



YosemiteDems.net

The Mountain Democrat
Newsletter Editor
PO Box 760
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The Mountain Democrat

December
2010
January
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CONTENTS

Coming Events.....	page 2
Peace on Earth...If We Want It.....	page 3
Copywrong.....	page 4
The Tale of Two Santas.....	page 6
Dear Auntie Sam	page 8
Mariposa Club Potluck Christmas Dinner	page 11
The Progressive Caucus of the CDP	page 12
Petite Persuasion.....	page 14
The Power of the Oakhurst Democratic Club	page 16
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 2010

Dec 4: Oakhurst Club Meeting

**Dec 7: Peace on Earth --
If You Want It
(page 3)**

Dec 11: Mariposa Club Meeting
**Christmas Potluck
(page 11)**

January 2011

Jan 1: NO Oakhurst Meeting

Jan 8: 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



Peace on Earth - If We Want It

Tuesday, December 7th

7:00PM

At The Grind

40879 Hwy 41

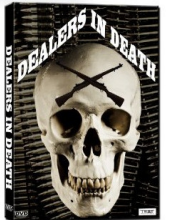
**Two Short Classic Films
and Panel Discussion**



1930's Film Classics:

"Peace on Earth"

"Dealers in Death"



Event is free and open to the public

presented by

The Oakhurst Democratic Forum

Call 683-8815 for dinner reservations prior to the forum

Copywrong

by Les Marsden

Arts and Politics don't often collide, even though not all artists are wise enough to be Democrats! I belong to an international online community of professional conductors—and recently a colleague bemoaned the current interminable length of US copyright law—while applauding the US Supreme Court's "Citizens United" decision. Below, excerpts from my lengthy response.

Art and Politics collide:

"...with that January 21, 2009 decision, corporations' "rights" as individuals will mean virtually no accounting for the "mystery" money that will inveigle itself into our very law-making process, either via pro-cause candidates or (in certain states' laws) via the initiative process. FEC filings will be largely meaningless. Today's lobbyists will skip the middleman of elected officials and simply—with bottomless corporate bucks behind them—BECOME our elected officials. How does that matter to us, and to copyright?

Jefferson, Madison and many of the founders viewed copyright protection—including patents—negatively. Jefferson's words are important:

'If nature has made any one thing less susceptible than all others of exclusive property, it is the action of the thinking power called an idea, which an individual may exclusively possess as long as he keeps it to himself; but the moment it is divulged, it forces itself into the possession of every one, and the receiver cannot dispossess himself of it. That ideas should freely spread from one to another over the globe, for the moral and mutual instruction of man, and improvement of his condition, seems to have been peculiarly and benevolently designed by nature... Inventions then cannot, in nature, be a subject of property.'

Copywrong (continued)

Madison's writings concur. However, rather than ban copyright protection outright, they stipulated "limited Times" protection in the Constitution's Article One, Section Eight, Clause Eight: *'The Congress shall have Power... To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries...'*

Nothing allowing "limited Times" to be transferred to DESCENDANTS or designees of the original creators. "LIMITED TIMES" only to the authors and inventors, period. This clause has already been twisted far beyond the founders' reckoning, most egregiously by the Sonny Bono Act, the "Mickey Mouse Forever Act". That Act was the result of the corporate power and wealth of Disney. And now—under the terms of the Citizens United decision—I foresee far greater corporate weight being thrown around, including near-perpetual copyright—especially wherein copyright is held by corporations unwilling to cede valued "commodities" the rest of us view as "art".

Have no doubt that corporations pose a threat to democracy. Only some 30 years after the Constitution was adopted, Jefferson wrote in 1817: *'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.'*

Rather than a government that crushes the threats of corporations, our Supreme Court has empowered them. I semi-seriously propose we bring back the draft. After all, if corporations ARE to have the same rights as persons, they should have the same obligations—and so, we'd be able to draft the very corporations to go fight the wars from which they profit..."

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The Tale of Two Santas

By Peter Cavanaugh

Here comes Santa Claus! Here comes Santa Claus! Right down Fooled Again Lane!

In 1976, as we celebrated America's Bicentennial, Jude Wanniski coined "The Two Santa Claus Theory", a brilliant positioning move for the Republican Party. It elected Ronald Reagan in 1980.

Mr. Wanniski was Associate Editor of the Wall Street Journal at the time and a devout believer in supply side economics. This is often referred to as "Trickle Down" by those who believe money accrued by the rich inevitably finds its way down to the proletariat (working poor). Wanniski's hero was a gentleman named Milton Friedman, who took things a bit further, stressing that government must be starved of revenue in order to curtail the growth of spending on such wasteful items as Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, Unemployment Insurance, Workers Disability Compensation and, when all is said and done, any expenditures not associated with increasing private wealth.

Welfare? NO! Warfare? GREAT! But how does one sell this to the average voter?

So Jude Wanniski came up with his "Two Santa Claus" approach, and it goes like this: Jude said that Democrats are elected because the Democratic Party is generally perceived as "Santa Claus", providing all sorts of goodies with every new election cycle for the general well being of the American people, as mandated by Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution. Hardly a Marxist document. Ask the Tea Party.

So Jude declared that the Republican Party needed to be "Santa Claus" too, by making the electorate an offer they could not refuse. It came down to two short words: LOWER TAXES! It worked like a charm then, and did again only weeks ago.

The Tale of Two Santas (continued)

And here's the really cool part of Wanniski's plan: if Republicans would only keep pounding "Lower Taxes!" through the years, while increasing expenditures on things THEY liked, combined with radically lower taxes for powerful supporters (Reagan Tax Cuts 1981 and 1986 and Bush Tax Cuts 2001 and 2003), there would be an inevitable collision with an unavoidable destination—the realization of Milton Friedman's dream—a democratic government stifled, strangled and starved. Down for the count. Turn up the trickle.

And what was on the Conservative "like list" as taxes were toppled? Granada (1983–\$50 million dollars), Panama (1989–\$155 million), Persian Gulf War (1991–\$102 Billion), Iraq (2003–\$784 Billion to date), and Afghanistan (2003–\$321 Billion to date).

In the last 30 years, since the election of The Great Communicator with his powerful new message, our national debt has soared from \$700 billion to \$14 trillion dollars under primarily Republican administrations. Fourteen trillion dollars is \$14 thousand billion, a full \$9 trillion of the \$14 trillion total racked up since the Inauguration of George W. Bush in 2001. So now we have a Presidential Panel calling for austerity measures disproportionately aimed at those who can least afford sacrifice, while a new House of Representatives stands ready to roll back hard-won measures dealing with Health and Banking Reform.

George The Conqueror now tours the nation on a book tour victory lap, something Barack Obama will be denied at the end of his first and only term unless he begins to act like a Republican: leading with enthusiastic vitality, ruthlessly sticking to a defined game plan, and fighting with determined dedication and fierce conviction for what he truly believes.

Anything less is pure surrender.

In this month's issue we are starting a new feature: Dear Auntie Sam. Writers of both questions and answers are anonymous. Send your questions and rants to:

yosemitedems@yahoo.com



Dear Auntie Sam,

I know there was a great hew and cry over Keith Olbermann being suspended for a few days because he contributed funds to a few Democrats. I think the whole thing was pretty pathetic, seeing as how no one could possibly misunderstand where he stood. And I'm writing to you, as a way of venting. Hope you don't mind...

Over the last year or so, I've become much less taken with any person who happens to hold a hard line - on either side. I'm tired of the bombast. This is not to say that I don't appreciate a good argument, or someone standing on their principles. But I'm really tired of the extremism that seems to be rampant on both sides. I, for one, truly embraced **Jon Stewart's "Rally to Restore Sanity"** in D.C. a few weeks ago. As a result, I've decided to turn off MSNBC, except for **Rachel Maddow**, and instead have taken to watching **Parker/Spitzer** on CNN. They both have a clear "side", but they're much more collegial in their presentation. They actually seem to have fun, appreciate what their guests have to say, and I find I'm learning a lot. Tonight they had on **David Stockman**, and he actually made sense! (I always did appreciate a good economist.) Go figure...

I'm not even sure why I'm telling you this, except I have a need for someone out there to know that I still embrace the dream of cooperation. I doubt it'll happen just yet, and I wish Obama would

Dear Auntie Sam (continued)

quit being the only one to try and cooperate - but still, I dream of that day.

Sanity Seeker

Dear Sanity Seeker,

You have my deepest empathy. I don't think our democracy is served well at all by the constant bombardment of bombast. I fully applaud your changing channels to something more thoughtful, and, yes, TRULY balanced.

We are completely captured by the media, and all this listening to two opposing sides battling with each other really isn't accomplishing anything. The damn trouble is, it seems to work to increase ratings, and "they" would lead us to believe that it wins and loses elections. I wish I knew if that were true. But whom would we ask? The political consultants who make their living at it? The very media who is dishing it out and rises or falls on ratings? And if it does determine elections, it is not improving the country, it is not solving problems, it is not advancing us as a society.

When and why did our politicians decide "negotiate" was a dirty word? Because they've been taught that by the electorate who has been taught that by the media? Chicken and eggs are involved somehow in this, but, at the moment, it all looks like a scramble.

Auntie Sam



MAKING A NEW LIST
For the
MARIPOSA DEMOCRATIC CLUB

MARIPOSA DEMOCRATIC CLUB
memberships expire on
January 1, 2011

Renewing is easy—send a \$10 check (individual) or \$15 check (family) to: Mariposa Democratic Club, PO Box 5008-268, Mariposa, CA 95338. This gives you ALL the benefits of belonging to the BEST Democratic club in Mariposa.



(snipped from Mitch Terkildsen)

NOW WHY ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT FOOD??

**Because you don't want to miss
the**

**MARIPOSA POTLUCK
CHRISTMAS DINNER**

**Saturday, December 11
1:00 PM
Catheys Valley County Park**

Call 209-742-1010 for more information

The Progressive Caucus of the California Democratic Party Solidarity Summit II, Fresno, CA, September 25th & 26th

By Lynn Jacobsson

As I attended the “Solidarity Summit II” of the Progressive Caucus of the California Democratic Party in Fresno on September 25th and 26th, I realized that there are many California Democrats and Democratic Party activists who fit the label that Obama’s press secretary, Robert Gibbs, recently derided as “professional Leftists.” At a press conference in August, Gibbs’ comments on progressives in the Democratic Party was that they “wouldn’t be happy unless Dennis Kucinich were President and we had succeeded in getting a Canadian-style, single-payer health care system.” While that’s not totally true, it is true that the Progressive Caucus of the California Democratic Party is not happy with the present Administration’s handling of the economy, health care legislation, education policy, and above all else, the continuing occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan and the drone attacks in Pakistan and now, Yemen.

The recent Summit conference on Fresno State’s campus brought CA Democratic Progressive Caucus members from all over the state to discuss where they were going and where they have been. Five members of the Oakhurst Democratic Club attended either one or both days of the meeting. Les Marsden headed up one of the breakout sessions with a focus on “The Progressive Message.” Other breakout sessions included: Ending Corporate Rule; Reviving the Single-Payer Health Care Movement; Challenging the Warfare State; and Saving Public Education in the Age of Privatization.

On Day Two of the Summit, Congressman Keith Ellison from Minnesota, a member of the Progressive Caucus and the only Muslim member of the House or Senate, gave a presentation on “Anti-Muslim Bigotry and the Democratic Party—Working to Realize a Party of Inclusion.” It was one of the most inspiring presentations of the two-day conference.

Solidarity Summit-II (continued)

The Congressional Progressive Caucus (CPC) is the largest caucus within the Democratic caucus in the U.S. It was established in 1991 by six members of the House including two from California, Ron Dellums and Maxine Waters. Then Representative Bernie Sanders (I-VT) was the first chairman. The founding members were concerned about the economic hardship imposed by the deepening recession and the growing inequality brought about by the timidity of the Democratic Party response at the time. Four more California representatives joined soon including George Miller, Nancy Pelosi, Pete Stark, and Lynn Woolsey.

For those of you who have concerns about the direction the national Democratic Party is taking the country on the issues, you might want to consider joining the Progressive Caucus of the California Democratic Party. While the Progressive Caucus is the largest in Congress, the congressional members need the support of grass roots progressives in their states. The CA Progressive Caucus provides an organizing forum for those who wish to work on the issues that are the focus of the Caucus. A chapter is being formed in Fresno, but you can join as an at-large member as well.

The platform of the California Progressive Caucus is at the top of the application and the dues are only \$10 per year. For me, the Caucus has made the difference between giving up on the Democratic Party and to becoming enthusiastic about working with progressives across the state to move the CA Democrats beyond the Blue Dogs’ corporate agenda. Go to:

www.ProgressiveCaucusCDP.org

and click on AboutUs/Join Us to join online, or contact Lynn Jacobsson at (559) 658-5227 and I will send you a membership form.

Petite Persuasion

by Ken West

"Gotta add some for Uncle Sam." - (frown)
(Smiling) - "Good, I like roads, safe drugs and food."

Persuading polarized persons, like some in the Tea Party, is a slow and incremental process advancing one small step at a time. One of the ways to win the 2012 elections is by the "petite persuasion" method.

When in a store, gym, or restaurant, speak against the prevailing attitudes in small and friendly ways. As the customer completing a transaction, and because you are speaking in small chunks to clerks and owners, your message is direct, short and accepted. You have created and delivered a small change message before the defenses can come up.

At the gym: "If you are going to show Fox in the Aerobics room, please show MSNBC as well. I would prefer to workout without news or politics." The clerk hears a message that says: "I do not like Fox; at least be fair." Or say "How about nothing or HGTV?" Two of these are winners for progressives.

At a restaurant the other day, the television was turned to Fox, and at check out, I said, "Why do you have Fox on? It is the most factually incorrect news channel on TV, or do you balance it with MSNBC or Free Speech TV?" The answer: "I just turn it on; whatever is there is where I leave it." "Okay", I said, "but I do not like politics with my breakfast." The owner is taking my money and so does not argue, and my point is made. Smiles all around and I am gone. (Resist the temptation to say "Mosaic", "Democracy Now", or "Al Jazeera", as alternatives).

There is a lot of paving going on around Oakhurst. I say, "I am so

Petite Persuasion (continued)

glad to see people working because of the stimulus; it sure has saved Oakhurst", as I stop at the table of quilters and buy a lottery ticket.

A person is complaining at the book store about government waste. "Big government scares me...almost as much as big business." This one gets a sharp look, but I am moving on out the door.

The people on the far right have been well-schooled to have high resistance and to be ready to resist any direct change messages, so incidental, indirect, and quick messages are one way to get in.

The strength of the progressive is that they are often open-minded, evidence-based, and tolerant; those attitudes come with the assumption of reciprocity. When reciprocity is not a shared value, those virtues are liabilities.

Winning the 2012 elections means deploying persistent, clever, and sophisticated communication techniques. Our misinformed and polarized friends are resistant to the big, in your face messages. Let's help them change, for their own good, and for ours.

As the momentum of radical materialistic individualism slows and then reverses and begins to turn toward community-based democracy, the goal should be to hold the political discourse to less radical shifts. As we gain the momentum, let's not overdo it.



The Power of the Oakhurst Democratic Club

By Ellie Schermerhorn

In one of the most conservative areas of the state, our club is now up to 116 dues paying members. That is a new record. Our members are carefully, thoughtfully, tilling the soil and giving voice to the opposition. Remember that every vote that this area generated for Boxer, or Brown, or against rolling back air quality standards, was worth as much as any vote in any blue county in the state. We may not now have as much hope as we'd like of electing a Democratic Representative to Congress, but we can have as much influence on the outcome of many elections as anyone else, and we do.

There are many like us who support Democratic/Progressive groups and causes, who have actually developed a well-considered political ideology, honed from many hours of thought and consideration, and study of the arguments through a magnifying glass.

And then there is the knee-jerk electorate which believes whatever it sees on TV or hears on the radio, and doesn't look behind the curtain to determine the true motives of the messengers, and the ramifications if those messengers rise to power.

The work of conservatives to energize the knee-jerk electorate is an easy one. All it takes is money, message manipulation, and slick ad campaigns. Piece of cake!

The Power of the Oakhurst Democratic Club (continued)

Democrats have a harder row to hoe. We actually have to educate, and engender an evolution of thought in the knee-jerk electorate. This can't be mobilized by a slug of money thrown into a particular election or in support of a particular candidate. It comes slowly, over time.

Once in a blue moon, we'll have a candidate like Obama, who through personal charm and an interesting background story, will peel off enough of the knee-jerk electorate to actually win an election, but that relies on the cult of the personality. It's wide, but shallow, and easily undone, as I think happened in this election.

It's not enough to just register voters. We have to educate voters so they aren't suckers for any line that's fed them. And some voters simply don't want to be educated. That takes time and they would actually have to do the hard work of evaluating choices and puzzling through arguments. The most we can do with that group is develop trust and ties with them so they turn to us, versus the conservatives, when looking for guidance.

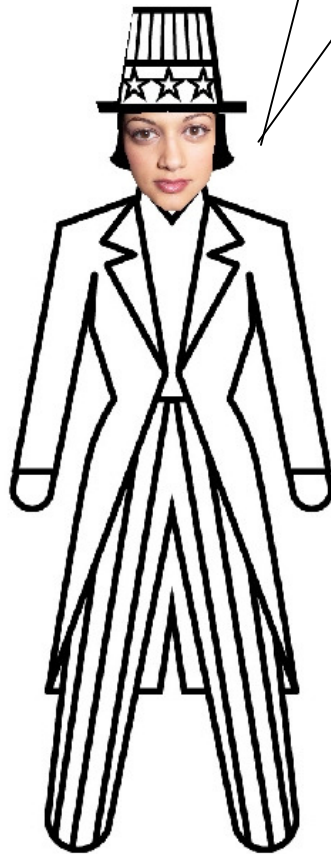
We do that on a micro-level with the Oakhurst Democratic Club. It's accomplished when we staff a booth, write articles for the newsletter, submit letters to the editor, promote Oakhurst Democratic Forums, compose articles for the Sierra Star, attend demonstrations, and do Get Out the Vote activities.

Take care, take hope. and

GO MOUNTAIN DEMOCRATS!

LISTEN UP PEOPLE!
WE NEED SOME CREATIVITY HERE!
JUST SEND YOUR RANTS AND
QUESTIONS TO
AUNTIE SAM

She'll
show
you
what
Fair
And
Balanced
IS
ALL
ABOUT!



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: _____

Supervisory District (if known): _____

Total Amount Enclosed: \$_____

Please mail form and check payable to:

Mariposa Democratic Club	-or- Oakhurst Democratic Club
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Mariposa, CA 95338	Oakhurst, CA 93644
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