



YosemiteDems.net

The Mountain Democrat
Newsletter Editor
PO Box 760
Oakhurst, CA 93644



The Mountain Democrat

Feb. – Mar. 2010

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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

February 2010

Feb. 6: Oakhurst Club Meeting

Feb. 13: Mariposa Club Meeting

March 2010

Mar 6: Oakhurst Club Meeting

Mar 13: Mariposa Club Meeting

**Mar 21: Peace & Justice
Festival, Fresno**
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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 Democratic Club

**PLEASE RENEW
FINAL ISSUE**

If this label is on the cover of your newsletter it means that our records indicate your 2010 club dues have not been paid.

It's the beginning of the year; and time to renew your Mariposa Democratic Club membership! Please fill out the form below and send it with a check to:

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

Name(s): _____

MAILING _____

Address: _____

PHYSICAL _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email(s): _____

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Note: Dues are \$10 per person and \$15 per family, but please consider donating extra to help us do more!

From the Campaign Trail

By Les Marsden

On December 29th Congressman George Radanovich announced he wouldn't seek another term due to his wife Ethie's continuing health crisis. I received a confidential phone tip-off early that morning and when the official news came, I offered a statement supporting the Congressman's decision and offering positive wishes for the health of Mrs. Radanovich.

Meanwhile, all hell broke loose on the right. Those Republicans too timid to challenge an incumbent suddenly began their feeding frenzy; as of this writing those remaining include outgoing State Senator Jeff Denham (Radanovich's hand-picked successor-designee), Former Congressman Richard Pombo, Former Fresno Mayor Jim Patterson (who had been 'exploring' a primary challenge to Radanovich, but didn't actually announce until George vacated), Fresno City Councilman Larry Westerlund—and a few others less definite.

All tainted. All career politicians. Some (like Pombo) have a history of ethics questions and bad decisions. Pombo's anti-environmentalism and attacks on the Endangered Species Act caused him to be soundly defeated in 2006 when Jerry McNerney won Pombo's 11th District seat. Termed out of the state senate, within the period of one month Denham first announced his intention to run for CA Attorney General, THEN state assembly, and THEN the 19th Congressional. Patterson left behind an unimpressive record as mayor of Fresno. And of all the Republicans, only Patterson actually lives in the district. Career politicians, and with the exception of Patterson, they're all carpetbaggers.

The differences between them and me? I believe in the concept of the citizen representative: as you know, I've never fallen for the elected-office-as-a-way-of-life syndrome that's infected so many. I'm not running because I'm looking for my next political

From the Campaign Trail (continued)

patronage job. I'm running because the 19th has been terribly represented for the past 15 years—and now things could be far worse if an anti-environmentalist such as Pombo gets in. Yosemite National Park in the hands of the man who tried to sell off 15 of our national parks—and one-quarter of all national park lands? And—unlike the Republicans, I was born in Fresno. I was raised in Fresno. After I became disabled, Diane and I decided to return here from the East Coast—to this region where we were raised, where our families still live—and which we never ceased to think of as home. Not only do I actually LIVE in this district, I'm FROM this district. OF this district.

The battle on the other side is going to be interesting to watch. But the outcome—whichever of the Republicans walks away with the primary prize—will be the wrong choice for this district.

In other issues related to the campaign, we've just experienced the most blatant attempt in American history by the judiciary to rewrite the Constitution. The 5-4 January 21 decision by the Supreme Court to overturn portions of the 2002 McCain-Feingold Campaign Finance law is judicial activism at its worst. This is EXACTLY the sort of judicial mischief conservatives ALWAYS scream about—until it serves THEIR needs, and then it's just peachy. The conservatives on the bench in effect gave the green light to unfettered campaign spending by corporations. Unions—traditional allies of Democrats—are similarly affected by the new court ruling, but their political funding is grossly outnumbered by the money available to campaigns from big business, which traditionally supports Republicans over Democrats by a wide margin. Besides the partisan element in this ruling, I'm more disturbed by the judicial overreach into constitutional territory. Chartering of corporations was not directly addressed in the US Constitution. It therefore becomes the milieu of states' rights, according to the Founders. But in the federalist era, there was already distrust and (at least) suspicion of corporations. 30 years

From the Campaign Trail (continued)

after the 1787 Constitutional convention, Jefferson wrote: "I hope we shall... crush in its birth the aristocracy of our moneyed corporations which dare already to challenge our government in a trial of strength, and bid defiance to the laws of our country." Banks, other corporations and colleges had to fight or go to court over evincing even the simplest of procedures. In 1790 the board of the College of William and Mary actually had to defend itself in a suit in the Virginia State Supreme Court to show why the school presumed it had due cause AND legal right to reorganize itself and remove professors.

Look how far we've come since those days: directly BACKWARDS. And now, more than ever, I'll need your financial help; big business will be backing the GOP candidate. Please visit MarsdenForCongress.com and contribute to our grassroots campaign. Today.



**Peace and Justice Festival
9th Annual Rally in the Valley
Sunday, March 21, 2010, 12:30 – 5:00 p.m.
Fresno Fairgrounds, Jr. Exhibit Hall**

The Peace and Justice Festival will be the largest convergence of peace activists in the Central Valley on the day that marks seven years of U.S. war on Iraq. We will join people all over the U.S. in calling for an end to war, and we will celebrate the richness of our local peace and justice community.

The festival will feature speakers –Kathy Kelly of Voices for Creative Nonviolence, Iraq Veterans Against War leader Rick Reyes, and actor/ musician Thomas Ian Nicholas as Abbie Hoffman, music – by Blake Jones and the Trike Shop, Ibice, Thomas Ian Nicholas, the Sanger Academy Charter School Guitar Ensemble, and the Raging Grannies, muralists, and local peace and justice organizations showcasing their work (last year 50 groups tabled). For the first time, we are inviting vendors to sell handcrafted goods, health & wellness products & services.

Admission and parking is free. The venue is the Jr. Exhibit Hall at the fairgrounds. It is approximately 100' x 200' with heat, cooling, electrical outlets, restrooms, and a stage. Go to our website for details about the program for the 2010 Peace and Justice Festival, for pictures and information from last year's Rally in the Valley, and to view photos of the Jr. Exhibit Hall.

We come together to strengthen the movement against militarism, to bear witness, and to learn from each other.

For information, contact Dan Yaseen danyaseen@comcast.net 251-3361. **Downloadable forms and flyers are at www.peacefresno.org**

The Finest Elections Money Can Buy

By Peter Cavanaugh

A bitterly divided and radically partisan U. S. Supreme Court has opened the floodgates on profligate corporate political extortion.

In yet another act of wild public betrayal reminiscent of its December 2000 anointing of George W. Bush as President, the Court has ruled that the government may not ban political spending by corporations in candidate elections.

The 5 to 4 decision overruled two important First Amendment precedents.

The New York Times offers us this headline: "Lobbies' New Power: Cross Us, and Our Cash Will Bury You."

President Obama calls it "a major victory for big oil, Wall Street banks, health insurance companies and the other powerful interests that marshal their power every day in Washington to drown out the voices of everyday Americans."

But our still new President needs to put a bit of bite into his barks. Make that bites. With really big teeth. Fangs are fitting.

It's no surprise to any of us that things haven't completely turned around in the last twelve months after eight horrid years of Bush-Cheney and three decades of wretched retreat from traditional democratic values, but we seem at dead stall with no wind in our sails, no hand on the wheel and no cannons on deck, loose or otherwise - not even a Mighty Mouse to round up all the Democratic Congressional Cats unable to herd themselves.

Our leaders seem bafflingly blinded even as we see the road.

Medicare for all. OUT of Iraq. OUT of Afghanistan. IN with Social Responsibility. IN with Economic Justice. And ON and ON.

The Finest Elections Money Can Buy (continued)

There are over 35,000 registered lobbyists in Washington, D.C., the number growing every hour since Obama's election. That's approximately 65 lobbyists haunting each member of the U.S. Congress on any given day.

And the Supreme Court's Decision in "Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission?"

E.J. Dionne Jr. nailed it in the Washington Post:

"The only proper response to this distortion of our political system by ideologically driven justices is a popular revolt. It would be a revolt of a sort deeply rooted in the American political tradition. The most vibrant reform alliances in our history have involved coalitions between populists (who stand up for the interests and values of average citizens) and progressives (who fight against corruption in government and for institutional changes to improve the workings of our democracy). It's time for a new populist-progressive alliance."

Dionne continues:

"This court ruling should also challenge the fake populism we have seen of late. It disguises a defense of the interests of the powerful behind crowd-pleasing rhetoric against "Washington," "taxes" and, yes, "Obama." The President has helped feed this faux populist revolt by failing to understand until recently how deeply frustrated politically moderate, middle-class Americans are over policies that bailed out the banks while leaving behind millions of unemployed and millions more alarmed about their economic futures."

Yet, paraphrasing Franklin Delano Roosevelt, we have nothing to fear but us, ourselves. And, quoting Elvis, "It's now or never!"

Make no mistake. This is not a rehearsal.



Peter and Eileen Cavanaugh along with Bob Keystone rally for peace



Lynn Jacobsson, organized the peace rally



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Residents Rally to Bring Troops Home Sierra Star, December 24, 2010

By Tiffany Tuell

A small group of Mountain Area residents braved the cold Friday evening, Dec. 18 at the corner of Highway 41 and Highway 49 for a peace vigil, sending a message to end the wars in the Middle East and bring American troops home.

Their message was met by a steady stream of vehicles honking in agreement.

"We're here because we're very upset," said Lynn Jacobsson. "Congress has decided to fund more war rather than send our troops home. We're worried that there is no end in Afghanistan. The majority of America wants our troops to come home."

For Peter Cavanaugh, the rally hit home.

"I have a cousin who is a Navy Seal lieutenant commander," Cavanaugh said. "I am very much in support of him and the troops, but I don't want to see them throw away their lives for an insane proposition."

Jacobsson said she thinks America's actions against Pakistan will gain more recruits for Al Qaeda.

"A lot of innocent civilians are being killed along with targeted insurgents, creating hate and animosity towards America," Jacobsson said. "Pakistan is nuclear-armed, and that is where Al Qaeda is moving."

Betty Persson said she was at the vigil to promote education rather than war and to promote "peace in Afghanistan."

"We're not going to bring democracy to Afghanistan -- we're promoting death of civilians," Persson said. "If we brought books

Residents Rally to Bring Troops Home (continued)

and education, we would turn it around more than by creating another war."

The protesters also sought to send a message to Republican Congressman George Radanovich. Jacobsson said he should vote against war appropriations.

"America needs the money at home for education, health care and for people to regain their homes and work on unemployment," she said.

Coarsegold resident Bob Keystone and his two daughters were among the protesters waving signs.

"I'd rather spend money on health care than on the war," Keystone said.

"I want health insurance for my dad," Hannah Keystone, 13, said.

"We need to stop the war," her sister, Elianna, 9, said.

The future of children across America is one of the greatest concerns for Peter Leinau. "I'm out here because of the invasion and occupation of Iraq," Leinau said.

He said he has held strong to his point of view that the United States was wrong in the war's inception and its continuation.

"The killing and pretext is wrong," Leinau said. "We can't afford this morally or financially. I've been an educator 25 years for children to have a future in a sustainable world, but it's heartbreaking to see where our leaders are taking that future."

Successful Oakhurst Democratic Forum on Afghanistan

by Alan Cheah

On Friday, Jan 15th, as part of our Oakhurst Democratic Forum series, we showed “**Rethink Afghanistan**” by BraveNew Film director Robert Greenwald of the **BraveNew Foundation**. We had an inauspicious beginning. Due to budget cutbacks the library turned off the heat that evening. We mustered up two space heaters. Fortunately, it wasn't very cold and the space heaters kept the room comfortably warm for most. As with any event, you're always apprehensive about a good turnout. We only had two RSVPs, **Bob and Mary Pope**. Things started looking up when our reliable attendees **Darylsue and Lee Stephansen** of Coarsegold walked in the door. Shortly, more people were streaming in until we had 30. Much to my pleasure, they included some Republicans. With **Eileen Cavanaugh's** coffee brewed and her chocolate chip cookies and **Lynn Jacobsson's** brownies laid out, we were ready to get our refreshments and watch the film.

The film questions whether our current policy is achieving the desired goals, examines the grave unintended consequences from the perspective of the Afghan people and makes us rethink our position on the conflict. *How do Afghans view our military escalation? How does the war further destabilize a nuclear Pakistan and drive it towards Taliban or Al Qaeda control? How much is the war costing in U.S blood and treasure? How much have civilians suffered and how has it driven pro-American Afghans toward anti-Americanism? Is the war liberating women or actually worsening their situation? What do three ex-CIA officials say about Afghanistan being a no-win situation?* These questions are answered in the film and you can see it online at <http://rethinkafghanistan.com/videos.php>. Click on Groups at that site to see what action you can take to change our policy.

After the film, our guest speakers, **Camille Russell** and **Dan Yaseen** from **Peace Fresno**, conducted the follow-up discussion. They were so gracious to come up from Fresno and being quite

Successful Oakhurst Democratic Forum on Afghanistan (continued)

knowledgeable about the subject, were perfect for the task. As with all our forums, the Q&A was robust and informative. Many thanks to the following: **Peter Cavanaugh** for supplying the film, gathering signatures for Les Marsden to bypass registration fees and bringing his Republican friends; **Lynn Jacobsson** for putting the event together; **Ellie Schermerhorn** for the flyers, promotion and pictures; and **Eileen Cavanaugh** for coordinating refreshments. Finally, thanks to the attendees, the library cat which wandered in and out of the library providing comfort and entertainment to all and mostly to the Oakhurst Library. One last note - donate a little something, if possible, to BraveNew Films. They make wonderful films consistent with our values.



Club members Peter Cavanaugh, Lynn Jacobsson, and Alan Cheah with Dan Yaseen and Camille Russell of Peace Fresno

Chris Parker for Board of Equalization

by Ellie Schermerhorn

Chris Parker, an accomplished tax attorney for the Franchise Tax Board, is running for the BOE District 2 position. Chris has been campaigning hard in his quest, and spoke to the Oakhurst Democratic Club on October 3rd.

Many people don't know what the BOE does. It's charged with serving the public through fair, effective and efficient administration of California's tax system, and Chris has plenty of experience in getting that done. As a tax attorney, he's successfully developed and won many cases before the BOE against corporations and individuals who attempt to evade paying their fair share of taxes. As a result, millions of dollars have accrued to the state on behalf of California taxpayers.

A California resident for eight years, Chris was raised by a working-class single mom who taught him blue collar values that he still carries to this day. Chris believes in a system of fairness and integrity that rewards working people and holds accountable those who choose to cheat the system.

As an active Democrat, Chris is the elected delegate from Assembly District 9 and an executive board representative for the California Democratic Party. He was a founding member of the Sacramento Democratic Party's "Farm Team" and the Green Democratic Club. He led the County's effort to reach over 100,000 Democratic voters through a slate mailer, and helped elect two Democrats to the State Assembly in traditionally Republican districts.

Chris received his Juris Doctorate from the University of San Diego School of Law and has an LL.M degree in taxation. He also holds degrees in the sciences from Barry University and the

Chris Parker for Board of Equalization (continued)

University of Puget Sound. He is a member of the California Attorneys in State Employment union, and a member of the American, State and County Bar Associations. He is also a member of the American Constitution Society and the Stonewall Democratic Club.

You can contact Chris at parkerforboe@gmail.com or 916-956-4037.



Oakhurst Club members Lynn Jacobsson, Peter Cavanaugh, and Scott Hill
With Chris Parker at our December, 2009 meeting

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Mortimer Mouse Sez...

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laurels. It is get busy time
AGAIN**



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\$15.00 family
Lifetime membership \$150.00

or

___ Oakhurst: Annual Dues are \$5.00 per person

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How did you find out about us? _____

Name: _____

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: ___ ZIP: _____

Physical 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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