



YosemiteDems.net

The Mountain Democrat
Newsletter Editor
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The Mountain Democrat

June - July 2013

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The Mountain Democrat is published bimonthly by the Oakhurst Democratic Club and the Mariposa Democratic Club, 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 2013

Jun 1: Oakhurst Club Meeting

Jun 2: MCDCC Fundraiser
(see Page 3)

Jun 8: Mariposa Club Meeting

Jun 9: Region 4 Meeting
(see Page 3)

July 2013

Jul 6: Oakhurst Club Meeting

Jul 13: Mariposa Club Meeting

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Cover Photo
<http://geekphilosopher.com/>
California Poppy
(Eschscholzia californica)

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

YosemiteDems.net or MariposaDemocraticClub.org

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Madera County Democratic Central Committee Annual Luncheon Fundraiser

“Making California A Better Place!”

Sunday, June 2nd, 2013

12:30-3:30 PM

~Madera Clubhouse Restaurant~

For Information contact: Susan Rowe, MCDCC Chair
559.658.7343 srowe@sti.net

REGIONAL MEETING SCHEDULE: REGION 4

Prior to the July E-Board meeting (July 19-22, in Costa Mesa) there are three regional meetings scheduled in Region 4.

For Democrats in southwestern AD-5, AD-12, AD-13 and AD-21, (San Joaquin Stanislaus, Merced, Tuolumne, Mariposa and Madera Counties) the meeting will be:

June 9th in Modesto, CA

1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

McHenry Bowl
3700 McHenry Avenue
Modesto, CA

For any questions, please contact Martha Gamez, CDP Region 4 Director, at gamezm01@att.net, 209-836-9030.

ABC Outfoxes Competition

By Peter Cavanaugh

Bill O'Reilly? Sean Hannity? Megyn Kelly? Make way for King Karl! On Friday, May 10th, ABC Chief White House Correspondent Jonathan Karl grabbed major media attention across a wide spectrum with an "ABC Exclusive" now revealed to be woefully inaccurate, significantly misleading and pathetically unprofessional.

What appeared to be direct quotes from the e-mails of White House and State Department aides turned out to be significantly less. After CNN challenged Karl's credibility, he admitted he hadn't actually reviewed the material in question himself, but was *"quoting verbatim"* from someone who allegedly had. The White House finally put an end to all speculation with the release of documentation proving Karl's inaccuracy—and once and for all establishing beyond doubt that the Administration did not engage in any Benghazi talking points cover up.

Edward Wasserman, dean of the Graduate School of Journalism at Berkley, unequivocally says of Karl's "Exclusive", *"It's highly problematic ethically, and the failure to acknowledge or correct is even worse."* Wasserman's review is echoed by Tom Fiedler, dean of the Boston University College of Communication, who stated Karl's report *"cries out for a correction."*

Ramping up the craziness—it seems that the Obama White House had already made the alleged source of Karl's revelations available to Republican leadership several months earlier in tandem with Confirmation Hearings for CIA Director John Brennan, except the actual documents offer a much different conclusion than that so self-servingly and haphazardly presented by Karl.

The fact that so many Congressional Republicans expressed shock and dismay over initial coverage of the phony ABC "discovery" offers woeful witness to and undeniable evidence of their own

gross negligence in not reading what had been in front of them all along.

After Benghazi, blaming went the way of reported flying saucer landings on Von's roof, Big Foot sightings in North Fork and the most recent alien abduction up near Fish Camp. At least Obama haters still had FBI subpoenas of Associated Press phone records and IRS persecution of the Tea Party to fall back on—for a few minutes. But if scandals were sandals—they'd now have sore feet.

New information indicates that no laws were clearly broken in either instance, although both subjects remain areas of deep concern in terms of obviously conflicting interpretations of applicable legislation on the part of underlings who, in every instance, had no direct connection to or communication with the President regarding their actions. Even in the face of House Speaker John Boehner's *"Who's going to jail?"* pandering, ambiguity is not a felonious offense.

But the big buzz bursting out of Jonathan Karl's sloppy journalism has left its toll. A new survey by Public Policy Polling reveals that 23% of Americans have come to believe that *"Benghazi is the biggest political scandal in American History"*, although a full 39% of this number have absolutely no idea where Benghazi might be located.

This grouping presumably includes the 17% of our fellow citizens who still insist that President Obama is a Muslim and the 24% who *"know he was born elsewhere"*, including more than half (55%) of registered Republicans according to a Dartmouth poll.

By my estimation, a "low information voter" is infinitely worse than a "no information voter"—the latter representing simple ignorance while the former illustrates a simple mind.

Rhetorical venom seeps into some, yet poisons all.

Tempest in a Tea Party

By Les Marsden

Why SHOULDN'T the Tea Party and other self-proclaimed "Patriot" groups be singled out for special scrutiny by the IRS? Many, if not most, "Tea Party" members proudly claim that the "TEA" stands for "Taxed Enough Already." And I have to note in passing: that's amazingly ignorant considering the fact that personal AND corporate taxes in 2013 America are among the lowest historically over the past century and contemporaneously among the lowest in all developed nations today.

But to return to the main feature: these groups scream about paying taxes even while they're attempting to set up tax-exempt organizations in order to attack and demolish the very policy of paying taxes. Now wouldn't that immediately cause YOU to give such groups extra scrutiny? And they're trying to do so under 501(c)(4) tax-EXEMPT status, which is specifically afforded to groups which perform "social good" i.e. Civic leagues and other locality-based organizations engaged in assisting the citizens of particular municipalities or neighborhoods.

So screw 'em—or rather: scrutinize them! Such groups MUST be targeted with greater focus than bona-fide charitable organizations like 501(c)(3) religious, educational, charitable, scientific non-profits. More so than legitimate 501(c)(4) advocacy groups ACTUALLY working on behalf of civic leagues or social welfare groups. More so than legitimate 501(c)(5) agricultural or labor support organizations which advocate on behalf of their causes. So yes, they must be specially-targeted.

But from whence did this sudden run for tax-exemption spring? Easy, kids! From the Koch Brothers and dear old Karl Rove—this has all happened at their instigation. The Tea Partyista (in most cases, unwittingly) simply fronts for massive right-wing PACs which have sprung up in the wake of the ridiculous, narrow 5-4

2010 SCOTUS "Citizens United" decision. These PACs seek to take advantage of the IRS 501(c)(4) tax exemption code. And our poor Tea-Pals have merely been caught in the middle due to their manipulation as astroturf organizations—that is, fake grassroots groups. This sham of political organizations seeking shelter from the tax code as "charities" is not only disgusting but it has overwhelmed the IRS. Think about it: even as the right-wing has encouraged Tea Party and "Patriot" groups to apply for tax-exempt status, elected Republicans have cut the budget of the IRS. Sound familiar? The old Grover Norquist "get it down to the size where I can drown it in the bathtub" philosophy with a new (twisted) twist: starve the agency WHILE you overwhelm it.

The amazing thing lost in all the coverage of this "scandal" is that the IRS afforded that same level of scrutiny to Democratic and left-wing groups, too. Liberals received the same IRS questionnaires. And get this: NO tea party or conservative group was turned down for 501(c)(4) status. So rather than investigating the Internal Revenue Service, I would think it's Congress itself and the Supreme Court which must be investigated. After all, they created legislation making it easier for political activist organizations to slip through regulations and refrain from paying taxes. And SCOTUS greased the skids with their pro-contributory decisions such as "Citizens United." It appears to me they're using our nation's legislative and judicial powers to directly benefit themselves.

As with so much in this country, we've come to associate money with free speech. Bucks with the Constitution. Whenever the issue of campaign finance regulations is raised, those on the right claim a First Amendment right to donate whatever they wish to campaigns. But I do think it's past time to revisit that thought—free speech is just, and only THAT: speech. The first amendment guarantees your right to free speech, but it doesn't guarantee any sort of right to use money to actually PURCHASE access to more "speech" than the next guy. In a true democracy, the wealthy can't be allowed to yell while the rest of us can barely whisper.

Mariposa and Madera County Resolutions Succeed At State Convention By Rosemarie Smallcombe

Democratic organizations in Mariposa and Madera counties submitted seven resolutions for consideration by the California Democratic Party Resolutions Committee and several of them were accepted, at least in one form or another! The Oakhurst and Mariposa Democratic Clubs and the Mariposa and Madera Central Committees endorsed all seven of these resolutions. CDP Region 4, in which Madera and Mariposa are included, also endorsed them at their March 10, 2013 Regional meeting. Our members had a very successful convention in terms of the number of our resolutions that were adopted at the April California Democratic State Convention.

Anne Brock, Peter Leinau, Lowell Young and I wrote six of the 85 resolutions that were considered by the Resolutions Committee at the Convention. Les Marsden forwarded a resolution prepared by Evolve California directed at closing a corporate tax loophole contained in Proposition 13, which Mariposa and Madera chose to endorse. Peter wrote one on the drone attacks that was incorporated into a similar resolution proposed by CDP Chair, John Burton. That resolution was adopted on the convention floor on Sunday, April 14th. Peter also wrote a resolution encouraging action on filibuster reform that hasn't yet been approved, but will likely be favorably considered at the Executive Board meeting scheduled for July 2013. Lowell Young's resolution on desalination was considered by the Resolutions Committee, but was returned to him to further emphasize recycling and conservation.

Anne and I focused on health care issues. Anne's resolution encouraged legislators to approve greater funding for John C. Fremont hospital. I wrote a resolution asking legislators to approve measures to overturn cuts to Medi-Cal reimbursement rates in general and, more specifically, to Distinct Part Skilled

Mariposa and Madera County Resolutions Succeed At State Convention (continued)

Nursing Facilities (SNFs), such as the Ewing Wing at John C. Fremont Hospital. Since the resolution on SNFs also called for increased funding for rural hospitals, we believe that Anne's resolution was combined with mine, which was also adopted by the full convention. Lowell Young and I collaborated on a resolution calling for increased federal funding for hearing and vision care, in addition to dental care that is already included in the CDP platform. Susan McGahey, a member of the Mariposa Democratic Club, had requested that such a resolution be presented to the Resolutions Committee. That resolution was approved by the Committee, but wasn't presented at the General Session for a vote, because it wasn't deemed to be time sensitive. It will almost certainly be adopted at the July E-Board meeting.

As noted above, the Resolutions Committee considered a total of 85 resolutions in the days before the convention began and, of those, only 17 were advanced to the full convention for adoption. Normally, only about 10 resolutions are advanced to the full convention, but according to the Chair of the Resolutions Committee, this year they had an unusual number of very well written resolutions that addressed important issues, and so they sent 17 to the floor. All 17 were adopted by the General Session on Sunday.

Mariposa and Madera Democratic organizations can take pride in knowing that we wrote and endorsed five of the 17 and the sixth, encouraging additional funding for vision and hearing care was approved by the Resolutions Committee. We may be small, rural counties, but our voices are being heard!



Eleanor Roosevelt Service Awards

By Cheryce Chartier

Since I've been on the Awards Committee, I don't remember having such a hard time choosing two recipients. One would think that being there were only two of us on the committee this year it would have been easier to come to a conclusion.

Peter Leinau and I couldn't have had a harder time. Besides the normal discussions back and forth, we ended up double checking our own personal choices on the matter. There were so many deserving applications. We really had to take a close look at the community service these two women provided.

So without further ado, our 2013 Eleanor Roosevelt Service Award Winners are....

Alyssa Esposito and Angelica Maria Smith

Alyssa plans on majoring in nursing with a minor in music at a private university, and she would eventually like to earn her PhD in medicine. Alyssa enjoys working with children and would like to open a private practice where she could help those with financial hardships. Alyssa has been helping feed the homeless for years through Fresno food bank and Sierra Vista homeless shelter and has participated in Mission trips to various cities within the US.

Angelica, being the first to attend college in her family, plans to attend CSU Fresno with a major in Agricultural Education with an emphasis in Animal Science. Angelica would like to become an Agricultural Instructor, and eventually move on to working with an organization such as the California Future Farmers of America Association or National FFA Organization. Angelica has extensive volunteer experiences from feeding the homeless to Bass Lake clean ups and Relay for Life, just to name a few.

CEO of Hospital District Spoke at April Meeting in Mariposa

By Anne Brock

The Mariposa Democratic Club hosted Dave Hill, CEO of the John C. Fremont Hospital District, at our April meeting. Mr. Hill started off discussing the Medi-Cal cuts and how they will affect the Ewing Wing. *The cuts would be a 10% cut to the facility's reimbursements—but that is based on 2008 rates, which means, compared to 2011 rates it would be a 30% cut.* In addition, they would have to reimburse the overpayment that they have gotten since mid-2011, when the cuts were placed on hold due to a lawsuit; *that is another \$1.1 million.*

A bill (AB900) has been introduced which would rescind the cuts for the 88 hospital-based skilled nursing facilities affected, including the Ewing Wing. It's vital we tell Gov. Brown that we want him to sign the bill if it gets through the legislature; he has been reluctant to roll back the cuts. If the cuts stand, there will need to be serious expense reduction and/or revenue increase to keep the Ewing Wing open. The board definitely wants to keep it open, so a range of options are being examined.

Mr. Hill also discussed that managed care is coming for Medi-Cal patients. Anthem and Blue Cross have been picked as providers. Medi-Cal recipients will need to pick a home clinic. While currently John C. Fremont is the only clinic serving Medi-Cal patients, a new facility in town is opening soon and will also take Medi-Cal patients. Patients who don't pick a home clinic will be assigned to one at random.

The club is continuing to write letters to Gov. Brown and update our members about this very important issue.



Addicted to Violence

By Jim Landis

PEARL HARBOR
Bataan
London Blitz
Auschwitz
Dresden
Iwo Jima
Hiroshima
My Lai
Kent State
Munich Olympics
PAN AM FLIGHT 103
Jonestown
Dachau
Sabra and Shatilla
Gaza
NAGASAKI
Afghanistan
Dallas
Waco
Oklahoma City
Lorraine Motel, Memphis
Columbine
September 11, 2001
Iraq
Haditha
Fallujah
Abu Ghraib
Ambassador Hotel, Los Angeles
Beirut
Guantanamo
Virginia Tech
Tucson
Aurora
Newtown

We are addicted to violence. Each act of violence leads to the next; why are we surprised and shocked? Or are we really shocked?

There are adults among us who “play” at violence, re-enacting the American Civil War each year. They would probably re-enact Hiroshima if they could figure out a way to do it.

More than 3,300 Americans have been killed by guns since December 14th. Before long, there will be another Newtown, perhaps even worse. Perhaps it will occur in *your* hometown; perhaps your children or grandchildren will be the victims. Don't scoff at that; it can happen *anywhere*. After each tragic event, there are the usual professions of grief, flowers placed at the site, and the media covers it ad nauseam until they rush off to cover the next horror story. But nothing changes; the carnage continues. Our children deserve better. They deserve a safe environment. They should not have to live in fear.

Americans can have all the handguns, rifles, and shotguns they wish. But they don't need, nor should they have, military type assault weapons, any more than they should have rocket launchers.

Americans can have all types of cars and trucks, but they don't need, nor should they have, M1 Abrams Tanks.

Americans can have many types of private aircraft, but they don't need, nor should they have, F-16 fighter jets or B-52 bombers.

It is time for balance. It is time to re-establish the ban on assault weapons. It is time for comprehensive background checks on *all* purchases and transfers of all guns, regardless of method or location. It is time to limit magazine capacities. Most Americans want these changes.

The American people have spoken. It is time for Congress to listen and take action. We will not be silent. We will not go away. It is time to end our addiction to violence.

Ask For the Moon

By Carl Bosco

As you may know, Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts has introduced a landmark bill that may be the most progressive act by a legislator since the Franklin Roosevelt administration. This piece of legislation would force the Federal Reserve to make education loans available to students at 0.75%, which is the "discount" rate offered to Wall Street bankers, the people who almost sank the economy. Why not give the young people of this country the same break the hyena hedge fund brokers get, instead of saddling them with unconscionable debt at usury-style high rates of interest? Of course, our demands for interest-free loans—or nearly so—should go beyond just education, but also for revamping the crumbling and outmoded infrastructure and for re-industrializing this country's heavy industry that was sold off to slave-labor exploiters around the world.

Make no mistake—if the American people get behind the Warren bill, it will be no small victory. It has far-reaching implications and will be seen by the powers that rule as a serious shot across the bow of corporate control. It could be the beginning of a brave new era, or a savage push back from, of course, Republicans, as well as Democratic sell-outs. It has been over 70 years since anyone has had the guts to really threaten the oligarchy, as when FDR waved a menacing finger at the Federal Reserve Board during the Great Depression, suggesting that they come across with funds for infrastructure and jobs for the American people or face the possibility of being nationalized. Whether Roosevelt was a heart-felt humanitarian or not can be debated, but it would be hard to deny that by his actions he took the steam out of an extremely radicalized work force that was done taking no for an answer.

Now-a-days Labor has become—for the most part—a docile lap dog panting with unwarranted expectation after any craven politician

Ask for the Moon (continued)

that says the right words. You can hear some Neanderthals blathering that diplomas and higher degrees are nothing but useless symbols of prestige. What use is it to know mathematics, science, biology, art and music when you can get a job in the fast food industry right now? Sure, let's stand by as our youth steadily lose out on technological know-how and high paying jobs while Russia, China, Japan and any number of so-called third world nations storm ahead and make us look like dummies.

Like Kucinich and Feingold and Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren is a lone wolf, and her bill will fall flat unless we all get behind it, call and write our representatives and DEMAND that this legislation be passed, or else. Spread the word to other Democratic groups across the country. Economics historian Webster Tarpley suggests booking speakers at graduations to talk about the importance of this legislation for the education of our youth. As the economy is in free fall, there is little room left for airy-fairy invocations of positive thinking and bootstrap baloney. Demand the moon and force the oligarchy to beg for compromise, not the other way around.



What the CDP convention looks like from the floor.

Video Montage of Democratic State Convention

By Christina Oborn

The Democratic State Convention general session on Saturday, April 13, featured speeches from State party leaders as well as others with important messages who were invited to speak. Steve and Rosemarie Smallcombe, and Christina Oborn, created a video montage of some of the Session's representative moments to share with Mariposa Democratic Club and Central Committee members.

The video begins with Nancy Pelosi, Minority Leader of the US House of Representatives, paying tribute to state party chair John Burton's leadership and service. She thanks the membership for electing 11 new Democratic representatives to the House, making the CA Democratic Caucus the most diverse in the history of Congress and "the world." But, she said, we are "just getting started," vocalizing a major theme of the Party as it gears up for the 2014 election year.

The next speaker, John Vigna, president of the California Young Democrats, hails from Redding and Bakersfield, and speaks about becoming active in the Democratic Party when he was in high school. He pledges his group to be the party's "youth army" in getting out the vote to elect more Democrats to office.

Dave Jones, Insurance Commissioner, speaks about the importance of health insurance, implementing the Affordable Health Care Act, and working together to pass legislation in California that will allow his office to reject excessive rate increases proposed by health insurance companies.

Gavin Newsome begins his speech with jokes about his six day "reign" as Acting Governor since the governor, Jerry Brown, was on a business development trip to China, but he quickly gets serious in listing the major progressive issues that still, he feels, need to be accomplished: chronic homelessness, poverty, joblessness, immigration reform, marriage equality, ending the death penalty, and legalization of marijuana.

The next speaker, Barbara Andridge, was invited to speak to the Convention attendees because of her experience as a Walmart employee. Although technically a full-time employee, her work schedule is so erratic that she can not accrue enough hours to afford health care for her and her family. She has become politically active with other employees to fight the Walmart work schedule policy and to stand up for the right to a basic living wage.

Debra Bowen, Secretary of State, discusses the current political trend to require voters to have a photo ID which she labels "pure partisan politics," since those most likely to not have a photo ID are urban, elderly, and low income.

Tom Steyer is an asset manager, philanthropist, and self-described as "passionate about energy, climate and the State of California." Tom was the major financial backer on the "No on 23" campaign in 2010 and was also the major driver behind the "Yes on 39" campaign which closed a tax loophole used by multistate corporations to avoid paying taxes in California and is expected to increase state revenues by about \$1 billion over the next five years.

The last speaker on the montage is Kamala Harris, Attorney General. She pays tribute to the leadership of Jerry Brown and John Burton who worked to solve California's \$27 billion dollar deficit, bringing to the state a balanced budget for the first time in ten years. She discusses how California has been the leader on other issues, the latest being the fight for marriage equality. She reminds the Convention attendees that more needs to be done for immigration reform, gun laws, worker and collective bargaining rights, women's reproductive freedom, and more funding for education.

The montage is available at

<http://www.mariposademocraticclub.org/May2013Meeting.html>

and full length versions of all the presentations are available at

<http://video.cademconvention.org/>

IMAGES FROM THE CONVENTION

By Steve Smallcombe



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:

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