state's political parties challenged it in court.

Earlier this year, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the system could not be considered unconstitutional, in part because it hadn't been implemented yet and no one could show that there had been harm done.

Gilmore said television advertising designed to explain the new primary system has reminded voters that there is a primary occurring, which should increase turnout.

Should statewide turnout reach 46 percent, it would be the highest result for a primary since 1972.

Join in an online conversation about government and politics at the Kitsap Caucus blog.



Published August 10, 2008

The voters fought for it and top-two is here

The Aug. 19 primary is fast approaching, offering voters in this state a chance to make history.

The 2008 primary election marks the debut of the top-two primary, which means the two candidates who receive the most votes in partisan races advance to the November general election.

That's right, two Democrats or two Republicans could square off in a general election contest. It's likely to happen more than once this election year here in South Sound.

The primary election is also nearly a month earlier than it has been historically.

Bear in mind, the top-two primary approach doesn't apply to certain elections, including the race for president and vice president and nonpartisan races for such offices as judicial, municipal, fire district or school board posts.

The top-two primary was born out of Initiative 872, which voters approved with a 60 percent "yes" vote in November 2004. They were rebelling against a "pick-a-party" system that limited voters to one party's slate of candidates.

Pick-a-party politics ran counter to the tradition in this state of voters casting their ballots for the person, not the party.

Finally, after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 7-2 in March to uphold the top-two primary approach, voters in this state have a primary election system much more to their liking.

Secretary of State Sam Reed predicts a 46 percent voter turnout for the Aug. 19 primary, which would be the highest percent of voters in a primary since the 49.4 percent who showed up at the polls in 1972.

Few voters will actually go to the polls this year because mail-in ballots have become the rule, not the exception.

All counties except King and Pierce have all vote-by-mail elections, compared with just one county in 2000 and five counties in 2004.

In fact, the election has been officially under way since voters received their ballots in the mail in early August. All they have to do is fill them out and have them postmarked before 8 p.m. Aug. 19.

Voters who want to save the price of a postage stamp can drop their ballots off at one of 24 drop box locations throughout the county.

For a list of the drop box locations, go to www.thurstonvotes.org or call 360-786-5408 with election-related questions.

Voters with disabilities can bring their ballots to several sites around the county that will be staffed by election personnel 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Election Day. Call 360-786-5408 for locations.

In addition, voting machines for those who need them will be available 3-6 p.m. Aug. 8 and Aug. 15 and noon-3 p.m. Aug. 9 and Aug. 16 at the downtown Olympia Transit Center; 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday through Saturday through Aug. 19 at the TCTV Office, 440 Yauger Way S.W., Suite C., Olympia, and Monday through Friday through Election Day at the Thurston County Courthouse.

Voters will do more than just narrow the field of candidates for the general election. For instance:

- **Voters in** Olympia, Lacey, Littlerock and Grand Mound-Rochester will decide the fate of levy requests for fire district operations in their communities.
- **Two judicial races** for Thurston County Superior Court will be decided in the primary election — Thurston County Prosecutor Ed Holm versus incumbent Judge Gary Tabor and Olympia attorney Charles Williams versus Carol Murphy, senior counsel in the state Attorney General's Office, to fill the seat of retiring Judge Richard Strophy.
- **A seat on** the state Court of Appeals will be decided when incumbent Judge Robin Hunt faces challenger Tim Ford, an open government ombudsman for Attorney General Rob McKenna.
- **A seat on** the state Supreme Court will be decided when incumbent Judge Mary Fairhurst squares off against Mercer Island attorney Michael J. Bond.

Election officials have gone to great lengths to make participation in the 2008 primary election hassle-free. Now it's up to the voters to do their part.

The voters fought for it and top-two is here

Published August 10, 2008

Voters swarm top-two primary

Brad Shannon

Elections officials predict relatively high voter turnout for the Aug. 19 vote-by-mail primary election, which has been under way for about a week in Washington.

Secretary of State Sam Reed said turnout could hit 46 percent, the highest for a primary since turnout was 49 percent in 1972.

In Thurston County, a county commissioner race with five candidates could lift local turnout even higher.

"We're guessing, and really it's an educated guess, the high 40s, maybe 48 percent. I think that's low, but I'm optimistic," county chief deputy auditor Ken Raske said.

As of Friday afternoon, 11,302 ballots had been returned. That's about 8 percent of the 139,618 county voters, Raske said. Statewide, there are 3.4 million registered voters.

Reed's predicted turnout is slightly more than the 45.8 percent for the primary in September 1992 and less than the 49.4 percent of September 1972. The turnout four years ago was 45.1 percent, compared with 40.8 percent in 2000.

Reed based his higher prediction on the empowering effect he said the new top-two primary will have for voters, who can pick any candidate from any party; and the all-mail voting in 37 of 39 counties.

The top-two was voted into law in 2004 by a citizen initiative that the Washington State Grange sponsored. Voters were upset at the time by court rulings that struck down the state's 70-year-old tradition of splitting tickets in a "blanket" primary, and they rebelled by passing the measure by a roughly 60 percent majority.

Lower federal courts struck down the top-two, finding that it also was an infringement on party rights. But the U.S. Supreme Court restored the top-two system this year, and Reed hurried to put it into use. Lawyers for the state's Democratic and Republican parties have warned that it could be invalidated.

Under the top-two system, two candidates from the same party can advance, and the Thurston commission race is one in which that could happen.

Democrats Sandra Romero and Jon Halvorson are well-known and have built campaign organizations, and they are running against little-known Democrat Lucius Daye, Republican Robin Edmondson and independent Bill Pilkey.

Reed, a Republican facing three opponents, said he doesn't expect any of the eight partisan statewide races on the primary to yield two candidates of the same party on the November general-election ballot. The most likely scenario for that to happen is in the state treasurer's race, but Reed thinks Republican Allan J. Martin is strong enough to out-poll at least one of the two better-known Democrats, Jim McIntire and ChangMook Sohn.

In the governor's race, Republican challenger Dino Rossi and Democratic Gov. Chris Gregoire are the only candidates who have assembled significant campaign organizations in a field of 10 hopefuls, and both expect to move on easily to the Nov. 4 ballot. Gregoire barely beat out Rossi four years ago.

Brad Shannon is political editor for The Olympian. He can be reached at 360-753-1688 or bshannon@theolympian.com.

HeraldNet

Everett, Wash.

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New primary calms voters' tempers

Officials have heard no complaints about 'Top Two' system so far

By Jerry Cornfield, Herald Writer

OLYMPIA -- Something is absent from primary ballot envelopes now flowing into election offices statewide.

Anger.

During elections each of the past four years, voters who despised having to declare a political party in partisan races scrawled angry and sometimes hateful messages on envelopes and ballots.

In 2004, one Island County voter wrote "I won't vote this Nazi ballot" in black marker on the envelope while Snohomish County voters jotted slogans such as "This primary sucks" and "Won't participate!!" on their ballots.

Secretary of State Sam Reed said that year his office received 16,000 e-mails from upset voters. So many complaint calls came in that phone banks were set up and temporary workers were hired to handle the volume, he said.

This year's debut of the "Top Two" primary is not inciting any negative response at all -- so far.

"We are not receiving the angry phone calls," Snohomish County Auditor Carolyn Diepenbrock said last week. "It is certainly less tense because there is not this underlying anger and frustration that there was with the pick-a-party system."

In this primary, all candidates for an office are listed together and voters can pick any one they want.

The two candidates with the most votes in each race will advance to the general election, regardless of their political affiliation. This could lead to two hopefuls of the same political persuasion on the November ballot.

In nonpartisan races, a candidate with a majority of votes in the primary will be the winner. Otherwise the top two vote-getters move on.

This overhaul is the product of a legal fight launched by the state's Democratic, Republican and Libertarian parties against the once cherished, much litigated and now departed blanket primary system.

They argued that letting voters choose candidates of any party in each race violated the political parties' constitutional rights to control the process of determining their nominees in those races.

In 2003, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals agreed and threw out the blanket primary. In early 2004, the state Legislature enacted a new law that required voters to indicate a party preference and vote only for candidates in that party.

September marked the first use of the new method. In November 2004, voters passed Initiative 872 aimed at regaining some of the choice enjoyed with the blanket primary. The parties sued to block its use.

Earlier this year, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the measure should be given a chance. Its constitutionality could not be determined, justices concluded, because it hadn't yet been used. After the election, the parties might mount another legal attack.

For voters, one of the big differences on the ballot is candidates no longer associate directly with a political party. Instead they are identified by the party they prefer -- Democrat, Republican, America's Third or even Salmon Yoga.

Voters are finding many of the contests have more than two people competing. In Snohomish County there are 11 partisan battles with only two candidates so both will advance automatically.

U.S. Rep. Jay Inslee, D-Wash., is in one of the races. He's challenged by Republican Larry Ishmael of Redmond in a rematch of the 2006 fight for this seat.

Similarly, in the 39th Legislative District, state Rep. Dan Kristiansen, R-Snohomish, is again dueling Democrat Scott Olson.

Other offices with only two competitors are state attorney general, state commissioner of public lands and state legislative seats in the 1st, 10th, 21st, 38th, and 44th legislative districts.

Reporter Jerry Cornfield: 360-352-8623 or jcornfield@heraldnet.com.

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Top 2 Primary

Top Two Primary & Party Preference

Background:

The Top Two Primary was established in 2004, when voters approved Initiative-872 by almost 60 percent. This was in reaction to a court's finding that the blanket primary – used in Washington since the 1930's – was unconstitutional, and the voters' rejection of the pick-a-party primary, by approval of the initiative.

In May 2005, the state Democratic, Republican and Libertarian parties sued in federal court to prevent its implementation. The political parties argued that the Top Two Primary system violated their right to free association by allowing the party's standard-bearer in a general election to be a person who is not a member of the party.

The federal District Court agreed with them and issued an order in July 2005 prohibiting the State from implementing the Top Two Primary. The State appealed, but the Court of Appeals also agreed with the parties in an order issued in 2006.

The State appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, which upheld the constitutionality of I-872. The Supreme Court reasoned that, since this form of primary has never been used, the political parties' challenge was based on assumptions of what harms could occur to their party nominating processes. The Court decided that it would not nullify the vote of the people based on

speculation about voter confusion.

This will be the first year in which Washington holds elections under the “Top Two” system.

Details:

- A Top Two Primary allows voters to choose among all candidates running for each office, with only the two candidates who receive the most votes proceeding to the general election.
- Voters do not have to declare a party affiliation in order to vote in the primary.
- Candidates for partisan office may state a preference for a political party, which is listed on the ballot.
- Candidates do not have to be supported, nominated or endorsed by that party.
- The two candidates who receive the most votes in the Primary Election qualify for the General Election.

A new ballot:

In order to accommodate the new requirements for Washington’s new “Top Two” Primary system, candidates for partisan offices in this year’s election were allowed to designate on the ballot which political affiliation or cause, if any, they prefer.

The candidate’s preference comes in the form of a statement on the ballot that the candidate “Prefers _____ Party” – where the candidate gets to “fill in the blank” with a description of their political affiliation, not to exceed 16 characters.

The Top Two Primary was created in part to reduce the control of established political parties, and giving candidates the ability to freely express their political preference supports that goal. Some candidates chose traditional political party labels, but others preferred less recognizable descriptors, which may confuse some voters.

With no limit on the “party preference” a candidate may choose to express, the ballot will, for the first time, enable candidates to

include a reference to a favorite cause, such as two candidates running as members of the “Cut Taxes G.O.P.” party.

For the most part, Democrats across the state have chosen to have a listing that states “Prefers Democratic Party” – although about 13 initially filed using the descriptor “Democrat” resulting in the grammatically incorrect listing “Prefers Democrat Party.” Those filings were corrected.

Other filings that have stood out include “True Democratic Party” and “Prefers Progressive Dem Party.”

Other examples of candidate ballot preferences include:

- Prefers G.O.P. Party – For the almost 25 percent of Washington voters who don’t know, G.O.P. means Grand Old Party, making such a declaration redundantly decodes as “Prefers Grand Old Party Party.”
- No Preference - The Spokane GOP chairman decided not to list a party preference in his run for state insurance commissioner.

Other preferences included:

- Progressive
- Green
- Independent
- no party listed
- Party of Commons
- Constitution

Questions or comments? Contact the SDC Webmaster
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Published April 08, 2008

Small parties decry top-two primary vote

Brad Shannon

Representatives of minor political parties in the state, such as the Libertarians and Greens, say the new top-two primary system will make it harder for their candidates to qualify for the November ballot.

"We're unlikely to be able to participate in the General Election," said Ruth Bennett, who got 63,464 votes for governor in 2004 running for the Libertarian Party.

Bennett figures her candidacy caused a net loss of 20,000 votes for the eventual winner, Democrat Chris Gregoire, who beat Republican Dino Rossi by 133 votes.

Bennett said her party does not want to go back to court over the primary issue because it is an expensive process.

Much of the legal dispute over the system, revolves around the identification of candidates' parties on the top-two ballot. The major political parties have argued that if any candidate can say, for example, they are a Republican, then voters will not be able to tell which Republican has the official party endorsement.

Secretary of State Sam Reed says the ballots can be explained clearly, to avoid confusion.

Janet Jordan, facilitator for the Green Party of South Puget Sound, said in a recent e-mail that the Greens do not plan a legal challenge in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court ruling that has given Washington the top-two primary.

Voters approved the top-two in 2004 but lower federal courts struck it down, and the U.S. Supreme Court reinstated it last month.

"This is sad news for the state, since many more people vote in the general election than in the primary, and the real choice comes in the primary," Jordan wrote. "So that election tends to be dominated by the more ideological voters, and the choice the average voter gets to make (in the General Election) is more radical than it might be if everyone participated in the initial vote."

Jordan said the Green Party continues to push for another election option known as "instant runoff voting."

With that, "everyone can vote their first choice and then have a "virtual" second vote if their first choice is eliminated, by applying their second-choice vote," Jordan said.

Conventions set

Meanwhile, state Democrats laid out plans Monday for a series of nominating conventions to help select favorites for the Aug. 19 primary, the first step to a potential second challenge of the top-two primary.

Democratic state chairman Dwight Pelz said candidates must be nominated at the party's state convention June 14 in Spokane. Precinct committee officers would nominate congressional candidates May 17. PCOs also must nominate for legislative and local county races before May 23, which could occur April 28 in Thurston County.

Republicans haven't decided if they also will nominate candidates, state GOP chairman Luke Esser said.

"We'll probably be having an executive board meeting of our own in the next week or two," he said Monday.

The political parties are upset that the new top-two primary could mean a candidate not favored by the party ends up as the nominee on the November ballot.

The top-two format lets voters pick candidates from any party for any position in the primary, but lets only the top-two vote getters advance to November. That means that minor party candidates will disappear from many ballots, and two candidates from the same party could be the only choices in November.

In making nominations, the Democrats will pick one candidate — who then might be in the primary with other Democrats.

In Thurston County, that means precinct committee officers must decide between Jon Halvorson and Sandra Romero in the District 2 county commissioner race.

"Voters want to know which candidate is the nominated candidate of the Democratic Party, the Republican Party, and of any minor parties, such as the Libertarian Party and the Green Party," Pelz said in a statement Monday. "Because I-872 eliminates the nominating primary in Washington, the Democratic Party will select our candidates through nominating conventions."

The political parties have fought the top-two and have been waiting for Secretary of State Sam Reed to announce a ballot design before mapping their next legal steps. Reed is expected to announce his decision soon, perhaps next week.

But the Democrats' decision to nominate won't affect how Reed handles the primary.

"Under the law we can't include political party endorsements or nominations" on the ballot, Reed spokeswoman Trova Hutchins said.

Brad Shannon is political editor for The Olympian. He can be reached at 360-753-1688 or bshannon@theolympian.com.