



YosemiteDems.net

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



The Mountain Democrat

August – September 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

August 2010

**Aug 7: Debra Bowen
Breakfast Reception**

Aug 14: Mariposa Club Meeting

September 2010

Sep 4: NO Oakhurst Meeting

Sep 4 Mariposa Parade & Fair
(Page 3)

Sep 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

WE NEED YOU TO RIDE THE FLOAT



**SHOW THEM
THERE ARE
DEMOCRATS
IN THE
MOUNTAINS**

**MARIPOSA
SAT. Sep. 4th
10:00 AM
Call 209-742-1010**

**Bring your
FRIENDS, FAMILY, DOGS, FLAGS & SIGNS!
EVERYONE WELCOME!**

The Right Side of History

By Peter Cavanaugh

Summer 2010 is sizzling to a close as we approach some stark, cold realities. A pending November election period awaits us with everything on the line and little to brag about except not being Republicans. Sadly, that should more than be enough.

In the words of Buffalo Springfield, “I think it's time we stop, children, what's that sound? Everybody look what's going down!”

The Minority Leader in the House of Representatives sports an artificial tan as phony as his continual claims to speak for “The American People” at every turn.

The Minority Leader in the Senate recites talking points of the privileged like the good party parrot he is, feathers righteously ruffling at the slightest hint of genuine social concern on the part of anyone—anywhere.

Our “Democratic Majority” in the House and Senate is highly suspect at best—purely fictional at worst.

Recent headlines screaming: “Next Big Battle in Washington: Bush’s Tax Cuts” (New York Times 7/24/10) remind us that even the most obvious immediate remedies to historic budget deficits remain hostage to the relentless push and pull of powerful wealth.

“Victories” in Health Insurance and Financial Reform legislation have been, by any fair measure, severely limited. Attempts at formulating initial important steps addressing climate control have now been abandoned for the current session.

The unauthorized release of secret military documents dramatically unveils the depth of deceit ever more evident in our naive occupation of Afghanistan, an ongoing tragedy for all participants.

The Right Side of History (continued)

According to National Talk Show Host Thom Hartmann, Chief Justice John Roberts' Supreme Court is "the most conservative one in living memory." During this time, the Roberts court "issued conservative decisions 58 percent of the time" and, in the last year, “that rate increased to 65 percent, the highest since 1953.” As Jeffrey Toobin wrote last year in an article for The New Yorker, "In every major case since he became the nation's seventeenth Chief Justice, Roberts has sided with the prosecution over the defendant, the state over the condemned, the executive branch over the legislative, and the corporate defendant over the individual plaintiff.

President Obama is vilified by the right for doing what he hasn't done and pilloried by the left for not doing what he should have done. Driving down the middle of any given road guarantees being repeatedly struck by both sides of traffic. By now it must be crystal clear to our President that conciliation has been rejected, compromise spurned and capitulation demanded. It's always jump ball with a knee in the—never mind.

And yet.

It seems to me we have no choice but to rededicate ourselves to each and every principle and purpose which—so far—have proceeded not much further than putting Barack Obama in the White House. A mighty and historic step, but only the first of many if we are to truly succeed.

Change comes slowly, but when it arrives, we must be on the right side of history—not to be found on the right side of the aisle.

In a tanning booth or gilded cage.

The Last Field Trip

By Peter Leinau

A child eye-to-eyes with a spider, a snow cave. A teacher knee-deep in Big Creek, dip net poised. Five-foot tall children in six-foot snow drifts...

As images of children in the joy of nature-discovery rolled on, club member Peter Leinau led the Oakhurst Democratic Club on a personalized tour of "The Last Great Field Trip".

Not the field trip to the dairy or fire department, as memorable as these are for children—the field trips of Peter's domain are what are known as "Residential Outdoor School" or sometimes "Science Camp". What makes them "Great" are the immediate and profound lasting impacts on the students.

Beginning in the mid 1920's, "School Camping" expanded in the aftermath of WWII and evolved through the Sputnik Era into "Science Camp", then with Earth Day and the environmental movement into "Outdoor Environmental Education."

"Character Development, Leadership, and Self Esteem programming elements grew in popularity in the 1980s, and now in their current form Outdoor Schools retain and combine all of the elements of their origins and evolution—Camp fun and Character Development, Science and Environmental Education. What carries across all of the content areas is a focus on child-centered active exploration and learning, and a utilization of all aspects of the group living environment as educational opportunities.

Peter shared stories of student and school successes that he has seen in his 19 year principalship of Merced County's JLB Green Meadows Outdoor School in Fish Camp, new significant research linking "Nature Deficit Disorder" to ADD/ADHD patterns, and the results from several studies documenting the measurable positive outcomes from outdoor school experiences.

The Last Field Trip (continued)

The challenges of the current economy to the future of outdoor school experiences were described, with one bright spot being inclusion in the new No Child Left Behind of language from "No Child Left Inside."

No Child Left Inside is an initiative to move education from a seat-time focus to more recognition of the benefits of outdoor and active-learning experiences. Peter believes strongly that the narrow focus of our current Test and University-Prep educational "reforms" are at the root of many of our educational and social problems, and reminded club members that the basis of our state education lies in the California Constitution, which guarantees a "Free and Appropriate Education for Every Student."

He went on define appropriate education as more than UC prep and test drills, but the broader and older definition of preparing students to be contributing and participating citizens. Peter challenged us to consider the impact on the students of our current system, which speaks to and values only the narrowest set of elevated education outcomes. and asked us: "What of the others?"

He encouraged club members to support efforts to broaden educational goals to include career and technical education, de-emphasize the UC prep and high salary outcomes, and give more esteem to the careers and trades students.

Those interested in more information on the research and benefits related to outdoor education were referred to Richard Louv's recent book "Last Child in the Woods- Saving Our Children From Nature Deficit Disorder" (2005). Peter reminded us in closing of the impacts of other priorities on education with the T-Shirt graphic 'It will be a great day when our schools have all the money they need and the Pentagon has to have a bake sale to buy a bomber.'

6/18/10

Mrs. Ellie Schermerhorn
Oakhurst Democratic Club
P.O. Box 559
Ahwahnee, CA 93644

Dear Mrs. Ellie Schermerhorn

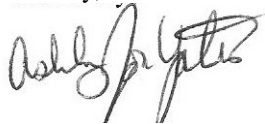
I am writing to thank you for your generous \$500 Oakhurst Democratic Club scholarship I could not believe it when I heard my name called when you presented your award. My heart leapt and I was filled with excitement.

Also thank you for inviting me to the Ol' Kettle Restaurant as your guest. I enjoyed meeting the different people and enjoyed a delicious meal.

I am very thrilled you chose me as one of your recipients. The career I plan to pursue is in Pediatric Nursing. I will be furthering my education at Oakhurst Community College in the fall semester. I will continue with community college to finish my general education. With your help I am able to achieve my goal and pursue my dream career.

With this award I will have a much better chance at being focused on my studies and in a way I will give back to our community. I am hoping to give back by giving my own scholarship to help our future generations to come.

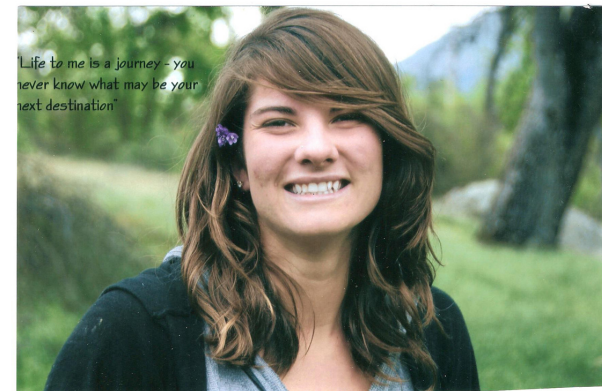
Sincerely,



AshlyJon Yates
Oakhurst, CA 93644



Dear Oakhurst Democratic Club,
I wanted to say thank you for your lovely contribution of 500 dollars and the chance to further my educational career on the discovery of myself.
I'd like to think of myself as an adventurer traveling down the highway of life. Each step a challenge and each mile a new stage of life. Now I look toward the future and can not wait to see what it has in store for me.
I know I will use this award wisely as it will help with piecing my 71 Volkswagon Bug back together as well as college necessities like bedding and boxes of top Ramen. Thank you once again for all of your help.



Brittany Elsmann

Photos From Previous Mariposa County Parades and Fairs
(To see all the photos in color go to yosemitedems.net)



Photos From Previous Mariposa County Parades and Fairs
(To see all the photos in color go to yosemitedems.net)



To Spend or Not to Spend

By Ed Estes

Unless you have been living on another planet, you should be aware of all the current clamor over the need to reduce federal spending. It is a main theme of Tea Party spokesmen and is now being embraced by the Republican Party leadership. It has great appeal and reflects the apprehension among the public.

On the other hand, the current approach of the Obama administration is to continue trying to improve the economic climate by channeling money to infrastructure projects, unemployment benefits, mortgagees and to enact other measures that will get the money to the people who need it most and will spend it the quickest.

The strategy behind this approach goes by the name of Keynesian economics which says that during times when neither businesses nor consumers generate sufficient demand, the government should lower taxes and interest and start spending on various projects and services that will keep the country working. When prosperity does return the government should then curtail its spending, and raise taxes and interest to contain inflation and recover the funds spent during the downturn. Unfortunately, administrations seem to have difficulty doing this last part. The other problem with Keynesian economics is that, because it is so counter-intuitive, it seems reckless to most people, and therefore it takes real courage to increase spending while the federal budget is already in the red.

This is especially true, when some of the tax breaks mistakenly go to the rich (e.g. those with incomes over \$250,000), since they will neither spend nor invest much of it when the economy is slow.

To Spend or Not to Spend (continued)

The irony here is that Keynesian economics is about the only thing that seems to work in times of reduced demand. It has been used often, and somewhat successfully, by both parties since the Great Depression. The conventional wisdom seems to hold that Roosevelt didn't spend enough. What everyone seems to agree on is that WWII is what really brought us out of the depression. The question one doesn't often hear is why did it; the apparent answer being that it did so, because the government spent so much on arms and personnel to fight the war.

The administration is hoping that it can continue growing the economy until at least next year when the bipartisan Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform can agree on the best way to reduce our long-term debt problems.

Critics of this policy argue that businesses are not hiring and investing today because of crippling regulations, oppressive taxes and the prospect of worse to come. The question then becomes whether this really is what is curtailing growth, or is it because, although businesses already have enough plant, equipment, personnel and cash (\$2 Trillion); what they don't have is enough demand for their products and services.



The Great Decoupling of Corporate Profits from Jobs

By Robert Reich, from The LAProgressive at laprogressive.com

Second-quarter earnings reports are coming in, and they're making Wall Street smile. Corporate profits are up. And big American companies are sitting on a gigantic pile of money. The 500 largest non-financial firms held almost a trillion dollars in the second quarter, and that money pile is growing larger this quarter. Profits that plummeted in the recession have bounced back. Big businesses have recovered almost 90 percent of what they lost.

So with all this money and profit, they'll start hiring again, right? Wrong—for three reasons. First, lots of their profits are coming from their overseas operations. So that's where they're investing and expanding production.

GM now sells more cars in China than it does in the US, but makes most of them there. The company now employs 32,000 hourly workers in China. But only 52,000 GM hourly workers remain in the United States – down from 468,000 in 1970.

GM isn't just hiring low-tech assembly workers in China. Last week the firm broke ground there on a \$250 million advanced technology center to develop batteries and other alternative energy sources.

You and I and other American taxpayers still own over 60 percent of GM. We bought GM to save GM jobs, remember? GM officials say no American taxpayer money is being used to expand in China. But money is fungible. Because of our generosity, GM can now use the dollars it doesn't have to spend in the United States meeting its American payrolls and repaying its creditors, for new investments in China.

Second, big U.S. businesses are investing their cash in labor-saving technologies. This boosts their productivity, but not their payrolls.

The Great Decoupling of Corporate Profits from Jobs (continued)

Last Friday, for example, Ford reported a \$2.6 billion second-quarter profit. The firm is already more than two-thirds the way to equaling its record 1999 profits. But due to labor-saving technologies, Ford now has half as many employees as it did a decade ago.

Wall Street analysts are happy with Ford's "commitment to keeping capacity in check," according to the *Wall Street Journal*. Ford shares rose 5.2 percent Friday. "Keeping capacity in check" is the Street's way of saying, "no new hiring." In fact, the Street is advising investors to sell the stocks of companies that talk openly of expanding capacity.

Finally, corporations are using their pile of money to pay dividends to their shareholders and buy back their own stock – thereby pushing up share prices.

Last Friday, GE announced it would raise its dividend by 20 percent and reinstate its share-buyback plan. It's GE's first dividend increase since the company cut its dividend in early 2009. As a result, GE shares are up more than 5% in the past few days.

Bottom line: Higher corporate profits no longer lead to higher employment. We're witnessing a great decoupling of company profits from jobs. The next supply-side economist who tells you companies need more incentive (i.e. lower taxes) before they'll hire is living on another planet.

The reality is this: Big American companies may never rehire large numbers of workers. And they won't even begin to think about hiring until they know American consumers will buy their products. The problem is, American consumers won't start buying against until they know they have reliable paychecks.

Miscellaneous Happenings on the Political Scene

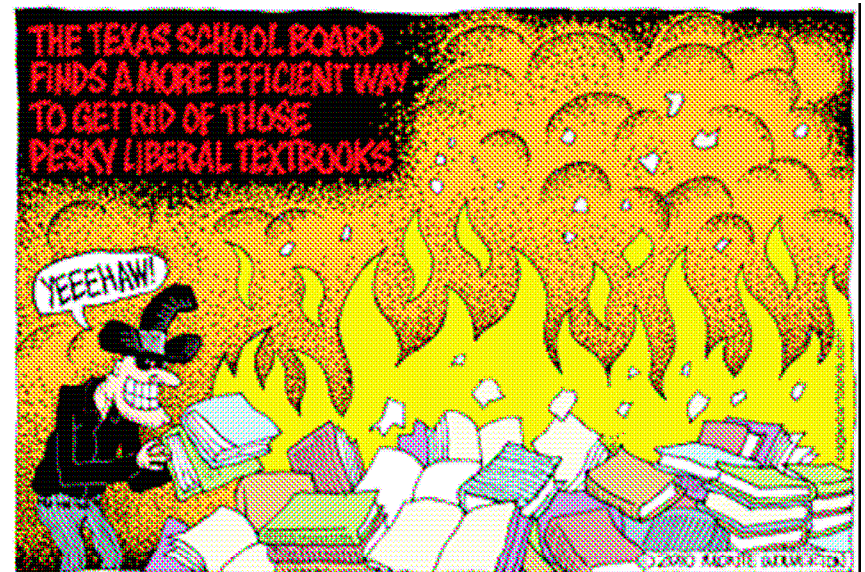
(To see all the photos in color go to yosemitedems.net)



**So you think Executive Committee Meetings are Boring??
Maybe you should drop by for the Lynn Jacobsson banana split celebration**

Miscellaneous Happenings on the Political Scene

(To see all the photos in color go to yosemitedems.net)



We knew that!



The message hasn't changed



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Has hosted several overflow Democratic Events**



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Mortimer Mouse Sez...

I Just LOVE

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Float in the Labor Day Parade



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: _____

Physical 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