



# The Mountain Democrat

## June – July 2011

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YosemiteDems.net

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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

### June 2011

Jun. 4: Oakhurst Club Meeting

Jun 11: Mariposa Club Meeting

### July 2011

Jul 2: Oakhurst Club Meeting

Jul 9: Mariposa Summer Picnic  
(page 9)

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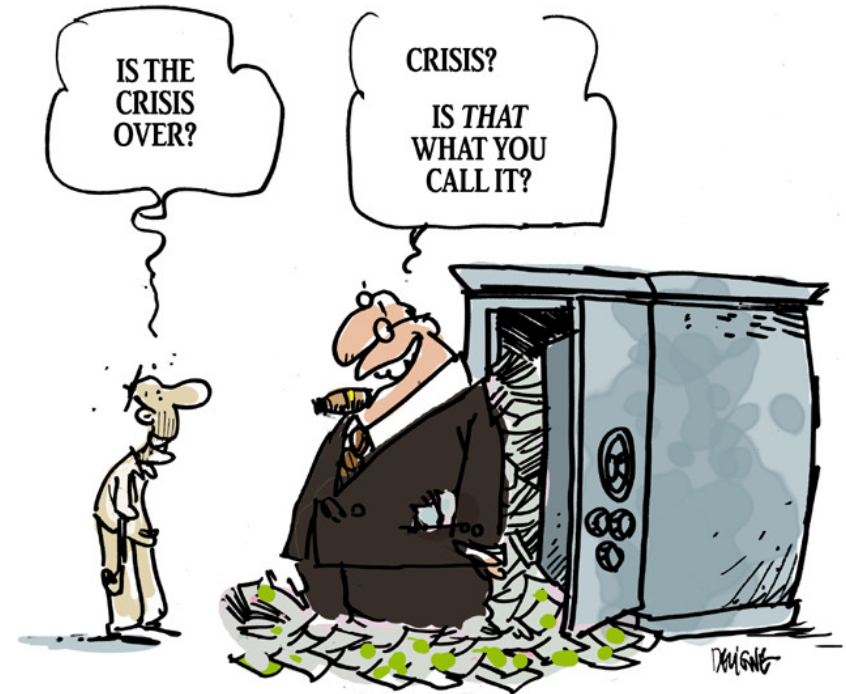
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For more information about our Democratic Clubs and Democratic happenings around the state and nation open your trusty web browser and visit our web page at:

**YosemiteDems.net**



## Bitten by the Past

by Les Marsden

Oh, the past. A person's recorded words, yesterday's documented actions. The past can sometimes be nothing less than a snarling, slobbering fanged beast just outside the door. Gifted with an impeccable memory, it patiently bides its time. And then, just the right moment occurs and it springs onto the scene with a deftly-aimed bite to the jugular.

As I write, Mitt Romney is trying to shake that monster's death lock by recklessly running in circles in an effort to dislodge the beast perched upon his back. Romney's beast? The health insurance reform he defended and signed into law as governor of Massachusetts. And even worse for Mitt? That Massachusetts program includes a mandate requiring individuals to purchase health insurance. Mitt's not the only Republican who flirted with good sense and decency in the past—decency now threatening his standing as a potential Presidential candidate in the indecent party of NO. Newt Gingrich, the hypocritical serial-cheater and misogynistic perpetrator of the reviled “Contract With America” has sometimes surprised those who best know (and despise) him by speaking with uncharacteristic rational humanity—sounding more like a Democrat than a member of the GOP. In June 2007, Newt wrote in the Des Moines Register: “Personal responsibility extends to the purchase of health insurance” and that an “individual mandate” should be a part of US healthcare “when the larger health-care system has been fundamentally changed.” Individual mandate, eh? Just like the one in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (known as “Obamacare” by the ignorant) House Republicans are now fighting so hard to kill through defunding?

But it gets even better! In his book “Real Change” (2008) Gingrich wrote “Finally, we should insist that everyone above a certain level buy coverage (or, if they are opposed to insurance,

## Bitten by the Past (continued)

post a bond). Meanwhile, we should provide tax credits or subsidize private insurance for the poor.” Subsidized insurance for the poor? Yowzah! And in “Winning the Future” he laid it right out there: “You have the right to be part of the lowest-cost insurance pool and you have a responsibility to buy insurance. We need some significant changes to ensure that every American is insured, but we should make it clear that a 21st Century Intelligent System requires everyone to participate in the insurance system.”

No amount of equivocating back-pedaling NOW by Mitt or Newt can undo the facts of their past: accidentally positive deeds and good words—wisdom despised by the “none for all, all for ME” conservative GOP, members of which jockey all over each other in a mad dash to the right—in an effort to please their Tea Party masters. The monster of Newt's past words may pounce soon, though in the case of the corpulent tub-o'-Gingrich, the Beast of Newt's words has a tempting target far larger than the Gingrich jugular.

As for us Democrats? I'd like to leave you with wise words we can celebrate, rather than hide from. Democratic former NY Governor Mario Cuomo said: “Of course, we should have only the government we need. But we must have all the government we need. A society as blessed as ours should be able to find shelter for the homeless, work for the idle, care for the elderly and infirm, and hope for the destitute.” Amen, brother.



## **Crazy Days? Straight Ahead!**

By Peter Cavanaugh

From Nat “King” Cole --- Summer 1963

“Roll out those lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer  
Those days of soda and pretzels and beer.”

-- and Romney and Ryan and Boehner and Newt --  
and Trump and Palin and Bachman to boot --  
and every Republican Member of the House --  
locked in mindless march.

Back in the summer of ‘63, the top rate for personal Federal Income Taxes for the fortunately blessed was 91%, now slashed over time to 35%. All in all, Federal taxes for 2011 are the lowest in sixty years—since the end of World War Two. The rich have not only gotten richer in recent decades. Elected surrogates have been brilliantly successful in blaming “Big Government” for the prolonged economic execution of America’s Middle Class. Even more sinister is the ever accelerating abolishment of social programs by the score and abandonment of any affirmative recognition of hard-won, long-accepted, time-honored commitments to a prosperous collective future in a thriving, vibrant, national union.

We are entering a mean season. I would hope our President will now display the same courage, confidence and conviction which won him unparalleled praise from even his harshest critics in the bin Laden finale by—taking on the takers! They have a lot to give back. I’m trusting he’s up to the task.

These are my primary current reflections:

(1) Any retreat on Medicare/Medicaid would be unforgivable.

## **Crazy Days? Straight Ahead! (continued)**

(2) Federal taxes must be increased by 10% on all net personal income above \$250,000.

(3) Capital Gains should be moved upward to 35%.

(4) Investment in social programs curtailed by or eliminated through “budget cuts” should be restored at the soonest and increased thereafter as circumstances allow.

(5) Let’s bring home our troops from Iraq, Afghanistan and all those other places where American ground presence has become, in the age of deadly drones, an expensive, outmoded, completely unnecessary anachronism.

(6) The Republican Party of 2011 has been hijacked by precocious pretenders funded by an oligarchical cabal seeking eventual repeal of the whole New Deal. Then they’ll get serious. This threat should be met with the responsive severity it deserves.

(7) Washington lobbying should be enormously curtailed, if not completely eliminated as a formal enterprise. Let’s write that up NOW. Then it’s on to “Medicare for All.”

(8) A Constitutional Amendment should be initiated aimed at overturning the Supreme Court’s horrid decision in “Citizens United” granting corporations “person” status in matters of free speech. Right now, it’s open season with money ever more bold to keep us controlled.

(9) Let’s not be shy about sharing our concerns with others, particularly those beginning to realize that cries of “taking our country back” have been leaving out the last two words:

“To 1900!”

## **Mariposa Dem Club Awesome Speaker Lineup!**

By Anne Brock

The Mariposa Democratic Club has been featuring just a fantastic lineup of speakers this year, and we continue to hit it out of the park!

January was Aaron Rosander, Superintendent of Mariposa School District; that was followed by John Brady from MERG who covered the Yosemite lawsuit, the past present and future.

Then in March Rita and Tony Kidd came and gave us the low-down on the Cathey's Valley Community Plan—the controversy, what the general plan calls for, and lots of other good information!

In April, Rick Benson, the CAO of Mariposa County came and talked to us about how he works with the BOS, about the MID contract, about the recently negotiated contracts, and about a lot of other numbers.

In May we had Kevin Cann, Mariposa Supervisor - District IV, coming to speak to us! We heard what's going on in county plans—sign ordinances, Cathey's Valley plan, the new Welfare building.

In June we will have Ralph Mendershausen to cover the Denham bill to raise the Exchequer Dam. Come hear why so many people think this is a bad idea.

In July, we won't have a meeting; instead we'll have our summer fundraiser. After that, we hope to continue the great list of speakers! If you have an idea of someone you want to hear from, let us know! Email [mariposademclub@gmail.com](mailto:mariposademclub@gmail.com).



### **Mariposa Democratic Club Planning Summer Fundraiser**

The Mariposa Democratic Club will be holding a summer fundraiser in lieu of our July meeting.

The event will be held in the Mariposa Town park on Saturday, July 9th, starting around 4 in the afternoon. We'll be selling a variety of hot sandwiches (tri tips, burgers, etc.) along with water, soda, ice cream treats and baked goods. We'll have donkey rides and games! Come and grab some food, hang out with your friends, and then go down to the Arts Park for the evening concert!

Should be a lot of fun for families and friends - mark your calendar now!

We are looking for people to help plan and run the event! Email us at:

[mariposademclub@gmail.com](mailto:mariposademclub@gmail.com)

if you can help!

## PHOTOS



Rita and Tony Kidd spoke to the Mariposa Club in March about “The Cathey’s Valley Community Plan”

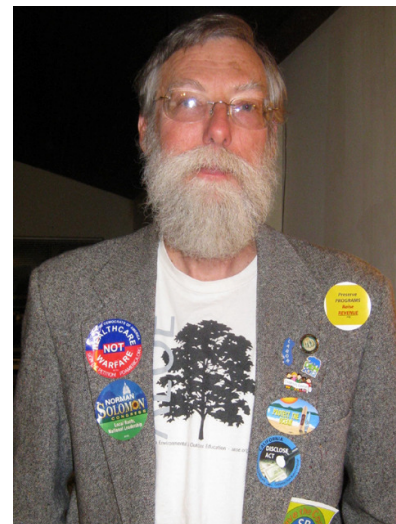


Dan Loeberg spoke to the Oakhurst Club in April about “Renewable Energy for the Home”

## PHOTOS



Max Richie spoke to the Oakhurst Club in May about “Guns or Butter”



Peter Leinau displays his convention fashion savvy at the 2011 CDP Convention



## Tales of a Mountain Democrat

by Ellie Schermerhorn

*(This is the first in a series of articles featuring the interesting lives of many of our members. We'd love to feature YOU. Tall tales and historical embellishments are sought and relished. Just e-mail Ellie Schermerhorn at mizzes12@yahoo.com.)*



Jeanne wrote to me: *"If I were about 20 years younger I would go for it. Not at this ancient age. I voted for FDR!!!!!!"*

I knew right then that **Jeanne Schaeffer** was somebody I wanted to get to know.

What Jeanne didn't want to "go for" was being an **Obama for America** grassroots activist, but she thought I'd be great at it. I ducked that one, but grabbed her by her little toe and insisted she tell me all about herself.

She began: *"Yes, that was a happy day for me when I cast my first vote and I have never changed my mind since then as to which party cares about the people. I am really upset about the unions breaking down. None of those people knows what it was like before unions. I grew up with no health insurance. I doubt anyone had it during those Depression years. There was still child labor in this country before unions. Just like a third world country and like the ignorant people are working to get it that way again. You can't cure stupid, I guess."*

Jeanne is a native Californian and became interested in politics in the fourth grade because she saw what the country was like under Coolidge and Hoover. Then the changes came with FDR and she had to wait 'til she was old enough (21) to vote for him. Growing

## Tales of a Mountain Democrat (continued)

up in San Francisco, a cosmopolitan city with many ethnic groups, made her open-minded and unprejudiced. She was horrified when she saw some of the rest of the country with segregation and bias, and people who were fearful of other cultures and ethnicities.

And what about her mother's politics? *"As a kid, I always wondered why my mother wasn't interested in politics or even bothered to vote. It took a long time for me to realize that women didn't even have the right to vote until a year after I was born, so naturally she wasn't brought up to even consider it. My mother raised me as a single parent. She was a legal secretary. By the way, all secretarial jobs were 5 1/2 days, and there was no overtime pay or benefits. No such thing as a 40 hour week!"*

One of Jeanne's biggest concerns is education. She states: *"A bit of history—The generation before mine knew as much at the end of eighth grade as we knew upon graduating from high school. Now college graduates are lucky if they know what my generation of high school graduates knew. Education is so important and teachers should be compensated as much as other professionals."*

Jeanne goes on: *"I have traveled lots of the world and, in between, raised my family in an affluent suburb. People were surprised we were not Republicans, as my husband was in management at Hewlett-Packard. We stayed true to our beliefs and were not influenced by his success."*

Thanks for sharing your story with us, Jeanne Schaeffer! We salute you for your life-long dedication to the Democratic Party and your many contributions to our country.

## 2011 California Democratic Party Convention

By Peter Leinau

Greetings! I have just returned from the 2011 Convention of the California Democratic Party and offer the following summary as one of your 25th Assembly District Delegates:

The over-arching and recurring themes of the convention were:

1) Satisfaction that the Democratic Party in California effectively connected with California voters in 2010 resulting in wins for Democrats in all state constitutional offices and adding another Democrat to the State Assembly.

\*\*\*Current action needed: Begin voter education and registration cycle for 2012, and contribute to Dem 2012. Go to [www.CaDem.org](http://www.CaDem.org).

2) The urgent and compelling need to turn out support for workers and families in California and nationwide.

\*\*\*Current action needed: Letters to editors and governing officials, call-ins to talk programs supporting workers, rejecting anti-union, anti-worker, and anti-family legislation and budgets. Costa Mesa, CA is the next Wisconsin, with the city council and mayor laying off the public sector union workers in favor of privatized city services.

3) The urgent need for extending the Schwarzenegger temporary tax structure in California in order to avoid irreparable harm to education, services, and infrastructure.

\*\*\*Current action needed: Regardless of party or persuasion all voters need to contact their State Assembly and State Senate members IMMEDIATELY and demand an extension of the existing tax rates. Letting the taxes expire will have irreversible consequences for California. As separate matters to support there is an effort to pass a 1% tax increase on the top 1% income bracket in California, an effort to tax oil that is extracted from California

## 2011 California Democratic Party Convention (continued)

(as is done in the majority of oil producing states), and an effort to end the death penalty and convert existing death sentences to life without parole.

I attended the Rural, Labor, Children's, and Progressive Caucuses where strategies are developed and actions taken to influence the Democratic Party and elected Democrats.

The Rural Caucus emphasized the need on a local level for support for our workers and their families, the need for local media coverage, and the impacts of an all-cuts budget on rural communities.

The Labor Caucus focused on the assault on workers nationwide and in California, and the need to support public service workers in Orange County.

The Children's Caucus reviewed progress on the lead hazards associated with artificial turf and recognized Caroline Cox and the center for Environmental Health for their work on this.

The Progressive Caucus also focused on labor and budget matters.

Some of the resolutions adopted during the general session were: Support for Planned Parenthood, Support of the California Dream Act, Support for Social Security, Repudiation of the Republican Party Marilyn Davenport Obama/Chimp caricature as Racist, Call for internet Sales Tax Compliance, Opposition to Arizona Anti-Immigrant/Ethnic Studies Bills, Support for Protection of the Oceans, and a resolution supporting the Human Rights and Democracy Movement in Iran.

Highlights of the convention for me were definitely the speeches by Independent Senator Bernie Sanders, and our own Attorney General Kamela Harris.



## 2011 Eleanor Roosevelt Service Award Winners

By Cheryce Chartier

This year we had even more amazing applications than last year! With this being my third year on the committee, I am more impressed each year and look forward to the next.

For 2011, the Oakhurst Democratic Club Awards Committee has chosen:

*Erica Grant and Kelly Mears.*

Each of these remarkable young ladies went above and beyond when it came to giving back to their communities! Between them, they have over 100 volunteer hours!!

*Erica Grant* impresses, with a senior class rank of #1 out of 212 seniors! While keeping her grade point average at 4.35, it astounds me that she finds the time to volunteer with the community service club at Yosemite High School, Marine Corps Ball, OES Spirit night and food packing at Manna House among so many other volunteer activities.

Erica is looking forward to college at UCLA where she would like to major in microbiology, immunology and molecular genetics; she would like to obtain her PhD/MD so she could ultimately work as a research scientist. Keep your eyes and ears open—I believe we will be hearing about Erica Grant in the future!

*Kelly Mears* was busy with volunteer work even before she moved to this mountain community. With her time here, she has been an asset with her volunteer work and Manna House, Park clean ups, Mountain Area Youth Soccer League and more.

## 2011 Eleanor Roosevelt Service Award Winners (continued)

Kelly is on track to attend Union College in Schenectady, New York where she will be working toward a degree in political science with an influence in business and psychology. She hopes to acquire an internship at the White House so she can become more involved and educated about the inner workings of our nation's capitol. I have no doubt that Kelly will be wowing us for years to come!

Each of these hard working students has received a \$500 award to help them on their path. We are certain they will put it to good use.

Thank you once more to Sandy Stairs for heading this committee and opening his home to us for meeting. Thank you also to Carol Collins for being such an important part of this process!

It is never an easy decision, but it helps to work with dedicated people.





## FLOAT FOR RENT

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Tell your friends and relations.**

For information call 209-742-1010

*Mortimer Mouse Sez...*

**I've been hibernating, but  
I'm ready now to  
Start things rolling for a  
GREAT SUMMER**



## 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
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