



YosemiteDems.net

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



The Mountain Democrat

April – May 2013

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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

April 2013

Apr. 6: Oakhurst Club Meeting
Sweetwater Steakhouse

Apr 13: Mariposa Club Meeting

Apr 28: MCDCC Fundraiser
(see Page 3)

May 2013

May. 4: Oakhurst Club Meeting
Sweetwater Steakhouse

May 11: Mariposa Club Meeting

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Gilia tricolor (Bird's-eyes)
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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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Madera County Democratic Central Committee Annual Luncheon Fundraiser

“Making California A Better Place!”

Sunday, April 28, 2013
12:30-3:30 PM

~Madera Clubhouse Restaurant~

For Information contact: Susan Rowe, MCDCC Chair
559.658.7343 srowe@sti.net

MCDCC – Off and Roaring!

The Mariposa County Democratic Central Committee is off to a great start! We have 14 members, and let me tell you—they are ALL active!

Our new MCDCC officers are:

Chair: Aaron Marcus
Vice Chair: Rosemarie Smallcombe
Treasurer: Kathy Lander
Secretary: Anne Brock
Executive Board Rep: Rosemarie Smallcombe

If you want to join the MCDCC please contact
Aaron Marcus: aarondmarcus@yahoo.com

S.O.P. (Same Old Party)

By Les Marsden

Republicans continue to soul-search after faring miserably in November 2012's elections. On March 18th the GOP released the results of its internal chest beating "post-mortem": a 97 page report insisting the party must woo low-income, young, minority and women voters and do a better job of "connecting people to our policies."

Republicans viewed their own party as "scary," "narrow minded," "out of touch" and made up of "stuffy old men." Which sounds terrible unless you relish being scary, narrow minded and out of touch old men. Other findings: minorities feel hated by the GOP. And ethnic Americans are on their way to becoming a majority of all Americans. Pity the party of stuffy old men; they're in a terrible quandary.

"The perception, revealed in polling, that the GOP does not care about people is doing great harm to the Party and its candidates on the federal level, especially in presidential years," the report said. But GOP leadership doesn't plan to change the message. Their report's bottom line is that they need to better SELL that defunct philosophy, not change it. But in my opinion, pandering with the occasional non-ancient, non-WASP face such as younger but no-less-scary Marco Rubio or off-the-chart demented Bobby Jindal ain't gonna help. Because most people see right through that ploy and we Democrats must expose the fact that the GOP of tomorrow is still the same old GOP of today.

Or more accurately: of yesterday.

Just after sifting through that report, I happened to re-read the words of a writer I enjoy. Striking, because they're so opposite of what the GOP leadership believes:

"We all want to help one another. Human beings are like that.

S.O.P. (continued)

We want to live by each other's happiness—not by each other's misery. We don't want to hate and despise one another. In this world there is room for everyone. And the good earth is rich and can provide for everyone. The way of life can be free and beautiful, but we have lost the way.

Greed has poisoned men's souls, has barricaded the world with hate, has goose-stepped us into misery and bloodshed. We have developed speed, but we have shut ourselves in. Machinery that gives abundance has left us in want. Our knowledge has made us cynical. Our cleverness, hard and unkind. We think too much and feel too little. More than machinery we need humanity. More than cleverness we need kindness and gentleness. Without these qualities, life will be violent and all will be lost.

Let us fight for a new world, a decent world that will give men a chance to work—that will give youth a future and old age a security. By the promise of these things, brutes have risen to power. But they lie. They do not fulfill that promise. They never will. Let us fight to free the world—to do away with greed, with hate and intolerance. Let us fight for a world of reason, a world where science and progress will lead to all men's happiness."

Though the "brutes" he referenced might have been today's GOP, they weren't. The writer of those words which seem so contemporary? Charlie Chaplin. Excerpted from the final speech from his 1939-40 script for *The Great Dictator*.

A brilliant comedic artist and damned decent human being, too. But those words (and his humanitarian beliefs) began a persecution of Chaplin by HUAC in 1947 which ultimately resulted in Chaplin being banned from re-entering the US after a European trip in 1952. And he wasn't to return until 1972, when an apologetic Hollywood honored him with an Oscar life achievement award. The same Hollywood which had attacked him for being a

S.O.P. (continued)

“Communist”—which, ironically, he had never been.

Our goal: live up to the standards I hope we share as Democrats, even while the GOP begins its new campaign of deceit. And strengthen our own resolve to make sure the least among us can enjoy good health, a secure future and old age, and all the rights inherent in the society. It's a society our Founders created and which countless others have fought and died to maintain. And a world about which some have “merely” made classic films, in defense of those human rights.



Mariposa Democratic Club meeting on March 9, 2013

A Moment Frozen In Time

By Peter Leinau

Moments frozen in time become our life's thread of pivotal memories, our sequence of epiphanies. The first kiss... the last goodbye... and last weekend, another.

“What’s this for?” she asked, glancing from our “You deserve a vote” sign to the petitions on our table. It’s a warm, friendly, early-spring Sierra afternoon outside Vons and we chat about our shared concern for public safety and the need for Congress to get to work on real solutions for gun violence. “I’m in the Tea Party, and I don’t want anyone taking my guns!” she declares, and I agree. After all, I’m a gun owner and I support the Second Amendment, too. We agree that the petitions to get Congress to act and in support of universal background checks are just common sense and she signs them both. “Who’s sponsoring these?” she asks. “The Oakhurst Democratic Club. We....” and then it happens... “I can’t sign anything Democrat!” Her eyes wide, she scratches out her signatures on the petitions and rushes away, my “Even when we agree?” hanging mid-air behind her, frozen in time.



Peter Cavanaugh, Vinetta Suzettis, Eileen Cavanaugh and Peter Leinau gather petitions outside Vons in Oakhurst

Mariposa Democratic Club's February Meeting

By Steve Smallcombe

The Mariposa Democratic Club's February meeting featured the National Park Service presenting the Merced River Plan Draft Environmental Impact Statement containing six Alternative Concepts.

Yosemite Superintendent, Don Neubacher, was at the meeting to answer questions, as was Woody Smeck, the Deputy Park Superintendent, and Elizabeth Munding from the Yosemite Planning staff.

Kathleen Morse, Yosemite Planning Division Chief gave an excellent 45 minute presentation on the steps that the NPS was proposing in all Alternative Concepts to protect and enhance the Wild and Scenic Merced River and the details of the preferred Alternative 5.

The preferred alternative (#5) promotes sustainability over generations, access by private vehicles while reducing traffic congestion, removes industrial and administrative functions, and creates a sense of "arrival" at Yosemite Village.

In particular, while the preferred alternative eliminates horse rentals, bike rentals and raft rentals, Sup't Neubacher clearly stated that private parties could bring in their own horses, bikes, and rafts, and that the bike and horse trails would remain.

One of the more controversial items in the proposed alternative is "overflow parking" in the West Valley.

More information including a copy of the PowerPoint talk is available at:

<http://www.mariposademocraticclub.org/February2013Meeting.html>

Mariposa Democratic Club March Meeting

By Steve Smallcombe

At the Mariposa Democratic Club's March meeting, Mr. Jim Rydingsword, Director of Mariposa Human Services started with a quote from Hubert Humphrey: "...the moral test of government is how that government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; those who are in the shadows of life; the sick, the needy and the handicapped." (last speech of Hubert H. Humphrey, Nov 1, 1977). This quote helps guide him in his work.

His department has a budget of \$16 million; this is virtually all funded by the state and federal governments. The department has a behavioral health arm that provides mental health services for both adults and children; it also has an alcohol and drug arm and a conservatorship arm. The dept. is required to serve mentally ill adults and children. A portion of mental health funding comes from the Mental Health Services Act which put a 1% tax on millionaires; another source is the Realignment Program in which the State sends funds to local governments; and a third source is Medi-Cal reimbursement. His department has a mental health clinic on their site.

Our second speaker was Mike McCreary, member of the J C Fremont Hospital Board, who gave a summary of the JCF financial situation. If the state continues to demand recoupment of the so called Medi-Cal "overpayment" the hospital will owe (so far) about \$1.1 million.

The hospital gets about \$2.2 million from sales tax and property tax; their budget is \$27 million a year. Last year the Ewing Wing lost about \$458K dollars; the emergency room lost \$1.1 to \$1.2 million (note: this is an unaudited figure).

On Feb 22nd, emergency legislation (AB900) was introduced to stop the cuts. We should all write letters to support it.

Herding Cats and Commanding the Tides

Peter Leinau, AD 5 Delegate to the CDP

The California Democratic Convention is happening in Sacramento April 12-14, and you are coming with me! Virtually speaking of course, so you can pack light. I'm one of our mountain area delegates to the convention, and I will be attending caucus meetings, voting for party and caucus officers, and trying my best to accomplish two simple things:

- 1) Get the Democratic Party to stand for what's best for long term sustainability and justice; and
- 2) Increase the number of Democrats who, when elected, take actions that contribute to sustainability and justice.

Did I say simple? The path toward sustainability, justice, and accountability of our candidates to their promises seems one of those journeys of a million steps or more. We all know how each journey begins though, with that single step. One of those steps within the party is the submission of "resolutions" which are statements of principle and/or a call for action by the party. In our "Mountain Democrats" area we have contributed seven resolutions for this convention. If all are adopted at the convention our state party will call on our elected Democrats to provide greater support for rural hospitals, eliminate the filibuster, put water reclamation and desalination considerations into statewide water planning, include eye and dental care in health care reform, require public disclosure and debate of the legal basis for the assassinations without trial or oversight, and oppose retroactive cuts to skilled nursing facilities. There will be over a hundred resolutions under consideration for adoption by the party, so I will be promoting ours and supporting others of similar good intent while working against those I believe to be mistaken. While the adopted resolutions have no "force of law" on our elected Democrats they express the will of the most active Democrats (the same ones who help with campaigns and contribute to political causes), and over time the actions of the elected officials do tend to move toward these positions.

Herding Cats and Commanding the Tides (continued)

Another step along the path is through the efforts of the party caucuses. A caucus is a group that looks out for the interests of a specific group within the Democratic Party. I belong to the Children's, Environmental, Labor, Progressive, and Rural Caucuses, for example. I encourage you to increase YOUR impact on party politics and our elected Democrats by joining a party caucus that represents your area(s) of interest. Even without personally attending a convention you then know your interest/concerns are being promoted and protected not only by individual delegates like me, but by the multiplied voice and impact of your caucus group. The larger the membership of a caucus the more clout it has in influencing the behavior of the party, so go to the caucus list at:

<http://www.cadem.org/about?id=0001>

and "power up" your causes just by joining a caucus!

That's two steps along the path. Thanks for traveling with me!



Isabel Barreras and Dr. Teresa Patterson,
State Center Community College District administrators,
speaking to the Oakhurst Democratic Club on Feb. 2, 2013

Guns or No Guns?

Lucille Apcar

In the year 1945, the Empire of Japan collapsed and the entire country suffered the humiliation of unconditional surrender. The conquerors known as the Allied Powers invaded their territories throughout the Pacific, and entered Japan with full contingent of armed forces.

Commanding General of the Armies of the Pacific, Douglas MacArthur set up headquarters in the capital city of Tokyo, General Robert L. Eichelberger, commander of U.S. Eighth Army, in the neighboring city of Yokohama. What was the very first action? Disarmament.

Disarmament not just of the Japanese forces, and a rather large contingent of German forces, but ALL armies forming the forces of invasion. English, Australian and American, and yes, even a handful of invading Soviets. There were no guns anywhere; all were confiscated except in the cases of those on guard duty. Nor were there any weapons of war, such as grenades, bombs, armored vehicles such as tanks, etc. Instead they offloaded instruments of peace and rehabilitation. Bulldozers to clear away the huge piles of rubble so that a devastated country could quickly return to a normal existence.

How do I know this? Well, by rather unfortunate happenstance. Our nanny goat, a beloved animal and pet who had sustained our family well through three years of semi-starvation, providing us with life preserving milk, suddenly became very ill, bellowing in pain. We had no idea how this came about, possibly she ingested some poisonous substance. There were no drugs available to alleviate her suffering or put her out of her misery.

My dad, well versed in humane slaughter of livestock to provide sustenance for his family, could not bring himself to perform such

Guns or No Guns? (continued)

an act on a much loved creature. He went to the American Military Police nearby, to ask if the suffering animal could be shot.

Believe it or not, the officer in charge could not perform the task until permission was granted by the Eighth Army Headquarters. Yes, they came with an army rifle and shot our goat. The gun in question was immediately removed and returned to the Army Depot.

To my knowledge, even with a heavily armed invading force, there were no gun deaths, because nobody had guns. Even the war criminals were put to death by hanging. There was no shooting that I witnessed or even heard about.

This for your information.



Mariposa Democratic Central Committee meeting March 9, 2013

An Apathetic Turnabout

By Gene Hubert

So how does a 52 year old decide to make a sudden turnabout from political apathy? Answers to this question are appearing daily the more I understand how the political process works. I realized one very important factor was due to my own ignorance. I'm not proud of my lack of caring and there are many stories I could relate to back this up, but you would be reading for weeks. I will save these stories for later. The fact is I care now. I am in the school of life, making the changes necessary to improve my ignorant status to educated.

There are events in life that wake you up to see things differently and I attribute my political reversal to the weekend of March 9th and 10th, 2013. The Mariposa Democratic Club and The Mariposa Democratic Committee agreed to meet on the same day, back to back, for better attendance, and it worked. This particular weekend our Communications Committee decided that appearing at the Regional 4 meeting in Modesto would be educational and beneficial. Two full days of intense political process opened my eyes that had been blind for so long.

The journey to the Region 4 meeting included Rosemarie and Steve Smallcombe, Lowell Young, Peter Leinau (from Oakhurst) and myself (Gene Hubert). We, as conscientious Democrats, decided to carpool. Saving gas and money was one thing, but having an hour and a half drive with a car full of well-educated democrats made for nonstop conversation on current topics. The carpool became my classroom. Having never attended a Democratic meeting outside of Mariposa, any kind of expectation was wasted energy and I decided to simply be a sponge. When we arrived and introductions were complete we found our seats. I collected all relevant paperwork and found my seat. I was ready for anything. The meeting began and I was pleasantly surprised by their process. My ears were listening and my eyes were open despite the effects of having "fun" in Fresno the night before.

An Apathetic Turnabout (continued)

The Regional meeting was informative and expeditious so I began people watching. I payed attention to reactions, which is one of my passions. I witnessed an unknown group of people, very few of whom knew each other, come together, peacefully connect (whether they agreed or disagreed) and in the end stand together as one for the betterment and advancement of all.

My mind was racing trying to find reasons as to why I had allowed so many years of apathy in the political process. So many years of not caring because of my belief that all politicians are crooks so my voice doesn't matter. After all, who am I? They are going to do what they want anyway, so why bother? I listened and processed and when the agenda was complete a few people wanted to make speeches. Two of the speeches included a speaker from The Young Democrats, and the other that caught my attention was a 27 year old Josh Franco who was running for Mayor of Merced. After listening and spending time talking to Josh and hearing his ideas my world changed. Having lived in Mariposa for 1.5 years and only having become involved in the Democratic process just a little over four months ago, I realized why the turnabout occurred. I was drawn in with 100% enthusiasm in the love and caring for the future of Mariposa due in large part to the friends I now call family and the town I now call home.



Rejoice, Dear Hearts!—Part Two

By Peter Cavanaugh

With time flying by faster than Superman's iconic speeding bullet, it's amazing to recall that our "For Your Consideration" column is now well into its fourth year as a regular weekly feature in Oakhurst's Sierra Star.

Initiated through the efforts of Lynn Jacobsson in late Autumn '09, colleague Alan Cheah and I have enjoyed sharing a hopefully more progressive perspective on national and local politics than that agonizingly offered by other regular Star contributors such as Dr. Bill and Junior Froelich.

There are even times when we are accidentally more prescient than usual, such as in the newspaper's February 21st issue. In an offering entitled, "Rejoice, Dear Hearts." I devoted significant space to a discussion of Le Moyne College in Syracuse, a Jesuit institution.

The whole thrust was stressing the importance of critical thinking as encouraged by a Jesuit philosophy exposing students to comparative schools of reflective thought without fear of concurrent contamination. One learns to avoid confusing knowledge with belief or firm facts with fanciful fiction. My specific point of focus was the brilliant early '60's comedy of a gentleman named Dave Gardner, who reminded me very much of "a Jesuit" in his awesome ability to seemingly reflect on almost everything at once.

Little did I know that within a few short weeks Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Argentina would be chosen to head the Roman Catholic Church, naming himself Pope Francis the First. In the process, our New Holiness also becomes the first Pope ever from the Americas and, of even greater significance, the first Jesuit to reign supreme over a billion plus faithful souls around the world.

Rejoice, Dear Hearts!—Part Two (continued)

Make no mistake. There's much more happening here than meets the uninformed eye. Don't look for immediate, rapid change. Do expect extraordinary thought, rigid reorganization, steel discipline and exemplary dedication to social justice. Less welcomed will be initial adherence to traditional male organizational dominance and most matters concerning S-E-X. This dangerous area includes negative outlooks on homosexuality, birth control, abortion, masturbation, all sensitive body parts, fond memories of innocently discovering puberty or any extended thinking about any of the preceding—possible pun intended.

So I submit Francis I will be sexually, constrictively conservative, while socially, positively progressive. I'll take that for openers.

Late last year, I lost an old friend.

Father Philip Keane, S.S. had attended school with me for six years at St. Mary's Academy in Syracuse. When we graduated in '59, I headed for Le Moyne as Phil began his studies for the priesthood, eventually becoming Proctor at St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore and obtaining global renown as a major Catholic Theologian.

In 1977, the Paulist Press published a masterwork by Father Keane entitled, "Sexual Morality." Among other brilliantly reasoned positions was Phil's argument that "homosexual conduct cannot be understood as absolutely immoral." In May of 1984, the Vatican's Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger ordered the book banned by officially lifting its imprimatur, believing Father Phil was promoting an "intrinsic evil."

In 2005, Ratzinger became Pope Benedict XVI. A few weeks ago, Benedict became the Sarah Palin of Pontiffs, quitting before his job was done.

Rejoice, Dear Hearts!—Part Two (continued)

Phil Keane would have made a fine Jesuit.

I remember his final words to the class after celebrating Mass at our 50th High School Reunion in 2009.

"I'll pray for you for all Eternity."

To which I responded at the time in my heart and now in print—
"Rejoice, Dear Hearts!"

Perhaps there's hope in that new Pope.



Oakhurst Democratic Club meeting February 2nd, 2013

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: \$ _____

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