



YosemiteDems.net

The Mountain Democrat
Newsletter Editor
PO Box 760
Oakhurst, CA 93644



The Mountain Democrat August – September 2013

Coming Events.....	page 2
Come Ride The Float!	page 3
The Politics of Education	page 4
Mariposa Club—Having Great Meetings	page 7
E-Board Meeting	page 8
You Never Can Tell	page 10
Photos.....	page 13
In Support of Early Education.....	page 14
CDP Executive Board Meeting	page 16
Environmental Caucus—July E-Board	page 18
Membership Application.....	page 19

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

August 2013

Aug 3: Oakhurst Club Meeting

Aug 10: **NO** Mariposa Club Meeting

Aug 31: Mariposa Fair Parade
(see page 3)

September 2013

Sep 7: Oakhurst Club Meeting

Sep 14: Mariposa Club Meeting

CONTACT US

Mariposa Democratic Club
209-742-1010

Oakhurst Democratic Club
Scott Hill: 559-658-2342

Newsletter Editor
Scott Hill: 559-658-2342

Cover Photo
Mariposa Fair Parade
Mariposa Club Float

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

WE NEED YOU TO RIDE THE FLOAT



SHOW THEM THERE ARE DEMOCRATS IN THE MOUNTAINS

**MARIPOSA
SAT. Aug. 31st
10:00 AM**
Call 209-742-1010
MariposaDemocraticClub.org

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

The Politics of Education

By Les Marsden

“Johnny, spell ‘cat’ for me.”

“That’s easy, Teacher: K-A-T!”

And another Fox News viewer is born.

On July 19, the GOP-controlled House narrowly passed the “Student Success Act” (HR5): the latest Republican attempt at gutting American education. Since 2001’s “No Child Left Behind”—the Bush-era’s cynically-named education mandate which did for America’s teachers and students what his “Clean Skies Initiative” did for our nation’s air—the GOP has increasingly tried to put education and educational dollars in the hands of the privileged few.

HR5 will decrease the amount of federal funds for “marginalized” (read: less-affluent) student populations. But it also increases federal funding of private-school vouchers at the expense of public education, as well as focusing on test results (and punitive measures) rather than educating children. And of course, HR5 continues the Republican assault on educational labor unions.

There are plenty of brainy, educated Republicans out there....as well as Democrats who can’t think their way out of a sandbox. But generally, study after study has shown the higher your educational attainment, the more likely you’re a Democrat. 2012 PEW data reveals that 25% of postgraduate degree-holders are Republicans while a whopping 39% are Democrats. College professors are overwhelmingly Democrats. And only 6% of scientists are Republicans while 55% are registered Democrats.

A May 29, 2013 Gallup poll revealed self-identified Republicans as overwhelmingly more likely than Democrats to be easily manipulated (think only of “push” polling.) And by now, most

The Politics of Education (continued)

people are aware of Chris Mooney’s (author of “The Republican War on Science”) abstract compiling the compelling data from no less than six academic studies, all of which determined that Fox viewers are remarkably misinformed. And we all know that far more Republicans than Democrats watch Fox, so feel free to draw your own categorical syllogism.

So—it would seem that the better-educated Americans become, the more Democrats we’ll have. Unfortunately, the Republican Party has apparently seen that writing on the chalkboard, too—which may be part of the reason they stand so adamantly opposed to a magnanimous, inclusive educational system for all American children.

There really is a palpable correlation (at least to me) between the high incidence of conservative Republicans and less-educated areas of America, the prime areas (incidentally) for Fox News viewership. The five least-educated states in America (2012) were also among the reddest, deep in the Bible-belt: Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Georgia and South Carolina with the rest of the red South right behind.

What’s the relevance for Mountain Democrats? As with so many other less-populated rural areas, our kids—the brighter ones, at least—graduate from high school, hightail it to college and are usually never to be sighted in these parts again, leaving us with another annual generation of the less-educated, non-college-bound, more-likely-to-become Republican kids to perpetuate the cycle that keeps areas like ours crimson red.

But there is some great news. After years of Governor Brown’s budgets strangling California’s school districts, the corner has been turned. And please keep in mind that our Democratic governor’s fiscal frugality was caused by 28 years of irresponsibility by Republican governors in Sacramento, interrupted only by Gray

The Politics of Education (continued)

Davis' recall-truncated single term. And the news gets even better. On the very same day in early July when the US House allowed federal student interest rates to double, Jerry Brown and Speaker John Pérez signed the "Middle Class Scholarship" legislation that thankfully, will dramatically cut tuition at UCs and CSUs by some 40% for California families making less than \$100,000 annually.

As we deal with the critical political reality of a good education, we'll have a better chance of educating more Americans about politics. And the end result will be a better educated America. A stronger, more competitive America. And hopefully a far more Democratic America. And with a better-educated, less Republican, far less-gullible America, Fox's ratings will shrink so small we'll be able to drag it into the bathroom and drown it in the tub, along with Grover Norquist.



Mariposa Dem Club—having GREAT Meetings!

By Anne Brock

Here in Mariposa we continue to have some great meetings!

Our May meeting featured a presentation from our central committee's representatives to the state convention. They even compiled a summary video from all the amazing speeches that were given. Very inspiring—you can see the video at <http://www.mariposademocraticclub.org/May2013Meeting.htm>

In June, we took a different direction: Lieutenant Cody Hart, Jail Commander, came and spoke to us about how the jail in Mariposa operates, where it gets its funding, and what it's doing to adapt to the new alignment of prisoners from state facilities to local facilities. It was great to hear from him, and we'll be looking for more presentations from others in the local justice system in the future.

Finally, to top off this string of great meetings, we had Lee Stetson, Supervisor, District 1 come talk to us in July. Lee is the only Democratic supervisor on the board right now; he's serving for the second time. He filled us in on updates to various county issues, talked about how more Democrats could get elected—talk local issues, not political parties—and discussed what he sees facing the county.

We're taking a break in August, but we'll be back with more great topics in the fall, including Assembly member Bigelow in October!



E-Board Meeting

By Lowell Young

I just got back from the E-Board meeting in Costa Mesa. Like all get-togethers of this type, it was a whirlwind within a tornado, but fun and educational.

I have been appointed to the Affirmative Action Committee. The committee is being reconstituted and will have a new focus, a focus that we are in the process of defining. We will also be coming up with a new name for the committee that will be more descriptive of what we will be doing. I will keep you updated on our progress.

I attended the Resolutions Committee meeting and am happy to report that our resolution, "Including Hearing and Vision Care as well as Dental Care in Health Care Plans and Proposals" passed.

The name of our resolution on Desalination was changed to "Comprehensive Statewide Water Resource Management Plan." The committee also removed the use of non-nuclear renewable energy from the resolution. I am disappointed by this decision, but, we have to remember where the money that the party runs on and that also funds elections comes from, and its not the renewable energy industry. To me, the important thing is that we got a bite of the apple and we can go back for more.

The resolution was also given a code 10 rating because there is pending legislation and/or a proposition on the subject matter pending. The Committee chair said that the resolution was very well-written and should be reintroduced in the fall of 2014.

Later in the day, a member of the Resolutions Committee told me that the Committee liked the resolution. He also told me that a new Water Resources Management bill was being worked on and

E-Board Meeting (continued)

that negotiations were in process to include the provisions of the revised resolution in the bill.

Two very interesting presentations were given at the Progressive Caucus, one on the idea of having an Oil Extraction Tax. California is the only oil producing state that does not have such a tax. The other was about the Trans Pacific Partnership, which is basically NAFTA on super steroids. Both of these presentations would be excellent programs for our clubs.

I also attended the Women's Caucus. And no, I wasn't the only male critter there. I had to leave early so I don't have anything to report other than to say that this is a dynamic group of people and I look forward to working with them.



General Session at the E-Board Meeting in July

You Never Can Tell

By Peter Cavanaugh

“It was a teenage wedding and the old folks wished them well. You could see that Pierre did truly love the Mademoiselle.”

“You Never Can Tell”—Chuck Berry—(1963)

You can't buy it where they make it.

Lynchburg, Tennessee is the home of Jack Daniels, distilling fine bourbon whiskey by the billions of barrels, but it's in Moore County, which has been dry since way before Prohibition.

A bit north of Lynchburg is Cookeville, about 80 miles east of Nashville, where our oldest granddaughter, Katherine, was married on Saturday to a handsome young Second Lieutenant named Patrick. He'll be heading off to Flight School in just a few short weeks. They considered postponing their wedding until Patrick completes his service obligations—but you never can tell.

I've known Katherine for almost 21 years, holding her in my arms that first day she was born on December 20, 1992. She was baptized in a fine Irish Christening gown Eileen and I brought from Killarney a short time before for just such purpose. In the years that followed as she began to ever so magically enter early childhood, the enchanted “Riverdance” unexpectedly exploded from a Dublin stage into the global phenomenon it became, reviving traditional Irish music and dance from modern cultural obscurity to unparalleled prominence—lifting both to world renown.

Following my presentation suggestions with proper precision, Katherine would patiently hide behind the living room couch biding her time as I would elaborately initiate her introduction in my announcer voice to an imagined audience bursting with anticipation. As opening strains of “The Countess Cathleen” filled the room with fiddles and flutes, I would continue my recitation of

You Never Can Tell (continued)

exaggerated hyperbole until a specifically selected instant, at which point two year-old Katherine would leap into sight with electrified launch and River Dance in joyous abandon exactly as did Jean Butler in the original production.

I was most honored when Katherine called several weeks ago and asked if I might assist her in preparing music for both her wedding ceremony and the reception to follow. And so it was that extra tears flowed when she appeared in dazzling view, hitting that exact cue once again—but this time slowly and gently gliding down the aisle like the most graceful of beautiful swans accompanied by her wonderful father, Paul.

Katherine and Patrick had scripted everything out with acute attention to every tiny detail. “Riverdance” selections with ten edited tunes from George Clooney's highly eclectic “O Brother Where Art Thou?” was surely creatively brilliant and was accompanied by outstanding visual elements, further elaboration upon which must await some future time. Suffice it to observe that “Blue Grass” music directly evolved from its native Scotch-Irish origins in the hills and valleys of early Appalachian settlement. I'm quite proud that Katherine knew this and figured out a way to combine both in theme and execution.

Shifting mood, her Reception hours following lunch started with Chuck Berry's early Rock & Roll classic, “You Never Can Tell,” then rocked right along, offering virtually every form of contemporary tunes up through today.

At the entrance to the Cookeville Town Center, wedding guests were confronted with a large, down-home, hand-lettered sign which simply read, “Today two families become one, so pick a seat—not a side.”

That immediately brought to mind my colleague, Alan Cheah's

You Never Can Tell (continued)

“For Your Consideration” column from the Sierra Star of 7/18/13 which I had just read before leaving the hotel. As mentioned previously, we have never found need to read each other’s words until actually published, an excellent approach which has proven most viable in our collaborative effort—great minds thinking alike.

Having bravely attended the July 4th “Freedom Festival” in Coarsegold, Alan’s basic theme was that, despite basic differences in fundamental political persuasion, there is every reason to discover common ground in oppositional positions wherever found and act collectively toward better times in mutual best interest. I herein echo those sentiments.

Whenever discovered, that just might work.

You never can tell.



PHOTOS



Student Award winners Alyssa Esposito and Angelica Smith with Oakhurst Club members Ellie Schermerhorn and Monika Moulin



Lee Stetson strikes a typically formal pose while speaking to the Mariposa Club

In Support of Early Education

By Lucille Apar

Kids, even babies are a lot smarter than we ever give them credit for. The simple fact that languages learned at the earliest stages of life are never “unlearned” or forgotten bears out this statement.

And another fact: the minute they exit their mother’s womb their education in twisting even the most routine adult tasks to their advantage begins. If the loving or even doting adult is not careful about imposing certain rules to the game, the baby soon can become the dominant personality, even to the detriment of attention to other tasks. And don’t think for a minute the newborn isn’t fully aware of this.

I say this because by the age of four, my siblings and I were both reading and writing, well before any formal schooling began. We also spoke two languages with fair fluency. The morning routine began soon after breakfast where we were placed at a desk with children’s copy books before us and instructed in the art of holding pen or pencil to create letters one by one, to recite the alphabet and learn to count. I credit my grandmother with this discipline and it has served me well throughout the years.

Talented or gifted children? Certainly not. We were just normal kids with likes and dislikes. My sister hated eating spinach, I hated drinking a tall glass of milk every morning. My sister liked sports and disliked music; I loved music and disliked sports. She was slim and I was fat. But one characteristic we both had in common: *we wanted to learn.*

As a result of this early learning, we both graduated from school younger than our classmates, myself at 16, my sister 17. And we graduated with good marks.

In Support of Early Education (continue)

By no means can pre-school education be considered another form of welfare or entitlement. Early education is a benefit not just to the student but gives a *headstart* to graduating young people with skills that enable them to enter the working world and become responsible citizens. The benefit goes to the community, to the government, and to the taxpaying public.

Research tells us that early education also encourages students to complete their full K-12 studies and encourages them to continue into further studies such as college or job training.

So please support President Obama’s pending proposal to fund pre-school studies as part of public education. You will never regret it.



Dr. Woody Clark addressing the Environmental Caucus
at the July E-Board Meeting

CDP Executive Board Meeting, July 19-21

By Rosemarie Smallcombe

Mariposa was represented this last weekend at the Executive Board Meeting in Costa Mesa by Lowell Young, Steve and me. The three of us covered several of the caucus and committee meetings but not all because, as usual, there were many meetings, reflecting all the issues the California Democratic Party is addressing. Some of the highlights follow.

John Burton and other CDP officers were on hand to update attendees on the status of hotly contested local elections and encourage our continued efforts to maintain the two-thirds super majority in the state legislature.

In brief, private meetings, **Tom Torlakson**, Superintendent of Public Instruction, agreed to assist the Rural Caucus Task Force on Rural Education (see below) and **Darrell Steinberg**, Senate President Pro Tempore, provided an update on the status of pending legislation regarding Medi-Cal reimbursements to Skilled Nursing Facilities. Steinberg's assessment was upbeat and we'll send details as soon as we've confirmed some of them with his office.

A New Database—Daraka Larimore-Hall, Secretary of the CDP, announced a new database that will include information on local elected officials. This will enable the CDP to support local efforts to elect candidates that promote our positions. It will be rolled out for review and input from all counties in early August. As soon as it's available, we'll distribute more information.

Rural Caucus—Included considerable discussion on education in California. The Chair, Chris Stampolis, encouraged everyone to read the California Common Core standards and become informed regarding their implications. The general thrust of the Brown administration is to decentralize control of at least some decisions

CDP Executive Board Meeting (continued)

to local School Boards. This effort will have unintended consequences that, according to Chris, we need to identify and, where necessary, begin to take action to mitigate.

The Rural Caucus also authorized the Task Force on Rural Education to proceed. Christina Oborn of the Mariposa Democratic Central Committee, Cindy Ellsmore of the Sierra DCC and I prepared a draft mission statement which was approved by the Rural Caucus. A number of Caucus members volunteered to assist in this effort. Experts generally agree that the principal challenges facing rural education systems are insufficient internet access and inadequate transportation. The Task Force intends to convene panels of experts to educate members of the Rural Caucus and other interested parties. If you have an interest or a background in rural education, the Task Force would greatly appreciate any input you care to provide.

Resolutions Committee—The Chair of the Resolutions Committee, John Hanna, was very complimentary about the quality of all the resolutions submitted for consideration at the July E-Board meeting. The Committee unanimously approved the resolution advocating for legislation to fund vision and hearing care that was endorsed by Mariposa and Madera county Democratic organizations earlier this year. Other resolutions approved by the Committee have been posted to the CDP website at cadem.org/resources/resolutions. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions or comments you may have.

The Committee also approved a resolution in support of continued operation of the Drakes Bay Oyster Company. The Chairs of the Sonoma and Marin Central Committees contested this decision when it was presented at the General Session of the E-Board and the resolution has been tabled until the November E-Board meeting.

Environmental Caucus Report—July E-Board Meeting

By Steve Smallcombe

The Environmental Caucus was a lively meeting and covered a lot of very interesting ground, including a presentation by Dr. Clark, a proposed change to the California Democratic Party Platform, several resolutions and the general subject of desalination.

—The presentation by Dr. Woody Clark focused on the “Next Economy”—one not based on fossil fuels.

—The Caucus discussed and then approved a proposal to add a Transportation Plank to the CDP Platform.

—The Caucus then discussed at some length a resolution under which the CDP calls for a preparation of a cost benefit analysis prior to initiating the Bay Delta Project (building tunnels under the Delta to carry water from Northern California Rivers to the California Aqueduct). No one was arguing for the project, just the best strategy to oppose it. The Caucus endorsed the resolution.

—The issue of desalination was raised by someone in the audience. Both the Chair and general membership stated firmly that any resolution supporting desalination would be strongly opposed by the Environmental Caucus.

After the meeting the Chair of the Environmental Caucus, R.L. Miller, expressed surprise that Mariposa County was identified as having endorsed any resolution promoting desalination. R.L. said that she and the Environmental Caucus would actively oppose any such resolution and that she hoped that would not offend or embarrass me. I assured her that I would also oppose any resolution that could be seen as promoting desalination as a general solution to California’s water problem.

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