Retired Associated Press reporter and long-time California political observer Chuck McFadden will speak at DoR’s monthly membership meeting. For the first time, our monthly meeting will be held at the Event Center.

Mr. McFadden recently published *Trailblazer*, the first biography of Governor Jerry Brown in more than three decades. The book is a lively and highly readable tutorial on Governor Brown’s California legacy, from the socially chaotic “Governor Moonbeam” days when he was the youngest California Governor ever elected, to the present time when he is serving as the oldest. His recent decision to run for a second term (this time around) has raised even more interest in the Governor’s visionary, often unconventional thinking and the maturation of his leadership that has led to his great popularity and high performance ratings – by both parties.

*Trailblazer*’s publisher, University of California Press, describes the scope of Mr. McFadden’s book, in part: *McFadden traces Brown’s childhood in San Francisco, his time studying for the priesthood, his unusual political career, and his romances—including a long-term relationship with singer Linda Ronstadt. He describes Brown’s first two terms as governor advocating for farm workers, women and minorities, his time roaming the world in a spiritual quest, and his return to the gritty world of politics as chairman of the California Democratic Party and then mayor of Oakland. Political experts weigh in with thoughts about the remarkable 2010 campaign that saw the 72-year-old Brown winning his third term in office while being vastly outspent by Republican Meg Whitman.*

Continued on page 5 (McFadden)

Shasta-Pacific Planned Parenthood Public Affairs Director Susannah Delano will speak at the April 24 membership meeting. Ms. Delano’s topic will be “Shutting Down the War on Women.” She will discuss the state of current anti-choice activism and the increasing hardships faced by women in conservative states to obtain legal, safe abortions.

Shasta-Pacific Planned Parenthood provides over 100,000 individuals with health care and education services at more than 30 sites in 17 Northern California counties. It provides high-quality, affordable health care for women, men, and teens. Services include a broad range of reproductive general health services including birth control, abortion, prenatal care, pregnancy testing, STD screening and treatment, sterilization, and counseling.

According to public information on its website, Shasta-Pacific Planned Parenthood has one of the largest community services and education programs in the country to provide comprehensive, responsible, age-appropriate sexuality education and case management services to more than 36,000 men, women, parents, and teens annually. Planned Parenthood also advocates for reproductive rights, including the right to safe, legal abortions.

Despite its openness to everyone, women make up 95% of the chapter’s clientele. Most are...
President Jane Walter’s Message

Voting, Voter Registration and Voter Suppression

As a club of Democratic voters, we entered the political arena by holding a candidates’ forum in February; our members had the chance to meet Tim Sbranti and Newell Arnerich, two candidates for Joan Buchanan’s seat in the State Assembly. Also at this meeting our members heard from Mark DeSaulnier, the Democratic candidate running for the retiring George Miller’s seat in the House of Representatives. As I receive more information about their campaigns, I will post it on our website for those of you who may wish, in addition to our Club activities, to volunteer as individuals to support these candidates.

Also at that meeting the Club heard Michael Eggman, who is trying to unseat Jeff Denham, the Tea Party congressman and Republican incumbent in neighboring Congressional District 10. We will be planning some events to support Mr. Eggman’s campaign in the near future. At present, Mr. Eggman’s greatest need is for funding to counter the Tea Party dollars pouring into Denham’s re-election campaign. As an individual Democratic voter you can make a contribution via his website: www.eggmanforcongress.com

None of these political activities will bear fruit unless Democrats actually turn out to vote in both the 2014 primary in June and the mid-term election in November. Potential Democratic voters cannot vote unless they are registered. This is why we are trying to organize volunteers for a voter registration drive, starting this spring. We need volunteers willing to help organize the effort and staff voter registration tables both inside and outside Rossmoor. At all of our upcoming events there will be an area for voter information and registration, and also a place for volunteers to provide their contact information. We are holding a voter registration workshop, open to everyone, on March 24th at 1:30 in MPR#2. Even if you do not attend this session, please let us know if you are willing to help. Our volunteers always enjoy the camaraderie of the voter registration team, especially in election years. Also critical to note: without our volunteers we cannot move forward with this important DoR effort and do our part to support the County’s efforts to register as many eligible voters as possible.

I would like to devote the rest of my column to the shocking story of how, in other states, people likely to be Democratic voters are being deprived of their right to vote. There is a coordinated campaign funded by the Koch brothers to suppress groups of the electorate that elected Barack Obama in 2008. This campaign went into high gear in June of 2013 when the U.S. Supreme Court struck down Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act. Section 4 contained a formula that compelled certain states with a history of voting discrimination to clear changes to their voting procedures with the federal government before implementing them. Republican-dominated state legislatures across the country immediately responded by passing measures to make it harder for some Americans – many rural and poor - to exercise their constitutional right to vote. These measures will most directly affect African Americans, Latinos, students, the elderly, the urban poor, and persons with disabilities - groups that traditionally vote Democratic.

Six states have passed laws requiring voters to present a government-issued photo ID in order to vote. Studies suggest that over 11% of voters lack this form of identification and would be required to navigate administrative burdens to acquire them. Three additional states passed laws requiring documentary proof of citizenship in order to vote, even though as many as 7% of American citizens do not have such proof. Seven states shortened early voting time frames, even though over 30% of all votes cast in 2008 were cast before Election Day. Two states voted to repeal Election Day registration laws that are known to increase voter turnout by 10% - 12%. Finally, two states passed legislation making it more difficult for third-party organizations to register voters. Taken together, these measures could significantly dampen the Democratic turnout next year—perhaps enough to shift the outcome in favor of the GOP.

The GOP claims that these new voter restrictions are necessary to prevent “voter fraud.” However, a major probe by the Department of Justice between 2002 and 2007 concluded that, out of 300 million votes cast during that period, only 86 were guilty of voter fraud - and many cases involved immigrants and former felons who were simply unaware of their ineligibility. Their fraud argument is pure sham. The real objective of these restrictive voter laws is simply to prevent large groups (that traditionally vote

Continued on page 5 (President)
The Rossmoor Democrat

March-April 2014

Mark DeSaulnier Wins DoR Endorsement for U.S. Congressional District 11.

Our current state Senator, Mark DeSaulnier, is running for the U.S. Congressional seat soon to be vacated by retiring Rep. George Miller. DeSaulnier addressed us at the January candidates’ forum and earned our unanimous endorsement and is the only Democratic candidate. One declared Republican opponent is retired federal immigration judge Tue Phan-Quang. (The election to replace Mark DeSaulnier in the state Senate will not be held until 2015 – after the results of the November election for U.S. Congress have been determined.) Website: http://desaulnierforcongress.com.

Michael Eggman, Democratic candidate for Congress in nearby CD10, Tracy – Modesto.

DoR members responded enthusiastically to Michael Eggman during his talk on January 30. Eggman, a third-generation Modesto-area farmer and beekeeper who travels the county providing hives for pollination at area farms, is running to defeat Republican Tea Party incumbent Jeff Denham. He has been endorsed by the CDP and his campaign has earned support as a DCCC “Red to Blue Emerging Race.”

Actions:
1.) While we cannot vote for Michael Eggman, we can help take back Congress by supporting him with donations needed against the right-wing organizations funding his opponent. (See website below.)
2.) DoR members are organizing phone bank/postcard parties here in early May to urge CD11 Democrats to vote in the June primary for Michael Eggman. Info:cindyware@mac.com Website: www.eggmanforcongress.com

Key Dates:
CA Primary: June 3 (7 am – 8pm)
Absentee ballots arrive: Around May 5
Voter Registration Deadline to vote in Primary: May 19.

It’s Spring!

Rossmoor Democrats in Action
Cindy Ware

Expose the $$ Big Money $$ Political Ad Funding in California!

The Disclose Act (SB52) requires that the top three funders (e.g., Koch Brothers, ExxonMobil, Monsanto, AFSME, SEIU) be named in legible print in ads, rather than hidden behind organizational names like “www.stophiddentaxes.com.” This MAJOR step to limit the impact of the U.S. Supreme Court Citizens United decision in California passed the state Senate last fall due in great part to grassroots messages and support. Now we need to pressure state Assembly members to pass the bill that will finally expose the big money behind state, county, and local political ads.

Actions you can take:
1.) Please sign the online petition to Assembly members to pass the bill. Click on “Sign Petition” at: http://www.caclean.org.
2.) Tell all your friends to sign it on line as well.
3.) Download a petition and carry it with you! http://www.caclean.org/content/pdf/ ccmc_sb52_petition.pdf
Info about petition and returning it: cindyware@mac.com

Elections Update:
Tim Sbranti Wins DoR Endorsement for CA Assembly District 16.

At our January 30th candidates’ forum, Tim Sbranti won over two-thirds of DoR votes to beat Newell Arnerich for our endorsement as the Democratic candidate to succeed our current Assemblyperson Joan Buchanan, in the November midterm election.

Twenty-one DoR delegates had a taste of grassroots democracy as they voted for Tim Sbranti at the CDP Region 2 Pre-Endorsement Conference in Fairfield on February 9. Tim received the CDP Endorsement on March 9. In the June 3 primary election, Sbranti faces Newell Americh, Steve Glazer, and probably Republican candidate attorney Catharine Baker. (The top two winners will compete in November.)

Action: Sbranti may be opening a Walnut Creek office, where we can volunteer.

(Continued on page 4.)

It’s Spring!

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It’s Spring!

(The following round-up of DoR political activities will appear in every edition of the newsletter leading up to the November midterm election.)

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(Continued on page 4.)
DoR representatives watch the vote tally at the Democratic California Region 2 Pre-Endorsement Conference in Fairfield.

DoR representatives watch votes being counted at the February Pre-endorsement Conference in Fairfield.

What the Heck is a Pre-Endorsement Conference?
Marilyn Davin

DoR members became grass-roots participants in California’s Democratic endorsement process when, following the Club’s January 30 candidates’ forum where attendees cast ballots for candidates in key local races, DoR representatives then presented those results at the February 9 Region 2 Pre-endorsement Conference in Fairfield. DoR supported Tim Sbranti, running for termed-out Joan Buchanan’s state Assembly seat, and state Senator Mark DeSaulnier, who is running for retiring George Miller’s congressional House seat. Both candidates then moved on to the next step: endorsement at the Democratic State Convention at the Los Angeles Convention Center, where nearly 3,000 delegates gathered on March 9. Their official endorsement means that they may state their endorsement in campaign materials and will be identified as the endorsed candidate on the voter sample ballot.

California Democratic Party Region 2 Director Craig Cheslog said that the convention was early this year because Democrats need to get out in front of what could be tight midterm races. Referring to what happened recently in Florida, where Republican David Jolly recently beat Democrat Alex Sink by a handful of votes after a huge Republican cash infusion into a special election, Mr. Cheslog said that “Democrats need to get out, get organized, and be ready to vote.” He voiced concern that voter turnout could be low. “People elected in off-year elections still vote about policies we care about,” he said. “It would be horrific if 2014 ended up like 2010.”
Continued from page 1 (McFadden)

Mr. McFadden covered Sacramento politics for many years with the Associated Press. Democrats of Rossmoor member Bud Lembke, who published the political newsletter Political Pulse in Sacramento, knew Mr. McFadden professionally. "He was a likeable guy and a respected member of the state press corps," he said, adding that McFadden went on to work for Wilson Riles, the first African American to be elected to statewide office in California, as California State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Mr. McFadden will take questions from the audience and everyone is welcome to attend, Democrat or otherwise. There is no charge and refreshments will be served. Call Jon Foyt with questions at 322-064.

Continued from page 1 (Delano)

NAFTA Redux Being Considered
Mary Lembke

Though the subject is not universally known, the Transpacific Partnership Agreement (TPP) should be on the minds of Rossmoor Democrats who have any appreciation of the impact that NAFTA (the North American Free Trade Agreement) has had on our economy since its passage in 1996. The Diablo Valley Democratic Club hosted Carleen Pickard, managing director of Global Exchange at its monthly meeting on February 25.

The TPP is a proposed trade agreement among Australia, Brunei, Chile, Canada, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam. As with NAFTA, the TPP intends to enhance trade and investment among the partner countries, promote innovation, economic growth and development and support the creation and retention of jobs. There are many people who question if these grand ideals will be achieved.

Global Exchange is a human rights organization dedicated to promoting social, economic and environmental justice. As such, it has been part of an effort to slow down what appears to be a less-than-transparent process on the part of the U.S. Government to pass the TPP. Criticism of and

Continued in right column (Lembke)

Continued from page 2 (President)

Democratic) from casting their ballots. It is a blatant power grab by the Republican Party, pure and simple.

The ACLU has launched a “Voting Rights Project” to fight these discriminatory laws on a state-by-state basis, and U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder has filed suit against the two most egregious cases: laws passed in North Carolina and Texas. However, it is far from clear, even if these cases end up before the U.S. Supreme Court, that the conservative Roberts Court would side with Holder.

In an attempt to reverse this voter suppression judicial decision, in January two Democratic senators and one Republican senator introduced “The Voting Rights Amendment Act of 2014,” which would reinstate some of the vital protections of the Voting Rights Act wiped out by the Supreme Court decision. Unfortunately, it remains doubtful whether this legislation will ever be brought to the floor for a vote in the Republican-controlled House.

The modern history of this nation has been to expand the franchise and make it more inclusive for all Americans. What these voter suppression laws do is reverse that history. This is inconsistent with who we say we are as a nation and as a people. In order to prevent large groups of Americans from voting for the opposition party, the Republican Party is shamefully pushing for legislation and judicial decisions that violate the very spirit of America’s Democracy.

Best Wishes,

Jane

Continued from left column (Lembke)

protests against the TPP by global health experts, environmentalists, and organized labor, among others, have raised questions that have not been addressed by negotiators so that the public may debate them. Two of our members attended the discussion led by Ms. Pickard at the Diablo Valley Democrat meeting. We were greeted warmly and concluded that it is to the advantage of our members to exchange more information between our clubs. The Diablo Valley Democrats meet on the fourth Tuesday of each month, from 7-9 pm in Walnut Creek at the Ygnacio Valley Library, at 2661 Oak Grove Road.
Welcome Aboard!

Many new members have joined DoR since September; some attended our casual February 25 new members’ welcome party. Keep an eye out for them at our meetings so you can meet and personally welcome them to our Club!

New members include:

Frank Morgan          Wayne Lanier          John Roe
Carolyn Kramer        Katharine Forrest    Rita Wasserman
Diane Hyde            Kathy and Richard Klein Diane Kern
David Helfich         Suzanne Blake        Nancy Pinkosh
Elizabeth Wetherell   Carol Pillsbury      Carl Pearl
JoAnne Archer         Eugene Uyeki         Pam Dickerson
Carl Pearl            Keith and Cheryl Geckeler Aleene Brown
Roma Rehfisch         Nancy Meredith       Judy Canena
Margaret and Stephen McGrath Nancy Bey Kelvin and Joan Booty
Jeanne Melaugh, Webmaster

As of March 1, there were 2,462 page views of DoR’s website in 704 visits from 429 different users. “That means that, on average, visitors to the site are viewing 4 pages per visit,” explained Club webmaster and board member Jeanne Melaugh.

47% of the page views were of the home page, 17% of the calendar, 10% of board members, 6% of programs, 6% links, 5% the newsletter, 5% contact information, 3% to join, and .2% for elected officials.

98% came from desktops and 2% from mobile devices. 57% were Macs, 37% PCs, and 6% were other operating systems. 60% of the mobile home usage was from iPhones.

Finally, this access is costing us $0.03 a click.

Everybody Loves a Flea Market

One of DoR’s longest-running, most successful committees is the Turner School in Antioch. Every year this committee raises several thousand dollars in support of the school’s first graders. One ever-popular annual fundraiser is the Flea Market at Rossmoor, held this year on April 26. If you could donate (as they say) gently used articles to sell, it would be much appreciated. No clothes, no electronics, just those tasteful items that your daughter-in-law gave you last Christmas that you will never use because it’s just not your taste…Call Emily Ehm (943-7610) or Janet Larson (934-3158) for a complimentary pick-up!

Remember to Pay your 2014 Membership Dues!

Poor Kids
An Intimate Portrait of America’s Economic Crisis

Save Monday, April 7, for showings of a movie-Poor Kids - at 1 and 7 p.m. in Peacock Hall. This is an intimate portrait of families’ struggles against financial ruin set in the Quad Cities, a great American crossroads along the border of Iowa and Illinois, where the Mississippi River intersects Interstate 80. It’s home to John Deere manufacturing and the nation’s breadbasket but is also an area deeply scarred by the Recession. How does the financial turmoil affect children and what does poverty mean to them and to the country’s future? Frontline produced this program to great acclaim.

People are invited to stay for a discussion after the show. The movie is 60 minutes long and will be shown with subtitles. Although it is sponsored by the Democrats of Rossmoor, it is open to all residents and their guests. A $1 donation is requested but no one will be turned away.

The U.S. Census Bureau reports that more than 16 million children, roughly 1 in 5, were living in poverty in 2011 – higher than any other age group. According to The Urban Institute, the amount of federal spending on children in the same year declined from $450 billion to $445 billion, at a time when total federal spending increased.

Best Wishes for a Happy Spring from your Editors!

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Remember to Pay your 2014 Membership Dues!
2014 MEMBERSHIP DUES

Use this form to join or renew membership in DEMOCRATS OF ROSSMOOR. Dues are $20 per member. Dues cover one calendar year, January 1 through December 31, and include our newsletter.

PLEASE CHECK ONE:  [ ] New member       [ ] Returning member

Please print

Name(s)________________________________________________________________________ Date________

Address________________________________________________________________________

Phone number________________________ E-mail________________________________________

Can you be an occasional volunteer? From time to time the Democrats of Rossmoor could use help with various tasks such as serving on committees or the Board of Directors, or helping with: 1) mailings, 2) voter registration, 3) social events, or 4) service groups. Please circle any item where you can devote some time.

Place your check (payable to Democrats of Rossmoor) and this form in an envelope and:

(1) leave it in the Democrats' mailbox during office hours at Gateway,
(2) mail it to Emily Ehm, 2324 Ptarmigan Drive, Apt. 2, Walnut Creek, CA 94595 or
(3) bring your check and this form to the membership table at any meeting.

We thank you for joining / rejoining the Democrats of Rossmoor.