



YosemiteDems.net

The Mountain Democrat
Newsletter Editor
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THE MOUNTAIN DEMOCRAT OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 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

October 2011

- Oct 1: Oakhurst Club Meeting
- Oct 8: Mariposa Club Meeting

November 2011

- Nov 6: Oakhurst Club Meeting
- Nov 13: 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



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The Oakhurst and Mariposa Democratic Clubs now have a Facebook page. Keep up with all the latest club and Democratic happenings by following us there!

If you need assistance, contact Scott Hill at scott@k6ix.net or 559-658-2342.

Another Texas Village Idiot on the Loose?

Les Marsden

In politics, time is meaningless. Anything can (and usually does) alter the landscape on a near-daily basis. Remember "Dewey defeats Truman"? Donald Rumsfeld's blithering Iraq forecast: "The war will last six days, six weeks—I doubt six months"? And just this past May conservative know-it-all George Will made this assured prediction: "I think we know with reasonable certainty that standing up there on the West front of the Capitol on January 20, 2013 will be one of three people: Obama, Pawlenty and Daniels. I think that's it." Well—he's right about Obama, but the only way (Tim) Pawlenty or (Mitch) Daniels could make it to the inaugural platform will be as a Capitol groundskeeper.

That said, I've risked an errant turn on the path to political prognostication over the past many months. Since early this year, I've observed the actions of Texas Governor Rick Perry and perhaps more importantly: the reactions he's garnered of increasing cultish support. For a couple of months before he officially announced his candidacy, I began to issue cautionary red alerts within the CDP about that man. Why? Because he will be the single most dangerous threat to our losing the White House on November 6, 2012.

Yes, we good Democrats know he's just another swaggering Texas nabob in the tradition of Bush. The new Tea Party du Jour, displacing poor Michelle Bachmann faster than her bug-eyed head could spin. To borrow a line from that famed comedy team with which I've had a long ersatz-familial association: Perry? He may talk like an idiot, and look like an idiot, but don't let that fool you; he really is an idiot.

But he's an idiot in the mold of Bush the Younger. And (to only a slightly lesser extent), an idiot like Reagan. And they both took the White House, by hook and by crook...but also (in the case of

Reagan), by overwhelming popular and electoral victory. How? Because of image trumping substance.

Perry has a better-than-fighting-chance to defeat Obama in November. Certainly not when one digs into his dreadful record as governor; the "Texas Miracle" is quite a sham. So why is he such a threat? Because Perry can and WILL be packaged as the very resurrection of Ronald Reagan. I'm speaking of the all-important IMAGE and not the substance of Reagan (provided HE had any). Anti-labor, anti-commie, anti-environmentalist that he was, poor Ronnie would be booted out of today's GOP as a left-wing tree-hugger. But the GOP grassroots is still hungering for that IMAGE, that play-acting Daddy-in-Charge. And Americans LOVE to elect style over substance. Americans LOVE to vote for that decisive, seemingly-in-control father figure while turning a blind eye to demented political philosophy, failed records and personal weaknesses. Perry is the very raw material the GOP has been DYING for.

Never underestimate the ability of the American electorate to do the WRONG thing, and particularly when GOP mischief plays a role at the ballot box. But even if pictures turn up of Rick Perry in a pink tutu—he will be able to defeat Obama. Because when you pit the commanding (though idiotic) daddy-figure with the great hair against the intellectual White House professor who had his chance but didn't act decisively, well, we've got trouble folks. Add a sound bite or two in the tradition of "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!" or "I'M paying for this mike!" or even "I've signed legislation that will outlaw Russia forever: we begin bombing in five minutes..."—all terrible lines from Reagan that became beloved 'truths' from a decisive leader—any sappy garbage like that outta Perry and we may be done for on November 6, 2012. It's (unfortunately) all about image, image, image. Which is why so many lazy, indiscriminating Americans vote against their own best personal and national interests. And why we ALL consequently pay in the end.

“Tough Cookie Truckin”

By Peter Cavanaugh

That Cindy Sheehan is one tough cookie. I couldn't believe it when Lynn Jacobsson called and said Cindy was coming to Oakhurst.

Of course, Oakhurst—being a CDP (“Census Designated Place”) with 2,829 souls—is a major metropolitan area compared to Crawford, Texas. Crawford had a rounded-up total of no more than 800 Texans, a trillion cattle and a monkey named George when Ms. Sheehan set up her antiwar camp outside his ranch and became a global phenomenon in August of 2005.

And so it was that The Positive Living Center on Golden Oak Drive was filled with folks—wall to wall—standing room only—for four solid hours on Sunday, August 28th. It was exciting, amazing and inspiring.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of Cindy Sheehan's visit was her ability to draw such an amazing assembly of truly cool people from our immediate mountain area on very short notice. Ms. Sheehan was here concluding a ten day bus tour promoting “Re-Creating Revolutionary Communities” (REVCOM). This brief quote from Cindy at her website sums it up nicely:

“Recent events in the U.S., which amount to financial terrorism by the elite, have demonstrated that Democracy with a Capital D is officially DOA, and We the People can face a scary future assured that we will survive, because we can build communities that foster peace, health, the environment, and prosperity.”

Crazy hippie talk? Some sort of a wild anarchistic '60's acid flashback? Doesn't Cindy Sheehan realize it's 2011 and the banks own us all?

HAH!

From North Fork was the *Friendship Circle of Grace Community Church, the Kern family with their Farm and School Garden, the North Fork Art Gallery, the Up Country Co-op, the Sustainable Forest and Committees Collaboration, Three Springs, The Yosemite Sequoia Resource Conservation and Development Council, Cash Mob, the North Fork Studio and the intriguing North Fork Shares project.*

Mariposa sent representatives from *Mariposa Spirit, the Mariposa Peace Vigil* and those from Mariposa involved in pursuing the continued development of electric cars, even as Cindy's old bus parked across the street is bio-fuel powered as an example to everyone but Rick Perry.

Oakhurst attendees included *Full Circle Family Outreach, Judy DeRosa's Creativity Circle, Marianna Burrett of Tend the Earth, Barney Berrier speaking on Alternative Energy, Peace Fresno, and legendary blues artist Jimmy Collier.*

Cindy Sheehan sat and listened from start to finish, frequently nodding her head with enthusiastic endorsement and powerful affirmation. At the end of it all, she spoke.

Cindy told us of losing a son and her belief that the American Dream is long gone—if it ever was. She discussed the importance of true community, pleased that her presence had drawn so many kindred spirits. She challenged us to focus on the potentials of collective activity for common local good. The Irish have a name for such a notion: “Sinn Fein”—“We Ourselves”.

I liked Cindy a lot. She's very much for real. In this age of unbridled hyperbolic hysteria on the right and tragically compromised conviction on the left, Cindy Sheehan just keeps on truckin'.

As should all Progressive Democrats: “Together—more or less in line.” (“Truckin”, The Grateful Dead, 1970)

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

yosemitedems@yahoo.com



Dear Auntie Sam,

Everyone gets in a lather when it comes to Social Security. My understanding is it's not in nearly the dire straits that Medicare is, but it can be carefully tuned now so that it will still be there when our grandchildren retire. If phased in gradually, I see no problem with extending the retirement age, taxing those who work past the retirement age, or reducing the amount a person collects due to an already higher income. These all seem like sensible ways to control the system. Thanks for your thoughts on this, Auntie Sam!

Puzzled Politico

Dear Puzzled,

I have to admit, Auntie Sam's head swims a bit when the budget crisis gets discussed. There are so many different viewpoints, and they all seem to have some validity.

With a maximum benefit of maybe \$2,500 a month, no one with just Social Security will be living the luxury life; this is definitely a safety net, not a retirement bonanza. So let Auntie Sam state firmly right up front that cutting benefits is not the way to adjust Social Security. There is no fat in that payment.

Back to the question: can small changes help Social Security remain solvent? Let's note the latest calculations show the system will be solvent through 2037; at that point, it will be able to pay

out only 75% of its benefits. (Other studies give it 'till 2047.) It is solvent for that long because, quite frankly, most of the changes you mention have already been done. For example, the full retirement age was raised from 65 to a maximum of 67 for people born after 1959. Raising it higher makes Auntie Sam nervous; there are a lot of people in occupations who are plain worn out by the time they get to the mid-sixties. She does like the incentives offered to people who delay taking their Social Security; the current maximum age to start taking benefits is 70. She could see raising that age for those who want to keep working.

In terms of taxing people who work after retirement age: Social Security benefits are taxed if you (and your spouse) make enough money – over \$25,000 for individuals; over \$32,000 for a joint return. You may be taxed on up to 85% of the benefits if you make enough money.

Auntie Sam hesitates to reduce the benefits paid to people based on their income; that goes down the slippery slope of means testing. Anyone who paid in should be able to collect. However, Auntie Sam is all for raising the tax rate on those people who have a lot of money, so we get more of that back. And perhaps the highest earners should be taxed on more than 85% of the benefits; that seems reasonable.

One thing you didn't mention, dear Puzzled, is increasing the income limit on which to collect Social Security; currently the limit is \$106,800. Auntie Sam sees benefits to raising that.

I think you are correct, that doing a few more small adjustments now (raise the \$106,800 limit; let people postpone collecting until after age 70; increase the amount taxed for people of wealth; and restore the payroll tax back to where it was before the holiday) will keep the system going just fine. Now, if only the other deficit issues were as easy to address!

Auntie Sam

PHOTOS

From the 2011 Mariposa County Labor Day Parade



David Raboy's truck kept the float on the move

PHOTOS

From the 2011 Mariposa County Labor Day Parade



Aaron Marcus trying to keep track of the details



Alan Chea putting up the fringe



Everybody loves Uncle Sam

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Dear Auntie Sam,

I went to the Democratic Forum last night intending to raise the question: has anything like the Tea Party occurred before in American politics, and, if so, when and where?

Concerned Democrat

Dear Concerned Democrat,

Thinking back on Professor Eisinger's discussion last night, the closest paradigm to the Tea Party movement seems to harken possibly to Reconstruction times, where it led to the Klan, Black Codes, etc.

What I took from that meeting is that Tea Partiers get into political activism from a far different place in themselves than do progressives, and have a much different view of what political activism is.

Where do we go from here, knowing this? It was not much discussed in the meeting, but a few things are readily apparent even to me:

Dear Auntie Sam (continued)

We must not lower ourselves to their level;

We must remember the ethic of nonviolent protest in what we do, respecting the way of Martin Luther King, Gandhi, and Thoreau, even in the presence of those who do not respect their way, trusting that there will be many who will see the moral high ground in this;

We must hope that the Constitution and the law will come to recognize that in exercising our right to "peaceably protest, redress grievances", we need protection not only from the government who would take that right away from us, but also from political persuasions such as the Tea Party.

Auntie Sam



Professor Eisinger speaking at the Tea Party Forum

PHOTOS

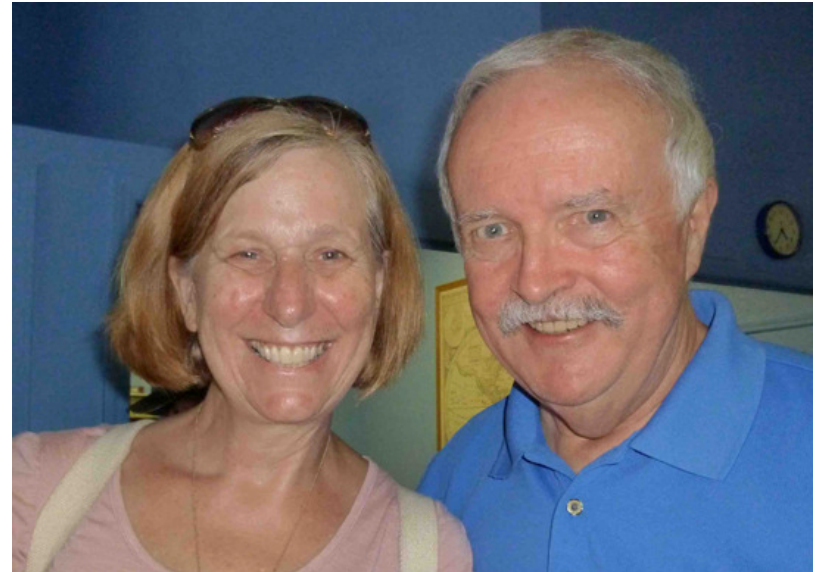


Mike Rhodes speaking to the Oakhurst Club in August



Mariposa Democratic Club Booth at the Mariposa County Fair

PHOTOS



Peter Cavanaugh with Cindy Sheehan in Oakhurst (see Page 6)



Les Marsden gets the cold sholder from Uncle Sam

Mariposa Democratic Club's Summer Fun!

By Anne Brock

The Mariposa Democratic Club had a heck of a summer! We started with a picnic fundraiser in June in lieu of a meeting. Lots of hot dogs and baked goods were enjoyed by all!

While we gave ourselves a rest by skipping the August meeting, lots was happening behind the scenes to line us up for the Labor Day weekend festivities! Thanks to Aaron Marcus and Jim Spotts and team for all they did to get the float decorated and populated! We heard lots of comments about how many Democrats were on the float - great turnout! Thanks to all who showed up for it! And thanks to Nancy Fagerstrom and Bob Orazem for getting the float oiled up and fixed up and to Dave Raboy and Heather Bernikoff for towing it!

That same weekend we had our traditional booth at the Mariposa County Fair. Wow did it look good! Thanks to all who helped set it up - Jim Spotts, Jim Archer, Shirley Schmelzer, Kathy Lander, Laura Lee! We got a bunch of new members, lots of talk time, and great publicity!

For September's meeting, we were lucky enough to have Janet Bibby, Supervisor District 3, come and talk about the county's budget struggles along with other topics. We got a lot of very granular data - it was great!

We're now into fall, and for the next couple meetings we're going to be focusing on some issues. Still shaping up the topics, but we'll dive deep into one or two topics per meeting. Remember, meetings are second Saturday of the month at Miner's Inn Restaurant, 9:00 to purchase breakfast and 9:45 for the meeting. Call 209-742-1010 if you need details!

Looking for Officers for Mariposa Democratic Club!

The Mariposa Democratic Club is looking for officers for 2012! This is going to be a very critical year; we need YOU to shape the club next year! Positions listed below; if you are interested, call Anne at 209-742-6872. We can't do it without you!

President: Lead club; organize agendas; run meetings; ensure bylaws get met; communicate with members. Work with treasurer and other officers on budget for the year to be presented at Jan. or Feb. meeting. Monitor budget throughout the year.

1st Vice President: Run meetings if President not available; organize speakers for meetings along with Second VP.

2nd Vice President: Run meetings if President and First VP not available; organize speakers for meetings along with First VP.

Recording Secretary: Take and distribute minutes of all meetings, whether general or executive committee meetings. Maintain archive of minutes.

Corresponding Secretary: Handle phone and mail correspondence and assist president with communicating with members. Send articles to local media on upcoming meetings, club activities, and reports of speakers. Perhaps be membership chair or maintain membership lists?

Treasurer: Handle all finances for the club; report on budget vs actual at every meeting; write checks; fill out all required reports.

Asst. Treasurer: Assist treasurer with all financial duties and reporting requirements.

Four At-Large Members Give input on items brought up by other officers or club members. Represent the "ordinary" club member. Get involved on committees and activities as needed.



UNDER



CAMPAIGN!

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Mortimer Mouse Sez...

**I'm going to get on Facebook
and Twitter both!**

**The only problem is that I
have trouble using the keyboard.**



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
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Mariposa, CA 95338		Oakhurst, CA 93644
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