

one but the right. As for the Greens supposed high ideals, I'd like to see one single thing that they've accomplished that's served anyone but themselves.

Sybil Fabian
Ashland

BUS FAIR

Those who know LTD know from "Bus Talk" fliers that the system is hurting. A \$2 million budget shortfall over the next three years is anticipated.

The impact? Consider more Talk: "Service Reductions Anticipated ... substantial ... in Fall 2004" and "more dramatically in Fall 2005." That was the Talk of December. January's has devolved the alarm a little. This

year may not be so bad but "more significant ... cuts will take place in fall 2005 if conditions have not improved." What "conditions"? Could Measure 30 passage help? Will the largely conservative LTD establishment ever get liberalized and activated to our benefit? Are we beyond the point where fare increases could help?

Anyone who rides and knows the routes knows how to translate Bus Talk: The routes which will suffer will involve the many neighborhoods where low-income, senior, disabled, and young frequently unemployed riders depend upon the bus to get to affordable shopping centers, libraries, friends and relatives who may need our help, and such jobs as yet remain.

UO and LCC will continue to be served. LCC will have new articulated long buses and Duck shuttles will shuttle. The new BRT, completed, will delight commuters but get no one closer to needed groceries, diapers or toothpaste. Personnel whose employers contract with LTD at discount rates will probably continue to enjoy expresses to park-and-rides and the more distant suburbs. It's all OK. Less polluting buses online that get people out of their vehicles will be lung-beneficial.

But let's not forget the needs of those who have less change in their pockets. Talk back to LTD by mail and, in February and March, in public hearings.

John A. Hickam
Eugene

COMMON DECENCY

I was willing to read Sally Sheklow's extremely crude article (12/18) and move on without comment at the time. However, after reading the recent response to a reader who did take issue with the piece I felt I must check in. Prudery and the "thought police" are not the issues here. Rather, I would say "common decency" (not a term heard too often these days) is at stake. I am far from being a prude, but I don't expect to find graphic details of anyone's sexual experiences described in your paper. There are many avenues available for those interested in going down that path. Please don't be one of them.

Jane Dods
Springfield

KUMBAYA DAMMIT BY DAN CAROL

Blog This

What's next for the Deaniacs?



Prediction time. The Days of Dean are coming to an end, and even the candidate has said he will exit the race if he loses in the Wisconsin primary on Feb. 18. So what's next for the Dean "movement"? Was there one? Or was it all hype?

Actually, this is not a simple either-or question. There's both hype – and hope – underlying the Dean machine.

First the hype. The press built him up and tore him down, we've sure seen that before. They stuck him on the cover of *Time* magazine, upgraded his really smart campaign manager to genius status, wowed at the crowds and prematurely anointed him the nominee. It reminded me of all the hoopla surrounding the campaign of "President" John McCain under his genius manager John Weaver in 2000.

But the press and the pundits would be equally wrong now to dismiss Dean's grassroots movement as just a few freaks on the Internet who came out of the shadows for a few weeks and then went into hiding after Groundhog's Day. There's some real there-there. I am sure of that. I'm less sure how easily we can "bottle" all that energy.

Deaniacs will be loyal anti-Bush voters, of that I have little doubt. But they are not going to be told (or like being told) by Democratic insiders to go stand in the political equivalent of deep right field, and wait patiently for instructions. Why do that when they feel they are already writing their own "source code" for a new form of grassroots organizing – what tech gurus like Howard Rheingold are calling the self-organized mob.

Let me put it another way: These folks are essentially the political version of Habitat for Humanity – they're happy to bring their own hammer and start building "the next thing." And who can blame them? It's not like the houses on Democratic Party Street look shiny and new – they look in need of *serious* renovation.

So while we used to have a few political architects like Paul Tully and James Carville to name two, now we have thousands of Deaniacs, political bloggers and virtual communities sprouting up everywhere that are writing – and implementing – their different versions of the new code for political success.

Take Markos ("Kos") Moulitsas Zúniga. Here's a guy who served our country in the Army, works in the tech industry, is passionate about politics, and runs the DailyKos.com – one of the biggest political blogging sites, with over two million visitors per month.

All kudos to Kos – he was big before Howard Dean and will remain big after Dean is back in Vermont. He's stunning evidence of what is at the core of the Dean movement that has nothing to do with old Howard. And now he (Kos, not Howard) is trying to rally folks to try and take back the House from the Republican Party.

Is the Kos plan a good thing? Is it strategic? Is it a smart use of scarce resources compared to either the presidential race or key state races that are out there? Probably not. But is there a tipping point where grassroots-driven passion can beat the odds and the conventional wisdom? You betcha.

So the last thing that experts like me or anyone should be doing is telling Kos and others like him to chill on his "take back the House" project. What we can be doing instead is practicing open source politics – by posting the holes in our roof that need repairing and the projects that need support, money, and volunteers. And if 50 folks show up with hammers and nails to fix one roof, we can deal with that problem by offering them some other odd jobs.

That list, in fact, is in process:

- People are busy figuring through the technical and logistical challenges of how to get everyone into battleground states next fall – essentially we will need to make a volunteer "dating" service for progressives who want to give a week of their time in the field. So before you write the code for that, you might check into places like TheNationalVoice.org, AmericaVotes.org, The League of Conversation Voters or ACT (www.americacomingtogether.com) to see what they are planning. Give them until April before you book alternative reservations.

- Or you can stay at home – after all, Oregon is a battleground state. I am headed to a meeting on this up north next week and will report back on a promising new virtual coalition project. For now, I recommend you check out The Zephyr (www.secret-plan.org) and plug in there.

- I assume you've got your 10 best friends signed up and registered to vote. If not, start there. Collect their names (and their specific commitments) and stay tuned for instructions in this space. I'll post more frequent updates on important projects at (ahem, cough, cough) my blog at www.kumbayadammit.com

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