



YosemiteDems.net

The Mountain Democrat
Newsletter Editor
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THE MOUNTAIN DEMOCRAT AUGUST – SEPTEMBER 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

August 2011

Aug 6: Oakhurst Club Meeting

Aug 13: **NO** Mariposa Meeting

September 2011

Sep 3: Ride the Float
(see page 3 and 9)
NO Oakhurst Meeting

Sep 10: Mariposa Club Meeting

CONTACT US

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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. 3th
10:00 AM
Call 209-742-1010**

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

Paradise Gained!

By Les Marsden

Life in paradise has trade-offs: we relish our great scenic beauty, but, alas, we're also a scattered Democratic minority in a rural red sea. Worse: our federal and state districts are embarrassingly gerrymandered as strongly Republican—because leadership of both parties agreed to make it so. Radanovich effortlessly held the 19th Congressional District thanks to mutual concurrence of both parties' leadership, who blatantly crayoned the 19th hopelessly red and the 18th safely blue. An amazing stretch of the 19th nearly totally encircles Modesto: ALL the extremely red rural areas surrounding that city are included with us, while the predominantly bluer urban core is tenuously linked to the neighboring 18th (Cardoza). And if that's not bad enough, we were doubly screwed because our small mountain populations were divided and meaninglessly appended onto Central Valley-centric portions of those (and other) districts. The huge Valley numerical advantage meant that not only would we be a Democratic minority, but also that our mountain concerns, needs and issues would be entirely predominated by the flatlands. I live at 4,000 feet. Our districts include massive High Sierra territory past 10,000 feet including all of Yosemite, but our few mountain voices are silenced by farming interests below. The environmental community (best symbolized by Yosemite itself) is rarely given more than patronizing lip service, especially when it comes to water—see Denham's HR 869.

That's why we had to take districting out of the hands of our elected partisan legislators. Clearly, we ain't gonna see blue districts here any time soon; rural areas aren't lefty hotbeds. And there really aren't many Democratic-leaning areas which we might connect with. The city of Madera has a large Latino population, which generally tends to vote Democratic. But they're also largely socially conservative. When an election critically turns on progressive policies like women's rights, birth control, abortion, and gay marriage, many Latinos vote Republican—and especially so with second-and-later generations who are also less supportive

Paradise Gained! (continued)

of "illegal alien rights." And Latino voters in general are low-propensity voters, turning out in low numbers.

So what will the Citizens Redistricting Commission gain us? We serve as life-support for the Valley, and that's why I've fought for trans-Sierran representation. At least we'll THEN join other mountain "communities of interest" as the new commission is tasked to accomplish. Until Proposition 11, we had no hope for equitable, honestly-drawn districts based upon common interests. But that's just what the CRC's two initial drafts give us: foothill/mountain representation, and about time. And to a lesser extent, that's the CRC visioning for our State Senate and Assembly districts, too.

Far more California Republican incumbents than Dems will be hurt and the initial draft district maps demonstrate a route to a two-thirds majority for Dems in Sacramento. Will we still live in red districts? Yup. But the numbers will be far less overwhelming AGAINST Dems, leaving the possibility for the election of Dems, rather than the absolute, finite outlook of NO Dems needing to apply here, as has been the case for so long. We'll be one step closer to honest, open representation AND elections, rather than the farces of safe districts that have closed off the potential for so many rural-area Democrats in this state. With the ever-increasing registration gap between Dems and Repubs in CA, the outlook is for MORE elected Democrats—making life in paradise a little more rosy.



“Let Her Be An Everlasting Light”

by Peter Cavanaugh

I was first introduced to Elizabeth Warren in Michael Moore’s “Capitalism: A Love Story.”

At the time, Ms. Warren was chair of a Congressional Oversight Panel created to oversee the U.S. banking bailout involving hundreds of billions of tax payer dollars. When Michael asked her in the film “where the money went”, she candidly replied with genuine frustration and refreshing candor, “I don’t know”—a question which remains largely unanswered to this day.

A seemingly perfect choice to develop and oversee a new Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Elizabeth Warren was named a senior adviser to President Barack Obama and Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner on September 17, 2010, since then earning the nickname “Sheriff of Wall Street” and ruffling more than a few feathers outside and inside the Obama Administration.

On Thursday, July 14th, while testifying before a Congressional panel, Warren questioned the scope of state and federal investigations into alleged mortgage abuses and “illegal” foreclosures perpetrated by the nation’s largest mortgage companies, marking the first time a senior White House official publicly broke ranks with the President over the issue and raising fresh questions about the wisdom of the Federal government’s rush to settle with the firms.

She testified that government agencies may not have sufficiently investigated claims that borrowers’ homes were illegally seized by banks such as JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, Wells Fargo, Citigroup and Ally Financial.

On Monday, July 18th, President Obama announced Warren was being passed over as his choice to become permanent Director of the very organization she had conceived and created, instead

“Let Her Be An Everlasting Light” (continued)

choosing to nominate Warren’s second-in-command, former Ohio Attorney General Richard Cordray, thus caving in to those who view Elizabeth Warren as being far, far too serious in her quest for meaningful banking regulations and reform.

While this decision may well open the door for Ms. Warren to run for the Senate next year in Massachusetts against Scott Brown, surprise inheritor of Ted Kennedy’s old seat, Obama’s reluctance to confront the GOP head-on in this instance again seems to signal undue Presidential reticence at best and incomprehensible capitulation at worst.

In Elizabeth Warren’s case, I find myself equally troubled by the President’s choice of such Wall Street tainted advisors as Geithner, Bill Daily, Gene Sperling and others, who may well have felt themselves under Warren’s scrutiny to an uncomfortable degree in her attempts to shed serious light on shifty shenanigans.

But I am most heartened by Ms. Warren’s words to the Huffington Post in graciously commenting on Cordray’s appointment:

“I’m not taking my eye off those who want to cripple this agency. We got this agency by fighting, we stood it up by fighting, and, if it takes more fighting to keep it strong and independent, then we can do it.

Perhaps the day may come when a Senator Warren might become a President Warren. She already has her gloves on.

Everlasts! They don’t come in lace!



Mariposa Democratic Club Updates

By Anne Brock

We had a great fundraiser picnic in July! The weather cooled off just enough that evening, and a great time was had by all! Thanks to Kathy Lander for organizing the bake sale and to all who donated to it; also thanks to Nancy Fagerstrom who wielded a mean barbeque fork! Thanks to everyone else who helped out - the Smallcombes, the Orazems, Shirley Schmelzer, Vicki Roland and everyone else we're forgetting!

We wanted to let everyone know that the Mariposa Democratic Club will NOT be holding an August meeting; too many conflicting summer plans going on. We hope everyone enjoys their August!

We are coming back with a roar in September - we will have Janet Bibby, Supervisor of District 3, for our speaker! Come hear her on Sept. 10th! She represents a unique part of the county AND is the only woman on the BOS. Let's hear her perspective on the county's issues.

As usual, the September meeting will be at Miner's Inn Restaurant; meet at 9:00 a.m. for breakfast. The meeting starts at 9:45. Call 209-742-1010 if questions!

By the way - it's not too early to think what you might want to do for the club next year! We will be looking for officers starting September - let us know if you want to step up and take on a leadership position. 2012 will be an exciting year since it's a presidential election year - you can help make it successful.

Mariposa Democratic Club Labor Day Plans

Labor Day is fast approaching, which means that one of the busiest weekends of the year for the club is right around the corner!

We will be joining the Mariposa Labor Day parade with our awesome float! We are looking for people to ride on it and to help decorate it! If you can help decorate, contact Jim Spotts at 209-377-8484. We will be emailing details of when and where the float will be so you can ride it, but if you're not on email (or you get too many!) call Jim as well for details the week before the parade. The parade is on September 3rd so let's show the Dem spirit and get lots of riders out for it!

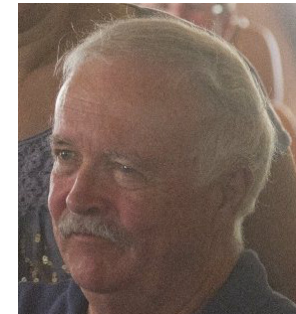
We will also be staffing a booth at the County Fair that weekend! Thanks in advance to all of you who have volunteered to staff it; Shirley will be calling to remind you of your slot. We hope all of you will stop by the booth and say hi, buy some buttons, and use your camera device to get your picture taken with Barack Obama! (Unfortunately, he will be there in cardboard cutout mode, not live.) Bring your friends and have them join as members of the club as well!

Any questions, please call Jim Spotts or the club phone - 209-742-1010.

Oakhurst Democratic Forum Photos
“The Tea Party: Grass Roots or Corporate Roots?”
July 23, 2011



Oakhurst Democratic Forum Photos
“The Tea Party: Grass Roots or Corporate Roots?”
July 23, 2011



101 Reasons to Dump Obama

by Jackie Anderson

Or should this article be entitled 1001 reasons to dump Obama? Let's take a look at what's happened during his presidency so far.

Universal health care is probably the major issue. The consensus before Obama became president was that this was never going to happen, or as many said "when pigs fly." So what has happened? We have the beginnings, small steps, with more on the horizon. Compromise was necessary in some areas, but more changes are likely to happen in the future just as they did with Medicare. Those of us who have fallen in the "doughnut hole" as far as prescription drugs go, are happy with the new modifications. Republicans say that two-thirds of Americans do not want this plan, but polls show something a bit different: one-third are against, one-third are for, and one-third are critical of Obamacare because it does not have the public option, but oppose repeal. Obviously, this is not a reason to dump Obama so let's move on.

Next issue is our military involvement. Obama inherited a couple of messy military engagements. So what has he done? Obama has chosen to listen and consult our generals. He is bringing some of our troops home from Afghanistan shortly, and as individuals and groups we can urge him to increase the pace and the numbers. Since the capture of American's arch enemy, Osama bin Laden, was under his command, this area is not a reason to dump Obama either.

The uneven distribution of wealth is still another issue. What has Obama done here? He has attempted to help the unemployed with the extension of assistance, and he has tried to help some of those who are losing their homes. He wanted to end the tax breaks for

101 Reasons to Dump Obama (continued)

the wealthy, but is fighting a reactionary Congress. Is he responsible for the current recession? Or the practices of the banks that got our country in this mess? Or did he inherit this mess along with a couple of ill-conceived wars? Apparently this is not a reason to dump Obama either.

Obama is looking good, but how about our First Lady? Maybe we can examine his wife's healthy eating campaign for children to fight childhood obesity. Did you hear that she was seen eating a burger at a fast food place recently? Well, maybe we can't fault her for that as an occasional eating slip is so human. Many of the restaurant chains have decided to have healthier menu choices for children. This is voluntary on their part, but we can thank Mrs. Obama for kick-starting this.

This writer is having a hard time finding even one reason to dump Obama. In fact, Obama may very well be one of our greatest presidents yet as time will tell. Now think of the alternative: a Tea Party administration. Pretty scary, huh? If we don't agree with Obama's policies or actions our letters, e-mails, and discussions with our representatives will make a difference. But let's not throw out the baby with the bathwater. Support our president and get him reelected.



PHOTOS

From the Mariposa Democratic Club Summer Picnic



PHOTOS

From the Mariposa Democratic Club Summer Picnic



One View of the "Tea Party Fest"

by Ellie Schermerhorn

You've got to hand it to 'em. The local Tea Partiers are hard-working, organized, pretty darned clever, and (clearly), very well-funded.

I was first struck by their ingenuity when I noted that the Sierra Star ran a news release for the July 4th "Freedom Fest" without a single mention that the Tea Party was sponsoring it. In other words, lure in the kids and parents with promises of entertainment on July 4th, and indoctrinate them while they're there. What a great approach!

Sweltering heat notwithstanding, I moseyed on over to the location in Coarsegold to take in the Tea Party wonders and see exactly what it was they were offering. When I arrived, I was given a program for the day. This consisted of a 4-page color spread and included advertisements from a number of sponsors, including Supervisor Wheeler and the Chukchansi Indians. Somebody had hustled to get this put together and it wasn't cheap to produce.

As promised, the TPer's had an abundance of children's games and activities, in addition to a colossal water slide. Very nicely done! Large tents and seating were provided to give the crowd a place to shun the sun and listen to various speakers and entertainment. A singer by the name of Linda Lanier, dressed in patriotic garb, was exhorting the crowd to show respect and appreciation for veterans. Then, at the end of a song, she proclaimed that she didn't care what anyone said, "This is a Christian nation!" The crowd clapped and hooted in agreement. I surmised there was no room in the TPer's tent for anyone of a different religious persuasion.

One View of the "Tea Party Fest" (continued)

I browsed the Tea Party booths, of which there were many. In one, the Constitution was displayed prominently. In another, one could buy a pocket-sized Constitution so as to always be sure it was handy. I decided I definitely needed one for my overstuffed purse, and paid \$1.00 for it. Other items in the booths included a "Central Valley Tea Party Times" (40 pages long and very professionally produced), and a predictable smattering of bumper stickers and t-shirts for sale.

Continuing my tour, I wandered by the ACT! For America - Fresno table which was the only other group I noticed that had a booth besides the TPer's. I had a nice chat with a spokesman who explained that ACT!'s mission is to prevent the Islamic takeover of our fair nation. The booth had abundant literature on the evils of Islam, a view he clearly supported.

I asked him if he'd ever talked to the head of the Islamic Cultural Center of Fresno. He said he had spoken with ICCF Director Kamal Abu-Shamsieh and had seen the Center's "castle" there. He then pointed out that Mr. Abu-Shamsieh sent his own son to a Jewish school. I asked him if he saw anything wrong with that, and he said, no, that he expected the child was getting a proper education from "other places". I wasn't quite sure what to make of that statement, and moved on.

I'd decided I'd had enough and it was time to take my leave. I was happy to run into several other Oakhurst Democratic Club members who were there to see what was happening, one of whom had attended last year's "Freedom Fest" at the Oakhurst Community Park. He observed that attendance was considerably lower than it had been at the same time the year before. We can speculate why this might have been the case. Perhaps people now know that this is a partisan event? We can hope.

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: (_____) _____

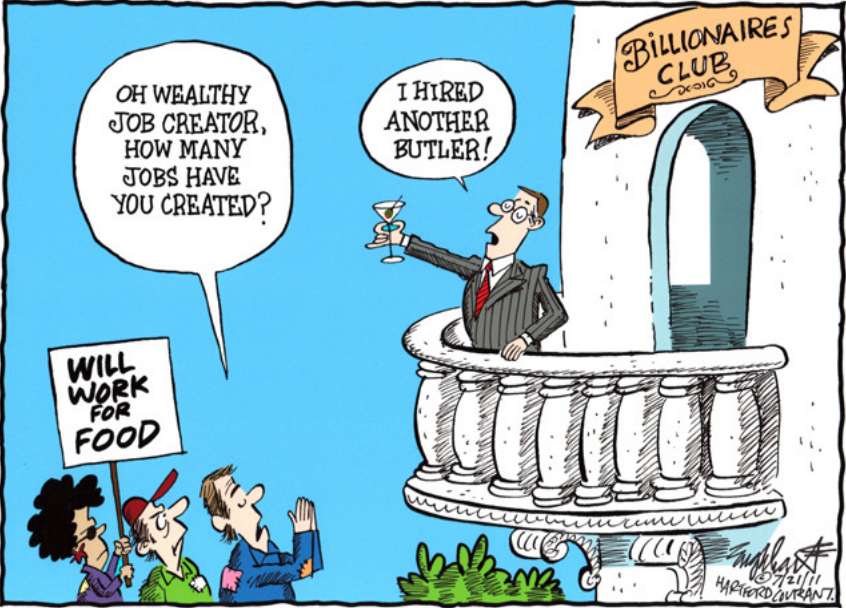
E-Mail: _____ Fax: _____

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



See the newsletter in COLOR at: YosemiteDems.net

Mortimer Mouse Sez...

**I'm going to ride on the
 BIG Democratic Float
 and then
 go check out the booth
 at the Mariposa County Fair!**