

Alliance of People with **dis**Abilities

connectABILITY

Volume VI, Issue II

(Formerly Washington Coalition of Citizens with disAbilities and disAbility Resource Network)

Let's Stand Together as Voting Americans with disAbilities!

By Gladys Springborn-Brannigan

King County is home to 259,843 people with disAbilities, according to the 2000 census, and we know how to vote! While it was expected that only a few hundred people would take advantage of the new accessible voting machines initiated during the September 19th primary, the number was over seven thousand and amounted to 11.25% of votes cast! Not all people with disAbilities require accessible machines, so in reality, the number of people with disabilities that voted was even higher!

To facilitate all of these voters with disAbilities learning about how candidates stand on disability issues, eighteen disability organizations, including the Alliance of People with disAbilities, recently came together to sponsor a Candidates Forum. Twenty candidates where there to answer questions about disability issues and the Seattle

Channel recorded the forum. It is available for viewing on their website. All

pects people with a broad array of disabilities against discrimination?

To see video of the recent Candidates Forum on Disability Issues, go to: <http://www.theseattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5010676>

candidates were also invited to respond in writing to two questions:

- What are the major barriers for people with disabilities to lead productive lives and what do you see as the top priorities for removing these barriers?

- The Washington State Supreme Court recently discarded the definition of disability used in Washington State for the past 30 years and replaced it with a definition which eliminates protection from discrimination for thousands of people with disabilities. (McClarty v Totem Electric). If elected, what will you do to reassert the original Legislative intent that pro-

The responses to these can be found online at www.disabilitypride.org or you may contact an Alliance office for a print copy. The unity shown in organizing this forum shows the power within our local disability

Want to vote on an accessible voting machine?

Accessible voting is available now through election day at the King County Elections Office, 500 4th Ave. Rm 55, in downtown Seattle. Hours are: Mon - Fri 8:30 am 4:30 pm. It will also be open Sat. October 21st and Nov. 4th from 9 am - 3 pm.

community to affect policymaking. It is time for people with disabilities to make their voting power known and it starts with you! *You* can affect the direction of our county and our country. How do you think we could make our community more inclusive of all people? Who do you

think would best work with people with disabilities to make that happen? Voice your choice and vote on November 7th.

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Mission Statement

People with disAbilities advocating
for equality and choice.

Join one of the Alliance's Peer Groups!

Come meet new people, share common experiences, receive and provide support, and discover new resources. Open to all people with disAbilities, their families and friends.

General Peer Groups

Lake Forest Park

Fourth Thursday of each month, 2:00 - 3:30 pm

Third Place Commons—17171 Bothell Way NE

Wallingford - Seattle

- Second Thursday of each month, 6:00 - 7:30pm

Good Shepherd Center, 4649 Sunnyside Ave N, Rm 221

- Fourth Tuesday of each month, 2:30 - 4:00 pm

Good Shepherd Center, 4649 Sunnyside Ave N, Rm 221

Redmond

Second Wednesday of each month, 6:00-7:30 pm

16315 NE 87th St, Ste B-3, Redmond

Burien

First Thursday of each month, 11:00 am - 12:20pm

Burien Public Library—14700 6th Ave SW

Special Interest Peer Groups

Youth Transition and Event Club

This club provides great opportunities to build leadership skills, learn about work, volunteer, and college opportunities, meet new people, and visit interesting places. All teens and young adults with and without disAbilities are welcome! Meetings in Shoreline. Redmond meetings to start soon.

Young Adult

First Tuesday of each month, 3:00pm – 4:30pm and

6:00-7:30 pm; 16315 NE 87th St, Ste B-3,

Redmond Office

Resource Management

Call 206-633-6634 for information.

Traumatic Brain Injury

Third Tuesday of each month, 4:00 pm – 5:30 pm

Good Shepherd Center, 4649 Sunnyside Ave N, Rm 202

Seattle

Special Election Edition!

For more information on elections, go to www.disabilitypride.org.

Independent Voting at Last!

By Kevin Nathan

Let me set the scene for you. It's Tuesday September 19, 2006 about 6:45 in the evening. My wife and I are walking through the door of our local polling place in Federal Way where I am about to vote for the first time in a primary election. Now, you need to understand that I've been voting in general elections since McGovern ran against Nixon in 1972 but never a primary because, as a rule, I don't like them. I moved here from Idaho and have always had to declare a party which I dislike immensely. So, why now? What makes this primary different? No, it's not the candidates or any initiatives or a driving patriotic need. It's the fact that for the first time since I was 18 years old back in 1972 that I have been able to cast my ballot totally in secret. Here, as Paul Harvey says, is the rest of the story.

I am 53 years old and am totally blind having lost both eyes to retinal cancer by the time I was two. I am a college graduate and have worked in the past in human resources and now for over 23 years in the field of work with the blind. Presently, I am the Independent Living program manager for

the Department of Services for the blind. I pride myself on my independence and enjoy diverse activities such as ham radio, sailing, travel and both listening to and performing music. No, this isn't really a personal ad. I am simply trying to demonstrate that I am a regular sort of guy with a decent job, an average or above average level of intelligence, a lot of interests and a love for living. But, for all my personal independence and work toward helping others also obtain their own, there has been one area of my life where I have always had to be dependent on someone else. That is the basic, democratic right to vote.

Until now, voting for me has taken one of two forms. In Idaho, except for the absentee ballot I cast from college in that first election, I have always used the punch cards. Remember those hanging chads? When I used that system, I had to have someone come in the voting booth with me, read the choices and tell me which holes corresponded to which choice. I would do my best to cover my punching hand with the other so the reader could not see which hole I punched but never felt this

was an absolutely fool proof method. With that first absentee ballot or with the ballots I have cast here in Washington since we moved here five years ago, I have had to have someone physically mark the correct box for me on a paper ballot. While this individual has always been someone I trust, it was still not the same as doing it myself.

So, what was different this time? What brought me out to vote in my first primary, even though I had to select a party? The difference is an accessible voting machine. I was handed a ballot to put in the machine and an access card. The election worker showed me how to place the ballot into the machine and where to insert the access card and then walked away. For the next fifteen minutes or so I stood there with a grin the size of Texas on my face, listening to names and issues and punching keys. At the end I told it to cast the ballot, removed the access card and left having cast the first secret ballot of my life.

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Accessible Voting Machines are here!

Not sure if they are right for you? Read these FAQs and find out!

What is an accessible voting unit (AVU)?

The federally required accessible voting unit is equipped with audio and visual technology that allows voters with limited vision to vote a truly secret ballot and voters with physical disabilities to vote more independently.

How do I vote on an accessible voting unit?

Voters who choose to cast their ballot on an accessible voting unit will check in with the poll worker, show their ID and sign their name in the poll book. Then the voter will be issued a Voter Access Card that contains the ballot style that corresponds to the voter's precinct. No personal information is stored on the Voter Access Card, and the card does not record how the voter has cast their ballot. The voter has the option to vote a touch screen ballot or an audio ballot.

The voter will insert the Voter Access Card in to the accessible voting unit located at the top right of the machine. The voter's ballot will appear on the screen, or in the case of an audio ballot, the machine will begin reading the ballot through a set of earphones. Voters using a touch screen ballot will register their choices by touching next to a candidate's name on the screen; voters casting an audio ballot will listen to the races and initiatives through headphones and register their choices via a numerical keypad.

Before casting their ballot, the voter is provided a summary of their ballot on a Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT). At this time they can accept the ballot or reject it and change selections. The paper record is stored in a sealed container that is opened by election officials only in the event of a recount or an election audit. Once a ballot has been cast, the Voter Access Card is automatically deactivated and ejected from the accessible voting unit. That card cannot be reused to vote until it is re-encoded with ballot information by the accessible voting unit poll judge.

How do I know my vote will be counted?

The voting unit displays a paper record, called a Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail, of the selections to verify before you cast your ballot. Your secret ballot is stored electronically but can not be traced back to you. The paper record is stored in a sealed container that is opened by election officials only in the event of a recount or an election audit.



A voter practices casting a touch screen ballot on an Accessible Voting Unit at a recent advocacy fair.

Will this replace paper ballots?

No. Accessible voting units offer another way to vote in addition to paper ballots already in use at polling places.

Why is King County implementing accessible voting units?

Federal law requires an accessible voting unit at every polling place in the country starting in 2006.



A voter practices casting an audio ballot on an Accessible Voting Unit.

If King County moves to an all vote-by-mail system, where can voters with disabilities cast an independent ballot?

When King County moves entirely to vote by mail, voters will still be able to use accessible voting units at regional voting centers.

What are the benefits of the accessible voting unit?

Accessible voting units provide many benefits to voters.

Voters with visual or motor impairments have the ability to vote independently and in private.

Accessible voting units can display multiple languages and alert voters when they skip a race and prevents overvoting. A summary screen gives voters a chance to check and change their votes before they cast their ballot.

In the State of Washington, all accessible voting equipment must provide a Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) to document the voter's intent. To ensure accuracy, King County Elections will conduct a mandatory audit of 4 percent of the accessible voting units after every election.

What happens if the power goes out?

An internal battery is provided in case of external power failure. The accessible voting unit can run on battery power for at least four hours, providing elections staff with ample time to deliver a replacement unit.

No votes would be lost in the process.

For more information on accessible voting machines, visit the website of the King County Office of Elections at <http://www.metrokc.gov/elections/> or contact them directly at: 206-296-VOTE 800-325-6165 (toll free) 206-296-0109 TTY elections@metrokc.gov

Independent Voting

Continued from page 3

I know to some, this doesn't seem to be such a big deal. Even my wife, although very loving and understanding of my blindness, doesn't have a complete grasp of the significance of this event in my life. Words are hard to find but I guess the only way I can frame it is to say that

the right to cast a secret ballot to select the leaders of this great democracy is a fundamental right we have as Americans. The fact that I can now make those choices trusting totally to my own judgment and ability to press the right key places me on a totally equal footing with anyone else walking into that polling

place. I am thrilled with this new technology and the door to personal freedom it has opened and will work hard to make sure this door remains open to us in the move toward total voting by mail in the future. I eagerly await the general election in November when I can again take part in this basic American right.

Are Accessible Voting Machines Secure?

Provided by King County Department of Elections

To ensure anonymity, the ballot order on the Accessible Voting Machines is scrambled, leaving no connection between the voter and his or her recorded vote. Additional security measures include:

- The vote tabulation and ballot creation servers are installed in secure rooms with controlled access. King County Elections Office policy requires two people with unique passwords log on to the computer at any given time.
- A video camera also records all activity in this room.
- Individual election database files are backed up.
- King County Elections Staff maintains a detailed inventory control of voting machine keys, memory cards, and voter access cards.
- This ballot station soft-

ware, in addition to other components of the tabulating system, was code tested to ensure that the software programming code provided to King County by the vendor is the same line for line as the programming code deposited in the National Institute of Science and Technology Software Library. This ensures that we are using the exact same programming code as that tested by the Independent Testing Authorities.

- When programming and testing for each election King County procedures require a check that each machine is tabulating results correctly and the equipment is then set for the election and the database memory card is sealed in the unit. This legally required testing is conducted in the presence of political party observers.
- Election morning poll workers will run a zero

report on the equipment and ensure that all the seals are intact and not tampered with.

- These units are equipped with the legally required Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) that becomes the official ballot in the case of a hand recount. The paper record is stored in a sealed container that is opened by election officials only in the event of a recount or an election audit.
- After Election Day and before certification of the election, an audit is performed on 4% of the AVUs deployed on Election Day that compares the electronic results produced by the units with the hand accumulated results from the VVPAT.
- King County closely follows lessons learned from counties across the nation.

Connect with the Alliance!

Become an Alliance Member!

Your membership dollars will help the Alliance improve the quality and amount of support available to people with disabilities. It will allow us to provide services related to urgent needs, such as housing, transportation, and employment. Please join with us in supporting independent living for people with disAbilities!

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---|--------|
| <input type="radio"/> | Universal Access Circle | \$1000 |
| <input type="radio"/> | Barrier Removers' Circle | \$500 |
| <input type="radio"/> | Invest in Ability Circle | \$250 |
| <input type="radio"/> | Collaborators' Circle | \$100 |
| <input type="radio"/> | Advocates' Circle | \$30 |
| <input type="radio"/> | Advocates' Circle (Fixed or low-income) | \$10 |
| <input type="radio"/> | Volunteer (please contact me) | |

Apply for the Board of Directors

The Alliance is accepting applications for its Board of Directors. If you have a passion for disability issues, the heart of an advocate and are looking to build leadership skills, this may be a good opportunity for you! We are especially interested in those with knowledge of finances, marketing, and fund development. For more information email jeanette@disabilitypride.org or call 206-632-1212.

Support the Alliance by shopping at Amazon.com

If you like to shop at amazon.com, click first on www.disabilitypride.org and support the Alliance while you shop! All you have to do is click the amazon.com logo on the Alliance's website before you make a purchase and a portion of your purchase will go towards supporting the Alliance and community inclusion for people with disAbilities!

Contact Information

Whether you would like to become a member, renew a membership, or volunteer, please fill out the section below with the relevant information. Thanks!

Name: _____ **Total Amount Enclosed:** \$ _____
(if applicable)

Address _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Checks may be made payable to the Alliance. Please return form to: The Alliance, 4649 Sunnyside Ave N, Ste 100, Seattle, WA 98103. For more information, please call 206-545-7055. Thanks!

You can also contribute online at <http://www.disabilitypride.org>

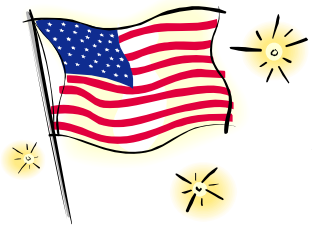


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Alliance of People with **dis**Abilities

I dream. I can. I will.



**Your Vote Matters for
People with
disAbilities!**

Special Election Issue 2006

Please Remember to Vote
on or before November 7th!

connectABILITY

November 2006

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The Alliance is a United Way
of King County Partner Agency.



www.disabilitypride.org