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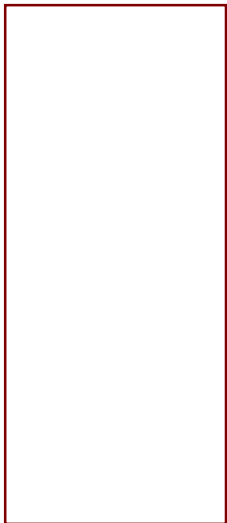
The Mountain Democrat
Newsletter Editor
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The Mountain Democrat

June – July 2008

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The Mountain Democrat is published bimonthly by the Democratic Clubs of Eastern Madera and Mariposa Counties which are affiliated with the California Democratic Council, and is distributed to all current members of those clubs. For a membership application see the inside back cover of this newsletter.

COMING EVENTS

June 2008

Jun 7: Oakhurst Club Meeting

Jun 14: Mariposa Club Meeting

Jun 20: Coarsegold Meeting

June 20: Democratic Forum
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July 2008

Jul 5: Oakhurst Club Meeting

Jul 12: Mariposa Club Meeting

Jul 18: Coarsegold Meeting

Jul 18: Coarsegold Movie

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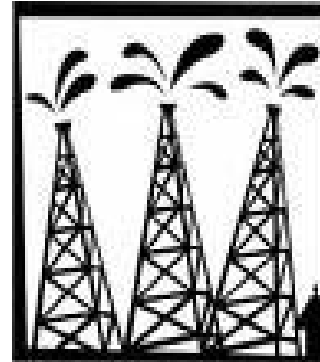
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For more information about our Democratic Clubs and Democratic happenings around the state and nation open your trusty web browser and visit our web page at:

YosemiteDems.net

The World Premier of **The Oakhurst Democratic Forum**

presents



The Truth About The PRICE of GAS

Friday, June 20th, 2008

Place: Reading room of the Oakhurst Library

Time: 7PM - 9PM

Discussants: Alan Cheah and Max Richie

Refreshments served--the event is free and open to the public.

The film, *The Oil Factor*, a documentary by Gerard Ungerman & Audrey Brohy, narrated by Ed Asner, (93 mins.) will be shown. Following the film, two Oakhurst Democratic Club members, Max Richie and Alan Cheah will speak briefly about "peak oil," what's behind high gas prices--and some solutions. They will open the floor for discussion.

The Bridge Is Burning

Copyright ©2008 by Jerry Lacayo

I've been at this political thing for a long time and have always been interested in politics. Though I have not always been happy with the election results, I have graciously (well, pretty much) accepted the results and promised myself we would do better next time. Frequently I have found myself voting for someone who did not make it out of the primary, but I gave it my best shot and moved on. I've never been angry with those in my party who chose the other guy—after all—we were all Democrats and I wasn't a sore loser. Sadly, that seems to be changing for me, and I think it has changed for many others as well. I am shocked and saddened by the unbelievably nasty attacks on our own Democratic candidates from within the Democratic Party and, though I expect some attacks from the broadcast hacks professing to deliver the "news" on television, I do not expect them to come from what I have considered, in the past, to be mainstream media.

From within the Party, I am angry with those who cannot satisfy themselves with supporting a Democratic candidate (Obama) but must continuously and unabashedly attack the competition (Hillary). I do not recall anything quite like this in the past and I believe it is doing irreparable harm to the Democratic Party and to the current leading Democratic candidate (Obama) as well. I fail to see what is to be gained by driving Democratic supporters of the alternate candidate out of the Party. I know that is happening, as I have had many personal interactions with longtime Democrats.

From outside the Party, the media "coverage" of this race is the worst that I can recall. Fox has long been barred from my living room, but MSNBC used to be a welcome guest on a regular basis. Chris Matthews, Keith Olberman, David Shuster and others have abused their access into my home so much that it has now been cut off. CNN still gets in, but with much more selectivity and for shorter periods of time.

The Bridge Is Burning (continued)

I have heard award winning columnists make comments that lead to me to believe that their awards must have been for bad taste. It appears that just about everything critical of Obama is called racism, and everything critical of Hillary (including the outrageous suggestion that her reference to Bobby Kennedy's assassination was a message that she was hoping that Obama would be killed) is justified as news or commentary.

I am personally sickened by such comments and those guilty of such obscene accusations are polluting the airwaves and making intelligent discourse difficult, hostile and very unlikely.

Many Democrats have joined the chorus. Some of my friends, people whose opinions I had respected and whose comments I had always read are now filled with anger, hostility and accusations. It is no longer a pleasure to join in the debate, but a hazard. If this degree of low-blow campaigning were being aimed at a Republican, I would be ashamed. That it is being aimed at a Democrat, by Democrats, is beyond comprehension, sad, and disgusting.

I was brought up to attack injustice, not people. I was taught to fight against unfairness and cruelty, not to aim it at those with whom I disagree. I don't necessarily love all those with whom I disagree, but I don't hate them. Hate is an expensive emotion. It can cause physical and emotional harm and ultimately costs the giver more than the recipient. It is a lousy investment of time and energy.

So, I will continue to choose to read reasonable discourse, I will delete hate-mail in all of its forms and I will hope that some semblance of civility will return sometime soon.

News from the Oakhurst Democratic Club

By Scott Hill

New Oakhurst Democratic Forum Debuts

After several months of preparation a new venue for Democrats will be launched in Oakhurst. Many club members have felt that, in addition to our Saturday morning breakfast meeting, we needed a venue in Oakhurst for exploring current issues, opinions, and feelings in more depth than the business meeting allows.

Lynn Jacobsson, a long-time member of the Oakhurst Club and Professor of Sociology at California State Fresno, has accepted the challenge to provide the new activity.

The inaugural event will take place on Friday, June 20, at the Oakhurst Branch Library, and will feature a film and two discussion leaders on the topic of “The Price of Oil”. The event will include discussions on the theory of “Peak Oil”, as well as an analysis of the factors involved in our escalating oil prices.

Memorial Day Market Washout

The first joint effort of the Coarsegold and Oakhurst clubs to set up a booth at the Memorial Day Coarsegold Peddlers Market was washed out by the rain and cold that greeted us on May 23rd through 26th last month.

Booths at local markets and fairs are one way of letting area residents know that there really are Democrats in the mountains, and that we are organized, active, informed, and enthusiastic.

But we were not enthusiastic about the weather this Memorial Day weekend. After a two hour shift on Saturday morning, May 24th, staffed by the very brave trio of Jackie and Dick Roberto and Lelia Bogard, we decided to “throw in the towel”, packed up the booth, and headed home to build a fire in the fireplace.

News from the Oakhurst Democratic Club (continued)

Entering the New Year Without a President

In June, 2007, as our then president, Ginny Terrell, was closing our last meeting for the year, she made a final plea for someone to step forward to take the job of President for the next year. After the meeting a woman who was present for her first meeting with our club volunteered to take the position for one year to give us a chance to find someone to take over the job for the longer term. That woman was Victoria Williams, and she has led the club throughout the last year despite the fact that she and her husband had just moved to town and were starting a new business, and the death in the family requiring her time and attention.

Now, one year later, we are still without a volunteer to fill the job of club president. Fortunately, we do have a strong group of officers and committee chairs for all the remaining positions.

The slate of officers nominated for the 2008 – 2009 year are:

President	Vacant
Vice President	Margaret Brandenburg
Secretary/Treasurer	Scott Hill
Member at Large	Charles Richie
Member at Large	Ed Estes

Current Committee Chairs are:

Democratic Forum	Lynn Jacobsson
New Citizen Registration	Margaret Brandenburg
Programs and Meetings	Ellie Schermerhorn
Student Awards Committee	Sally Jeans
Fund Raising Committee	Jamie Blair

A View from the Hill (Sierra foothills, that is!)

By Seth “Sandy” Stairs, Democratic Club of Coarsegold

It appears that the Democrats have selected a candidate for president and we are finally beginning to see real issues discussed. High on my personal priority list is health care. I have commented on this in the past and I will continue to do so as it is such an important topic. Health care is the one issue that can throw a family into bankruptcy more often than any other event. The figure I was quoted was 65% of all bankruptcies are health care related. We need to look a little closer at the cause of all this. First, the insurance companies are in it for profit. Being a small business owner, I know the quickest way to increase profit is to reduce expenses. So here we have a business (insurance) that we are paying to cover our health expenses and they are limiting their services to increase their profits. So what's wrong with this picture? The fact that approximately 20,000 people die each year because they are either under insured or have none! There are certain things that the private sector shouldn't be allowed to provide; health care is one of them.

Well, fat chance of changing this system now. The health care industry is a 2.4 trillion dollar business. The insurance providers aren't going to go away. But we do have the opportunity to make some choices here. Go to OneCareNow.org and read the information on SB 198, the single payer health care plan proposed by State Senator Sheila Kuehl. This plan leaves the insurance companies in place, but much like workers comp used to function, payment is made to the State in the form of a pool to pay the insurance premiums. This reduces the cost of administration by about 10% and that savings is what allows coverage for the currently uninsured. It also makes coverage uniform by regulating the providers. Not a perfect solution but far better than what we have now.

As if the cost of health insurance isn't bad enough, what about the gas prices?! I personally just finished another “Staycation”, a new,

A View from the Hill (continued)

but rather appropriate term coined to describe staying at home rather than paying the costs associated with traveling for a “real” vacation. There are several complex issues at work that are driving oil prices to almost daily record highs. If you would like to understand and discuss these issues, please plan on attending the first Democratic Forum, Friday, June 20th at the Oakhurst Library at 7:00PM. This is free to the public and refreshments will be served.

The Coarsegold club will be having our business meeting prior to the Oakhurst Forum at 6:00 PM. Car pooling will be available for our members so please contact Ruth or Sandy Stairs, 658-8220, to arrange for transportation if necessary. We will be having our meetings on Movie Night, the 3rd Friday of the month, for the rest of the summer. Email reminders will be sent regarding topics, times and movies to be shown. These are open meetings, so you Oakhurst folks, don't be bashful! Bring yourself, a guest, some food (did I mention these meetings are a Potluck? Mmmm, good!) and enjoy a Night at the Movies.

To recap our meeting dates and times:

June 20, 6:00 PM (in Oakhurst) movie to follow with discussion
July 18, 6:00 PM (in Coarsegold) movie to follow (bring food!)



New Committee to Focus on the Fall Election!

By Anne Brock

The Mariposa Democratic Club has formed a committee to focus on activities around the November election. Our goal is to get Mariposa County – and the 19th district— to go blue! We'll be doing this through voter education, phone banks, reaching out to independents, voter registration, media outreach, and working with the other clubs in Oakhurst, Fresno, Merced, etc. We're planning on mailers, phone banking parties, ads in the paper, letters to the editor, etc.

We need people and money for these efforts! If you're willing to work on any of these activities, contact Heather Bernikoff (925-465-6046, hbernikoff@hotmail.com) or Anne Brock (209-742-6872, abrock@aol.com). Also contact us if you can help us out with money, space or food for phone bankers, or any other way you can think to help us out. We're starting to plan the activities now and expect to have a lot going on, especially after the Democratic convention!

Let's hear it for victory in November!



Jane Jones, Mariposa Democratic Club Treasurer, presents Hayley Ballerini her \$500 award for best essay in the annual Thomas Jefferson Community Service Essay Contest.

Oakhurst and Coarsegold Clubs Give Two Service Awards

by Pati Stein, Scholarship Committee

The Oakhurst Democratic Club and the Democratic Club of Coarsegold awarded Eleanor Roosevelt Community Service Awards to Yosemite High School seniors this year. Jessica Fullmer and Wesley Jackson will each receive \$500 for financial assistance to further their education in fields that will benefit their communities and the world at large.

Jessica Fullmer has applied to Cal Poly San Luis Obispo to pursue double degrees in Psychology and Animal Science. Her ultimate goal is to become an Animal Assistance Therapist to help people with disabilities to learn through therapy with animals. She has applied to work as a volunteer this summer with the Chaffee Zoo in Fresno. Jessica has already volunteered extensively in the mountain community and has “logged over 1,125 hours in community and school service” during her high school years including a campaign to raise awareness for immunization against cervical cancer. In her letters of recommendation, Carole Calderwood refers to Jessica as “the bright light that will shine in our future.” Rebecca Hardison says “Jessica is the kindest, most thoughtful student I have ever had in any of my classes during my teaching career.” The members of the scholarship committee felt that Ms. Fullmer was imminently qualified to carry on the spirit of both Eleanor Roosevelt and the Mountain Democrats.

Wesley Jackson plans to pursue a doctoral degree majoring in computer science with a minor in a technical field of bioinformatics, robotics or nanotechnology. He hopes to attend either Harvey Mudd College or UC Berkeley. Wesley’s community service includes nine years of volunteer work as a Boy Scout including restoring trails and historic cabins in Yosemite and picking grapes in Fresno each fall to send as raisins for disaster victims worldwide. For his Eagle Scout Project he organized and directed the installation of two wheelchair accessible picnic tables for the playground at Coarsegold Elementary School Special

Oakhurst Club Gives Two Service Awards (Continued)

Education Department. As an International Baccalaureate Full Diploma Candidate he is required to complete 150 community service hours. In Wesley’s words, “... the soul of life is not idle, effortless pleasure, but direct experience.”

It was a pleasure for those of us who served on the Student Awards Committee to read through more than forty applications that were a wonderful view into the hardworking and inspiring lives of these students. These young people are not only hoping for a better future, but are already hard at work providing one for themselves and their communities. As Democrats we can appreciate their efforts as we try desperately to provide a political and economic climate that will foster education, freedom and opportunity for this and future generations. Youth will never give up striving. Neither can we.

A Thank You from a Service Award Recipient

I am Wes Jackson, a senior at Yosemite High School, and I will be attending UC Berkeley this fall. Thank you for the Mountain Democrats’ Community Service Award! I greatly appreciate this aid and your generosity in supporting our community!

I plan to attain a PhD in Computer Science and lead research in future technological development, such as in nanotechnology or bioinformatics. I also hope to minor in music, as the extensive uses and potential of computer science research and playing music are my two greatest passions.

Your gratuitous support allows my aspirations of driving technology towards the betterment of our society to be more feasible! Thank you!

Mariposa Club Thomas Jefferson Community Service Award

By Carol Johnson

The Mariposa Democratic Club proudly announces the winner of the 2008 Thomas Jefferson Community Service Essay Contest -- Hayley Ballerini. The Club presented Ms. Ballerini with her award in May of this year. The Club wishes to express its most sincere thanks to the generous people and businesses who made the award possible. The next time you see Judy Eppler or visit Chocolate Soup, the Starchman Law Office, Take and Bake Pizza, or Landis Realty please say "thank you" on behalf of Mariposa Democrats.

2008 Thomas Jefferson Community Service Essay

By Hayley Ballerini

Giving to other people is vital for one's own sense of self-worth. I receive personal well-being from giving to my community -- both local and global. On a local level, I have spent many hours working with Friday Night Live, mentoring at-risk students from Mariposa Middle School. My hope is that my time spent with these adolescents will encourage them to make positive decisions in their lives. Simply listening to these individuals helps increase their self-confidence, an essential tool in bettering their lives, and thus, our society.

Every year since its inception, I have participated in the Yosemite Facelift. Put on by a nonprofit organization, the Facelift gathers people together to remove trash from Yosemite National Park. Last year, we removed over 15,000 pounds of trash over four days. On other weekends, a friend and I get together and walk around the park to pick up the trash people have left. Although it's a simple task, I receive great pride from being a teenager that recycles the plastic bottle flung out of a passing vehicle, rather than the apathetic youth who tosses a piece of gum onto the pavement.

Two summers ago, I spent a month interning in a Biology Lab at

Mariposa Club Community Service Award (continued)

Harvard University. My work there was small; I mainly helped a graduate student with her experiments, but I was able to aid the scientific community. I was fortunate to learn that many societal contributions are small, but that makes them no less significant.

Last summer, I interned for the City of Berkeley on measure G -- a voter passed initiative that mandates the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions 80% by 2050. I spent six weeks conducting research, putting on workshops and rallying people at Farmers' Markets. Our job was simple: get the community involved and excited about reducing greenhouse gas emissions. While Berkeley may not be my geographical community, my work there helped engender change in the global community through local policy.

Thanks, in part, to my internship, I now wish to pursue a career in both science and politics. With a double major in political science and environmental science, I hope to use public policy as an outlet for solving environmental problems such as overpopulation, climate change, and sustainability. Far too often, politicians have a degree in business or law, but rarely, if ever, do they have a strong background in science. As our world becomes more reliant on technology and we begin to face environmental nightmares, I intend to bring scientific insight into politics. My goal is to help the international community face these issues through policy and activism.



Water Expert Speaks to Oakhurst Democrats

By Ellie Schermerhorn

The Oakhurst Democratic Club was fortunate enough to have **Lloyd Carter, one of the region's foremost water experts**, as its April speaker. Lloyd has been an award-winning reporter for United Press International, and is currently a practicing attorney. A Fresno native, he's dedicated much of his life to studying California's water wars, particularly those in the Central Valley.

Lloyd's summary of the current state of the water wars is this: **"In the big picture, northern California is being drained dry so we can build more subdivisions in southern California."**

The Governor's premise is that we are going to need more water, and no one can argue with that. But built into that argument is that all current water use is reasonable, a fact which is demonstrably false. Per person use of water in Europe is ½ of what we use in California. However, all domestic use in California only accounts for 10% of water used. Currently, 83% – 85% goes to agriculture.

One of the Governor's solutions is to build more dams, *although the 1,400 dams in California sat empty in the 1985 – 1992 drought*, and because of evaporation loss, surface storage is "one of the most inefficient and expensive means ever devised." Lloyd supports ground water storage as the best solution. Farmers can keep pumping costs to a minimum by using windmills, as they have for centuries.

But farmers, such as those represented by the **Westlands Water District** in the San Joaquin Valley, want to tie up the water supply and keep farming on inappropriate land, creating enormous amounts of selenium and a monumental environmental hazard.

Lloyd believes Diane Feinstein is currently selling out Democratic values, environmental values, and common sense, having been mesmerized by the Westlands' farmers. Lloyd feels

Water Expert Speaks to Oakhurst Democrats (continued)

"there ain't a dime's worth of difference between Republican and Democratic legislators because agribusiness calls the tune", and he doesn't understand why Feinstein has gotten so cozy with the Westlands given that "95% of them vote Republican."

Lloyd does propose a solution: Take 500,000 acres of high selenium soils out of production since there is no economic solution that makes sense to the taxpayers. This move would free up enough water for another 15 million urban users. "This is what the Westlands desperately fears which is why they want to lock up the water."

More information on the water wars can be found at lloydgcarter.com, revivethesanjoaquin.org, and c-win.org.



Lloyd Carter speaking to the Oakhurst Club



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***Mortimer Mouse Sez...*
I'm so proud of us
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Community Service
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Club: Coarsegold____ Mariposa____ or Oakhurst____

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How did you find out about us? _____

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Telephone: (_____) _____

E-Mail: _____ Fax: _____

Supervisory District (if known): _____

Total Amount Enclosed: \$_____

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