

THE VOORHIS VOICE

A Liberal Voice of the Inland Empire

January 2008 – Electronic Edition

claremontdemocrats@yahoo.com

www.claremontdems.org

MEETINGS & EVENTS IN JANUARY AND BEYOND

Special note: Beginning January 2008, the noon luncheon series will be moved to the SECOND (instead of the first) Friday of each month. The location, China Star restaurant, remains the same.

On January 11, the speaker will be Dr. Marilyn Montenegro, who will discuss how to reduce the huge population of prisoners in California prisons and also how to reduce the system's exorbitant cost without increasing crime or recidivism.

Marilyn Montenegro, PhD, LCSW, is a social worker who has serviced women in prison and leaving prison for over 20 years. She is coordinator of the California Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers Women's Council Prison Project, a member of the Action Committee for Women in Prison, and she works closely with the Mexican American Resource Association (an organization of women imprisoned at the California Institution of Women in Corona). She provides consultation to agencies serving women leaving prison in the Los Angeles area. The NASW chose her as Social Worker of the Year in 2002. She received the Mary Rhodes Award from the Loretto Women's network in 2003 and the Speak Truth to Power Award from Harbor Area Halfway Houses in 2005

The luncheon will take place in the rear banquet room of the China Star Restaurant, 921 W. Foothill Blvd. in Claremont. The event begins at noon and ends at 2pm. Food is served family style. The menu is 50 percent vegetarian and contains no pork. Attendance is free, but the lunch costs \$10, which includes meal, tax, and tip. There is plenty of free parking, and no stairs to climb.

The first regularly scheduled evening Club meeting of the new year will be held on January 28, 2008, 7:30 p.m., in Porter Hall, Pilgrim Place. Featured speaker will be Miguel Tinker Salas, Ph.D., Arango Professor in Latin American History and Chicano/a Studies at Pomona College. What's happening in Venezuela with regard to oil, politics, and culture? What is the current status of the U.S./Venezuela relationship? Time permitting, following the speaker, there will be a discussion of the low income housing issue currently facing the City of Claremont. The Club will not take an official position on this issue at this meeting; the "rules" for taking positions on local issues are being discussed at the Executive Committee level, and a By-law amendment will probably be proposed to the membership in March.

Many programs for 2008 are still being arranged. If you have any suggestions, please contact Ivan Light at 621-1159 or ihlight@yahoo.com.

PROPOSITIONS ON THE FEBRUARY 5 PRIMARY BALLOT:

The California Democratic Party has taken the following positions:

OPPOSE Prop. 91.

NEUTRAL on Prop. 92.

SUPPORT Prop. 93.

NEUTRAL on Props. 94 through 97.

The pros and cons of these issues are contained in the Primary Election guide, which California Secretary of State Debra Bowen has recently mailed to all registered voters.

IN MEMORIAM

One of our faithful members, Donna Whinnery, passed away recently. We are grateful for her life and good works, and we offer our condolences to her husband, Bill.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND

If you could do a two hour shift at the Democratic table at the Claremont Farmer's Market on Sunday mornings from time to time, please contact Gar Byrum at 621-9730 or garlandbyrum@aol.com. We need you – please help!!

DO PAY YOUR DUES IF THEY ARE CURRENTLY DUE

Dues for 2008 are now due. Please use the form on the next page to remit your payment, or just send \$1 million (OK, just kidding) to: *Democratic Club, PO Box 1201, Claremont CA 91711.*

SAM PEDROZA SPEAKS AT THE OCTOBER MEETING

Recently elected Claremont City Councilman Sam Pedroza was the featured speaker at the club's October members' meeting. Pedroza, a member of the club, was making his first public attempt at summarizing what the council had accomplished and what he had learned since the new council had taken power following the March election.

According to Pedroza, this council has worked very hard at being civil and attempting to work together despite significant differences of opinion.

Further, they established at the start a priority list of issues which has helped keep them working together. However, as is the way of the world, unplanned topics can interfere with the organization of council business; this time it was the matter of ‘medical marijuana’ which came to occupy far more time than anticipated.

Pedroza discussed the current status of the major issues facing the city and the council. He then responded to questions from a lively audience.

IT’S TIME TO ENERGIZE YOUR COMMITMENT TO OUR DEMOCRATIC EFFORTS! PLEASE PAY YOUR DUES!

Working together, we can transform society and politics in America:

- by building a community that knows what it values and can’t be manipulated;**
- by communicating our views to the public and to our Party and government officials; and**
- by bringing out our voters to support our candidates and our positions on ballot issues.**

Circle choices: Patron \$100 or more. Contributing \$50 Family \$35 Individual \$25 Student/Limited Income \$5

Name _____
Street Address or PO Box _____
City, State and Zip _____
Telephone _____ Email _____

In this crucial election year, please add at least \$25 (or as much as you can afford) to help your local Democratic Club elect responsible office holders! Yes (\$_____) Sorry, not today

(Part of your dues and contributions may be contributed to Federal and State candidates.)

*Please fill out the forms above and below. Mail the information with your check to:
Democratic Club, PO Box 1201, Claremont CA 91711*

PLEASE CIRCLE THOSE CLUB ACTIVITIES THAT INTEREST YOU:

- Develop our neighborhood teams**
- Staff a meeting or conference**
- Help with fund-raising**
- Edit or publish our newsletter**
- Develop resolutions on public policies**
- Publicize our activities and policies**

Assist with producing our cable TV programs
Staff our voter registration and literature tables
Help our campaign headquarters (scout location, volunteer, etc.)
Research vulnerabilities of opposition candidates
Improve our technology (Website, Database, E-mail distribution, etc.)
Other: _____

Note: Not all of the above will be needed at all times, but it will be good to know who can do something when we'll need it.

LEND ME YOUR EARS AND YOUR IDEAS

(The following is a “draft” acceptance speech – one I would like to see the Democratic Party nominee give at the convention. Suggestions for additions, other speeches you would like to write for famous (or infamous) public servants, etc. are all welcome and will be considered for inclusion in future issues. –Ed.)

Fellow Delegates, Fellow Democrats, and Fellow Americans,

More than seven years ago, this country started down a path that has taken us to the brink of international, environmental, economic, and political disaster.

Approximately one month after receiving a classified intelligence report stating that terrorist enemies were seriously intent on attacking the United States on its own soil, President Bush went on vacation. Shortly thereafter, this attack materialized as the infamous hijacking of four domestic airplanes, three of which managed to hit their targets. Thousands of innocent American lives were lost. But our response to this tragedy has itself been a tragedy. Osama bin Laden, the leader of the group responsible for the attack, still lives, somewhere in Pakistan or Afghanistan, despite our President’s pledge to bring him to justice; meanwhile, we invaded Iraq, and five years later our courageous American service men and women are still in harm’s way, fighting a war started under false pretenses and continued not out of hope for military victory but out of fear of political defeat.

More than seven years ago, this country’s economy was strong. Decades of federal deficits were being systemically reduced, taking the burden of debt off the backs of our children and grandchildren. Did we continue these progressive policies, initiated under President Bill Clinton, under the Republican Administration? No! Under the leadership, if one is willing to call it that, of the Republicans, the deficit has soared anew, victim not only of the interminable war but of political cowardice. Every American knows that “there is no free lunch.” But the wealthy have been feasting on caviar and crabmeat, refusing to pay the bill, while too many Americans subsist on bullion and baloney.

More than seven years ago, this country’s environmental commitment was strong. We still had a chance to combat global warming successfully and protect our environment in a

responsible way. Neither of these principles requires bringing business to its knees. There is a cost associated with using natural resources prudently, but no one segment of our economy need shoulder that burden alone. As residents of the planet, as adults, all of us need to be responsible for the consequences of our actions and share the costs equitably. Have we done so under this Republican Administration? No! This administration provides energy companies with enormous tax breaks. This administration makes it easier for logging companies to harvest precious timber. This administration refuse to accept our rightful place as leader of the free world in the conquest to preserve a stable earth – a conquest largely required by our own way of life.

More than seven years ago, this country's Constitution was strong. The three branches of our federal government operated independently, as they were intended to by our founding fathers. When the President of the United States signed a bill passed by Congress, his intent was to administer the law fairly, as envisioned by those empowered in the Constitution to adopt legislation. Our citizens enjoyed the right of habeas corpus; their telephone and internet conversations were subject to government scrutiny only if a warrant was issued by an authorized court of law; we had no need for a "Patriot Act" that authorizes searches of our private homes at the whim of unsupervised government spies; opposing points of view within our government were encouraged, since the truth is frequently arrived at in complex situations through dialogue between intelligent men and women who hold diverse points of view. Is our Constitution still strong under this Republican Administration? No! When President Bush approves legislation, he signs an illegal statement claiming the right to enforce the law as he sees fit, not as Congress intended. When our President and Vice President meet with advisors in the White House – OUR house – they claim we have no right to know who they are or what they discuss. It is ironic that the Federal government, under Republicans who claim to abhor big government, has undergone a conversion from benign parent to Big Brother!

More than seven years ago, this country was strong domestically and respected internationally. Is this still true under today's Republican administration? No! No, we are not. And that's why I accept the nomination of this great party to become the next President of the United States.

During the next several months, I will ask for the vote of all Americans who value our Constitution and our way of life. They will ask, "What is your vision for this country? In what direction will you lead us? If we elect you, what will our country look like four years from now?" Here are my answers.

- This country will never go to war under false pretenses. This country will end all current wars that started under false pretenses. This country will never hesitate to go to war in the future if war is required to preserve our way of life.
- This country will abide by the Geneva Conventions and all other treaties negotiated and signed by our predecessors for the benefit of humankind. We will not engage in the

torture of citizens of other countries, and we will not tolerate the torture of American citizens, under any circumstances.

- This country will respect its environment as a heritage for future generations. We will utilize its precious resources for our own benefit, but we will mitigate the consequences of such use through responsible policies intended to ensure that the earth remains, for many centuries, a habitable, hospitable place.

- This country will adopt philosophies and policies that respect the human condition. We will educate all Americans. We will provide all Americans with health care. We will be mindful of those in their golden years, whose labors have helped build this country and who now deserve our gratitude and our support. We will ensure that all Americans have the opportunity to provide for their families through lawful employment. And we will ensure that everyone who enjoys this good life pays his or her fair share of the inevitable cost.

- This country will restore to glory the Constitution of the United States. Every school child – every adult – every senior citizen – will know, understand, and respect the provisions of the Bill of Rights. The government itself will know, understand, and respect the provisions of the Bill of Rights. Responsible dissent, based on facts, will flourish; insinuation, slander, secrecy, and guilt by association, the trademarks of political charlatans, will fade, relegated to dark corners inhabited only by those who value their own special interests above the common good.

- This country, when I become its President, will make decisions for the good of all, in the light of all relevant information, in the presence of all competing ideas. I will not live in a bubble! I will listen to my advisors, but I will not allow them to shut me away from the citizens of my country. I will read newspapers and magazines. I will meet with people who seek to make me aware of how common conditions affect the common man. And, as a consequence, the actions I take will meet the test of common sense.

Thank you for your support. Thank you for your confidence. Thank you for the hard work that will be required to bring this message of hope to the millions of people who will, next November, make a momentous decision. With your help, WE SHALL WIN! THE PEOPLE SHALL WIN!

Ronald Wolff

The “Dean’s” List

Democratic Party Chair Howard Dean delivered the following Democratic precepts at the National Baptist Convention on September 6, 2007. Governor Dean said, “We know what moral issues are about . . . As Democrats we believe:

1. That no child should go to bed hungry.

2. That it is a moral issue that we no longer be the last industrialized country on the face of the Earth that doesn't have health care for every single person, and we have acted on that in Congress by offering every child under 18 health insurance.
3. That war should be a last resort only after diplomacy has been exhausted.
4. That we should properly equip our troops before we send them to war.
5. That we should properly take care of our veterans when they come home.
6. That everyone deserves equal rights under the law.
7. That we should be good stewards of the Earth.
8. That hardworking people should earn a living wage and be able to care for their families.
9. That we shouldn't pass debt onto our children and our grandchildren.
10. That faith should not be used to divide people.
11. That you and I have more in common than we have differences.

TO BUILD OR NOT TO BUILD, THAT IS THE QUESTION

In case you've missed it (not a likely scenario, I admit), a debate has been raging in Claremont about whether to build affordable (low income) housing near the corner of Baseline Road and Towne Avenue. If you haven't been privy to the onslaught of e-mails that has been exchanged during the last month among members of the Claremont Democratic Party (your computer thanks you profusely), that debate has also been raging internally, bordering at times on a tone not often witnessed by this observer outside the realm of, well, two-party politics and Fox "News." Reproducing these e-mails and all the relevant background documents would take up far too much room in this newsletter and might even raise your blood pressure to an unhealthy level. I do not want to be responsible for anyone having to call 911! Therefore, using the immense power vested in me as newsletter editor, I have decided to attempt to summarize the primary facts and arguments. Those of you who have been heavily involved will probably feel that your point of view has been slighted; I will apologize in advance for any inadvertent bias or failure to be 100% accurate.

A large part of the debate centers on the environmental impact report (EIR) commissioned by the City of Claremont. (The city's web page on affordable housing contains a link to the EIR; see <http://www.ci.claremont.ca.us/ps.topics.cfm?ID=1684>.) Clearly, living less than one block from the 210 freeway is not the healthiest situation in the world for people dependent on oxygen, especially children. Opponents of the housing project use this as one of their primary arguments. They also say that the site is far removed from the center of the city (City Hall, the library, the village, etc.) and that public transportation would be inadequate. Opponents suggest that the site near Baseline and Towne might otherwise be used for a badly needed new Police station, and they do not feel that any legal mandate to expedite this project exists. They claim, contrary to the beliefs of the project's proponents, that few if any city and school district employees earn wages at the levels that would make

them eligible to live in this project. (Presumably that part of the debate would exist regardless of the location of the new housing, whenever and wherever it might be built.)

Proponents say that a considerable amount of housing (including the Bungalows, for example) has been built close to the 210 and that mature adults can make rational decisions about whether or not to live there. They argue that there is a legal mandate for cities to build affordable housing and that Claremont is behind the curve. They say there is a legal requirement to expedite a project of this kind and that one of the advantages would be that certain (low income) city and school district employees would finally be able to afford to live in the city in which they work. They indicate that, although a bus would probably not stop immediately in front of the project, that a bus stop is within walking distance (on Mountain Avenue near Baseline). Proponents claim that the site near Baseline and Towne is too small for a one-story Police station and that a two-story structure would be unaffordable. They also cite resolutions in favor of the project adopted by the Committee on Human Relations and the Human Services Commission.

In addition to the debate on substance, procedural issues have also surfaced. To what degree should Club e-mail be used to foster a point of view on which the Club has not taken an official position? Should the Club in fact take positions on local issues, some of which may generate internal controversy, or should it focus on promoting the election of Democrats to public office and promulgating progressive ideas about which there is general consensus (such as those contained in the Manifesto)?

In any case, it appears that the City Council will make a final decision on this issue at its meeting either on Jan. 22 or Feb. 12. If you're personally involved and want to make a difference, feel free to contact your City Council members and/or attend the appropriate meetings.

Ron Wolff

Who's "Minding" the Store? (or please pass the whole wheat bread)

by Brad Parker

If Calvin Coolidge was right and, "the chief business of the American people is business," then the current management needs to be fired, without a pension. It is bad enough that the Republicans celebrated their unchallenged federal control with wave upon wave of higher and higher deficits, but the Democrats giddily joined in, as if their complicity would go unnoticed in the binge of corruption and malfeasance. Moreover, where were all of the Ivy-league MBAs during this collapse of reason? Absent while searching for their scruples? Is there no decency left?

Well, in a word, no. We have quite literally gone to hell in a hand-basket. Perhaps the current Democratic crew in Congress has the fortitude to stand up to their corporate enablers? Remember though – it is hard to bite the hand that feeds you, so we will wait and see but don't hold your breath dear reader.

So, in lieu of any current political leadership, it's time for some new, BIG ideas on how to right the ship of state and clean the Stygian stables of the marketplace. Herein, I offer the following proposals from a Progressive Liberal Democrat's point of view. They are offered from a sociological as well as an economics perspective, putting people before profit.

Local / Renewable / Sustainable / Humane If we use those four words – local, renewable, sustainable, and humane – as our maxim, our code of conduct, in the futuring of business then we can mitigate the disasters that are unavoidable and enhance the possibilities for prevention of the afflictions that are brewing. Narrow self-interests must yield to enlightened self-interests. A little more sharing will go a long way. A cleaner greener world is still possible, but time is perilously short. We must rise to the occasion, open our minds and work together to untether ourselves from the tainted past. We must demand that our elected officials turn the ship of state away from the rocky shoals of stupefied greed. While we are at it, we had better get the looting of the treasury out of their clammy palms with some true transparency. Post all upcoming expenditure bills on the Internet so we can all weigh in on their efficacy before any votes are taken. Make every economic bill a jobs bill, not a corporate profit bill. Make every trade agreement fair not free. End the obscenity of the so-called War on Drugs. Make the tax system progressive not regressive.

The better you do in Business America the more you are responsible for maintaining it. Paying more in taxes because you made more in profits as an individual or company is a privilege not a punishment. You owe it to the company that made it possible for you to earn those greenbacks – Business America. Our American government is the most successful business enterprise in the history of the world if you insist on looking at it that way . It is time to stop privatizing or selling it off to the lowest incompetent bidder. It is time for all stakeholders to reinvest in our shared responsibility and opportunity. Like Robert Johnson sang – we're down at the crossroads with the hellhound on our trail. As a Progressive Liberal Democrat, I see a possible clean and green future, but it will take a massive correction in course for Business America. Cal Coolidge may have been right about something but not about the business of America. When the only business in America is business - with no principles, no ethics - then the business is finished. Put the people before the profit and we can finally get down to business.

(Editor's Note: The above is apparently an excerpt. If you wish to read more, go to the following website: <http://www.riozen.com/salon2.html>.)

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President: Bob Gerecke 626-2858
gerecke@surfside.net
VP Organization: Gar Byrum 621-9730
garlandbyrum@aol.com
VP-Education: Ivan Light 621-1159
ihlight@yahoo.com
Secretary: Carolee Monroe 626-8122
jackncarolee@verizon.net
Treasurer: Merrill Ring 626-8467
m36ring@earthlink.net
Past President: Parkes Riley 227-1961
wpriley2001@yahoo.com
Development Chair: Eric Andersson 621-9015
eandersson@aol.com

Issues: Werner Warmbrunn 621-1254
Newsletter: Ronald Wolff 625-2031
RPWinSOCAL@aol.com
Speakers Bureau: David Levering 621-5811
davidlil2@verizon.net
Ways & Means: Betty Cramer 621-0100
Peace & Justice Liaison: Lois Thompson

Rhodesth@verizon.net
621-2061
Publicity: Ted Rademaker 593-5364
Tedrad@uia.net
Transportation: Sally Alexander 714-654-8085
SallyAlexander10@aol.com
Webmaster: Ned Freed 625-7933
ned@mrochek.com