



YosemiteDems.net

**The Mountain Democrat
Newsletter Editor
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THE MOUNTAIN DEMOCRAT

**December
2015
January
2016**

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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 2015

Dec. 5: Oakhurst Club Meeting

Dec 12: Mariposa Club Meeting

NOTICE: Mariposa Club
Time to renew your membership
Please renew at the next meeting
or mail the form on page 19.

January 2016

Jan. 2: **NO** Oakhurst Club
Meeting in January

Jan. 9: Mariposa Club Meeting

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Cover
Digger Pine

Pinus sabiniana
Wikipedia

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

Eleanor (Ellie) M. Schermerhorn
June 12, 1954 - October 6, 2015



Ellie Schermerhorn, passed away peacefully on October 6th, 2015 after a long treatment for breast cancer.

Ellie was born in San Antonio, Texas on June 12, 1954 and moved to California with her husband, J. Scott Hill, in 1987. She and Scott made Ahwahnee their home in 2000.

Ellie loved the mountain community and was active in not-for-profit organizations. She was a founding member of the Oakhurst Democratic Club. Other organizations she enjoyed were the Sierra Historic Sites Association, Mountain Community Women, La Sierra Guild for Valley Children's Hospital, and the Sierra Foothills Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Bark for Bernie

By Peter Cavanaugh

Ivan Petrovich Pavlov was a pioneer in behavioral psychology who won a Nobel Prize in 1904 for his work on conditioned responses.

Pavlov is classically referenced as discovering that dogs salivating at the sight of food could also be conditioned to do the same at the sound of a bell, providing a pattern was established in which such was rung as a matter of routine, just before feeding time—the doggies reacting to the bell as though it was food itself.

More than half of American voters seem to be similarly predisposed to dismiss Bernie Sanders as a viable candidate for president since he is a self-declared “socialist”—this word, conditioned through the years by dubious definition and careless commentary, being the same thing as a “communist.”

A recent Gallup survey measuring electorate bias indicates that 93% of us would vote for a Catholic, 92% for an African-American, 92% for a woman, 91% for an Hispanic, 91% for a Jewish candidate, 81% for a Mormon, 74% for a gay or lesbian, 73% for an Evangelical Christian who believes the world is 6,000 years old and cavemen rode dinosaurs, and 58% would even back an atheist. But only a minority, 47% would support putting a socialist in The White House.

Such mindless conditioning is desperately in need of righteous revision. There’s a major disconnect here as far as Bernie Sanders’ campaign is concerned.

It’s truly astounding. Issues the Senator endorses score majority support across the board—many by impressive pluralities.

Bark for Bernie (continued)

A resounding 84% of voters, including Democrats, Republicans and Independents, agree that money has far too much influence on political campaigns and 77% think there should be limits on amounts individuals, corporations or political action committees can spend on their favorite issues or candidates.

That’s what Bernie says.

80% of registered Democrats are in favor of a “Single Payer Option” in health insurance, also known in Bernie-talk as “Medicare for All.” Sadly, such a concept was the first casualty in early 2009 health care debates when President Obama completely left it off the table in a doomed effort to obtain early Republican cooperation.

73% of Americans want Citizens United (2010) overturned, not believing that “corporations are persons” and “money is speech”—underscoring the fact that concern about the dominance of elections by corporations and the wealthy is overwhelmingly bipartisan. That’s a biggie with Bernie.

67% of our people believe there is obvious unfairness in the current national distribution of wages and wealth across the board 64% of us state that many major corporations are not paying their fair share of taxes.

63% would favor Bernie’s “College for All Act” which would provide free education at public colleges funded by a small tax on Wall Street transactions, including 47% of Republicans who are comfortable with the idea.

Bark for Bernie (continued)

57% of our citizens are not opposed to Same Sex Marriages.

An honest review of what Bernie Sanders represents brings quite a revelation. Senator Sanders is the new voice of mainstream America as our young lead the way.

In a late Autumn NBC News/Monkey Survey poll of probable Democratic voters between the ages of 19 and 29, Bernie Sanders lead Hillary Clinton by an outrageous 2 to 1 ratio – 54% to 26%.

2016 could be a VERY Happy New Year.

Let's get to work!



Mariposa County Democratic Central Committee

By Anne Brock

The MCDCC is thinking about the 2016 elections; we have activities we'd like to do: such as ads on Facebook and Sierra Sun Times, maybe a mailing, and direct support of candidates. This all takes money, so we're also looking for fundraising ideas.

Along with an email we'll be sending out in Jan, we are thinking of hosting the Democratic Jan. 17 debate at the Bug—so mark your calendars to join us! It will be fun to watch our great candidates as a group. We are looking for new members; we have openings in all districts. If you are interested, email us at:

mcdemcc@gmail.com

We must keep the White House in Democratic hands, to ensure that we keep the country moving forward. There is also the chance to recapture the Senate. This is going to be a very important year! Find us on the web at:

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

and on Facebook at:

<https://www.facebook.com/Mariposa-Democratic-Party-195222793888978/>

Donald Trump is SO dumb...

By Les Marsden

It's holiday time, so a respite from my usual sniping and political nastiness is in order. Instead, I'll offer some jolly, festive sniping and political nastiness from others.

But before we get down to brass knuckles, a quick tribute to the greatest recent inspiration for political insults: George W. Bush. Insults are only as powerful as their inspiring muses and Dubya spawned the best. Consider Barney Frank's "George Bush is proof that you can be totally impervious to the effects of a Harvard and Yale education" or Jim Hightower's "If ignorance ever goes to \$40 a barrel, I want drilling rights on George Bush's head." And the late Christopher Hitchens described Bush as "...lucky to be governor of Texas. He is unusually incurious, abnormally unintelligent, amazingly inarticulate, fantastically uncultured, extraordinarily uneducated, and apparently quite proud of all these things." And it's all in the family: relish the late, great Texas Governor Ann Richards' 1988 Democratic convention keynote address, in which she described Dubya's father George Herbert Walker Bush with "I'm delighted to be here with you this evening, because after listening to George Bush all these years, I figured you needed to know what a real Texas accent sounds like," and that now-classic "Poor George, he can't help it. He was born with a silver foot in his mouth."

Acid-dripping, think-twice political insult goes back a long time:

(Former) British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli on (also-former) Prime Minister William Gladstone: "If Gladstone fell into the Thames, that would be a misfortune. If anybody pulled him out, that, I suppose, would be a calamity."

Theodore Roosevelt on William McKinley: "No more backbone than a chocolate éclair."

One of my favorites was actually locally delivered while campaigning in Fresno on September 10th, 1952, by Adlai

Stevenson II: "I have been thinking that I would make a proposition to my Republican friends that if they will stop telling lies about the Democrats, we will stop telling the truth about them." Stevenson described Richard Nixon as "the kind of politician who would cut down a redwood tree and then mount the stump to make a speech for conservation."

James Reston praised Nixon with "he inherited some good instincts from his forebears, but by diligent hard work, he overcame them." And Hunter S. Thompson described Nixon's humorless mien: "I couldn't imagine him laughing at anything except maybe a paraplegic who wanted to vote Democratic but couldn't quite reach the lever on the voting machine."

David Broder summed up Ronald Reagan: "The task of watering the arid desert between Reagan's ears is a challenging one for his aides." Reagan also inspired the late Gore Vidal to describe the (then-still-alive) Reagan as "A triumph of the embalmer's art."

British Member of Parliament Jonathan Aitken on Reagan's pal and close ally Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher: "She probably thinks Sinai is the plural of sinus."

Winston Churchill, font of many great lines—once noted of Prime Minister Clement Attlee that "an empty cab pulled up to Downing Street. Clement Attlee got out." And on Attlee yet again: "He is a modest man with much to be modest about."

And this famous exchange between Lady Nancy Astor and Winston Churchill:

Astor: "If I were your wife I'd poison your tea."

Churchill: "If I were your husband, I'd drink it."

Churchill could also be a target: Margot Asquith said of Churchill that "he would kill his own mother just so that he could use her skin to make a drum to beat his own praises."

Dwight Eisenhower's aide/speechwriter Emmet Hughes summed

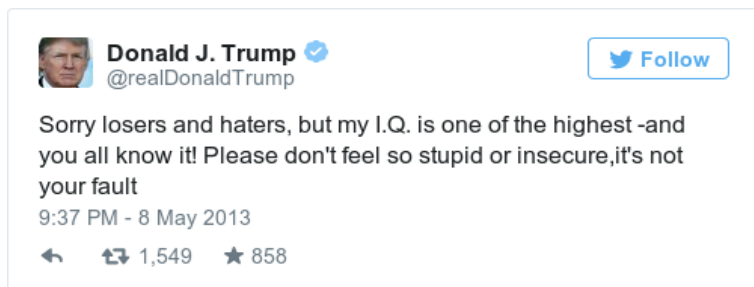
up that president: “He bestowed upon the games of golf and bridge all the enthusiasm and perseverance that he withheld from books and ideas.”

Right-wing humorist P.J. O’Rourke noted that “Republicans are the party that says government doesn’t work, and then get elected and prove it.” True that, P.J.

When told the taciturn Calvin Coolidge had died, legendary wit Dorothy Parker responded: “How can they tell?”

My all-time favorite political insult? 4th Earl of Sandwich (yes, the very same dude who invented the sandwich) John Montagu (1718-1792) once debated the radical Member of Parliament (and later London’s Lord Mayor) John Wilkes (1725-1797) offering: "Sir, I do not know whether you will die on the gallows or of the pox!" To which Wilkes responded: “That, sir, depends on whether I first embrace your Lordship's principles or your Lordship's mistresses.”

Which brings me (finally) to Donald Trump, great muse of the current season. When it comes to insulting THAT man, there’s no way I can compete with Trump himself. So I’ll leave you with his own words about Donald J. Trump—and yes, this was actually his own tweet:



Donald Trump, Genius. I’m just surprised he didn’t misspell “I.Q.”

And with that, Happy Holidays!

Mariposa Democratic Club

By Anne Brock

We had another good club meeting in November; Beth Tomsick, Exec Director, Habitat for Humanity, spoke to us. She discussed their house building projects, and made sure we knew they do more than just build houses; they have a “Brush With Kindness” program that helps fix up people’s existing houses.

They are always looking for volunteers; if interested, call them at 209-966-7444. Their fundraising efforts include a store with donated building supplies (and they have a lot of True Value paint right now, thanks to Troy Foster!) So if you have a house project going on, check to see if they have the supplies you need. And if you have good quality supplies that you can donate, they are always looking for them.

In other news, Suzette Prue, who is on the John C. Fremont board of directors, announced that they have a new internist starting at the clinic in Feb. Her husband is a Pulmonologist who wants to work occasionally, so we will also have a pulmonologist locally again!

Our December speaker will be Mary Hodson, CAO of Mariposa County.

Note: we are not having a December potluck this year; instead we will be meeting at our normal time—second Saturday of the month (Dec 12), 9:00 to purchase breakfast, 9:45 for meeting. Our website is:

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

and our Facebook site is

<https://www.facebook.com/Mariposa-Democratic-Club-165747866785120/>

What Does ISIS Really Want?

Lucille Aparcar

A recent op-ed article by Nobel Prizewinning economist Paul Krugman pointed out something that few of us have given much thought to: The ultimate goal of the ISIS movement, or for that matter the Al Qaida and other Jihadist groups. Can it be that they plan to rule the globe? Do they want to wipe out religions that do not conform to their beliefs? Do they want to plunder, rape, rob, destroy all that civilization has thus far built? Although the movement (if it can be called that) has certainly made its impact, realistically they have to weigh the impossibility and implausibility of such a task. Go back through history and you will see what I mean. Conquering nations, conquering movements, conquering heroes, invariably collapse for no other reason than because of the people they attempt to subjugate. For them life goes on.

Homes are rebuilt, roads repaired, schools open, public transit resumes, shopping, sports and entertainment re-enter the scene as though the bombings, mass killings and destruction never occurred. I witnessed this myself when I returned to a once devastated Japan less than 20 years after the end of World War II. It seemed as if a genie had emerged from its lamp, waved a magic wand and normalcy, to all outward appearances, never left. What reason can we attribute to this phenomenon? The people simply resumed their routine existence.

Yes the western world is under siege right now, mostly by a young, inexperienced, unseasoned group or religious sect yet to take heed of the lessons of history. They lack respect for centuries of established ways of life, for civil discourse, for advancements in science and achievements in mechanized operations, in institutions of learning. They are the inevitable result of growing up in an uneven world where enormous wealth, power and privilege lives side by side with grinding poverty and deprivation. And they are

What Does ISIS Really Want?

influenced by false prophets who preach their brand of ideology, encouraged to strike out and destroy all that fails to conform to those idols. Their goal is to instill fear and panic among those who they perceive as their enemy.

As Mr. Krugman pointed out, panic is exactly what the Jihadists want to see. The panic that causes us to go to yet another war, that causes us to refuse sanctuary to those unfortunates fleeing their homes in search of a better life for themselves and their families, and to demean an established religion. We should not repeat our actions during World War II when thousands of Japanese-Americans were incarcerated for no reason other than their ethnic background, especially because accusations of treachery were disproved, and the vast majority turned out to be loyal citizens.

Yes we must deal with this dastardly movement, we must punish those who would torture, humiliate, kill. Wherever they attack, they must be caught and punished severely. We must hold them accountable, hold them up as an example of what we can do when sufficiently provoked. But first cool heads need to prevail. Above all we must not panic.

The Poverty Report

By Ben Leet

Poverty is not a popular topic of conversation. Democrats deal with the issue more constructively than Republicans and the media, but most Democrats are not up on the facts. So, here are a few facts, fellow Democrats; may they help you when you converse with friends and neighbors.

This U.S. Census issued its annual report in September. And, for the first year, it also released the Supplemental Poverty Measure which most students of the subject find more accurate. The SPM incorporates the effects of government aid programs into the data—not often termed “charity” when in fact that is their nature.

But first, a look at some other centers of information. 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 wide-spread poverty is inexcusable. The average annual Hh income is around \$100,000 according to the Congressional Budget Office report, and the average Hh savings is approaching \$700,000 according to the Flow of Funds report from the Federal Reserve Bank. There’s no excuse for such pervasive poverty and the wake of human destruction it leaves.

For 2014, 15.3%, or one in seven Americans live in poverty, reports 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 CBO reports that this aid amounts to 4% of GDP. The Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that the after-tax, “disposable”, income for every citizen, per capita, is over \$41,393 in “current dollars”, yet we have not yet created a system to share this immense prosperity. A family of four, living in poverty, has an income at the maximum of \$6,000 per person, and often less. The

The Poverty Report (Continued)

average after-tax income for a family for four is over \$165,000, or over \$41,000 per person (the national income is around \$13 trillion.) The lower-earning 45% of U.S. workers, 71 million workers, earns less than 6% of the national income according to the Social Security Administration report. So, a conclusion a sensible reader may draw is that inequality of income and wealth is severe. (Yes, beyond a doubt, I have an attitude about this topic.)

The most important data to remember is the following: The SPM for 2014 shows that overall poverty was reduced from 30% to 15.5% through government transfers. Poverty among citizens 65 or older was reduced from 50.0% to 14.6% 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 who are officially poor, age 18 to 64, half are working poor, according to the SPM data.

The Economic Policy Institute and the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities distribute excellent reports related to this issue, for further reading. Dan Walters writing in the Sacramento Bee also has an interesting article about poverty in Fresno here:

<http://www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/capitol-alert/article31113221.html>

Fresno tops the “top ten” list in the U.S. in poverty in several aspects.

Editor's Note: The following article was written about 8 years ago by Ellie Schermerhorn, and I think it completely expresses the qualities for which we remember both her and Jerry Lacayo.

Why Are You A Democrat?

By Ellie Schermerhorn

You never know when someone will pop the question.

Years before, Jerry Lacayo, someone I refer to as the “birth mother” of the Oakhurst Democratic Club, had come to one of our organizing meetings held in the local library. We numbered about ten people then, and were in the early stages of trying to decide who we were and who we wanted to be as the first local group willing to come out of the closet and declare our liberal leanings. As a life-long Democratic organizer with deep knowledge of politics, Jerry was there to offer advice and support. I didn't know her, but she got my attention by making what I found to be a profound statement: “You need to know why you're a Democrat.”

I've been thinking about that ever since.

The day it happened to me, my only intent was to purchase an ointment for aches and pains suggested by my doctor. He even told me where to get it, at a local mountain establishment.

As I pulled up to the business, I saw the “Ron Paul for President” sign, and remembered seeing it before. I mused that the person who owned the store must be a real Ron Paul fan to still sport the sign long after Paul dropped out of the race.

The person who helped me was someone my mother would refer to as “a nice young man”—pleasant, well-spoken, and eager to please. I guessed he was around 18 years old. Making polite conversation as he rang up my purchase, he asked me how my day was going, and I told him the truth. I was coming from the

Why Are You A Democrat (continued)

Coarsegold Peddlers Market where the weather had rained out our Club's efforts to register voters.

“Who do you want for President?” His tone was affable and sincere, not one looking for a fight.

I explained that we were Democrats and so we'd like to see Clinton or Obama take the office.

And then he did it.

“Why are you a Democrat?”

Oh, no Here it was. If not the final exam, at least the mid-term. I felt my heart rate pick up a bit, and for the first time, I noticed the “Ron Paul for President” sign on the wall behind the cash register. The young person before me was likely the son of the shop owner, and mom or dad had carefully cultivated a Libertarian. This was not a blank slate.

I reached in my mental “Democratic bag” to see what I could find. I talked about universal health care, support for Social Security and Medicare, the war in Iraq, the important Supreme Court appointments which would likely take place over the next 8 years, and that it was important for these judges to support the common person against big corporate interests.

“You like government?”, he asked, and I thought, yep, a Libertarian.

Yes, I liked government, not everything they did, but government could help a lot of people that needed to be helped.

“And you'd trade freedom for security?”. Ah, I thought, this guy

Why Are You a Democrat? (continued)

hasn't had a few passing conversations with his parents about politics; he's been dyed in the wool!

I said a question that always arose was where my freedom ended and his began. Laws were important to keep either one of us from trampling on the freedom of the other. Our nation's having a healthy economy depended on it, too.

I asked him if he was old enough to vote. Would he like a voter registration card?

"I'm not going to vote".

Why, I asked?

He'd just decided not to.

I'm always disappointed when I hear this, so pointing to myself, I asked, "You're going to let me decide who your President is? Because I don't want to. I want YOU to decide who your President will be."

I wasn't sure what he thought of that question, but hoped I'd planted a seed.

I remembered my husband waiting in the car, and excused myself. As I said good-bye and started to walk away, I found myself turning back to him. I thanked him sincerely for asking me the questions, and for helping me to be a better Democrat.

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: _____

Supervisory District (if known): _____

Total Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Please mail form and check payable to:

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