



THE MOUNTAIN DEMOCRAT

October -
November
2015

Contents

Coming Events.....	page 2
Mariposa Dems Had a Great Weekend	page 3
Socialism 101	page 4
Smokehurst	page 8
The Poverty Reports.....	page 11
Mariposa Democratic Club Meetings.....	page 13
Membership Application.....	page 15



YosemiteDems.net

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

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

October 2015

Oct. 3: Oakhurst Club Meeting

Oct. 10: Mariposa Club Meeting

November 2015

Nov. 7: Oakhurst Club Meeting

Nov. 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
Seagull

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

Mariposa Dems Had a Great Labor Day Weekend!

By Anne Brock

As always, Labor Day Weekend was a great one for Mariposa Democrats. That's when we get to participate in the Labor Day Parade and have a booth in the County Fair.

Our float and booth were both fantastic-looking yet again! See the pictures in case you didn't see them live. Our thanks to everyone who helped organize, decorate and staff both of them!

But let's be candid here—we need more people riding the float next year. Next year is an election year; we need a strong presence on the float. So if you haven't ridden on the float in a few years, make a note now, that you'll be on it in 2016!

We did a primary runoff straw vote at the booth; Sanders won, with Clinton being a strong second. Chaffee, O'Malley, Webb got a vote each; Biden managed 10 votes, and he isn't in the race yet! We are so pleased with how good our candidates are; any one of them is better than any of the Republican candidates. But the Sanders/Clinton competition will keep the primaries interesting next year!



Socialism 101

By Les Marsden

“I ain’t votin’ fer no damned socialist fascist commie like that-there Bernie Sanders!”

It’s bad enough so many people slept through school, growing up to become opinionated right-wingers. You know: loudmouths without even a smattering of knowledge about the US Constitution, political science, American civics, world history—but who nonetheless consider themselves authorities of it all. The real tragedy, however: is that those remarkably ignorant people have the power of the vote.

Well—watch out—because there’s a Democratic Socialist running for president.

A DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST! To your basic Conservative, that sounds like TWO filthy words put together. But what does it mean? A thumbnail refresher:

CAPITALISM: Theoretically, pure free-market capitalism dictates that all means of production and capital itself are privately-held. Police, fire protection, defense, schools can of course all be yours, from private companies—if you can afford the price. And hey! With maximizing profits outweighing all else, corners might be cut here and there. Pure capitalism is unfettered by regulations in a laissez-faire survival-of-the-fittest, dog-eat-dog state. But “pure” capitalism doesn’t exist, and though technically an economic system, it’s become further twisted into something of a governmental system in America: capital controls our government and we’re becoming more of a corporatist oligarchy day by day. To be fair, our government has also embedded itself (rightfully) into our economic system via regulations, oversight and in some cases, public ownership—though not deeply enough.

SOCIALISM: again, the theoretical model doesn’t exist in the real

Socialism 101 (continued)

world, but in a purely socialist system, the means of production belong to the workers. They receive all the benefits of government-administered economy and services—which are usually of good quality and are cost-effective. Sounds pretty wild, right? But America IS somewhat a hybrid socialist state, with public schools, the aforementioned first-responders, public highways, our armed forces, public parks, Social Security, Medicare, etc. Our taxes pay for them and they belong to us, collectively. (And for what it’s worth, George Bernard Shaw and Albert Einstein were avowed socialists.)

COMMUNISM? In reality, just as there are no pure capitalist states so there are no real communist nations on the planet—though Cuba comes close. Observe the embrace of so many elements of capitalism in China and the former Soviet Union. Both, but particularly China: are ironically in a state of capitalist wage slavery so reminiscent of the early industrial revolution that Marx would flip his wig.

Most nations today have smorgasbord-style governmental and economic systems: a little of this, a little of that. In the US, we embrace elements of socialism, but we’re far behind most of today’s most successful developed nations (including the Scandinavian countries) when it comes to the basic health and well-being of our populace. We still allow the market to have dominion over many Americans who—while deserving, may not be able to afford college. While working for a living, may be homeless; while innocent of any societal infraction, may be hungry children. While hard-working, may earn a minute fraction of what their corporate executives are paid. Obamacare is a step in the right direction, but falls short. Bottom line: in our system, people sell their labor or services while being recompensed for their toil by whatever the capital-owner deems sufficient. Organized labor has been attacked and weakened and consequently, the disparity between those at top and those at bottom is now at its widest and

most unjust in the history of our nation.

So what is Bernie Sanders really after? He's not a wild radical. In fact, he's not really a true Democratic Socialist. Not to further confuse the issue, but he's really more a Social Democrat (and there IS a difference!)—his policies are in line with existing social democracies such as Denmark, Ireland, Belgium, Canada, Finland, Sweden, Norway, New Zealand—and more. Countries in which capitalism's extremes (primarily those caused by human greed) are tempered through sound, firm regulation, while a healthy, responsive social safety net results in a generally prosperous, well-educated society. Despite the shrieks from those on the right, survey after survey shows social democracies (including list-toppers Denmark, Finland and the Netherlands) have the highest populations of healthy AND happy people, the highest levels of employment and working conditions, the highest GDP per capita (2009 figures: Denmark's was \$68,000 while in the US it was \$47,335) and so many other positive metrics. The US doesn't even place in the top ten in overall quality of life. Unless you're talking about childhood obesity and poverty. And we're still WAY below the curve when it comes to healthcare delivery.

Our Constitution's Preamble notes among its goals to "promote the general Welfare." Unfortunately, the very word "welfare" has taken on a very negative connotation, thanks to those on the right who equate it with some sort of undeserved handout. It's not that at all. It's a right we deserve as human beings. The right to enjoy prosperity, health, education, happiness, and to be fairly paid for our toil. Ironically, it's something akin to what used to be called "the American Dream."

Bernie Sanders' remarkable record of fighting for the good of all society makes him the best hope we have of restoring America for Americans. While other candidates (primarily the GOP) obsess about taking away Americans' rights or champion ways to make

the rich even richer, Sanders' progressive economic platform is grounded in reforming Wall Street, reducing wealth inequality, the creation of "decent paying jobs," getting money out of politics (a passion of mine too,) establishing a living wage—and so much more. Read more at

<http://berniesanders.com/issues>

I support Bernie Sanders. And if that makes me some kind of damned socialist commie fascist: that's a label I'm proud to wear.

Smokehurst

By Peter Cavanaugh

On a clear day you can see forever—or at least to the top of Deadwood Mountain.

After an egregious onslaught of weather conditions over Labor Day Weekend with smoke from the 140,000 acre “Rough Fire” becoming trapped under a late summer inversion layer, things finally improved. We could finally at last breathe a deep sigh of relief without risking instant cardiac arrest.

As California is undergoing its worst fire season in history, we’ve been lucky so far. And such fate is not due to mere good fortune.

Much more is owed to the courageous efforts of Cal Fire management, crews, aircraft, and all associated local, regional and state agencies involved. They have kept us safe. With uncommon efforts far beyond reasonable expectation, these men and women have risked life and limb saving homes and lives with relentless dedication and awe-inspiring endurance.

Guess what? They also prove government can work. But not when we elect those who claim it can’t.

This brings to mind another kind of smoke blowing about in mid-September—a particularly hazardous haze generated by various participants in the Second Republican Presidential Debate, a.k.a.—“Clown Car Two”—a meeting of the miserably mindless.

Donald Trump sealed his decline from top spot in polling by characteristically talking the most and saying the least until blindsided by a wildly effective cutting slash from Carly Fiorina on what “*that face*” meant to women everywhere—followed by an icy glare that would have frozen hell thrice over.

Smokehurst (continued)

Carly is no stranger to us Californians who saw her soundly thrashed in her Senate run against Barbara Boxer in 2010 by ten full percentage points (52% - 42%) despite the fact that Boxer was facing an uphill battle against a multimillionaire candidate and a wave of attack ads from out of state business and conservative groups.

For pure performance points, Fiorina impressively outclassed the rest of the field with a polished presentation rightfully earning her a dramatic leap in polling preference, instantly replacing a quickly fading Ben Carson in the process. It now seems Dr. Ben was a temporary placeholder all along—more so now that he has decided Islam is unconstitutional and therefore no Muslim should be president.

Ms. Fiorina’s most dramatically effective moment of the evening was an impassioned recital of having watched a video depicting “*a fully formed fetus on the table, its heart beating, it’s legs kicking, while someone says we have to keep it alive to harvest its brain.*” No such video exists or ever has. Carly? No. Car-LIE.

But Jeb Bush won first prize in spectacular spin for the most outrageous assertion of the night—ironically greeted with thundering applause as a powerful endorsement of his brother’s presidency and family name. Jeb said of George, “*When it comes to my brother, there’s one thing I know for sure. He kept us safe!*”

The crowd went wild with—I suspect—a soothing measure of relieved self-congratulation. After all—most in attendance put “W” in office.

Yet it was almost eight months AFTER becoming President in 2001 that 9/11 changed our lives forever as Jeb’s brother “*kept us*

Smokehurst (continued)

safe—ignoring repeated intelligence community and allied warnings about a pending bin Laden attack against America by plane.

Gore Vidal was powerfully prescient. Most Republican stalwarts surely do live in “*The United States of Amnesia*.”

The Poverty Reports

By Ben Leet

The National Center for Children in Poverty reports that 44% of the nation’s children live in either low income (22%) or poor (22%) households (Hh). Low income is determined by income below \$47,248, and poverty by income below \$24,008 for a four person family. Our nation is very wealthy, and this is inexcusable. The average annual Hh income is around \$100,000, and the average Hh savings is approaching \$700,000. There’s no excuse for such pervasive poverty and the wake of human destruction it leaves.

On September 16, 2015, the U.S. Census released its annual report on Income, Poverty and Health Insurance. For 2014, 15.3%, or one in seven Americans live in poverty, from the Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM). Also, about one in seven citizens obtains food from the government SNAP program, and one in five receive medical care through Medicaid. The Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that after tax income for every citizen, per capita, is over \$41,393 in “current dollars”, yet we can’t manage to create a system to share this immense prosperity. A family of four, living in poverty, has an income of around \$6,000 per person. The lower-earning half of U.S. workers, 77 million workers, earns less than 8% of the national income according to the Social Security Administration report.

The SPM for 2013 shows that overall poverty was reduced from 30% to 15.5% through government transfers. Poverty among citizens more than 64 years old was reduced from 53% to 15% through Social Security transfers. Poverty among children was reduced from 24% to 16% by the Earned Income Tax Credit. Of the 15.5% of adults, age 18 to 64, who are poor, half are working poor.

The Poverty Reports (continued)

I believe there will be a generational backlash expressing itself in the voting booth against this inequality. Reducing the costs of life essentials and raising the income of nonsupervisory workers are the two keys to managing poverty. The Economic Policy Institute and the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities distribute excellent reports related to this issue. For further reading:

census.gov

is the web source for the Census.

Mariposa Democratic Club Meetings

By Anne Brock

The Mariposa Democratic Club was pleased to have its August meeting be about politics. We had three speakers—Assemblymember Jimmy Gomez, Robert Carabas—running for the 5th Assembly District, and Robert Derlet, MD, who is considering a run for the 4th Congressional District Seat.

Assemblymember Gomez has been very productive; among the bills he has sponsored or supported include one to have a license plate that funds domestic violence; he was one of six authors of the water bond; he has a bill to expand paid family leave; he's working on using Cap & Trade to repair our rivers; and he's chair of the appropriations committee which decides which bills move forward. He seemed to us to be a good argument against term limits!

Robert Carabas is running for Assemblymember Bigelow's seat. He discussed how when he was growing up and going to college, the infrastructure was there to support people like him. But now, with crony capitalism, the support for college and other services isn't there. He also discussed water issues; we need to get rid of leaks in ditch systems and need to start putting water back into the aquifers. He said desalination isn't a panacea; it's a "Disneyland" idea. To beat Bigelow, he knows he has to reach out to community groups and meet with voters individually.

Robert Derlet, MD, is exploring the possibility of running against Rep. McClintock. While he was working in the Indian Clinic in Tuolumne County, he heard so many stories of people's struggle to make ends meet every day, to pay for their pills, to get through the month, that he wants to do something to help them. ACA was

Mariposa Democratic Club Meetings (continued)

the first step in controlling costs, but hospitals, insurance companies, and drug companies were big winners from the ACA. He wants to change that. He thinks it shouldn't be easy to outsource jobs; that Wall Street needs more regulation; and that Social Security needs to be kept intact. He is working 24X7 to get the word out.

Our political future is bright with politicians and candidates like these.

Our September meeting was going to feature Lowell Young speaking about his amazing work with the Tricolored Blackbird. However, due to the amount of smoke, turnout was low, so we will bring him back at a later point.

Meetings are the second Saturday of the month at Miner's Roadhouse. Join us at 9:00 to purchase breakfast, 9:45 for the meeting. Call 209-742-1010 if questions. For more information on the club, please visit our website at :

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

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:

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