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The Mountain Democrat  
Newsletter Editor  
PO Box 760  
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# THE MOUNTAIN DEMOCRAT



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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 2009

Jun 6: Oakhurst Club Meeting

Jun 13: Mariposa Club Meeting

### July 2009

Jul 4: **NO** Oakhurst Meeting

Jul 11: Mariposa Club Meeting

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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**

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Anne Brock presenting Essay Award to  
Chris Brownell



Joanne Wagers presenting Community Service Award to  
Molly Barrett-O'Callaghan



Joanne Wagers presenting Community Service Award to  
Taylor Cano

## Jery's Rant

By Jery Lacayo

I am deeply troubled by some of the criticisms of Obama and I think it is time we step back, breathe deep and appreciate the things that have improved and get back to the positive messages we should be sending to Democrats. Until, and unless, we stop *eating our young*, long a practice of the progressive wing of the party, building necessary coalitions will be impossible.

Obama was elected President of the United States. He serves with many other Democrats and a number of Republicans. In order to promote his agenda he must have the support and votes of a MAJORITY of the House and Senate. MANY of the Democratic members of the House and Senate are far from being as progressive as Obama. There are many Blue Dog Democrats (who are very close to being moderate Republicans) who represent very conservative constituencies. They have tenuous ties to the more progressive Democrats and could easily vote with those across the aisle if they believe their concerns are not being respected and/or their reelection chances damaged.

Rush Limbaugh has mastered the art of defining a very complex problem, offering a dramatic and simplistic solution and damning the people who offer real solutions. With lights, music, action, and a great deal of bluster he has become rich and powerful. He loves it when the other side is equally unrealistic, because they often take their marbles and go home, weakening support for the only people who might actually be able to make the world a better place.

The current Supreme Court appointment has brought forth candidates with very different backgrounds and mindsets than would likely have come out of a Republican administration. Elections have consequences and the future of the Supreme Court will be one of them. I am very glad that it is Barack Obama, not John McCain, who will be making the appointment.

## Jery's Rant (continued)

I've listened for the past couple of years to some local Democrats damn a very progressive Democrat, Nancy Pelosi, for failing to use her magic wand to make all Democrats wildly liberal, rather than giving her credit for keeping the Democrats unified. These naysayers don't want leaders—THEY WANT MAGICIANS! No actual person serving in our government will ever live up to these impossible expectations. Loyalty to good effort is non-existent and attention spans are very short. If the naysayers were required to run for office and serve constituencies—many would be lucky to last a week.

Democracy is a messy concept. It's very hard work to serve in government. It requires patience, negotiation, compromise and tenacity. The object is to move your cause forward, even if only a little is possible. Sweeping change is often only creeping change, but the direction matters.

Yes, there are some bad apples in the Congress, but they were all elected in their own districts. They are sitting side by side with some very intelligent, caring representatives who are doing their best to support liberty and justice for all. Our job is to support the good guys and know who they are. Our job is to support those who are trying to get it right, even if they are not totally successful. Our job is to know our enemies and be sure they are not us.

Ignorance is bliss? Maybe it is for those who practice it. For the rest of us, watching it is terrifying.



## From the Campaign Trail....

By Les Marsden

My campaign for the US Congress (19<sup>th</sup> Congressional District) continues to hum along—but soon, it'll burst into full-throated song. Depending upon when you receive this newsletter, we're either on the cusp of our five-county press rollout—or you've already experienced it. The press rollout (as I write) will begin Thursday, June 11—with Mariposa at 9:00 AM (Mariposa County Courthouse Park) and then Stanislaus County (on campus at California State University, Stanislaus at noon) before heading to Sonora for the Tuolumne County press event at 3:00 PM, specific location TBA.

The following day we'll begin with our Fresno County press conference (tentatively scheduled on the banks of the San Joaquin at 11:00 AM) and then for the finale in Madera County in the heart of George's (former) stronghold and right in the middle of the ag community. Denis Prosperi has offered his ranch for our Madera event. He's extremely well-known and well-respected both in Madera agriculture AND Republican circles; you may also know of Denis as the man who single-handedly thwarted Enron's (yes, THAT Enron) attempt to privatize and corner the water market in Madera County. Denis literally initiated the fall of Enron. Denis was one of George's strongest supporters for many years. But he now endorses my candidacy—in fact it was he who early on encouraged me to run against George. Denis' support for me has already led to erosion of George's base. And as I was told early on by a knowledgeable Madera County Democrat: “when Denis says ‘vote for Les Marsden,’ Republicans and farmers *will*.”

But it's not just about building bridges across the aisle: yes, I've recently attended Madera County Farm Bureau meetings as Guest Speaker and also their annual Wine-Tasting and Scholarship Fundraiser. And in addition to wooing Republicans who are sick and tired of Radanovich, I've also been addressing our home team of Democrats—who've been sick and tired of George from the

## From the Campaign Trail (continued)

very beginning! I was honored to be asked by Susan Rowe (thanks, Susan!) to speak at the Madera County Democratic Central Committee's May 17<sup>th</sup> Fundraiser Luncheon featuring the wonderful Aleita Huguenin, Democratic National Committee Western States Caucus Chair as Special Guest Speaker; what an inspiration Aleita is. I was flattered by her very kind, positive words regarding my high prospects for FINALLY winning this seat and turning our District blue. I'll be Guest Speaker at the Stanislaus County Democratic Central Committee's May 27<sup>th</sup> meeting in Modesto and also Guest Speaker at El Concilio de Fresno on May 29 at noon.

Now: it's an unfortunate state of the American system that we don't have publicly funded elections, but until we do, I truly rely upon your financial help to get rid of George. Without money, it won't happen. I'll need at least \$1 million to mount the sort of first-class campaign needed to do the job. Please help. No donation is too small or unimportant. I will need every penny, every dollar—to bring down George. Think carefully: what is removing Radanovich worth to you? Please help. It's very easy: you can even sign up for a small automatic auto-donation every month. Visit <http://www.MarsdenForCongress.com> - and click on “Please Donate” in the left column to make a secure, safe contribution. Don't delay: the more money we raise right now, the more credibility we'll establish within the national Democratic party leadership—and will be able to persuade them of what we already know, right here: that this red District not only can, but WILL turn blue. Yes, we must!



## The Shunning

By Peter Cavanaugh

When our new First Lady, Michelle Obama, made her initial and only university commencement address this spring at the University of California at Merced on the 15th of May, five of six San Joaquin Valley congressmen skipped the event.

All had been invited, but only Pleasanton Democrat Jerry McNerney, whose East Bay-centered 11th District includes a portion of the northern San Joaquin Valley, had the grace and good manners to attend.

According to a spokesperson, our own George Radanovich from the 19th District didn't "make any special effort to avoid it," easing concerns among constituents that George ever be subjected to any form of heavy lifting.

Bakersfield Republican Kevin McCarthy said he had an art competition to attend, paintings evidently taking precedence over professional protocol.

Visalia Republican Devin Nunes announced he didn't go because "he is unhappy with President Barack Obama and the majority Democrats in Congress," upon whom he blames everything, including the Sack of Rome and the French Revolution.

But two Democrats were also elsewhere.

Jim Costa of Fresno had "other things to attend."

And Merced Congressman Dennis Cardoza declined an invitation to the exercise for "personal and professional reasons," although UC Merced is in his district and he received his invitation months in advance.

## The Shunning (continued)

In the words of Buffalo Springfield (1967), "There's something happening here. What it is, ain't exactly clear."

While the lack of Republican reps might be cynically scored as characteristically boorish behavior, I find myself concerned in no small measure over Costa's/Cardoza's perplexing provincial petulance, for only such might account for their inexcusable absence.

With 20.4% Unemployment (2nd highest in the nation) and 6,000 foreclosures during 2008 in a population of 80,000, Merced deserved more than Michelle Obama received.

"How 'bout displaying a little unity around here?"



**Hard Times at the Jefferson Dinner 2009  
Edith and Jerry Ankersmit with Alan Bernikoff**



**Madera Oversight Coalition Speaker Tony Ward  
Oakhurst Democratic Club, May 2, 2009**



**Fun Times at the California Democratic Party Convention  
Heather Bernikoff and friends**



**Grey Panthers Speaker Margie Metzler  
Oakhurst Democratic Club, April 4, 2009**



## Eleanor Roosevelt Service Award Winners Announced

By Sandy Stairs, Eleanor Roosevelt Award Committee

The Oakhurst Democratic Club and Democratic Club of Coarsegold are proud to announce this year's winners of the *Eleanor Roosevelt Service Award*: **Molly Barrett-O'Callahan and Taylor Cano**. Both are from Coarsegold (just outside YLP) and will each receive \$500 toward their college expenses. They were chosen from a fine field of 25 candidates, all of whom had qualifications which made it difficult to come to a decision on these winners. In my opinion, all were winners!

**Molly** has been a **volunteer at Valley Children's Hospital** and appears to have been very touched by what she has seen in the Pediatric Oncology unit at Children's. She has also spent time at St. Agnes Hospital aiding patients there. She is **on a career track to become a medical doctor specializing in Oncology** and she appears more than ready to tackle the very difficult road ahead. Good luck Molly, make us all proud of what you can do!

**Taylor** has contributed to the **local community through his church, volunteer work with Habitat for Humanity, Yosemite High's Interact Club, Relay for Life, and service with the Rotary Club**. Even with all these activities, Taylor still found time to **help several Spanish speaking students with their studies** and has enjoyed watching their grades improve. With all these experiences behind him, I really expect to see more of him in the future (after college) working with the less fortunate members of our global family. Good luck to you Taylor, you have earned our respect for your generous service.

An intense effort over a short period was needed to "simply" come up with two names for winners. A lot of credit belongs to **Joanne Wagers** and **Cheryce Chartier**, both serving on the Award Committee for the first time. I served last year on the committee so I had an idea of what to expect. Joanne, Cheryce and I worked independently (but under the gentle nudges from Ellie

Eleanor Roosevelt Service Award Winners (continued)

Schermerhorn) to each develop our "Top 10" (actually it was 6...) finalists.

Our final decision was made over a glass of iced tea at Joanne's home where we all re-read the final applications. After reading the applications for the umpteenth time, our final 2 were decided: Molly Barrett-O'Callahan and Taylor Cano. These are two very deserving students that are on a path to higher education and are more than ready to help their fellow citizens.

Thanks again to Joanne and Cheryce, and of course the ever present Ellie, and to all of the members of both the Coarsegold and Oakhurst clubs in their fundraising efforts which made this all possible.



## A Thank You from an Eleanor Roosevelt Award Recipient

May 18, 2009

I cannot express enough my appreciation of winning your \$500 scholarship. Thank you so much for giving me that much more of an opportunity, especially during this difficult economy. To receive such an award under the name of Eleanor Roosevelt and the Oakhurst Democratic Club and Democratic Club of Coarsegold is something for which I am tremendously proud, yet humbled by. Thank you so much.

Sincerely,

Molly O'Callahan

### **3rd Annual Thomas Jefferson Service Award**

By Jim Archer

Each year the Mariposa Democratic Club sponsors an essay contest to reward one outstanding student for his or her services to the community. We wish to express our appreciation to Landis Reality, Starchman Law Offices, Chocolate Soup, Take N' Bake Pizza, Judy Eppler and Jim Archer for their support of the award. Following is the winning essay, which was written by Chris Brownell, a senior at Mariposa County High School.

#### **My Life Through Service, by Chris Brownell**

“There is a debt of service due from every man to his country, proportioned to the bounties which nature and fortune have measured to him.” --Thomas Jefferson to Edward Rutledge, 1796.

Since I was in eighth grade, I've been giving as many hours as I can to community service. Being a part of the Mariposa Youth Council really helped me jump into my community and get involved. We designed and held an anti-drug convention for the middle school and hosted other drug prevention activities. Because of my love for wrestling my sophomore and junior years, I helped to coach The Golden Grapplers, a youth wrestling program. After my own practice, I coached 5 to 12 year olds, teaching them free style wrestling moves to get them prepared for tournaments at the end of the year. I also refereed for youth AYSO soccer games. In tenth grade, I was part of a class composed of student leaders called "Project Respect". It was an anti-bully program that raised awareness about respect and tried to solve some of the bullying problem at MCHS. We conducted surveys and talked to student and community groups, collecting data for the community action task force.

I consider myself a powerful leader. I lead with intense amounts of determination. As the captain of the wrestling team, I'm in charge of leading some of the conditioning, and on days when the team has to drop weight fast, I can't falter. Even when I find myself on the brink of my limits, I push myself harder so as to not waver

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Thomas Jefferson Service Award (continued)**

in my team's eyes. In my second year of ASB, I led a lot with my creative and innovative ideas, like making rallies more interactive, and finding ways to get more students involved in fundraising activities. During my sophomore year, I was a co-captain of the boys MCHS Soccer team. Throughout my school years, I've been involved in the youth group at the Positive Living Center. Being a leader in my youth group, I have hosted segments of the services as well as singing for the congregation. Our youth group helped with prayers, plans and fundraising to build three schools in Malawi, Africa.

I want to become a second grade elementary school teacher. In the summer of my freshman year I volunteered at a day care that I attended as a child. I love the idea of guiding children's intelligence and problem solving skills. It really just makes my day. For the past two summers, I have worked at Mariposa Parks and Recreation Day Camp at the park by the pool. Kids ranging from 7 to 12 years old followed me through the day as we played games, built crafts, swam and talked about our lives. Every day my life gets brighter because of them. My passion is to teach children.

Throughout my days at MCHS and in the community, I hold myself to a high standard of ethical principles and citizenship. Being a part of the racial majority at the high school I do my best to discourage against the racism that happens on the campus. I respect everyone for their differences and don't judge them by their skin color or backgrounds. I strive to be as honest and responsible as I can. Being in many leadership roles means I have tasks I have to carry out. Holding myself responsible through community services has made me the young man I am today. I sincerely believe that I can help our country's future by helping young children learn these honorable citizenship traits. I will be able to help them through their school day and I will continue to volunteer to help children learn positive characteristics through sports and community activities, too.



## The 2009 California State Democratic Party Convention

By Heather Bernikoff and Jery Lacayo

You walk in to a huge crowd of delegates from all over the State. It is shoulder bumping, arm rubbing, purse hitting crowded as everyone is moving in all different directions to check out the vendors, candidate and issue tables, which are vast—stretching among two floors of the Sacramento Convention Center. Like a Middle Eastern bazaar, everyone is trying to get your attention. Here, it is to support them, buy something, or just listen to their issues. I heard many comments as to the atypical size of the crowd for a non-election year. Obama was on the lips of many as the reason for all this interest and engagement in the Party process.

It is a political celebrity event with some amazing speeches and some not so amazing from a wide variety of elected officials and other speakers. Newly elected **John Burton, Chair**, got off to a running start. **Alex Rooker** is our 1<sup>st</sup> V.P. and **Eric Bauman** is our 2<sup>nd</sup> V.P. **Reggie Sawyer** remains Secretary and **Hilary Crosby** was elected Controller. Eric, Alex and Hilary have all been to Mariposa and have an interest in the needs of the rural counties.

A poignant speaker was the Chairman of the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) Bob Stein. He disclosed that in March of this year, a major research breakthrough was made and that two patients with leukemia were now cancer-free. He thanked the delegates there and all California voters for making this possible.

Our mountain area was well represented and we should all be grateful to those members who take the time and trouble to represent us at the State level. The Mariposa Delegation consisted of **Jery Lacayo, Laura Lee, Heather Bernikoff, Kathy Lander and John Stewart**. Madera was represented by **Susan Rowe, Kathy Eisele, John Eisele, Bill Fjellbo, Robert Blazer, and Peter Lineau**. There are many special interest caucuses available and we try to cover as many as possible

## The 2009 Democratic Party Convention (continued)

The final day was the vote on endorsements and resolutions. The convention held the attention of the delegates all the way through the resolutions report on Sunday with a much larger participation than is usually seen. The delegates were split and many felt the propositions, part of the budget deal, were a bad compromise not in keeping with our Democratic ideals. Proponents said that all choices were hard and this is what was needed to trim a portion of our deficit. People made impassioned statements on both sides of the issue.

It was a good time to connect with other delegates from around the district and State during caucuses, breaks, on the floor, and at the hospitality suites and parties that make conventions famous. The Young Democrats, for example, threw a block party for Gavin Newsom. They really did close an entire block and Wyclef Jean provided an amazing concert.

Everyone agreed, however, that the major issue essential for all of us to change is the 2/3rds rule required to pass the State budget. I encourage all readers to go to this website to learn more about what you can do to overturn this requirement and also to sign a pledge: [http://act.credoaction.com/campaign/reform\\_california/](http://act.credoaction.com/campaign/reform_california/).

The year 2010 is just around the bend and we need to be ready to work hard to hold on to what we have and strive to make additional progress. Please plan to give what you can give and work where you can work. Many little bits add up to a whole lot.

Thank you for sending us as your delegates to represent Mariposa County. It was an honor.

For those interested in more information about the convention and the many resolutions passed, you can check it all out at [www.cadem.org](http://www.cadem.org).

**Peter Leinau's Congressional Campaign 2010  
Comes to a Close....**

During my write-in campaign for congress in fall of 2008 I met many wonderful, supportive folks in our 19<sup>th</sup> district. We knew that the 2008 election was the beginning of change for America and for our 19<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, and the beginning of my campaign for 2010.

I committed the period from November of 2008 to April 2009 to laying the groundwork for a successful campaign through research, networking within the Democratic Party, and candidate trainings. It has been quite an experience, culminating with my participation in the California State Democratic Party Convention as your AD 25 Delegate last month.

During this same period our national and state economies collapsed, and our California schools headed into a crisis unparalleled in my twenty-four years in education. In these critical months ahead, I know that instead of campaigning for congress I need to focus my energy and attention closer to home, family, school, and community. I will not be able to be our progressive candidate for our 19<sup>th</sup> congressional seat. I do look forward to working together to contribute to progressive, sustainable change on our local level!

The need for a change in our 19<sup>th</sup> congressional representation has never been greater, and I encourage you to consider whether YOU may be the one, whether this may be YOUR time! I will be happy to share what I have learned with you in support of YOUR congressional campaign.

Thank you to everyone for their encouragement and support, and best wishes for us all!

Peter Leinau

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Mariposa: Annual Dues are \$10.00 per person  
\$15.00 family  
Lifetime membership \$150.00

or

\_\_\_ Oakhurst: Annual Dues are \$5.00 per person

\_\_\_ New Member or \_\_\_ Renewal:

How did you find out about us? \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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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