



YosemiteDems.net

The Mountain Democrat
Newsletter Editor
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The Mountain Democrat

Dec. 2009 -
Jan. 2010

CONTENTS

Coming Events.....	page 2
Mariposa Club Announcements.....	page 3
From the Campaign Trail.....	page 4
Happy Word From the 23rd.....	page 6
Note From the President of the Mariposa Club...	page 8
A Year Later	page 12
Social Democracy: Patience in Pursuit?.....	page 13
Local Physician Supports "Medicare for All".....	page 14
And a Great Time Was Had By All	page 16
The President's Health Insurance Guarantees....	page 17
Membership Application	page 19

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

December 2009

Dec 5: Oakhurst Club Meeting

Dec 12: Mariposa Club Meeting
Holiday Potluck Lunch
Catheys Valley County Park

January 2010

Jan 2: **NO** Oakhurst Club Meeting

Jan 9: Mariposa Club Meeting
Bootjack Stompers Hall

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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

Mariposa Club Dues are Due

Your **2010 Mariposa Democratic Club** dues are now due!! Please bring them to the next meeting or mail them to:

Mariposa Democratic Club
PO Box 5008-268
Mariposa, CA 95338

Dues are \$10 per person; \$15 per family (same household); and \$150 for a lifetime membership.

Mariposa Democratic Club Meetings January and February

We want to make sure everyone knows our meeting schedule in January and February.

In January, we will be at Bootjack Stompers Hall. Les will be cooking up a delicious breakfast and Supervisor Jim Allen will be our speaker. Bring your questions for him! As always, we'll start breakfast at 9:00 (\$6) and the meeting at 9:45.

In February, we are trying a change of pace: we will be meeting at the Miner's Inn in their back room! Order off their menu, get exactly what you want for breakfast. We'll still meet at 9:00 for breakfast; the meeting will follow.

If you want to start 2010 off right, come to the Mariposa Democratic Club meeting in January!

From the Campaign Trail

By Les Marsden

This may seem an odd thing to say to YOU, but:

Please—get involved.

Odd only because it seems just yesterday we were all fully, totally energized. Oh, sure—you probably still are, but: have you noticed that so many of the less-politically-active have put involvement on the back burner once again? Bush is gone, Cheney is once again a flailing inconsequence and Obama has been elected—all is well.

Except it's not. The Republicans are desperately attempting to return to power. They're ubiquitous, they're loud, they're unstoppable, they're totally without shame—and they're mercilessly attacking President Obama left and right. He's constantly described as a 'failed' president. They firmly stand in the way of his agenda. They attack his policies, his appointments, his thoughtful deliberations over Afghanistan. It's amazing to me: their pettiness is embarrassing; their motives transparent. And it's not just the GOP; their minions in the right-wing hate-media and the tea baggers (who are not ALWAYS in agreement with the Republicans) are also hitting the Democratic Congress and President Obama hard. And unfortunately, the tactics are working. As I write, Obama's approval is now 49%. Am I 100% thrilled with his job performance? Of course not! I want a full withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan NOW; I'd like him to make good on his promise to close Guantánamo next month. I'd love him to punch back and punch hard. I want to see Executive Branch leadership firmly pressure Congress for a single-payer healthcare plan for America. I'd love to see him come out strongly against the House Stupak amendment to their (passed) Healthcare plan. There are a lot of things I want but -

I have to remember one thing: our President isn't Santa.

From the Campaign Trail (continued)

And if you'll pardon an extension of the analogy, we ain't elves. We can't rely upon magic or good luck or flying reindeer. What WE have to provide is simple, hard work. Involvement. Engagement. Counterpunches to their insidious attacks; truth to their deceptions. Their invidiousness must be answered by our positive reality—loud, hard and without let-up.

I'm sorry it's that way. I'm sorry we no longer live in an age in which gracious losers realize there's a REASON they lost...instead of our current time, in which the schoolyard bullies begin tearing at the legitimate winner from the moment of victory.

The only way we'll maintain our majority—our only chance to continue to create positive change from within—is with your constant watch and everlasting vigilance. So please—not for my sake but for yours; not for me but for our country—get involved. Encourage others to do so. And if you don't know where to begin, you can start right here, right now. Please contact me at MarsdenForCongress@gmail.com. I'll tell you exactly what you can do to help. Get my name out there. Tell your friends and family about our campaign for the 19th Congressional District. Help however and wherever you can.

Because I can use all the elves I can get. And so can our President.

From my wife Diane, son Maxfield, and myself: Enjoy the Holidays and have a wonderful, hope-filled, peaceful, successful and rewarding New Year. It will be whatever we all work to make of it.



Happy Word From the 23rd!

By Peter Cavanaugh

The 23rd New York Congressional District is as carved up as a Thanksgiving turkey by Friday morning, not unlike our own California 19th. It includes all or parts of Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Oswego and St. Lawrence counties, most of the Adirondack Mountains and the Thousand Islands region, bordered by Canada to the north.

As of a recent special election, the 23rd is now represented by Bill Owens of Plattsburgh, the first Democrat to serve the area since sometime in the 1850's—before The Civil War.

My namesake and Great-Grandfather, Peter Cavanaugh, having fled to America from unrestrained free market economics during Ireland's Famine Years, has been buried under a fine Celtic Cross in New York's 23rd since 1892. I'm sure he's resting more comfortably these days, having waited 117 years for proper representation.

The special election to please Peter gained national attention when several national Republican leaders endorsed Conservative candidate Doug Hoffman over Republican nominee Dede Scozzafava. A few days before the election Scozzafava dropped out and endorsed Mr. Owens, who went on to win the seat with a 48.7% plurality. Nice work, Sarah.

I'm hoping it won't take 117 years for Les Marsden to replace George Radanovich.

The November 17th issue of the Fresno Bee featured a Letter to the Editor submitted by Nicholas Massei, Jr., suggesting Radanovich be congratulated for "having the courage to vote against" the House-passed health care reform bill.

Happy Word From the 23rd! (continued)

Junior went on to loyally recite standard GOP "talking points," escalating in wild absurdity with data from The Lewin Group, a consulting firm based in Falls Church, Virginia.

He neglected to mention that the Lewin organization is wholly owned by the health insurance giant, UnitedHealth Group, or that Mr. Massei, himself, is an Authorized Independent Agent for Blue Cross of California.

Radanovich's vote against health care reform is as cowardly and beholdng to special interests as his November 5th "No" vote on H.R. 3548, "The Workers, Home Ownership and Business Assistance Act of 2009", which passed 403 to 12, including overwhelming support from 156 Republican members.

An immediate priority of the measure was an extension of unemployment benefits for 14 weeks with an extra 6 weeks intended for states with unemployment figures above 8.5%, including California at 12.2%.

In Radanovich's 19th Congressional district, latest figures indicate Mariposa County registering 9.9% unemployment, Madera 13.8%, Tuolumne 13.5%, Fresno 15.8% and Stanislaus 16.6%.

More "compassionate conservatism" from Mr. Radanovich?

How 'bout Work Farms, Orphan Labor, and Debtors' Prisons?

To hold the torch of freedom high.

And burn out the poor.



Note from the President, Mariposa Democratic Club

By Anne Brock

Where has the year gone? Suddenly, we're putting out the fall newsletter!

In January, I had the honor to become president of the Mariposa Democratic Club. I was filling some huge shoes, following after the likes of Lee Stetson, Les Marsden, Jerry Lacayo, Jim Landis, etc. Not only was I taking on a big responsibility—to leave the club no worse than I found it, but I came in as an activist president, determined to change some things that I felt could make the club work better. As we all know, in Mariposa things don't change easily! We respect tradition.

I didn't get all the changes I wanted, but I hope some of the things I did make a positive impact. Among others, this year we raised dues to \$10 (first time ever they were raised) and set up a "family" level. We streamlined the meetings. We went to a voice-mail only phone, which is saving money. We got a PO Box in town so we don't have to go to a house to pick up mail. And we now have an email i.d. – mariposademclub@gmail.com — that any future president can use, to simplify transitions.

I also made a vow that we would not hold our major fundraisers at the Stompers Hall; that succeeded! And we did do some actions, though not as many as I had hoped.

I commend Nancy, Mitch and Tom for all they've done to organize our materials at the Stompers Hall and at Jerry's, to make things easier to get to. That's also been a big help and that work will continue.

I have one more big change I'm working on that we discussed at September's meeting, and that's to start moving the meeting location away from the Stompers Hall. That will save us money and aggravation (in terms of their strict cleanup standards).

Note from the President, Mariposa Democratic Club (continued)

Whenever possible, we should use our money to promote Democrats and the Democratic agenda, not use it on administrative costs.

I know not all of you agreed with me on these changes, and for sure you voted down some changes I suggested! But I hope I always acted in an aboveboard, democratic fashion, that there was full transparency to all in our actions, and that everyone had a chance to come to meetings and vote for or against the changes.

There are still some improvements I would like to see happen. I really want to see the treasurer's report presented every month as "budgeted" vs. "actual" revenues and expenditures. Nancy's working on getting Quicken to cooperate with that. I want to see a lot more actions. We had some good ones this year, but I want to see more letters to representatives and to newspapers, more phone calls, and more creative actions that leverage our resources. But these will be for next year's president.

Yes, I am stepping down as president of the club, but don't party too quickly. I will still be involved! I'll be working on getting more actions done and, of course, working on Les Marsden's campaign. The election is a year away; we'll be ramping up house parties and other things associated with his campaign.

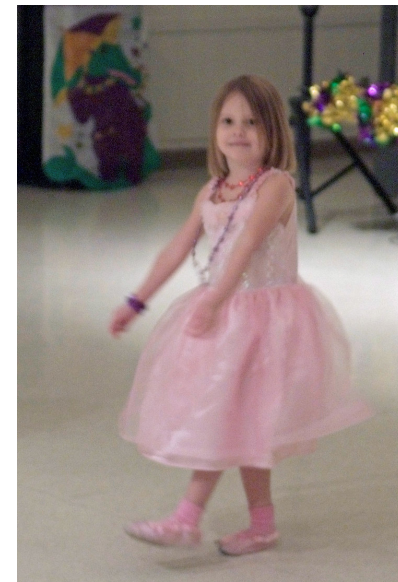
Thank you again for giving me the chance to serve the club this year. We have an awesome group of members. Let's keep the momentum going in 2010!



CAJUN FEAST AND COSTUME BALL, 2009



CAJUN FEAST AND COSTUME BALL, 2009



A Year Later

By Anne Brock

A year ago we were celebrating the election of Barack Obama as president and Democrats getting majorities in both the House and the Senate. It sure felt good, didn't it?

A year later, we're facing the hard reality of governance. Conservatives will stop at nothing to block President Obama and the Democratic agenda at every turn. Even popular measures—like extending the time on unemployment (which got passed with a large majority once the vote happened)—get delayed by the Republicans in the Senate. They don't seem to care when their delays hurt their constituents; they're just about delay.

I know many of us wish Democrats had been that organized when Bush was president! But that's the past. The key thing now is we need to keep on working to get our agenda through. We need to write letters and call and otherwise pressure both Congress and the Senate to act on our issues. Things like the Employee Free Choice Act, repealing "Don't Ask Don't Tell" and the Defense of Marriage Act. We need to keep pushing for real health reform and for budgets that aren't balanced on the backs of children or seniors. And of course we need to keep pushing to end the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Our troops should be home and we shouldn't be spending trillions of dollars over there.

I know it's easy to get discouraged at the slow pace of events in Washington, DC, but the opposition is tough, organized, and disciplined. We need to make sure our Democratic representatives get just as tough, organized and disciplined!

So thanks to all of you who have written, called, demonstrated, and sent letters to the editors over the last year. Please keep doing it; they have to hear from us if change is going to succeed.

Social Democracy: Patience in Pursuit?

By Carl Bosco

My father, who was philosophically a socialist, taught me democratic principles when I was quite young. It became clear early on that socialism was being slandered in the press by the very "military/industrial complex" that Eisenhower later warned us about, but whose warning we apparently didn't take seriously. Would the American people have come up with the Cold War mentality if they weren't harped on by the press and ambitious politicians, day after day for decades?

Socialism is a dirty word to the bankers, the war machine, the assassins that did in Kennedy and Martin Luther King, to the CIA operatives behind the death squads in Central America, the rulers of the world behind the candidates we elect. Until we have the courage to take back history from the propagandists and call the Cold War, for instance, the wasteful deception that it was, I think the people will remain impotent.

Socialism is an ideal, a philosophy that can be defined in many different ways. I'd be content with plain old democracy at this point. We have no choice at the moment but to give Obama the benefit of the doubt. If he fails us, then what? Are we justified in maintaining faith in the system, that it will all work out for the best, even though history has taught us differently? Or, will we take to the streets the way 10 million French people did (a quarter of the population) in 1968, to shut down the government and demand reform? Time will tell.

Local Physician Supports "Medicare for All"

by Ellie Schermerhorn

Dr. Daniel O'Meara from Community Medical Providers addressed the Oakhurst Democratic Club on November 7th and spoke on "One Physician's Opinion on Health Care". Dr. O'Meara has been in practice for 19 years, with the last 5 in Oakhurst.

He started his talk by referencing an editorial written by several bishops in the Fresno Bee. "People say, 'When did it become my job to be my brother's keeper?'" His reply to that question: "Two thousand years ago".

With degrees and/or certifications in biology, neurophysiology, chiropractic, and family practice, he spoke highly of his medical education which he obtained at the University of Santo Tomas in the Philippines (celebrating its 400th anniversary next year). At the University, he states, "We (were taught to) rely less on technology and more on clinical skills which are much more important than what tests to run. If I can listen to you and hear your aortic stenosis and get that repaired, I think I can do a better job, and that's cost effective".

Dr. O'Meara referred to a number of statistics from *Healthreform.gov*. The ranks of the uninsured have gone up to almost 29%. The intermediate care facility where he sees them has to write off the cost. He feels that "it's an unconscionable crime that this many people can't get health care, whatever the reason". Right now, we are all paying for those who can't get it. Premiums have risen 114% for Californians since the year 2000, while income has risen 44%, outpacing the cost of living by 3 times.

The Medicare Part D prescription drug "donut hole" is another great concern. Not only do people have to pay for the coverage, but they need to get other policies to cover the "donut hole", and many of these policies cover only generic drugs, which may not be

Local Physician Supports "Medicare for All" (continued)

the best. The amount a consumer has to pay annually in the "donut hole" is \$3,400. Many people on Social Security can't afford it. One of his patients was choosing whether to get her prescriptions or eat. She was paying \$3 per day for "Meals on Wheels", and she was dividing that meal up to cover her for the whole day. He watched her lose 40 pounds over the course of a year. The situation was heartbreaking. She died.

Dr. O'Meara himself has a preexisting condition: his neck was broken when he was born. "Somewhere, buried in the annals of information, they know I have those fractures, and if I need an MRI, it is going to be denied". The cost of an MRI, he notes, is roughly \$1,500 to \$1,800. In Japan, the government placed a cap of \$77. "We lack the 'hutzpah' to regulate and put a cap on those specific fees". He also points out that women are charged more because they might get pregnant, live longer and need those "pesky" mammograms every year.

Dr. O'Meara summarized his views by saying he supports "Medicare for All", and that the other physicians he speaks with do, too.



And a great time was had by all!

By Anne Brock

We had another fantastic Cajun Feast and Costume Ball this year! We held it in Building A at the Fairgrounds, which ended up being a GREAT venue. Even our chef, Les Marsden, praised it, and we know he's a tough audience! We had plenty of parking, plenty of room, and plenty of electricity.

I wanted to thank Les Marsden for the (as always) delicious food. How he did it when PG&E cut his power on the day before the Feast, I'll never know. He prepared a great selection of entrees, side dishes, and homemade ice cream.

I also want to thank all those who helped on setup/decorations and clean up. First, Kathy Lander led the decorating committee, and did a fantastic job! She did get some great supplies from Trent Williams (thank you, Trent!) who is always willing to help the community. Without Kathy and Trent, the evening would have been a drabber event. But it takes a village to set up and cleanup, so many thanks also to John Stewart, Vicki Roland, Rachel Oliver, Nancy Fagerstrom, Betty Boykin, Laura Lee, Gary Walker, Shirley Schmelzer and Lee Stetson

And finally, many thanks to all of you who turned out to make the event a success! Thank you for bringing (and bidding on) the white elephants. Thanks for a great evening!

**The PRESIDENT'S
HEALTH INSURANCE REFORM
G U A R A N T E E S**



**1. NO DISCRIMINATION FOR PRE-EXISTING
CONDITIONS**

Insurance companies would be prohibited from refusing you coverage because of your medical history.

**2. NO EXHORBITANT OUT-OF-POCKET EXPENSES,
DEDUCTIBLES OR CO-PAYS**

Insurance companies will have to abide by yearly caps on how much they can charge for out-of-pocket expenses.

3. NO COST-SHARING FOR PREVENTIVE CARE

Insurance companies must fully cover, without charge, regular checkups and tests that help you prevent illness, such as mammograms or eye and foot exams for diabetics.

4. NO DROPPING OF COVERAGE FOR SERIOUSLY ILL

Insurance companies will be prohibited from dropping or watering down coverage for those who become seriously ill.

5. NO GENDER DISCRIMINATION

Insurance companies will be prohibited from charging you more because of your gender.

6. NO ANNUAL OR LIFETIME CAP ON COVERAGE

Insurance companies will be prevented from placing annual or lifetime caps on the coverage you receive.

7. EXTENDED COVERAGE FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Children would continue to be eligible for coverage through the age of 26.

8. GUARANTEED INSURANCE RENEWAL

Insurance companies will be required to renew any policy as long as the policyholder pays their premium in full. Insurance companies won't be allowed to refuse renewal because someone becomes sick.

HEALTHCARE.BARACKOBAMA.COM

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION



FLOAT FOR RENT

**Our giant, splashy and wonderful float is for rent!
Tell your friends and relations.**

For information call 209-742-1010

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:

Mariposa Democratic Club -or- Oakhurst Democratic Club
PO Box 5008-268 PO Box 760
Mariposa, CA 95338 Oakhurst, CA 93644
(209) 742-1010 (559) 658-2342

Mortimer Mouse Sez...

**For Christmas I want Health
Care For All, Immigration
Reform, Global Warming
Stopped, U. S. Out Of the
Middle East, Les Marsden in
Congress, and in addition I**

