



YosemiteDems.net

The Mountain Democrat
Newsletter Editor
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THE MOUNTAIN DEMOCRAT

**August –
September
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

August 2016

Aug. 6: Oakhurst Club Meeting
8:30AM Denny's

Aug. 13: NO Mariposa Meeting
NO Mariposa Meeting in Aug.

September 2016

Sep. 3: Oakhurst Club Meeting
8:30AM Denny's

Sep 10: Mariposa Club Meeting
9:00AM Miner's Inn

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

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Cover Photo
Buteo jamaicensis
Red-tailed Hawk

A Witness to History

by Les Marsden

On the afternoon of June 18, I sat with my son Maxfield in our Jerseydale home. We're about the same elevation as Yosemite Valley, same sort of flora and fauna—the next best thing to living IN Yosemite. And there, on the couch, I reflected—somewhat giddily to Max—that just a couple hours earlier only a few miles away I had shaken hands with the most powerful person on the planet.



When news of the First Family's Yosemite visit broke a few days earlier, I knew the last place I'd want to be was **THERE** fighting traffic, crowds, security *and* Father's Day weekend celebrants. And it was already VERY high

season, a June weekend with summer blooming and falls roaring, and the time of year we gladly give the valley over to visitors who have fewer options to visit. And with all the added commotion AND traffic from the first Presidential visit in over five decades, I planned to sit this one out. I'll admit it was a tough decision because this is OUR President. Our Democratic President, a President in many ways comparable to the last sitting President to visit Yosemite in 1962. But come on! How close would anyone really be allowed to get near this President?

Then I received a special formal invitation from Yosemite Superintendent Don Neubacher on Presidential letterhead with a White House guest vehicle pass cordially inviting me to a National Park Service Centennial Celebration at which President Obama



would "address invitees during this historic event." Wow. I was floored.

An "historic event?" Absolutely so. The last visit by a sitting President to Yosemite was 54 years ago during JFK's whirlwind California tour when he spoke at the opening of the then-new San Luis Reservoir before making it to Yosemite on August 17-18, 1962. I musically allude to that visit in my *Yosemite!* symphonic work's 8th section: "1962: Yosemite

Valley, Late Summer at Twilight (Firefall)." Not many people know that during the Kennedy visit, the Glacier Point firefall was delayed from its usual prompt 9 pm start time because JFK had to take an important phone call from DC in the Ahwahnee. Finally at 9:30 the coals were pushed over the cliff when the President could witness the attraction. No one apparently minded the wait—our President was here, with us!

Jump forward 54 years when I received that invitation from Superintendent Neubacher at THIS Presidential visit; I immediately knew there was no OTHER place I could possibly be that day. And so, up at 5 am, the drive into the park to avoid crowds, gathering as requested in the lodge's west parking lot, waiting with the other VIPs, making sure we were on "the list," metal detectors, being shuttled to the site—then at 11:25 the President arrived at the Sentinel Bridge parking area at Cook's Meadow. History was made, and I'm honored to have been there, seated just a few feet back, dead center in front of the President. Mr. Obama's remarks were jovial but urgent. He addressed the

great importance of confronting global warming in a meaningful manner and preserving our planet's extraordinary nature before it's too late.



Celebrating the upcoming 100th Anniversary of the stewardship of our American National Parks. And he did it all with the amazing backdrop of Yosemite Falls. Friends would excitedly (later) let me know they

recognized me strictly from the back of my head on news broadcasts all over, even in the UK on BBC! The President spoke for about 14 minutes or so, and that was that. We were separated from him by massive logs which had been placed horizontally, and we were held back by the hordes of secret service agents who scanned near and far throughout the entire address. But at the conclusion, President Obama eagerly came forward and the crowd just as eagerly met him. He moved down the line, shaking every hand he could—including, "Mr. President!" yes, my hand. And before you knew it, he was whisked back to his convoy and then was gone.

It was great fun to visit with good friends including NPS staff gathered for the occasion. I even had a cordial few minutes' chat with a man I usually consider a nemesis, Congressman Tom McClintock, and believe me, he knows how I feel about him! After the event concluded, it was difficult to leave the scene. It was almost as if there was still a bit of magic lingering in the air as the mood was, and remained, joyously historic—yes, magical. I

A Witness to History (continued)

hope the First Family's visit was filled with plenty of that magic—Yosemite's special magic that rewards its visitors in so many ways. Because those rewards are spectacular, heart-filling and life-affirming—and available just as soon as one's lungs are filled with THAT air, the ears with the sounds of THAT nature and the eyes are filled with the incomparable sights of THAT remarkable place, a place which generously gives its magical self to all visitors from the smallest child to the most powerful person on the planet and his First Family.

The President's speech lauded the August 25, 2016 Centennial of the National Park Service. And on the weekend of August 20-21, the Mariposa Symphony Orchestra (MSO) concludes its five-county, seven-concert tour of my concert-length symphonic cycle "Our Nation's Nature," which I composed to commemorate that NPS 100th Anniversary. On Saturday August 20, we'll perform on the Sierra's east side (Mammoth Lakes.) Our seventh and final concert the following evening is now an invitation-only special event in Yosemite and is designated as the sole major event for the park's celebration of the NPS anniversary. I'm proud to have had a small role in this historic celebration of our NPS—and its crown jewel, Yosemite—with the MSO's April/May performances in Yosemite, Oakhurst, Mariposa, Merced, Sonora and now Mammoth, and back in Yosemite. Visit:

<http://tinyurl.com/MariposaSO>

Death Wish

By Peter Cavanaugh

Dusty Rhodes is one of my oldest friends.

Dusty is now in his seventh term as Hamilton County Auditor, having held this office for the last 26 years. Hamilton County, Ohio, with a population exceeding 800,000, includes the city of Cincinnati. For quite some time, Dusty was the only Democrat holding a major office in the County.

Dusty loves Donald Trump.

Dusty, a graduate of the Newhouse School of Communications at Syracuse University and one of the brightest folks I know, doesn't care if Donald Trump builds a wall, water boards prisoners, makes fun of cripples, demeans women or strangles tiny starving orphans with rusty barbed wire.

Dusty Rhodes wants Donald Trump elected because he wants "*a change*" since "*nothing is working.*" And, of course, Dusty hates Hillary.

I have suggested to Dusty that supporting Donald Trump requires an overt suspension of fair judgment. I didn't add that it also might be viewed as an act of moral abrogation bordering on intellectual cowardice.

I remain firmly convinced that Donald J. Trump is an oozing, open, festering sore on our American body politic. Yet many well-intended, otherwise responsible citizens, seem to see him as a simple solution—if not sole savior as he so humbly self declares.

Death Wish (Continued)

As witnessed by Dusty's mystifying allegiance, it has become uncomfortably evident they are deadly serious—mortally and terminally committed to see President Trump take office in January. I am therefore forced to speculate such folly represents nothing less than a classic death wish.

In Greek mythology, Thanatos was the demon of death. Sigmund Freud chose to use that word in defining the death drive—a powerful instinct toward chaos—ever lurking in our psychoanalytic nature.

According to Freud, we all basically have two life instincts: “*Eros*” which drives us to thrive and survive, and “*Thanatos*” which often causes us to engage in risky, self-destructive acts. It is theorized by some that this subconscious yearning for death masks a desire to return to our original, inorganic state, but we'll leave such speculation to greater minds.

One primary quality commonly associated with a serious reflection on destructive behavior makes perfect sense in trying to figure out what's happening with Trump. Simply stated, let's consider the phenomenon of stress relief. Just letting go. The Rolling Stones might call it, “*Some kind of ventilator.*” In fact they have. Often we just can't help ourselves.

Smoking. Racing. Cutting. Skydiving. Speeding. Fighting. Fasting. Overworking. Defiant drinking. Dirty dancing. Dangerous dating. Voting Republican.

All bring temporary satisfaction offering genuine emotional release and a sense of immediate personal control as phony and fake as the empty promises of Donald J. Trump.

Death Wish (continued)

Even another old friend of our Yosemite Democrats, Film Director Michael Moore, has come to believe that Trump will be our next President. Mike states with typical restraint—“*This wretched, ignorant, dangerous part-time clown and full-time sociopath is going to be our next president.*”

Among other reasons, Mr. Moore cites “*The Jesse Effect*”—observing that the people of Minnesota once elected a professional wrestler as governor—“*just because they could*” and “*voting for Ventura was their version of a good practical joke on a sick political system.*”

Ora pro amicis laeviculus.

Pray for clueless friends.

We can't have them elect Donald Trump.

“*It's a death trap, it's a suicide rap*”—Bruce Springsteen—“*Born to Run*”—1975

The Enemy Among Us?

By Lucille Apar

The address by Representative Tom McClintock to the United States Congress entitled, “The Enemy Among Us” evoked some long time memories. I said to myself:

“Where have I heard this before?”

And then, going back fifty, sixty, no seventy-plus years, the sound of ravings from a mad fascist in Europe returned, broadcast over a blaring radio under a dreary sky on a cold wartime day in the year 1942. The war in the Pacific had just started. A religious group was under fire from that madman, inciting millions of his countrymen and women to turn against innocent people simply because of their beliefs.

And six million Jews died as a result.

Have we so soon forgotten? Allow me to remind Messrs. McClintock and Trump as well as all their followers that more than twenty million Europeans were slaughtered in that holocaust, plus some thirty million in the Pacific region, all non-combatants of every color, ethnicity and faith.

And the world said “Never Again.”

Today we are faced with the same blame game: a religion is under fire by those anointed to represent us in Congress, inciting well-meaning people into condemnation of a specific race and religion however wrong it could be.

Let us instead place blame where it is deserved: those who invoke the words of a Constitutional Amendment written almost 250 years

The Enemy Among Us? (continued)

ago, at a time when weapons of mass destruction did not exist, and when guns, such as an AK-47 or an AR-15 or for that matter explosives of any description, were not a gleam in the eye nor even an idea.

We must take control of the distribution of weapons intended for use only in battlefields by people trained in their destructive capability, and certainly not in the hands of those whose mental capacity is in question or those misled unfortunates to whom the words of demagogues beholden to the manufacturers of such weapons are taken seriously.

Guns have no redeeming qualities for they are manufactured to kill, and kill they will continue to do unless we the people put a stop to it.

The National Debt—Trump and McClintock’s Error

By Ben Leet

I suppose it’s because I have a “Bernie” sticker on my car that one day a gentleman in Mariposa told me why he’s voting for Trump. This gentleman said, “He’s a businessman. We’ve got to get rid of politicians and elect businessmen.”

Even though Trump has been repeatedly through bankruptcy court, this doesn’t disqualify him for this gentleman. By restructuring his debt and distancing himself from personal liability, Trump has survived. And even though G.W. Bush, with his Harvard MBA, produced the worst, bar none, economic record since the 1930s, businessmen are needed by this gentleman.

One of the major themes of most Republicans is the danger of the national debt and how we must pay it off.

First: Cutting spending to balance the budget is like placing the economy in debtors’ prison. Locking up the debtor does not pay back the loan. In respect to the national debt, a healthy economy, operating at full employment, is absolutely necessary to pay it down. In 1950, the national debt stood at 90% of GDP, and in 1970 it had fallen to 40%, but in those 20 years, in only 5 years was the budget out of deficit. History shows us that a strong economy reduces the debt, not cuts. Full employment is needed—first. Adequate distribution of income is second, and we don’t have either.

Second: The Republicans perennially propose to reduce government spending and taxation and to eliminate as many regulations as they can. This is a recipe for a disabled economy. Ignoring regulations on mortgage lending caused the recent recession, and Alan Greenspan was negligent in his responsibility.

Trump and McClintock’s Error (continued)

The primary example of a successful recovery is Roosevelt between 1933 and 1937 when unemployment fell from 25% to 9.6%. Roosevelt’s government spent its way out of depression. This is why many economists say that “austerity” is a wrong-headed disaster. The period of WWII displayed the efficacy of government spending to increase output—output increased by 75% in 6 years, and the number of people employed increased by an incredible 40%. But the national debt also increased to 120% of GDP. The overall lesson is that full employment is tremendously powerful.

Third: Republicans would reduce the size of government—spending, taxes and regulations. This is their mantra, a recipe for a crippled economy. Even Mitt Romney admitted that precipitous cuts would destroy the economy. Trump would reduce spending by 29% or \$9 trillion over 10 years. Ryan’s plan would reduce it by 19% or \$6 trillion. Ryan’s plan takes 62% of his cuts from programs that serve poor, disabled and elderly Americans. It would reduce spending for these programs by 42% of their funding. Poverty would be an unmitigated disaster. McClintock voted in favor of this plan.

Fourth: Government transfers amount to 14% of national income, a large amount. According to the Congressional Budget Office’s report on income distribution for 2011, 6% goes to Social Security transfers, 4% to Medicare transfers, 2% to Medicaid, and 2% to “Other cash and in kind” transfers, what we call the “safety net.” The US Census’ Supplemental Poverty Measure reports that overall poverty is reduced by about 16%, from 31% to 15.3%—reduced by half—by government transfers. Poverty among seniors is reduced by Social Security from 50.0% to 14.4%, a very significant rescue to most American families, not just the elderly.

Trump and McClintock's Error (continued)

Other academics report that poverty overall is reduced from 25% to 15% due to transfers, a 40% reduction. A cut of 42% of funding would have a devastating effect on the poor.

So maybe a smaller government sounds appealing, but our economy and our society would be much worse off.

Ben Leet writes a blog, Economics Without Greed:

<http://benL8.blogspot.com>

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: _____

Total Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Please mail form and check payable to:

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