



DEMOCRATIC CLUB OF CAMARILLO



Newsletter
July 2009



IT'S FIESTA TIME!

Thanks to Webmistress Joan Rust for these snapshots of Booth Workers from Fiestas Past!

► ARE YOU SIGNED UP TO STAFF THE BOOTH?
DON'T MISS OUT ON ALL THE FUN! ◀

(Funny, isn't it - the *"No Arnold – No!"* theme remains forever fresh!

www.democraticclubofcamarillo.com 805-504-3749

General Meeting Thursday – July 2, 2009

6:15 pm – Ice Cream Social!
Gather and Networking
7:00 Meeting

Orchid Building, UFCW Hall
816 Camarillo Springs Road, Camarillo
at the Camarillo Springs exit from the South 101
Program:
John Krist Ventura County Farm Bureau

July President's Message

Dear Members,

I do hope you are having a great summer and that you can put the July 2 membership meeting on your calendar! Our ever-creative food committee will serve All-American ice cream sundaes and root beer floats in honor of Independence Day. For our program, we are delighted to welcome Mr. John Krist, the head of the VC Farm Bureau, to speak on the subject of AGRICULTURE - the #1 economic engine for our area! Come join us to learn more about the politics of farming and water.

We have two activities coming up where you can have the opportunity to volunteer to register voters. The Club has a booth at the Camarillo Fiesta July 11 and 12 (Sat. & Sun). Chairperson Marianne Slaughter wants to hear from you – call 805-484-8415 to volunteer.

The second opportunity is the Ventura County Fair in August. Our club is responsible for two days at the Fair – Wednesday and Thursday August 12 and 13. Please call me, Sue, at 805-469-3749 to sign up for the Fair.

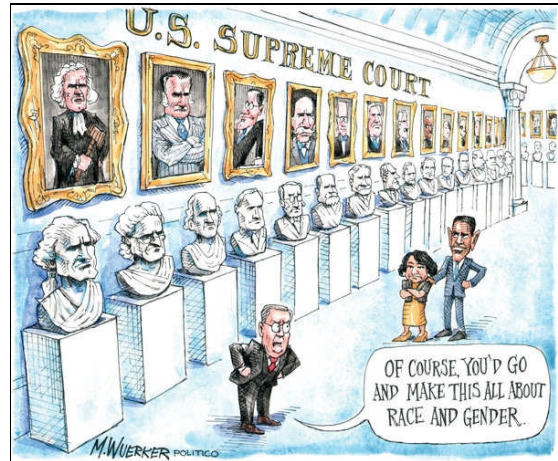
Both activities are lots of fun and worthwhile. At the Camarillo Fiesta we will have various swag and water available for donations. And don't forget - our every-Saturday morning Farmer's market booth where you can help to register voters and help to recruit new club members.

Another date and time to save is August 16, 2009 from 1:00-4:00 PM. Join our veterans from the Club at a rally to save the Veteran's land on the corner of San Vicente and Wilshire Boulevards. Steve Crandall has contributed an in-depth article to this newsletter about this outrage and the rally.

Also, please remember to bring your extra canned foods and we will deliver them to "Food Share."

I wish you all a HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY. See you July 2, 2009!

Sincerely,
Sue Bolorochi-President



July Meeting Program Notes

- *Kate McDermott*, Program Chair
John Krist, Ventura County Farm Bureau CEO, will be our speaker at the Thursday, July 2nd General Meeting. Mr. Krist is an award-winning journalist and wrote a popular column for the Ventura County Star for many years. He has published two books, and a yearlong series, "Farming on the Edge", about Ventura County agriculture. He has written many commentaries on land-use, natural resources and environmental issues.

The Farm Bureau of Ventura County is an independent, non-partisan organization which advocates for the agricultural industry and supports the vitality and long-term success of agriculture in Ventura County.

Other scheduled speakers include

- Dr. Kristofer Young of Ojai, who will tell of his efforts to support local farmers and eat only food grown within 100 miles of Ojai for all of 2009
- Eileen Mannion, who will update the club on the progress of the Camarillo Community Garden and
- Phil McGrath of McGrath Family Farms will share his vision for local agriculture.

**How's this for a concept?
Advertise with your friends:**

Are you a small business owner or do you know a small business owner who publicly supports democratic principles? A business card size ad will be available for purchase for \$30.00 a year and the ad will be placed in eleven newsletters. The year will go from Jan-Dec. However, a business can purchase this ad any time throughout the year. If you or someone you know would like to advertise you can contact Bruce Little at 805-482-8360 or his email at bruce@selecttravelnetwork.com or mail your business card along with a check made out to the Democratic Club of Camarillo to our new club address: P.O. Box 348 Camarillo, 93011-0348. Remember the newsletter deadline is around the 18th day of the month.

**And now, a word from our
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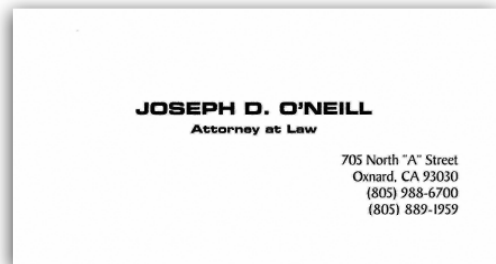


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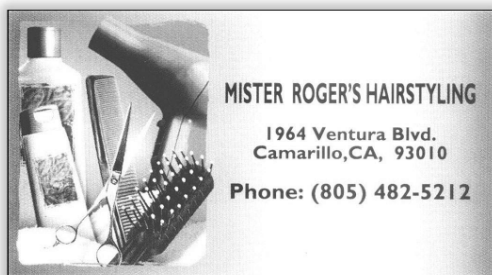
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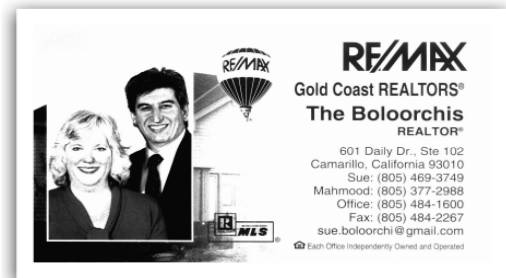
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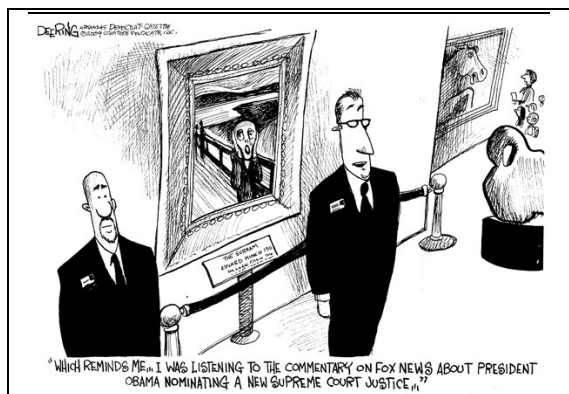
The long-blocked trial of José Angeles, political operative and \$80,000-per-year administrative assistant to Audra Strickland, was scheduled to start on June 18th, a year to the day since the assault of three participants in a peaceful demonstration at a Tony Strickland fundraiser.

What in fact happened on the 18th at 8:00 a.m. was the announcement of yet *another* month's delay, until July 23. This latest delay was granted when defense stated that the defendant's father is ill; but defense counsel also told the court that an investigator had been hired to interview all the *prosecution's* witnesses.

In another interesting turn, a story about the trial delay was posted on the Ventura Star website on Thursday, June 18; but the story appeared in print only in East County, and comments that had been posted Thursday night mysteriously disappeared by Friday morning.

The story says that a key witness for the defense would be Hector Barajas, the communications director for the California Republican Party, who did not witness the attack. The witness list provided only last week by the defense under pressure from the court to do so did not mention Mr. Barajas, but did list Audra Strickland and a campaign lawyer. Again, neither of these "witnesses" witnessed the attack.

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Rich neighbors grab land held in trust for veterans

- Steve Crandall

121 years ago two families deeded 388 acres of land to the United States for the "sole purpose of providing veterans a place to heal from war". This property is now called the "VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System" and is managed by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The VA has allowed many of the buildings to fall into disrepair. There is a Chapel near the entrance to the property that can't be used. There are abandoned buildings with broken windows. The lawns are riddled with holes created by ground squirrels and gophers. A building and courtyard that was dedicated in 1947 to the Women of the Military has been allowed to crumble. The roads throughout the property are in need of repair and caution tape is draped around the holes in the parking lots.

While the veteran's property crumbles the VA has made questionable land deals with private entities.

- They leased 21 acres of Veterans' land for less than \$1,500 per acre to a school that charges an annual tuition of \$30,000 per student.
- The VA leases the Veteran's Wadsworth Theatre to an entertainment group for the benefit and entertainment of the neighboring communities while the veterans and patients at the VA facility have no theatre of their own.
- UCLA has a baseball diamond on Veterans' land but if the American Legion wants to use it, it will cost them \$1,500.
- The VA has even turned a section of land into a dog park for the use of the Brentwood community.
- There is a golf course that was constructed for veterans but open to use by Brentwood golfers for a measly \$12 green fee. Due to the VA's lack of oversight the golf course has been closed because of an \$200,000 embezzlement. The VA is now in search of a private entity to run the course.
- There is \$1,000 per person annual "Celebrity Carnival and Picnic Fundraiser" hosted on Veterans Land and none of the money goes to Veterans.

All this brings us to the status of 16 acres of Veteran's property at the corner of Wilshire and San Vicente Boulevards. The VA has entered into a "rent

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free” a no-bid, long-term lease to a group of wealthy Brentwood and Beverly Hills homeowners calling themselves the Veterans Park Conservancy to build a public community park. Once the land has been developed it will never be returned to the Veterans.

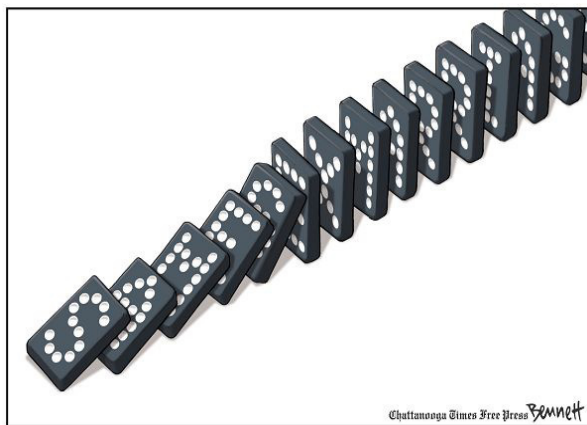
Thanks to a small group of veterans and supporters, who have been holding rallies at the corner of Wilshire and San Vicente every Sunday for the last 65 consecutive weeks, this land has remained undeveloped. The Veterans Caucus of the California Democratic Party drafted a resolution to force the VA to rescind the deal with the Veterans Park but was unable to find support from our elected officials. Senator Dianne Feinstein, Senator Barbara Boxer, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, LA County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky and Congressman Henry Waxman have all made public promises to support veterans and protect the veteran’s land but by refusing to endorse the resolution are turning the land over to the Veterans Park Conservancy.

We are asking for your support by joining us for a rally at the corner of Wilshire and San Vicente Blvds. on August 16th. Please contact Steve Crandall at (805) 388-1542 for additional information and let him know you will support the veterans by attending the rally to “SAVE OUR VETERAN’S LAND”.

Steve is the Club Chair of Veterans’ Affairs and President of the California Central Coast Chapter of Vietnam Veterans Against the War.

Food Share donations at Club Meeting

Bringing non-perishable foodstuffs for Camarillo Food Share has become a Club tradition. Thanks to all who bring food to share. Keep it coming!



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Letters to the Editor Department

We have the answer to the Right-Wing Drive that fills the Op-Ed pages of the Star and the Times: Good, intelligent and pointed response by progressives! If you write a letter – or see one that someone else wrote – send it to the Newsletter at jackn.phyls@verizon.net Please put the DATE and the paper that printed the letter.

Re: June 14 opinion column from Audra Strickland, “Time to reform budget process”:

Once again Assemblywoman Audra Strickland wastes three columns of print on the Opinion page of the Sunday Star. She calls for the legislative leadership to reform and streamline the budget process, yet she tells us that only five elected officials really craft the state budget – three Republicans and two Democrats. So who is to blame?

Our legislature is at a stalemate. Democrats hold the majority, yet they can’t get the 2/3 majority vote required to pass a budget because Republicans refuse to sign off on raising revenue to cover critical services. Therefore, it is minority Republicans who ultimately decide the fate of California's budget process.

Strickland complains about “dark-of-the-night” deals, but as I recall it was just such a deal by Republican Senator Abel Maldonado that garnered promises not to increase certain taxes and also resulted in a series of ill-fated propositions being placed on the May ballot. Hindsight shows us that Californians not only rejected this Republican trick, but in so voting actually acknowledged a revenue rescue was necessary.

So why is California really in the mess it is in? Despite the waste and pork barrel spending Strickland dwells on relentlessly, the biggest culprit is an anticipated decrease in state revenue. We will see revenue shrink from about \$100 billion to only \$83 billion this year due to the global recession. That’s a 27% decrease in money the state has to spend. In an attempt to fill an expected \$41 billion deficit, California could fire every state employee -- including prison guards and university professors -- close every government office, stop all travel and even cease the purchase of paper clips without closing the budget gap. The government would be gone but the deficit wouldn’t. It’s time for Strickland (and Republicans) to get real and acknowledge that it will be impossible to fix the

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budget deficit by eliminating waste and cutting programs.

A combination revenue rescue combined with cuts in non-essential spending is the only answer and we have just a couple of weeks to make it happen. I've seen a number of proposals, but at a minimum we should join every other oil-producing state and tax oil extraction at 9.9% (Alaska is 25%). Second, we should impose a dime-a-drink alcohol tax, a cigarette tax and a medical marijuana tax. Next, we should restore top income tax brackets of 10 and 11 percent (up from 9.55% max) on incomes of \$250,000 and above, and establish a 3% withholding for all independent contractors who earn more than \$600 per year.

Then, the Legislature should reverse three expensive tax concessions to businesses that were offered up as bribes to Republicans in September 2008 and February 2009. These breaks allow, among other things, corporations to share credits with affiliated companies allowing them to use this year's losses to obtain rebates on prior-year taxes. The legislature should also update rules governing the assessment of commercial property that allow companies that own commercial real estate to avoid having their property values updated, except under unusual circumstances.

Next, restore the vehicle license fee to 2% - the rate when Gov. Schwarzenegger took office. Then phase out obsolete and ineffective Enterprise Zone tax breaks. Reduce the State sales tax rate from 5% to only 3% but extend taxes to all services. The state could also end multinational tax sheltering and eliminate the tax loophole on like-kind exchange of commercial property. Additionally, mortgage interest deductions should be limited to the owner's primary residence.

We could save \$1 billion in five years by converting all death sentences to life in prison without possibility of parole. And last, but not least, we could use \$4 billion of the \$4.5 billion rainy-day fund Gov. Schwarzenegger has budgeted to help reduce the projected deficit. It's not just raining, there's lightning and thunder!

A combination of these and other revenue rescue proposals could easily add up to \$20 to \$30 billion, spread the cost fairly among individuals and business, and go a long way toward cutting our deficit and saving vital programs and services. Our state needs courageous leadership. I call on everyone to urge your state legislator to oppose an all-cuts budget.

- Club Vice President Bruce Little had about 2/3 of this letter printed in the Star last week The Newsletter is proud to present the unexpurgated version.

If you had a letter published somewhere - or even if you sent one in that wasn't published - it should be here, shared with other Club members. If it's not here, it could be that the editor may have misplaced your email - either through fussy-headedness or as part of his subtle campaign to see if anyone else really wants his job. On the other hand, it *could* be that the reason your letter isn't here is because - gasp! - you didn't send it in!

Remember, this is YOUR newsletter, and only as good as the stuff you send. Send your good stuff to:
jackn.phyls@verizon.net

Future General Meeting Programs:

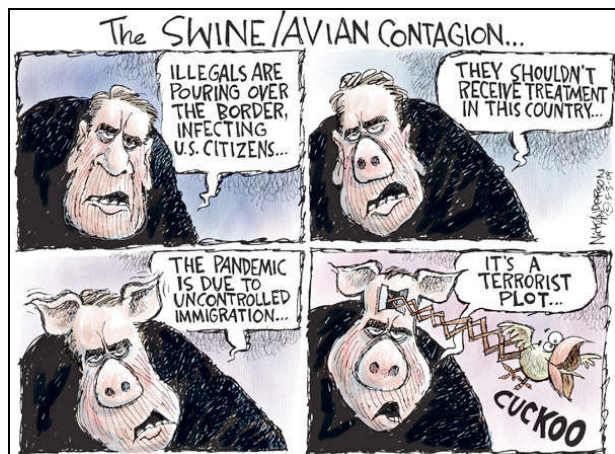
- August:** Dr. Greg Freeland - CLU and CAUSE
- September:** Dr. Robert Dodge - Beyond War/Citizens for Peaceful Resolutions
- October:** Dr. Stan Mantooth - Ventura County Supt. of Schools
- Kate McDermott

Thanks to Program Chair Kate McDermott for lining up our interesting speakers!

Club Community News

Marge Grate reports that long-time member and activist **Jean Shev** has fractured her pelvis and will be house bound for at least 4 more weeks. The disability seems likely to be a long haul. We all join in wishing her well, and look forward to seeing her at meetings once again.

Thanks, Marge, for keeping us posted. And please, everyone - do the same! This newsletter is just the place to keep everyone informed of what is going on with members.



Republicans (58%) now favor what [essentially equates to repealing](#) the 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' policy."

- Follow The Money:

In what amounts to an "end-run" around campaign finance laws, lobbyists in 2008 made \$35.8 million in payments to charities affiliated with lawmakers and to "honor" lawmakers and other federal officials. The USA Today analysis found that "[m]ost of the money -- about \$28 million -- went to non-profit groups, [some with direct ties to members of Congress.](#)" ... the donations "came in response to a personal appeal for funds from the lawmaker."



- What's a locavore? *

In 2007, the editors at the New Oxford American Dictionary announced that their word of the year was "locavore," which means someone who eats locally grown food.

At the July 2nd DCC meeting, you will get to meet locavore, Kris Young. Kris lives in Ojai and pledges to eat only locally grown food in 2009.

Some people become locavores because they want to support their local farmers and economy. Others want to reduce the size of their carbon footprint and make a positive impact on the environment. Most food travels an average of 1,300 to 2,000 miles from the farm to the store.

People become locavores for health reasons or simply because they believe that local foods taste better. Many locavores find that their diet helps them learn new things about the food they eat and the community where they live.

We hope to do both at the July 2nd meeting.

And we hope this will be a new monthly feature.

Keep 'em coming, Kate!

* The editor's dictionary defines it as a predator that feeds upon Thomas and his little friends.

Now, how's about something from **YOU** to cover you with fame and recognition

And

to fill this space next month?

More New Members!

. A warm welcome to the following new members who joined at the Spring Fling, the Farmer's Market, or at our club meeting:

Mike Cogua, Allison and Loyd Champion, Carol Cressy, Melissa DeMarco, Judi Gill, Helen Hartman and Shawn Stern.

And a very special thank you to **Melissa deMarco** for her generous donation to the club!

We would like to extend an extra welcome to **Steven Brown** and **Sue Gunther** who were inadvertently left out of last month's newsletter

Our Club is continuing to grow every month, we have 259 members. My goal is to have 275 paid members by the end of the year, but I can't do it alone, I need your help. Do you have a neighbor who is a Dem, your hairdresser, friends? All are potential members! (If this is out of your comfort zone I totally understand and respect that.) Thank you Judy for your help and hard work.

- Sandi Gummerman

Parting tidbits, from Kate McDermott (compressed, to fit them all in):

- "The times they are 'a-changing'!"

A Gallup poll released late last week found that conservatives are now in favor of allowing gay Americans serve openly in the military. Majorities of "weekly churchgoers (60%), conservatives (58%), and

If you have any questions about membership or the emailing or snail mailing of your copy of this magnificent publication, please contact Sandi Gummerman at (805) 389-0859, or by email: sandig@verizon.net

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