



YosemiteDems.net

The Mountain Democrat
Newsletter Editor
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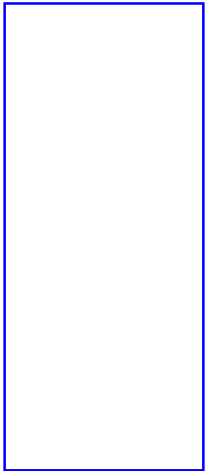


The Mountain Democrat

February March 2007

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The Mountain Democrat is published bimonthly by the Democratic Clubs of Mariposa, California, and Oakhurst, California, and is distributed to all current members of those clubs. For a membership application see the inside back cover of this newsletter.

COMING EVENTS

February 2007

- Feb. 3: Oakhurst Club Meeting
Feb. 10: Mariposa Club Meeting
Feb.10:Coarsegold Club Meeting

March 2007

- Mar. 3: Oakhurst Club meeting
Mar. 10: Mariposa Club Meeting
Mar. 24: Jefferson Dinner
See page 3

For more information about our Democratic Clubs and Democratic happenings around the state and nation open your trusty web browser and visit our web page at:

YosemiteDems.net

CONTACT US

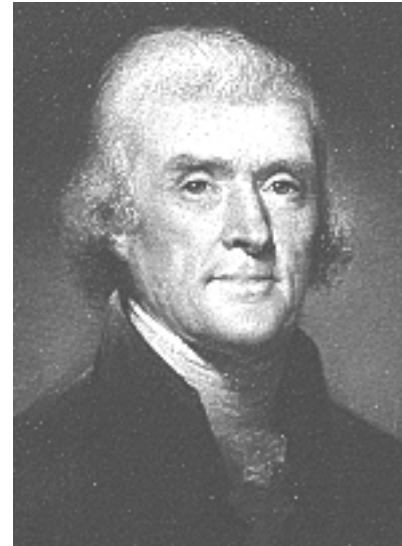
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Mariposa Jefferson Dinner

*The
Mariposa Democratic Club*

invites you to the

*Annual
Jefferson Dinner*

*March 24, 2007 at 6:30 PM
Best Western Banquet Room
\$25.00 per person*

CDC Report

By Jery Lacayo

California Democratic Council is VERY HAPPY to welcome Ginny Terrell back to an active role as the Yosemite Gateway Regional Vice-president. The officers all look forward to having our team all together again.

CDC is currently accepting bids for the 2007 convention which will take place sometime this summer. It promises to be a very interesting convention, and we hope all of our potential delegates will attend and participate in electing our officers, and setting the direction of our statewide organization for the next couple of years. All clubs will be notified of the location and dates as soon as they are available. Also, please note that it is time for your re-affiliation with CDC and we will be contacting you very soon to assist you in that effort.

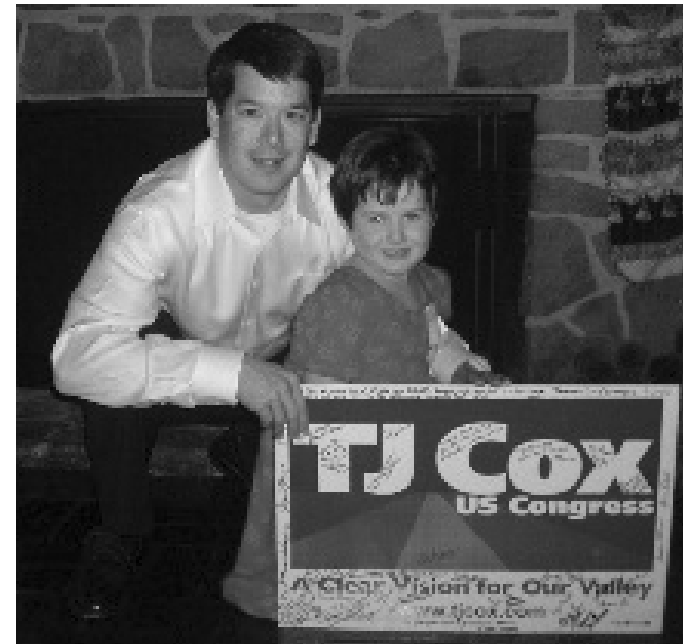
A major focus of the local CDC officers in the coming months will be the development of new geographic clubs in areas not presently being served. As we build new clubs we will encounter and inspire new activists. We all recognize the need for more involvement by more people if we are to effectively share our hopes and ideas.

It appears that we are heading into a very exciting time as the field of candidates for President of the United States becomes a crowded and diverse group. It is clear that as our ice melts and our frozen pipes get fixed, we will not have much time to rest before our activism and organizing will need to kick into gear for the upcoming election cycle. I hope your New Year's Resolutions included a determination to elect a Democratic president in 2008. While November 2008 seems far away, the primaries will be here before we know it, and our efforts to educate and inspire must begin very soon.

No matter who you prefer for President, and I encourage everyone

CDC Report (continued)

to work for their personal candidate of choice, be sure you are prepared to support the winner of the primaries, even if it is not your first choice. If we don't hang together, we will almost certainly all hang separately. Democrats, and others of similar persuasions, must not throw out the baby with the bath water—again.



TJ Cox and Hannah Livingstone at the Coarsegold Holiday Party

From the Wilds of Mariposa

By Les Marsden

It's never too early to stake our claim to your calendar, so please place a large happy face on Saturday, March 24th, 2007 right now. That's the date for this year's Mariposa Democrats **Thomas Jefferson Dinner**, held—as usual—in the Banquet Room of the Mariposa Best Western Motel. We've already secured Mr. Henry Vandermeir as speaker; Henry is Secretary of the California Democratic Council and a really great guy! We're currently working on other (national) speakers and will supply more details—including the menu—as the date approaches. We always offer a choice of meat entrée or vegetarian selection. If you've attended our past Jefferson Dinners, and particularly last year's phenomenal (and totally sold-out) event, you'll really want to dedicate March 24th to this great evening of fun, conviviality, wonderful gourmet food, exciting speakers—and the warm goodwill provided by an oasis of Democrats in this red region. This year, we Democrats are finally BACK—and can only feel sorry for the poor Republicans who are now on the outside looking in at our great feast! Tickets are now available; please call our Mariposa Democratic Office line at (209) 966-3367. As in the past, tickets are \$25 for adults ONLY when purchased in advance—but will be \$35 at the door. Children under twelve years of age are only \$10. Doors open at 6:00 and dinner is served at 7:00.

For those not present at our January 13th Breakfast Meeting, Shirley Schmelzer brought to our attention the attempt now under way to resurrect Proposition 90 from its defeat in the 2006 midterm elections. Only today I received in the mail a petition from the “Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association” warning me of “constitutional amendments to undermine Prop 13, now pending in (the) state legislature...” and asking me to sign and return the petition immediately. PLEASE: if you receive such garbage as this, throw it away. Proposition 90 was a hugely deceptive scam—referred to by Robert Redford as “the single most

From the Wilds of Mariposa (continued)

dangerous threat that has ever been leveled at our state's environment.” Prop 90 was one in a long line of similar initiatives foisted upon the voters of many states by Howie Rich, a wealthy multimillionaire libertarian land developer from New York who is trying to remove the ability of local and state governments to regulate property and to protect the environment and community from development. In effect, if Prop 90 or its successor(s) were to become law, virtually ANY use for ANY property could be litigated, anyone could literally bankrupt local or state governments and all existing General Plans would be nullified. Prop 90 went down only by a 52—47 vote but its backers have returned and are attempting to collect YOUR signature in an effort to put its latest incarnation on California's 2008 ballot. PLEASE do NOT sign any such garbage and PLEASE educate your friends and family. Despite its cynical backers' claims, this is NOT about Proposition 13 or eminent domain; it's an assault on the environment and California's ability to protect itself from development. Don't fall for it!

Longtime Mariposa Democratic Club member Dick Kunstman passed away on January 9 at the age of 86. He and his wife of 64 years, Alice, had recently relocated from Mariposa to Ashland, Oregon, to be near their daughter. Dick had endured a number of health maladies in recent years and with characteristic self-possession, planned to control the date of his demise under Oregon's voter-approved Death with Dignity Act. Ironically, he died of natural causes mere days before the mandated waiting period was to conclude. Only a few months ago, and after moving to Oregon, the Kunstmans sent a check to the Mariposa Democratic Club: the check paid for two life memberships. We send our heartfelt sympathy and wishes to Alice and family as we honor the inspiration and driving spirit of Dick Kunstman.



Oakhurst Democratic Club Report

Ginny Terrell

One of the happiest parts of being president of the Oakhurst Dems is the people who are in the trenches with me. Let me explain. Last year we started our scholarship fund. I was amazed that it got funded to such an extent, even more so by the students who applied.

To me, the scholarship fund is so important, not only because it really does do good things for people, but because it gives our club such visibility in such a positive way. Our winner last year, Trish Byers, was a model student who exemplified all the reasons why we wanted to have the scholarship in the first place. Hard working, excellent grades, community service, etc. It really made my day to be at the awards ceremony at the high school and hand out that award.

One thing should be pointed out. The criteria for the Eleanor Roosevelt Service Award isn't all about grades. We set a higher standard on community service, both now and in the future, than we do on just GPA. We also look at what the student wants to become, whether it requires college or a trade school.

Now I have an even more important announcement. An anonymous donor has contributed \$1,000 (!!!) to the scholarship fund. WOW! How do you even begin to say thanks for such a donation? The whole idea is almost overwhelming. Do we give out more awards? Do we make the award larger? Do we bankroll it in case we don't get funded properly in years to come? I don't know the answers to those questions, but I'm sure the people on the Scholarship Committee will come up with the right answers.

I want to thank all of you who have participated in our efforts in the past. In thinking about donating, remember it doesn't have to be money. We're very happy to accept "sweat equity". There are

Oakhurst Democratic Club Report (continued)

so many ways we can each help our club to become a standard of excellence for the community; from writing letters to the editor to public speaking; from talking to your neighbors to contacting our government representatives, and so much more.



Rebecca Martinez speaking at the Coarsegold Holiday Party

Coarsegold Club Report

By Sandy Stairs

Our club is off to a fast start this year. We have held our first meeting at the Clubhouse library with a great guest speaker, Dr. Mathew Egan, PhD. His knowledge of the facts surrounding the proposed gravel quarry was eye opening. As the great Yogi Berra once stated, "You'd be surprised what you don't see when you're told not to look!" Over 1,000 pages of environmental impact studies, and the supervisors neither objected to nor questioned the impact of this project. Their minds were made up prior to any public hearings on the issue. Even though Frank Bigelow didn't participate in the vote on this project, he will benefit greatly from the tonnage fees from the gravel trucks crossing his land. Looks like our buddy Frank is setting himself up with "investors" to help fund a run for US Congress!

Speaking of environmental issues, our movie night this month was "An Inconvenient Truth". This is a film which one needs to see at least once, and should view many times! If you missed it, we have the copy in our lending library, so call us. Another equally important film is "Who Killed The Electric Car?" and one which we will schedule on another movie night in the near future.

Our next meeting will be on February 10th and the next movie night will be on the 16th. Please call our information line at 683-1313 for more information.

We had our first ever Holiday Party at the Yosemite Lakes Park Clubhouse and I want to thank each and every one of you who helped to make it a huge success! TJ Cox was our main speaker and was flanked by Rebecca Martinez, Madera County Registrar and Recorder; Mike and Susan Rowe, DFA and Central Committee; Jerry Lacayo, CDC Area Chair; Dr. David Collins, MD, back from Iraq with his views on the war!

We have collected gifts for the troops the last several years and this

Coarsegold Club Report (continued)

year was no exception. We found a small group in Iraq which had no services at all so they were the group to whom we decided to send the gifts. Ruth enclosed a short letter to Spc. Casey Elliott, who was the contact person for this group. A short excerpt from her letter to Casey: "I want you all to know that our group does not like this 'war', but we are very supportive of you all. Our family prays for peace everyday for all the people who suffer, troops and civilians."

On December 16, we got a card in the mail. Spc. Casey Elliott had received the gifts and wrote:

To the Stairs and Democratic Club of Coarsegold,

Thank you all so very much for the packages, but thank you so much more for your support! Everyone's views of this "war" are different, but that is what we are truly blessed with by being Americans, the freedom to express those opinions. Personally, I do not agree with what is going on. Our mere presence is placing Americans in greater risk. But, as long as my friends are here fighting, I will be right beside them. I think that it is my Liberal views that keep me sane sometimes!

I sincerely hope that you all have a great holiday season & know that we all appreciate the support!

Very Respectfully, Spc. Casey O. Elliott

(He added): If you read the paper, you are misinformed; if you don't read the paper, you are uninformed~Mark Twain

I am still moved when I read this little card from an unknown guy stuck somewhere in Iraq. I pray for his safe return...

Local Democrats Meet to Elect CDP Representatives

By Ellie Schermerhorn

There's nothing that will put you to sleep in your soup faster than discussing the organizational structure of the California Democratic Party, or the California Democratic Council, for that matter. Unfortunately, it's important, and if you are going to be an informed and active Democrat in this state, you should try to participate in its activities.

Twenty-seven Democrats did just that on Sunday, January 14th. Those eligible to attend the meeting included all registered Democrats residing in Assembly District 25, which includes Oakhurst and Mariposa. They met to elect our representatives to the **Democratic State Central Committee (DSCC)**. Why is that important? Because the Democratic State Central Committee *governs* the California Democratic Party, so these are very important positions

Twelve positions were open to fill, and twelve were nominated and elected. Representing us at the State Party level now will be *Tom Aja, Heather Bernikoff, Robert Blazer, Mark Brekhus, Jim Cousland, Zane Davis, Nancy Mooney, Claudia Parks, Ron Platt, Bill Robbins, Gary Robbins, and Susan Rowe.*

But there was a little more to do: electing our **Executive Board (E-Board) Representative** to the California Democratic Party. The E-Board meets several times a year, votes on Party Resolutions, and handles endorsement of legislation. Pretty important job.

Both Tom Aja and Susan Rowe ran for the Executive Board, and in a close vote, Tom Aja was elected.

Local Democrats Meet (continued)

We all owe our thanks to those people who are willing to serve and keep the California Democratic Party strong.

Note: Thanks go to Susan Rowe for organizing the meeting, and congratulations for her recent re-election as Chair of the Madera County Democratic Central Committee.



Part of the crowd at the Coarsegold Club Holiday Party

Poli-Sci Professor Addresses Oakhurst Club (Part 1)

By Ellie Schermerhorn

In December, we had the pleasure of hosting David Schecter, Ph.D. in Political Science at CSU-Fresno. David made some on-target prophecies when he talked to us after the 2004 election, so we're always interested in hearing what he has to say. One of those predictions was that every second term he could remember, the party in power had screwed things up, and (happily in this case), the past predicted the future once again. According to David, "the Bush administration has imploded and will be rated as one of the worst in modern political history."

David's speech was a good news/bad news summary, but given space constraints, we'll just address the good news for now. Stay tuned next issue for the bad news.

Good News:

1. One tremendous positive - Democrats were competitive at fundraising which put us on par at the Congressional level.
2. California Democrats held onto the State Senate and Assembly, and we have 6 of 7 seats in the Executive office to counter Schwarzenegger. He cautioned, however, that this might not always be the case after redistricting takes place in 2011.
3. Nancy Pelosi - The only thing history books will remember in 50 years is this is the year Americans felt comfortable electing a woman as Speaker of the House. Currently, only 14% - 15% of House and Senate seats are women. Congress looks nothing like America and is still a "white male middle-aged, millionaire boy's club".
4. Democrats appealed to independent voters for the first time in about 5 election cycles, but the size of registered Democrats and

Poli-Sci Professor (continued)

Republicans is shrinking. "Even though Democratic activists are interested in keeping the Democratic Party whole, I will ask you to be as nice to independents as you can over the next 2 years. Democrats will need them. It's OK to work with them".

We'll cover the "bad news" in detail next month.



From the Fresno Center for Nonviolence February Events Calendar
By Angela Price

Wednesday, February 14 at 12 noon and 6:30 p.m. the film "Who Killed the Electric Car?" will be shown. The 12 noon showing will be at Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N. Van Ness; the 6:30 p.m. showing will be at the Fresno Central Library, 2420 Mariposa Street (488-3195) (doors opening at 6 p.m.) **Dr. John Dunning**, one of the inventors of the electric car, who worked with General Motors for 30 years, will be introducing the film both at mid-day and in the evening. He will lead a discussion after the evening showing. The film is 93 minutes long. Call 237-3223 for more information.

This story couldn't be more relevant or important. The foremost goal in making this movie was to educate and enlighten audiences with the story of this car, its place in history and in the larger story of our car culture and how it enables our continuing addiction to foreign oil. This is an important film with an important message that not only calls to task the officials who squelched the Zero Emission Vehicle mandate, but all of the other accomplices: government, the car companies, Big Oil, even Eco-darling Hydrogen as well as consumers, who turned their backs on the car, embracing the SUV instead. The documentary investigates the death and resurrection of the electric car, as well as the role of renewable energy and sustainable living in our country's future; issues which affect everyone from progressive liberals to the neo-conservative right.

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

John Croll, a member of the Mariposa Club recently sent several suggestions to the Yosemite Democrats web page editor for additions and changes to the web page.

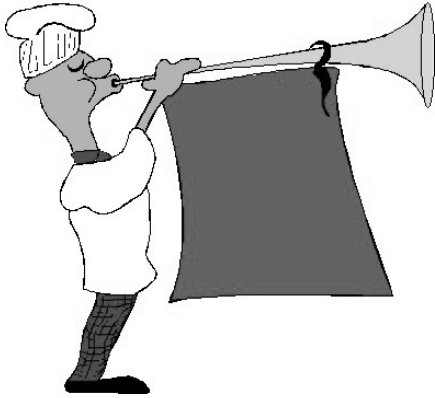
The first of these additions has now been implemented: putting the Mountain Democrat newsletter on the web page. Not only can you see all of the 2005 and 2006 newsletters, but as new newsletters are published they will be available for you to look at on line before you get them in the mail or at a meeting.

So give it a try. Go to the web page at:
<http://yosemitedems.net/>
and click on the Newsletters button, then choose the issue you want to view.

Mortimer Mouse Sez...

**Don't Miss The
wonderful
JEFFERSON DINNER!**





***YOU'RE
INVITED!***

“A warm mountain gathering of Democratic friends . . . ”

That’s how one of our community described this event, but it can be described in many ways.

It is casually elegant in the Sierra tradition

It’s a gourmet delight made with much love and care

It’s a chance to get somebody out of the kitchen

And enjoy a feast someone else will prepare.

So join with us then for a night filled with magic

Inspiring speakers who won’t talk too long

Share music and laughter with friends who are jolly

And all of this can now be yours for a song!

The Jefferson Dinner
Saturday, March 24th 6:30 PM
Best Western Banquet Room, Mariposa
\$25.00 per person 209-742-7891

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Annual Dues are \$5.00 per person
(Mariposa lifetime membership is \$100)

Today’s Date: _____

Mariposa Club: _____ or Oakhurst Club: _____

New Member: _____ or Renewal: _____

How did you find out about us? _____

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Telephone: (_____) _____

E-Mail: _____ Fax: _____

Supervisorial District (if known): _____

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Telephone: (_____) _____

E-Mail: _____ Fax: _____

Supervisorial District (if known): _____

Total Amount Enclosed: \$_____

Please mail form and check payable to:

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