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The Mountain Democrat  
Newsletter Editor  
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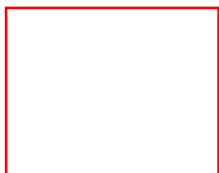
# The Mountain Democrat

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## February – March 2011

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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**

### **CONTACT US**

CDC Yosemite Gateway  
(Vacant)

#### **February 2011**

Feb 5: Oakhurst Club Meeting

Feb 12: Mariposa Club Meeting

Mariposa Democratic Club  
John Stewart: 209-742-1010

Oakhurst Democratic Club  
Scott Hill: 559-658-2342

#### **March 2011**

Mar 5: Oakhurst Club Meeting

Mar 12: Mariposa Club Meeting

Newsletter/Web Page Editor  
Scott Hill: 559-658-2342

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 2011 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!**

## "Congressional Reform Act of 2011"..Really?

By Les Marsden

You may have received earnestly-forwarded e-mails titled "Congressional Reform Act of 2011" or "28th Amendment to the Constitution" calling for changes to the way Congress functions—term limits, forcing Congressional reps to live “under the same laws” as the rest of us, etc.

Don't be duped: Congressional Reps/Senators ARE NOT held to different standards, or allowed to retire after one term with full pensions/benefits, and ARE legally obliged to follow every law they enact and which ALL Americans follow. This “reform” attempt is the product of conservatives and their deep-pocketed instigators—and has been pushed by (among many others) the Arizona Tea Party Network, beginning well more a year ago. It also calls for Federal term limits, to which I am totally, completely opposed. Upon what legal basis may I be told who I MAY NOT vote for? Worse: Why should experience be the basis for DISQUALIFYING someone from serving? Under this plan, Ted Kennedy would have been kicked out of the Senate in 1974. Yup—the Lion of the Senate would have been forced out 36 years ago, while still merely a Cub. Think of ALL Ted did for America as a Senator after 1974—in 1975 ALONE, he fought for a single-payer healthcare system, pushed for election reform, met with Brezhnev to encourage a nuclear test ban. Why get rid of a public servant just beginning to accrue the abilities to carry out the best sorts of the people's business? We've seen the terrible results produced in California from the GOP's success in enacting term limits, and which had one goal: to remove Democrats from office. Its other by-product? Sacramento's terrible gridlock.

It brazenly misinterprets (or rather, LIES about) the intentions of the Founders—who actually did impose term limits; they're called elections. And if today's ridiculously gerrymandered districts dilute the power of elections to replace ineffective or inferior

## "Congressional Reform Act of 2011"..Really? (continued)

representatives, THAT'S wherein the problem lies. YES, we must be able to easily vote out electeds who are NOT serving their constituencies. Effective elective democracy must be restored by eliminating safe districts—not by this scattershot removal of GOOD public servants as well as bad, based merely upon years in office. That's just stupid. The real solution is an end to safe districts.

There are far better ways to make Congress again the representative voice of the people. This "Reform Act" is not one of them. It creates totally nebulous straw-man arguments and then offers ersatz-solutions that are anything BUT. Snopes has effectively debunked this effort.

<http://www.snopes.com/politics/medical/28thamendment.asp>

This clear-eyed exposé is no liberal attack—the Mikkelsons are unabashed conservatives—and they reveal this “reform” attempt for what it is: total garbage.

These e-mailed missives demand they be forwarded out to “at least 20 others” and end: "THIS IS HOW YOU FIX CONGRESS!!!!!! If you agree with the above, pass it on. If not, just delete". That's like saying: "If you see deliberate disinformation, don't say anything: just stand by and celebrate ignorance. If YOU'VE cleverly realized what we're trying to do is a lie, PLEASE keep your mouth shut and don't expose us to others!" Well—that's plain wrong. Deleting condones lies and bad ideas. And this thing is a terribly bad, dishonest assault by conservatives on Democracy—with both big AND small “Ds.”

## Goofy's Golden Gavel

By Peter Cavanaugh

Among our species' most puzzling and haunting mysteries, right up there with the meaning of life, the secret of bumble bee flight (there's no aerodynamic reason for such a phenomenon) and why men leave up toilet seats (gravity defiance?), is one purely attributable to the late Walt Disney. I've heard it since First Grade.

"If Mickey is a mouse, Donald is a duck and Pluto is a dog--what -- and who--is Goofy?" Hmmmmm.

Unlike a dog--he stands on two feet--wears human clothing--and talks. That voice has seemed suspiciously familiar all along --his curious, stuttering cadence--those blurry eyes--such great big hands--and what a stunned look of blank amazement at--almost everything.

The giant gavel John Boehner so proudly and ecstatically pounded as he became our new Speaker of the House was made to certain specifications in Middletown, Ohio, part of John's home district. One suspects the exact design was primarily to assure all assembled that Speaker Boehner's gavel was much, much, much bigger than his predecessor's--approximately the size of a small fire hydrant--possibly reflecting Boehner's panting embracement of "trickle down" theory with typical dog-like loyalty.

In certain circles, size still counts. So does chromatic hue. Though made of wood, John's gavel, flashing under the pulsing, strobe-like illumination of cameras by the score, started to glitter like gold. And well it should. There's money up on that there Hill.

Saddle up, boys! Look! Loot! Lots! Loads!

Only the night before John's big day, our own new Congressman from California's "Gold Country", Jeff Denham (almost--he wasn't sworn in yet--that's just a detail) threw one heck of a "You

## Goofy's Golden Gavel (continued)

Can Buy and Pay Me Some More" Party at one of the coolest spots in town. Representative Denham, having campaigned on a message of austerity and budget cuts, charged \$2,500 a person (or \$50,000 a table) at Washington's posh "W" Hotel for a no holds barred, shake 'em on down fund raiser headlining LeAnn Rimes, fresh from a confessed extramarital affair and her recent Christmas Pageant appearance with a gay choir in a "Sexy Santa" outfit. Not that there's anything wrong with that. Santa's always been fashionable. Attendance was wall to wall. In fact, before even being elected, Jeff has become a fundraising kingpin for fellow freshmen members, planning at least four high dollar fundraisers in D.C. at the Republicans-only Capitol Hill Club.

The word is out. Reputation counts. Denham comes through. Proper contributions? Political solutions! Jeff's a player.

If there was a shred of doubt in anyone's mind that sinister forces are at work in the world, one only needs to review the appalling "Remembering the Brave" Campaign launched in support of then California State Senator Denham with an extensive paid schedule dominating our mountain airwaves on every major Fresno TV station in days leading up to the June 8th Primary. Over \$150,000 in funds were spent as we witnessed Jeff Denham climbing to long sought Congressional heights on the backs of the bereaved. Veterans' groups were justifiably in an uproar. Why didn't all that money just go to the cause?

And how often will we again, time after time, bribe ("contribution") after bribe ("donation"), see our darkest suspicions blatantly verified by the conduct of elected officials displaying total disregard for true honor, proper respect and common decency. Family values--discounted to dust.

Pound that golden gavel, Goofy.

*Writers of both questions and answers for Dear Auntie Sam are anonymous. Send your questions and rants to:*

yosemitedems@yahoo.com



### **Dear Auntie Sam,**

With the tragic consequences in Tucson, I wonder if there aren't a lot more people around the country who feel our rhetoric has plunged to dangerous depths.

Of course there is no proof (as yet) that the diatribes in the media had a direct bearing on the senseless shootings in Tucson, but I find it hard to believe there isn't at least *some* responsibility there. Is there anything you can suggest we do in our own communities to let our voices be heard that we don't want to further this kind of damaging dialog? Candlelight vigils and letters to the editor seem somewhat shallow, though well-intended.

### *Seeking Solutions*

### **Dear Seeking Solutions,**

Since your letter was written, we've learned that the Arizona shooter was probably not influenced by the violent political rhetoric. But even if HE wasn't, there were certainly other cases where people were clearly pushed to violence due to what they heard on talk radio and on television. One example is the California man who, last summer, was planning to attack both the ACLU and the Tides Foundation (he was an avid Glenn Beck watcher), so this is still a timely topic.

First, let's remember that violence has been a part of American politics since the beginning. Some of the campaign rhetoric in

### Dear Auntie Sam (continued)

the 1800s was vicious, and the debate around civil rights in the '50s and '60s got very ugly.

One difference now from the 1800s, of course, is that the hateful speech is available to hundreds of millions of people. There are more people now, so there are more people who are on the edge. They also have access to deadlier weapons today. In the 1800s, Loughner would not have had a gun with 33 bullets in it.

I'm a firm believer in freedom of speech. It is vital to our democracy. But I don't believe in encouraging people to use their "second amendment rights" when they disagree with someone.

Locally, I see two main things we can do. One is to model tempered behavior ourselves. When posting online, or when writing a letter to an editor, don't use heated rhetoric. Don't call people names. Don't threaten violence. When you see an online discussion getting heated, put in some calming words. Direct people back to the issue at hand. The other thing I suggest is to call people on it. If you hear someone saying something incendiary, tell them you don't like it. If it's a public personality, write them, write their sponsors, write the local papers to say that the language stepped out of bounds.

Unfortunately, Auntie Sam doesn't see politics or pundits changing any time soon. The pundits get lots of viewers and politicians get lots of votes with inflammatory speech. As long as people respond by watching and/or voting, the speech will not change, but we can try to encourage civility around us.

I've seen public opinion change over the decades on such topics as smoking and drinking. We can hope for the same kind of attitude shift towards a civil discourse. It can start with us.

### **Auntie Sam**



PEACE ON EARTH.....IF WE WANT IT  
December 7, 2011



PEACE ON EARTH.....IF WE WANT IT  
December 7, 2011



## Thomas Jefferson Community Service Essay Award

The Mariposa Democratic Club will be sponsoring the Fifth Annual Thomas Jefferson Community Service Essay Award. This essay contest will be open to all Mariposa County Unified School District seniors. Qualifications for the award will include currently enrolled high school seniors in good standing having a GPA of 2.0 or better. The intent of the essay contest is to provide financial assistance to those students who have contributed to their community in the past and intend to do so in the future.

A letter of recommendation from a community member who can validate a student's community service will be required to accompany the essay and the application form. All completed applications must be returned to the student's school no later than noon on Monday, March 21, 2011.

Following the judging of all entries, the finalist will be awarded a \$500.00 cash prize provided by the Mariposa Democratic Club. Service to family, community and country reflects the highest of values our young students can embrace. The Mariposa Democratic Club wishes to reward past services and encourage future endeavors through this essay contest and would like to recognize those students who engage in community services.

## Mariposa Democratic Club Thomas Jefferson Service Award

### Award Amount

\$500.00

### Purpose

The purpose of this award is to provide financial assistance to students who have served the community and who intend to use their chosen vocations to serve their communities or the world at large.

### Eligibility

A student must meet all of the following criteria to be eligible for the award:

1. Be any Mariposa County High School graduating senior, 2010-11 School Year.
2. Have earned a minimum G.P.A. of 2.0.
3. Submit a letter of recommendation from a person familiar with the student's community service activities.
4. Submit an essay answering the following (maximum of 600 words).

Describe how you have provided service to the community during your life and the ways you could and would use your chosen vocation to serve your community and the world at large.

### **Mariposa Democratic Club 2011 Officers**

The Mariposa Democratic Club is happy to announce its officers for 2011! We're doing it a little differently this year – due to many other commitments, John Stewart decided not to run for President again. So we are truly operating as an executive committee, with no president. We are very excited about this; we think it will strengthen the teamwork within the committee and give lots of you a chance to be involved!!

Please contact any of the officers listed below if you have comments, suggestions, questions or if you want to volunteer for anything!

Officers:

(all phone numbers are area code 209)

First Vice President - Laura Lee - lolee@sti.net - 966-5521

Second Vice President - Shirley Schmelzer  
shirbob@sti.net - 966-2915

Corresponding/Recording Secretary - Anne Brock  
abrock@aol.com - 742-6872

Treasurer - Vicky Roland - vicki.roland@gmail.com - 966-6787

At large members -

Nancy Fagerstrom - nancyfagerstrom@yahoo.com - 742-5236

Kathy Lander - mntnma@yahoo.com - 966-6423

Les Marsden - actlocally@sti.net - 966-6988

John Stewart - paulajohn@sti.net - 628-2839

Note: Kathy Lander will also be leading the membership committee – if you can help, please contact her!

### **Jefferson Dinner Update**

Plans are well underway for the Mariposa Democratic Club and Central Committee 2011 Jefferson Dinner. We will have more information to you later, but the key facts are:

Date: April 16, 2011

Time: doors open at 5:30pm; dinner at 7:00 pm

Tickets: \$20 each

Chef: Les Marsden is back in the kitchen,  
doing his magic!

Please mark your calendar now! You can call 209-742-1010 to order tickets or pick them up at our meetings in February or March (second Sat. of each month).



## Speakers for the Mariposa Democratic Club Meetings

By Anne Brock

We have decided to focus this year on recruiting more members for the club; as part of that, we are lining up a strong group of speakers. We will endeavor to have a great speaker at every meeting! Club business will still be conducted, but we will streamline it and cover as much as we can through e-mails or at the Executive Committee meetings.

In January, we had Aaron Rosander, the Superintendent of Mariposa County School district, come to talk to us. The members present all agreed we could have kept him talking for hours! Conversation ranged from ADA (average daily attendance) spending to home schooling to the way the transportation budget works – plus much more! It was a great way to start the year. In Feb, we will have John Brady from MERG discussing the recently settled Yosemite lawsuit -what does that mean and what happens next?

And in March we will have Rita and Tony Kidd discussing the Cathey's Valley Plan, which has gotten quite controversial lately. April, of course, is the Jefferson Dinner – more info on that speaker is to come!

So mark your calendars for the second Saturday of each month to come to the Mariposa Democratic Club meetings! Information on the meetings is always available at 209-742-1010.



Patsy Montgomery, Oakhurst Club speaker, December 4, 2010



On December 7th, The Oakhurst Peace Forum presented, "Peace on Earth–If We Want It", before a wall-to-wall crowd at The Grind in Oakhurst. Following the showing of two classic anti-war films from the 1930's, a panel of participants offered overview and commentary, including, left to right, the Rev. Paul Colbert, Vicar of St. Raphael's Episcopal Church in Oakhurst, Moderator Peter Cavanaugh, Basim Elkarra, Executive Director of the Sacramento Valley Chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, Dr. Terry Winant from the Philosophy Department at Fresno State and Soto Zen Priest Rev. Mary-Allen Macneil of Oakhurst. Mr. Elkarra also sits on the California Democratic Party's Executive Board and chairs its Arab American Caucus.



## FLOAT FOR RENT

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

For information call 209-742-1010

*Mortimer Mouse Sez...*

**I've been hibernating, but  
I certainly won't miss the**

**Jefferson Dinner!  
Saturday, April 16**



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