

Eugene for Dean

More local folks take note of the Vermont man's message.

Howard Dean, the candid physician and former governor of Vermont who announced his bid for president on the Democratic ticket just a few months ago, has become the front-runner in the donkey race. His outspoken anti-war message has resonated among vast groups of people who are disgusted with the direction the current administration has taken the country. With health care and education dollars going to fund violence abroad, Dean's domestic agenda also sounds a hopeful note with those crying "Stop the music."

Noting that the public latched on quickly to his campaign, Dean said during a speech to laborers in Des Moines, Iowa, July 30, "This campaign has become a powerful movement to take our country back. With over 200,000 Americans already signed up, we're building the greatest grassroots campaign of the modern era on mouse pads, shoe leather and hope."

What do mouse pads have to do with a presidential campaign? When not appearing in public, Dean speaks directly to voters through his "blogs," that is, weblogs, or real time web chat. Without being misinterpreted by the media, he can communicate his vision exactly.

even our European allies are with us. We've squandered our reputation." He believes Dean is the one who can restore international diplomacy. "Dean's saying there's a lot of bad guys, not just Saddam, and we can't go after all of them this way. He's the only one who has the courage and foresight to really say what's on everyone's minds." But it's not just Dean's international, but also his domestic agenda, that has Burley believing Dean's his man.

"His position on gun control is coalition building: Leave it to the states. That should resonate with the Republicans," says Burley, who was involved in gun safety discussions after the Thurston shootings. The fact that Dean has been governor also resounds with supporters. "As a chief executive officer of a state, you bring decisions and experience," says Burley. "He balanced the budget in his state for eight years and set up a good health care system."

That experience may be the overriding reason locals are jumping on the Dean bandwagon, as opposed to Kucinich, also a peacenik running on the Democratic ticket who has won over many other Eugeneans.



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His agenda includes repairing international diplomacy, formulating a national health care system, restoring rural communities and family farms, addressing environmental concerns and re-funding education.

Those logging on and reading his communique include a vast array of citizenry, from young to old, radical to right-of-center, of varying backgrounds. And that diversity is represented right here in Eugene. Ron Burley, chair of the Lane County for Dean campaign, says among those showing up at Dean meetings are many college students, a "core group for any democratic candidate," as well as others ranging from age 16 to 90. Their backgrounds are just as diverse, "from union members to small business owners, former hippies to a broad range in the middle."

The number of interested Eugeneans has grown from a dozen who assembled at the first Dean meeting in April to 20 in May, 50 in June, 80 in July, 85 in August and 110 in September. "We keep outgrowing meeting venues," says Burley.

What Burley and others like about Dean is not just what he has to say, but how he chooses to say it. He's no dissembler. For example, Dean told Des Moines union workers that "Too many Democrats in Washington have become so afraid of losing that they have remained silent, or only half-heartedly fought the very agenda that is destroying the democratic dream of America."

In addition to his openness, Dean's agenda is what impresses Burley. "On 9/11, the entire world was with us, even Arab countries that are not pro U.S., like Jordan. Two years later, not

"Kucinich has great ideas but Dean is a better candidate to reach out to others and work with them. Kucinich doesn't have the executive experience. He's only one of 400 representatives, as opposed to one executive," says Burley.

Jerree Anderson, vice chair of Lane County for Dean and Precinct Committee Chair for the Lane County Democrats, agrees with supporting Dean over Kucinich.

"One of the chief differences between Kucinich and Dean is that Dean can actually win," says Anderson. "I think the most important thing for us at this point is that we have to be pragmatic; he can actually beat Bush. ... I really liked Nader and I like Kucinich but neither can win. They're ahead of their time. We have to depend on the vote of middle America."

Anderson likes Dean's stand on war. "I was happy to see he really had a reasonable response to it, and wasn't just anti-war entirely, because I feel there are times when we have to defend ourselves."

Anderson says it's refreshing to have a Democrat standing up for Democratic beliefs. "I'm totally disappointed in the majority of candidates who blindly went along with Bush. That's frightening to me."

As to the numbers of people coming to meetings offering to volunteer, Anderson adds, "People are very upset. People want to do something. I've worked in politics for years and have never seen this level of activism before."

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Next meeting for Dean is at 7 pm on Oct. 1 at Monroe Middle School. Call 242-0639 or e-mail info@dean2004.lane.or.us

THON BUSTER (thon' bust er) noun

1. one who contributes to KLCC in order to preemptively truncate an upcoming pledge drive ("Radiothon").
2. any pledge to KLCC which occurs before the onset of a 'thon.
3. *figuratively*: anyone who sleeps comfortably, knowing they have taken action, rather than having put off or shirked some ethical obligation.
4. *slang*: a hipster, especially one with highly developed musical tastes and/or extensive knowledge of current affairs.
5. *rare*: a single, supermassive cash donation, usually dropped from an aircraft at high altitude, which on impact completely eliminates the need for one or more Radiothons [see MOAB "Mother of All Busters"].

usage: "Having already contributed to KLCC, the happy Thon Buster could hardly wait for Radiothon not to begin."

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