

Strange Bedfellows

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Your skinny dipping Seattle City Council candidates

It's a pretty safe bet that a candidate forum where you find out that Seattle City Council President Richard Conlin has skinny dipped in Lake Washington and smoked pot is not sponsored by the League of Women Voters.

Those facts and more were revealed Tuesday night at "Candidate Survivor," a forum/talent show/happening sponsored by [The Washington Bus](#). The Bus is the very energetic group trying to get young people engaged in the state's political system.

All the major candidates for City Council took part in the show, where they were asked a series of questions and had a chance to show off their talent - or lack thereof. Several hundred people crowded into the Showbox at the Market to see the people vying for one of four council seats dressed in track suits, headbands and camoflauge. It was during the lightning question round that a surprising number of politicians acknowledged they'd taken an au naturel dip in the lake and inhaled.

Twenty-four-year-old Iraq combat veteran Dorsal Plants scored points when it was revealed he was the only candidate without health insurance. But Plant's talent - a self-defense demonstration complete with one-arm pushups - was no match for David Bloom's rendition of "A Teenager in Love." Bloom is old enough to remember the 1959 hit for Dion and the Belmonts; most in the boisterous crowd certainly were not.

After each round audience members text-messaged their votes - candidates who didn't get enough were escorted from the stage.

It's difficult to divine serious policy differences from an event that was designed to be fun and drum up excitement, but there were several themes.

Nearly all the candidates expressed their support for things sure to go over with a young Seattle audience - the decriminalization of marijuana, support for nightlife and the environment. A few took unpopular positions. For example Jordan Royer and Sally Bagshaw were among those who said they opposed the 20-cent per plastic bag fee proposal on next month's ballot. Robert Rosencrantz was booed when he indicated he didn't support decriminalizing marijuana.

There was palpable dislike in the room for Mayor Greg Nickels, whose administration has tried to crackdown on bars and music clubs with a series of initiatives that were wildly unpopular with Tuesday night's target demographic. When one of the event panelists, Dominic Holden from The Stranger, jokingly asked "when do we get to vote Nickels off the island?" the crowd cheered loudly.

In fact several of the mayoral candidates were Tuesday's opening act. James Donaldson, Michael McGinn, Jan Drago and Joe Mallahan played an informal game of basketball with a hoop that had been set up on stage. Donaldson - the 7 foot 2 inch former Seattle Sonic - mostly toyed with his more diminutive foes, though McGinn did sink a nice bank shot. Nickels sent a stand-in, and a good one at that - the 6 foot 10 inch political consultant Colby Underwood.

So who among the City Council candidates prevailed? Plants, who is running for the open position 4 seat and who, amidst all the craziness, made a serious, sincere pitch for having a young voice on a council dominated by much older people.

His opponent in the position 4 race, Sally Bagshaw (a contender for best outfit with a smart camo number) finished second. Jessie Israel, who is giving incumbent Nick Licata a strong challenge in the position 6 race, finished third.

Posted by [Chris Grygiel](#) at July 28, 2009 9:34 p.m.



Richard Conlin at "Candidate Survivor."

· [Return to Your skinny dipping Seattle City Council candidates](#)