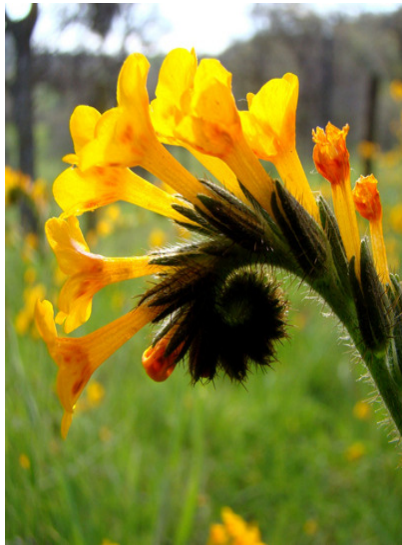




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THE MOUNTAIN DEMOCRAT

December 2014
-
January 2015

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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

December 2014

Dec. 6: Oakhurst Club Meeting

Dec. 13: **NO** Mariposa Club Meeting

January 2015

Jan. 3: **NO** Oakhurst Club Meeting

Jan 10: 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 pages at:

YosemiteDems.net or MariposaDemocraticClub.org

No More Mister Nice Guy!

By Peter Cavanaugh

On my daily walks up 425A, I often listen to Conservative Talk Radio just to check on new levels of local looniness, being rarely disappointed. Hosts, guests and callers have long since passed the point of committable craziness. I was nonetheless stunned on November 24th to hear Tea Party Pastor Jim Franklin on KMJ, filling in for an ever more absent Ray Appleton, gleefully concurring with the following statements:

“President Obama has NOT actually signed any “Executive Orders” regarding immigration.” —The President did exactly that three days earlier on Air Force One heading for Las Vegas.

“President Assad of Syria is a typical Islamic fanatic.”—Assad is an Alawite Muslim—regarded by most Sunnis as a heretic.

And—*“We need boots on the ground for victory in the Middle East.”*

The reason for my enhanced concern over such curious commentary is that such utterances were coming from none other than Congressman Devin Nunes (R-Tulare), re-elected to represent the 22nd California Congressional District and appointed only days earlier by Speaker John Boehner to be CHAIRMAN of the Permanent House Select Committee on INTELLIGENCE in the upcoming 114th Congress.

Nunes thus replaces Mike Rogers (R-Michigan), leaving Congress to earn millions as a “Talk Show Host” for Cumulus Media. Could Nunes be next in line? Perhaps I caught him practicing?

Only 14% of American voters voiced approval for the 113th Congress in polling averages just prior to our November 4th election. Then 96.4% of incumbents were triumphantly re-elected, including Nunes.

No More Mister Nice Guy! (continued)

Huh?

Due to low turnout, since fewer than one out of five citizens voted in support of this vacuous victory, let's keep in mind that any claims the 114th represents the "will of the American people" is delusional and pretentious.

But, let's face it. Republicans were brilliantly successful in hanging Barack HUSSEIN Obama out to dry. Now they pay the price.

President Obama's decision to finally deliver meaningful, promised resolution on immigration has exploded with predictable outrage on the right.

I am personally delighted our Commander-in-Chief is moving with such resolute determination in the face of deeply entrenched disloyal opposition.

It's more than a bit weird. My main disappointment to date with the President is that he HASN'T done in his first six years what everyone on the right boisterously claims he HAS done. He's been much more a conscientious "community leader" than "king", "dictator", "tyrant", "emperor" or "demagogue" to our decided disadvantage.

Why did President Obama leave highly promising "Single Payer" mechanics out of earliest discussions leading to The Affordable Care Act?

Why did the President approve the ill-fated, failed 20,000-troop Afghanistan "surge" in late 2009?

Why have deportations of undocumented immigrants soared under his watch with border fencing, security patrols and technical

No More Mister Nice Guy! (continued)

surveillance substantially increased?

Because all along—he's been trying to get along.

Alas, it's time for Alice.

"I used to be such a sweet, sweet thing – 'til they got a hold of me. I'd open doors for little old ladies. I helped the blind to see. But I've got no friends 'cause they read the papers. Now I'm feeling mean."

Alice Cooper: "No More Mister Nicer Guy." (1973)

Here it comes, Mitch.

No more Mr. Nice Guy!

A position enthusiastically supported by this writer and long overdue.



Peter Cavanaugh and Alan Chea get lessons on mixing drinks at the Election Night Celebrity Bartenders Event at Crab Cakes.

This isn't the column I originally wrote for this newsletter.

By Les Marsden

But during last afternoon/evening's suddenly-necessary visit to John C. Fremont's Emergency Room (Diane's fine now—don't worry!) we had true cause to celebrate "Obamacare."

Because Diane has it. She's covered. It was worth the remarkably frustrating hours spent online and on the phone to secure coverage for her a year ago. But now she's GOT affordable, comprehensive medical care—like millions of other Americans who can likewise breathe a sigh of relief thanks to President Obama. And it doesn't end there, of course: it's not only new enrollees in new health insurance plans who can be counted as they celebrate their coverage, but it's also (by conservative estimates) the over 100 million Americans who have also benefited thanks to free critical preventive services that had previously been available to covered policy holders only via fees. It's those billions of dollars saved by closing Medicare Part D's "Donut Hole," the billions saved by forcing accountability on insurance companies—and much, much more.

But those bastard Republicans won't stop trying to take it away from my wife. And from every other American who—thanks to President Obama—now has access to affordable care.

On November 4th as the GOP coasted to its predicted, inevitable control of the Senate and gains in its House majority, I thought it actually might be possible their party had grown up. That it had learned from its past stupidity, had realized that America doesn't want extremist agendas. Mitch McConnell sounded as amiably gregarious as I've ever heard him; the sky wasn't falling as he vowed to responsibly reach across the aisle—and it appeared that we might be heading for a kumbaya campfire, with Republicans fluttering their eyelashes at the Oval Office, the new incoming majority holding out a hand to the Democrats, both sides getting along (and getting down to WORK,) cats and dogs living

This isn't the column I originally wrote...(continued)

peaceably and lions lying down with lambs.

But within seconds: it was clear Pollyanna had left the building and that the lions were salivating—in some cases, rabidly.

Cackling gleefully like a collective of giddily stoned witches, the Rabblerpublicans just couldn't control themselves. The pumpkin-hued chain-smoking John Boehner was soon up to his lame old tricks, threatening President Obama like some demented, wrinkly Smoky Bear not to (ironically) "play with matches." Now—I really do hate to beat a dead horse, but in HIS case I'd love to make an exception. When President Obama (a few days later) stood up rightfully for a strong, open, fair Internet, the jackals shrieked—with Ted Cruz warning against an "Obamacare of the Internet." Really, Teddy Bear? Obamacare—unlike YOU—has been delivering the goods. And I think an "Obamanet" is just what America needs. If it were up to the GOP, our nation would continue to be held hostage to a Dark Ages "free market" monopoly which keeps our Internet speeds and connectivity among the worst in the developed world. And our customer costs among the highest. I don't want to get off on a tangential sidebar, but the Open Technology Institute at New America's latest international/domestic research is nothing short of disgusting. If you'd like to be disgusted too – help yourself: <http://www.newamerica.org/oti/the-cost-of-connectivity-2014>.

THIS is the world of the McClintocks and McConnells and Boehners and their political-ilk: a backwards world in which independent communications and readily-available education are to be treated with contempt but where nothing is too good for themselves. Especially if it's at your expense.

When the President took lawful Executive action on long-needed immigration reform, the incredibly partisan, far-right-ignorant, playing-to-the-corpse-of-the-tea-party GOP machine began

This isn't the column I originally wrote...(continued)

spewing its usual lies – including “illegal power grab!” Despite the fact that Obama’s modest action is literally, laughably DWARFED by Executive actions on immigration at least 18 times by (ahem) Republican Presidents including Eisenhower, Ford, Reagan and BOTH Bushes. The Orange One snapped that the President has now “poisoned” the waters and that the House WAS going to act on immigration. WHEN? Boehner had more than 22 months of majority control but did nothing—aside from attempting to defund Obamacare nearly 60 times. Remember the definition of insanity? Case closed.

But now that they have control of both the House AND the Senate, those anti-Obamacare minions will doubtless try again to weaken the Affordable Care Act—if not kill it outright. And while the Presidential veto can still keep the plan afloat as long as there’s a Democrat in the White House, the GOP legislators can do much to weaken the Act to the point where it becomes ineffective and even UN-affordable.

Those thoughts kept playing in my mind while Diane lay in the ER last night in pain—but received the care she needed. And my thoughts weren’t only for Diane, but for all those millions like her who now have affordable peace of mind. And more important: actual medical care when they need it—without fear of bankruptcy, lifelong debt or having to choose between food or rent—or medical attention.

Did the Republicans learn absolutely NOTHING from their past abuses of power? Do they somehow think red state ignorance is indicative of the rest of America? Whenever Boehner or McConnell or McClintock or any other right-wing nabob begins a statement with "Americans believe" or "Americans want" there’s only one thing THIS American wants. I believe: I want them to shut up. I want them to know they do not speak for America. They do not speak for a MAJORITY of Americans. And they

This isn't the column I originally wrote...(continued)

certainly do NOT speak for me. They speak only for themselves. I’m sick and tired of these morons thinking they speak for ANYONE other than corporatist deep-pockets, astro-turf organizations or the rabid Fox-watching idiots who time and again swallow this crap hook-line-and-sinker and then vote consistently against their OWN basic interests. Even though this Democratic President has made health care affordable for THOSE idiots, too.

But then again: remind me some time to tell you what I REALLY think...



Les’s favorite Republican at the Oakhurst Democratic Club’s Election Night Party!

Mariposa Democratic Club Report

By Anne Brock

Because we are not meeting in December, we elected our 2015 officers at our Nov. meeting. Congratulations to the following!

President – Cameron Burley

Second Vice President – Kathy Lander

Treasurer – Suzette Prue

Asst Treasurer – Vicki Roland

Corresponding/Recording Secretary - Anne Brock

At Large Members: Laura Lee, Carmel Lozano, Christina Oborn, Shirley Schmelzer

We also had a great presentation from Dave Williams on Fracking and its side effects. For information on this topic, please see the club web page at:

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

Our next meeting will be Saturday, January 10th, at Miner's Roadhouse in Mariposa. Along with a speaker (to be determined) we will be discussing whether to sell the club's float. If you are interested in this topic or know people who are interested, please do plan to attend this meeting. We want your input!

We are looking forward to a great 2015 and hope everyone has a wonderful holiday season.

Mariposa County Democratic Central Committee Report

By Anne Brock

Now that the MCDCC is done with the bylaws, we are coming up with a lot of ideas moving forward. One key goal for 2015 will be visibility – through articles, letters to the editor, Facebook, etc. we want to make the county much more aware of our existence and positions. We think the ads we sponsored in 2014 (in the Sierra Sun Times, on Facebook and in the Gazette) were a good start, but we want to do more.

Some areas we are looking at include voter registration; flagging any corruption we see; looking for local issues that we can tie to Democratic values; maybe doing something for Project Open Arms or to help counter domestic violence; helping school kids on a project where they are trying to get stores to move away from plastic bags before the deadline. There are a lot of places where we can have an impact; we are very excited about next year. We do need more people to help with this – if you are interested in joining the MCDCC, please contact us at 209-742-1010 or email:

mcdemcc@gmail.com

A major area will be fundraising; we want to build up our treasury so we can be effective in the 2016 elections. You'll be hearing more from us about this!

KEYSTONE PIPELINE? What about WATER?

By Lucille Aparcar

With the Republicans sweeping both houses of Congress, you can just bet your life that the Keystone Pipeline is going to be at the forefront of discussion and bills for President Obama to sign. Let us hope that such effort will be as worthless as the 52 attempts to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

Far more crucial to the State of California and most of the west is the need for new sources of water. We are experiencing our third year of drought, the year 2014 giving every sign of ending as the worst on record.

California is the world's salad bowl, the world's producer of vegetables, fruits and nuts, raisins, dates, and more, whether for local consumption or for export. California is setting an example of renewable energy to the rest of the continental United States. California produces grapes and wines to compete with the vineyards and reputations of the best of Europe. California feeds millions of people every single day.

Should not water be far, far more important than a pipeline designed to transport dirty tar sands shale oil from Canada to our refineries solely for the purpose of export? We have no need for this oil; America has become an oil exporting nation. Our dependence upon OPEC oil is diminishing day after day, month after month, year after year.

I do not claim to be an expert on such details as the engineering, design, feasibility, etc., but it doesn't take a college degree to assess the need. And water is far less dangerous to the environment than an oil pipeline right through Tornado Alley. As a matter of fact, the availability of water is far closer to California than the distance between Alberta, Canada and the Gulf of Mexico.

KEYSTONE PIPELINE? What about WATER? (continued)

And quite possibly will provide just as many if not more jobs in construction and maintenance of water pipelines. Do we have the expertise to bring pipelines of water into California? Yes of course we do. The aqueducts bringing snowmelt from the Sierra Nevada are concrete proof of it. We accomplished such pipelines early in the 20th Century with the California Aqueduct, the Hetch-Hetchy water system, and many other methods. Even a small rural county such as Mariposa installed a pipeline called Saxon Creek bringing water to its parched community.

Yet all of these systems have now run their course. With climate change upon us, the Sierra mountain range is no longer a reliable source of lifesaving water. We need new sources of supply namely where rainfall and snow pack can be relied upon to provide moisture for the foreseeable future, and available to be tapped. Add to that, advances in technology should provide simpler and easier methods of building and transport than those in use 100 years ago.

I say let us turn our efforts to fill a crucial requirement. Let us keep California green, let us keep California produce growing, let us protect our environment, and above all let us forget about the Keystone project.

November 15, 2014 E-Board Report

By Rosemarie and Steve Smallcombe

At the E-Board meeting in San Diego in November, the hottest topics were:

- 1) The final installment to the “stacking” controversy that erupted at the November 2013 E-Board meeting (see page 14 of the February-March 2014 and page 12 of the August-September 2014 editions of The Mountain Democrat);
- 2) A speech on Climate Change and Social Justice by Tom Hayden;
- 3) A resolution promoting desalination; and
- 4) A vote of ‘no confidence’ at the Rural Caucus.

The Rules Committee concluded its deliberations regarding “stacking” and brought it to the floor for a final vote by the E-Board. (For those who may not remember, “stacking” is a practice by which CDP leaders influence the outcome of an endorsement vote in one district by sending voting delegates from another district.) The compromise permits the elected officials to select 120 delegates to endorse candidates in districts other than those in which they’re registered to vote. This number represents a considerable reduction in that they were formerly able to appoint 319 delegates. Some members of the E-Board objected to even this reduced number, so there was a lengthy debate on the floor. As one of the speakers who supported the change as recommended by the Rules Committee noted, a total of 120 delegates statewide is not likely to make a significant difference in many, if any, local elections. Further, the compromise proposal requires that elected officials report on delegates that they’ve selected, thus providing a level of accountability that didn’t previously exist.

Another, related change stipulates that the endorsement of Central Committees is assumed for incumbents unless a challenger obtains

November 15, 2014 E-Board Report (continued)

the signatures of 20% of eligible voters. This also was contested, but as one of the defenders of the proposed changes noted, if a challenger is unable to obtain signatures from 20% of the electorate, they’re unlikely to be able to win an election.

So, at the end of a lengthy process, the proposal developed by the task force, led by Agi Kessler and Eric Bauman, and approved by the Rules Committee was accepted by the E-Board, proving that Democrats work together to achieve democratic ends!

Rural Caucus

The Rural Caucus, after considerable discussion, voted ‘no confidence’ in its current Chair. This vote was precipitated by issues that have arisen in his home county as well as a history of poor communication between the Chair and other members of the Rural Caucus leadership. Jamie Buetler, an activist from El Dorado County, was elected Chief Vice Chair and conducted the remainder of the Rural Caucus meeting. The members identified some issues that the Caucus should address, including efforts to ensure that input from rural communities is included in positions taken by the CDP.

Environmental Caucus

The highlight of the Environmental Caucus was a talk on Climate Change by Tom Hayden, the political, anti-war, civil rights, and radical intellectual counterculture activist of the late 60s and 70s followed by a stint in the State Senate during the 90s.

Tom addressed the recent agreement between China and our President to significantly reduce carbon emissions and the role that California is playing leading the nation in clean air, fuel efficiency, green building and renewable energy with our per capita green house gas emissions down 17% since 1990. He mentioned the importance of AB 32 that calls for further dramatic cuts in

November 15, 2014 E-Board Report (continued)

greenhouse gas emissions going forward. Tom was definitely preaching to the choir about climate change, but it was no doubt a joy for many in the audience to hear the message from a hero from our past.

Chair Training

The Executive Board Meetings are typically preceded by a half-day training session for County Chairs on Friday afternoon. Much of the meeting this time was devoted to the ADEM election process, but the meeting ended with two interesting presentations on the recent election. Paul Brown, the President of Political Data Inc., that supplies the State Party and County Committees with their MOE data base, talked mainly about the various races in California, and also touched a bit on the National election. He noted that nationally the voter turnout was the lowest in 72 years, and as a consequence Democrats did not do as well as they could have with a better turnout. He mentioned that things were very different in California with all Statewide races going Democratic and that the still undecided (at the time) house races would likely go Democratic as well. He also mentioned that nationwide, the Democrats who ran supporting Obama and the Affordable Care Act generally won, while those who tried to distance themselves from the Party lost.

Desalination Resolution

One of the more controversial aspects of this E-Board meeting involved a resolution to promote desalination put forth by Lowell Young that listed the Oakhurst and Mariposa Democratic organizations as supporters. This resolution has been extensively rewritten several times and the head of the Resolutions Committee suggested this was likely the 7th time that one version or the other has appeared before his committee. At the Resolutions Committee meeting, Lowell spoke in favor of his resolution and R.L. Miller,

November 15, 2014 E-Board Report (continued)

the head of the Environmental Caucus, and I requested that, since desalination has serious environmental consequences, it should be reviewed by the Environmental Caucus for a recommendation before being considered by the Resolutions Committee and the General Session. The Resolutions Committee voted to approve the resolution (for the first time) and the matter went with other approved resolutions to the General Session on Sunday for a final vote.

At the General Session, R.L. moved that the matter be referred to the Environmental Caucus for discussion, and noted that at the last E-Board meeting the Environmental Caucus dedicated their meeting to water issues in California and the subject of desalination was not identified as a potential solution to our water problems by any of the speakers. R.L. suggested that, since desalination has serious environmental consequences including exacerbating climate change, it deserves serious discussion before the Party takes a stand in favor of a concept that is opposed by the Sierra Club and other environmental organizations. I spoke of the climate change implication of desalination, one of which is that it uses ten times more energy than traditional sources of water. I suggested that this topic needed serious discussion in terms of water use in the state, our energy policy, the Party's position on climate change and our need to reduce our overall use of energy. Since it was impossible to discuss these matters in the one-minute time allowed, I also suggested that the matter be referred to the Environmental Caucus for a through discussion. A third speaker, Mike Thaller suggested that when a resolution involves labor, it would certainly be referred to the Labor Caucus and a resolution related to disabled persons would be referred to the Disabilities Caucus, then the Environmental Caucus was the appropriate place for a serious discussion of this issue.

The motion was brought to a vote and the voice vote seemed to clearly indicate that the resolution to refer the resolution to the

November 15, 2014 E-Board Report (continued)

Environmental Caucus had passed, but the Resolution Committee Chair said, "I am not sure" and asked people to hold up their credential cards to indicate votes for and against. (The only such vote at the meeting!) The motion to refer to the Environmental Caucus won by 68 to 39 if I remember correctly. Most of the members of the Resolutions Committee voted to refer the resolution, reversing their earlier vote, as did most, if not all of the Party Officers.

Desalination is an issue that many very intelligent, capable engineers and scientists have worked on for many years. There are 17,000 desalination plants in operation around the world and 17 in California, either already built or in the planning stages. Some are sitting idle due to high cost of operation. Unfortunately, separating water from salt takes a lot of energy and the energy requirement to do so is limited by fundamental physics—i.e. you can't get below that limit. Desalination of seawater will always be very energy intensive. Desalination of brackish water, industrial and domestic waste water or water from agricultural runoff that does not have as high a salt concentration can be done reasonably efficiently and will play significant role in the future of water in California.

Seawater desalination is one of the major battlegrounds, like the Keystone XL Pipeline and fracking where the big energy companies and environmental organizations are fighting over our future. If and when the State achieves 100% of its energy from renewable sources, then desalination of seawater will make sense. Advocating for seawater desalination as a solution to California's water problems before that time is to deny climate change and our role in it.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Today's Date: _____

___ Mariposa: Annual Dues are \$10.00 per person
(Jan. 1 – Dec. 31) \$15.00 family
Lifetime membership \$150.00

or

___ Oakhurst: Annual Dues are \$5.00 per person
(Jul. 1 - Jun. 30)

___ 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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