NEWSLETTER GOING HIGH TECH!
THIS IS THE LAST NEWSLETTER ISSUE to be DISTRIBUTED by SNAIL MAIL

Special Sunday Meeting
Sunday June 8
Social Hour - 2:00pm, Program 3:00pm
Fireside Room

June General Meeting
Thursday, June 26
Social Hour - 2:00pm, Program 3:00pm
Fireside Room

Urbanization in China
Stanford Professor Jean C. Oi will speak at a special Sunday, June 8 event sponsored jointly by DoR and the Rossmoor Stanford Club. Professor Oi is the William Haas Professor of Chinese Politics in the Department of Political Science and a senior fellow of the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies at Stanford University. She directed Stanford’s Center for East Asian Studies from 1998 to 2005 and in 2007 she became the founding director of the Stanford China Program at the Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center. She is the director of the Stanford Center at Peking University.

The Sunday, June 8 event is the second to be jointly sponsored by DoR and the Rossmoor Stanford Club. Everyone is welcome and a special invitation has been extended to members of the Chinese American Association of Rossmoor (CAAR). CAAR president John Lee describes the purpose of the 350-member association as “socially promoting fellowship and fraternity among its members, friends and residents of the Rossmoor community.”

Stanford University has broadened its focus on China in recent years. In 2007, in recognition of the importance of developing a program devoted to the study of contemporary China, the Stanford China Program was established within the Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center, which for decades had already been the home for extensive research on China at Stanford University.

This special DoR meeting will be in addition to the regular monthly membership meeting on June 26. For questions please call Jon Foyt at 925/322-3064.

Panel Discussion:
Campaign Reform Measures
Michael Cannon will speak at the Club’s monthly membership meeting on Thursday, June 26, in the Fireside Room. Mr. Cannon is a volunteer with the non-profit grassroots organization Represent.Us. Its goal is to pass the American Anti-Corruption Act, a 9-point plan to, in its words, “crack down on lobbyists, strengthen the flimsy law intended to prevent super-PACs from coordinating with campaigns, and put a stop to undisclosed donations funneled through dark-money nonprofits.” The Act would transform how elections are financed, how lobbyists influence politics, and how political money is disclosed. It’s a sweeping proposal that would reshape the rules of American politics, and restore ordinary Americans as the most important stakeholders instead of major donors. The Act enjoys support from progressives and conservatives alike.

Represent.Us has a high-profile bipartisan board of advisors including former Federal Elections Commission chair Trevor Potter, disgraced lobbyist-turned-reformer Jack Abramoff, representatives from Occupy Wall Street and Teddy Roosevelt’s great-grandson, and the DC Tea Party Patriots. This group says it hopes to “convince 1 million American citizens to join its cause, building popular revulsion to what it deems the worst political corruption in American history.”

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This pre-election period is a busy one for our Club. As you receive your mail-in ballots for the June 3 primary election, I want to remind everyone to make it a point to vote in this critical primary election. Hopefully, Democrats have learned from the disastrous election in 2010 that their participation in state and local elections is critical to limit the influence of the Tea Party at every level of government. Remember that, in California, the new open primary system means that the top two candidates from the primary will appear on the November ballot, regardless of their political parties. So failure to vote in the primary limits our choices in November like never before.

The Democrats of Rossmoor have endorsed the candidacies of Tim Sbranti for State Assembly and Mark DeSaulnier for retiring George Miller’s congressional seat, and both need your support in the primary. At the “Town Square” at our April 24 membership meeting you also had a chance to meet Karen Sakata, who is running for Contra Costa County Superintendent of Schools, and Ayore Riaunda, who is running for Contra Costa County Auditor-Controller. Among these candidates our Club has endorsed only Tim Sbranti, but we believe that all Democratic voices should be heard at our monthly Town Square so that you can evaluate candidates on your own.

The Club is also sponsoring some phone banks during the month of May to support the candidacy of Michael Eggman for the Congressional District 10 next door to us in the Central Valley. The Club took the unusual step of supporting a candidate outside our own district because Mr. Eggman’s victory would mean one more critical Democratic seat in the House of Representatives. The seat is currently held by Tea Party Republican Jeff Denham, who voted to shut down the government and favors the privatization of Social Security.

We have been busy preparing for the election with many other activities as well. Our voter registration volunteers have set up voter registration tables at the Gateway Clubhouse, the Tice Valley Safeway, the Walnut Creek Farmer’s Market, and Sun Valley Mall. Many thanks to Rose Jackson and her intrepid volunteers, who registered 50 voters during the month of April. We will restart this effort before the November elections, so please consider volunteering at that time.

In order to keep us informed on electoral issues, Scott Konopasek, Assistant County Registrar, will discuss voting procedures and regulations at the 7 pm May 21 meeting of Progressive Voices at Creekside.

Control of the Senate by Republicans would be a disaster for President Obama’s agenda, and for that reason our own Maria Rieger is preparing information on some of the most critical Senate races. This information will be available at a table at our next Town Square. You can look this information over and decide whether you want to support Democratic candidates in any of these tight electoral contests.

The Club also supports many activities which serve to help you, the Democratic voter, keep informed on the many critical issues facing our nation.

The DoR’s book club will hold its next meeting on Monday, June 2nd at 3:00 pm. in the Garden Room at the Dollar Clubhouse. The book under discussion will be Ralph Nadar's latest book, "Unstoppable: The Emerging Left-Right Alliance to Dismantle the Corporate State." In this book Nadar proposes that large segments from the progressive, conservative, and libertarian camps find themselves aligned in opposition to the worst abuses of the U.S. corporate-dominated state. He claims that these groups, when they cooperate, can prevail over the current system of crony capitalism. This book is available in hardcover or in an electronic Kindle edition through Amazon.

The book selected for July is a look at the life of the low wage restaurant worker called "Behind The Kitchen Door," by Saru Jayaraman. For more information please contact Jane Walter at walterjane4@yahoo.com, or call Jane at 925-945-1429.
The Rossmoor Democrat

Rossmoor Democrats in Action

Cindy Ware

At the April General Meeting, election candidates and representatives of ballot and legislative issues were invited to talk with DoR members and guests and present their materials at tables in the Event Center’s Donner Room, starting at 2 pm. Both our meeting attendees and the folks at the tables declared the new Town Square a success!

There will now be a Town Square before each monthly membership meeting, so remember to arrive a little early so you can take this opportunity to learn about key issues and ways to participate, and meet local candidates. In addition to tables for our own DoR membership, the Published Writers of Rossmoor and DoR’s Voter Registration Program, upcoming actions also include:

• Petition in support of the Disclose Act: California Senate Bill 52 (SB52)

The Disclose Act (SB52) requires that the top three funders of political ads (e.g., the Koch Brothers, ExxonMobil, Monsanto, AFSME, SEIU) be clearly named in legible print in those ads. Those funders would no longer be able to hide behind misleading and non-descriptive organizational names such as www.stophiddentaxes.com. This MAJOR step to limit the impact of the U.S. Supreme Court’s Citizens United decision passed the California Senate last fall, due in great part to grassroots messages and support. Now we need to pressure the State Assembly to pass this bill which, if passed and signed into law, will expose the big money behind state, county and local ads.

• Actions:
  a) Please sign the on-line petition to assembly members to pass the bill. Click on “Sign Petition” at: http://www.caclean.org/
  b) Tell all your friends to sign it on line as well.
  c) Download a petition and carry it with you: http://www.caclean.org/content/pdf/ ccmc_sb52_petition.pdf

Info about petition and to return it:
cindyware@mac.com

• Representatives of Candidates for Local, State and National Offices may include:
  a) Tim Sbranti—running to be our CA Assembly Member in District 16
  To volunteer, check his website: http://timsbranti.com/about/
  b) Mark DeSaulnier - running to be our Congressional Representative for District 11
  To volunteer, check his website: http://desaulnierforcongress.com/
  c) Michael Eggman, Dem candidate for Congress in nearby CD10, Tracy – Modesto.

While we cannot vote for Michael Eggman, we can help take back Congress by phoning his constituents (see below) and supporting him with donations needed against the right-wing organizations funding his opponent, Republican Tea Party incumbent Jeff Denham.

Check Eggman’s website: www.eggmanforcongress.com

• Phone banks for Tim Sbranti and Michael Eggman:

Yes, we as individuals CAN make a difference, one phone call at a time! To date 8 DoR members at 4 phone banks have called 622 Permanent Absentee Voters (mostly Dems) to encourage them to send in their primary ballot for Michael Eggman. Along with leaving numerous messages and alerting the campaign to many wrong numbers, almost 20% of our calls were conversations with either Eggman supporters or undecided voters to whom we could “spread the word.” And what a good feeling when a voter says, “Sure, bring an Eggman yard sign to me.”

Upcoming Phone Banks:

• Saturday, May 17 (MPR 3): 10-12 and 1-3
  (Michael Eggman)

• Tuesday, May 27 (Stanley Dollar): 10-12 and 4-6
  for (Michael Eggman)

Drop in! Or to volunteer or to make calls from home: Please contact Marilyn Davin: 707.499.3088 (cell) or mgdavin@gmail.com

VOTE! CA Primary: June 3 (7 am – 8pm)

Absentee Ballots have arrived

Voter Registration Deadline to vote in the Primary: May 19
Come One, Come All…

Emily Ehm

You know you’re a Republican if...
You’re really looking forward to Sarah Palin running for president.

You know you’re a Democrat if…
You’re really, really looking forward to Sarah Palin running for president.

You know you’re a Republican if...
You can’t stand your gay uncle, but you invite him to your son’s wedding because he’s rich.

You know you’re a Democrat if…
You can’t stand your rich uncle, but you invite him to your daughter’s graduation party because he’s gay.

You know you’re a Republican if…
You can’t fathom that Abraham Lincoln was actually a Republican!

You know you’re a Democrat if…
You can’t fathom that Abraham Lincoln was actually a Republican!

You know you’re a Republican if…
There are 3 people in your household and you own four vehicles—not counting the ATVs.

You know you’re a Democrat if…
The three cars you and your wife own all get good gas mileage.

You know you’re the Membership Chair when…
You walk around Rossmoor with brochures in your purse;
You can’t believe it only costs $20 a year to belong to the DoR;
You can’t believe that everyone doesn’t belong to the DoR;
You can’t believe that everyone doesn’t know we have a wonderful new member party when we have 20 new members.
You can’t believe we’ve been waiting for the last 2 new members to join to order the wine and cheese and crackers.
You can’t believe how much fun new members have on cheap wine.
You can’t believe how many things there are to do in this club!

If you haven’t joined yet, Join Today! Bring Your Friends!
(email Emily at emilyandrogerehm@gmail.com or call her at 943-7610)
DoR Board Acts on Fracking

Sue De Carlo

The DoR Board voted to support California Senate Bill 1132, known as the “Oil and Gas Fracking And Well Stimulation Moratorium,” with an amendment limiting the moratorium to any new fracking or underground chemical stimulation in the State. A letter to this effect will be sent to Senators Mitchell and Leno, who introduced the bill, as well as to our own Senator Mark DeSaulnier.

Production of gas and oil held within shale formations deep underground has been going on in California for many years. Under existing law, the Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources, in the Department of Conservation, regulates the drilling, operation, maintenance, stimulation, and abandonment of oil and gas wells in California. A few years ago legislative investigation determined that there were no standards governing fracking, and that the Department of Conservation was not inspecting the wells where fracking or chemical stimulation was occurring.

Last year, Governor Brown signed a law requiring the division to conduct a limited study “of fracking and chemical stimulation in order to finalize and implement regulations regulating well stimulation treatments by January 1, 2015.” SB1132 would expand the scientific study to consider additional elements, evaluate various potential direct, indirect, and cumulative health and environmental effects of both onshore and offshore well stimulation and well stimulation treatment-related activities. The bill would also prohibit all well stimulation treatments until (1) the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency convenes a committee to review the scientific study, (2) the Governor declares that the treatments do not contribute to the deterioration of environmental conditions in a way that threatens public health and welfare or to the environmental and economic sustainability of the State, and (3) the division prepares an environmental impact report. Because a violation of the bill’s requirements would be a crime if it is signed into law, it would impose a state-mandated local enforcement program. This law would require that the division finalize the regulations regulating well stimulation treatments by June 30, 2015.

Maria Rieger Supports Emily’s List

Marilyn Davin

DoR member Maria Rieger actively supported Emily’s List even before its official kick-off in 1985. She says that the organization’s goal – to support and ultimately elect pro-choice Democratic women to office – is more important than ever as anti-abortion activists chip away at a woman’s right to choose in conservative red states across the country.

When Ms. Rieger was nine years old growing up in Franco’s repressive Spain, she suffered a traumatic event that would shape the rest of her life: her beloved nanny died of a botched illegal abortion. She has supported Planned Parenthood, Emily’s List, and political candidates committed to women’s rights ever since. An issue of focus right now is retaining a Democratic majority in the U.S. Senate. “I’m terrified that we’re going to lose the Senate,” she said, referring to the upcoming November midterm election.

Emily’s List is the largest national resource for women in politics, and was created by Ellen Malcolm in 1985. “Emily” is an acronym standing for “Early Money is Like Yeast.” (It raises the dough). The saying is a reference to a staple of fundraising thinking that receiving major donations early on in a race is helpful in attracting other, later donors. The organization’s many volunteers nationwide work to recruit candidates, mobilize voters, and win elections for pro-choice female Democrats. You can learn more by visiting their website or calling Maria at 934-6257.
Report Card on the Affordable Care Act

Our long-time U.S. Congressman George Miller was deeply involved with the original legislative process which brought this law into existence. He recently shared the following successes of our nation’s new healthcare law, which has come under attack by several right-wing ultra conservative red state governors:

Covered California, the state’s new online health insurance marketplace, signed up nearly 1.4 million people for health insurance. Another 1.5 million enrolled or have been deemed eligible for expanded Medi-Cal, the state’s Medicaid program for lower-income people. This enrollment surpassed California’s initial enrollment goal of 815,900 individuals.

Nationwide, about 13 million have got coverage under the Affordable Care Act so far, with more than 8 million signed up for health insurance on state and federal marketplaces, and 4.8 million through Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Program enrollment growth.

The Affordable Care Act is also helping save money by reducing hospital readmission rates. From 2011 to 2012, reductions in drug events, falls, infections, and other forms of harm prevented nearly 15,000 deaths in hospitals, avoided 560,000 patient injuries, and approximately $4 billion in health spending.

Health care costs are growing at the slowest level on record. In fact, 2012 was the first year since 1997 that health expenditures didn’t outpace gross domestic product.

And the nonpartisan polling firm Gallup found the number of uninsured Americans is the lowest they’ve ever recorded.

George Miller

A Balanced Review of Benefits and Ills of Fracking

The following is an excerpt from a recent New York Times column about fracking, written by former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Associates:

LISTENING to the polarized energy debate in the United States, you might think natural gas was an economic and geopolitical cure-all - or an environmental curse. Too many oil and gas executives behave as if this newly abundant resource, released from underground shale deposits by the combination of horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing, has no environmental challenges. Opponents often act as if it has no economic and environmental benefits.

So here’s a reality check. The shale gas boom is indeed lowering energy costs, creating new jobs, boosting domestic manufacturing and delivering some measurable environmental benefits as well. Unlike coal, natural gas produces minuscule amounts of such toxic air pollutants as sulfur dioxide and mercury when burned — so the transition from coal- to natural-gas-fired electricity generation is improving overall air quality, which improves public health. There’s also a potential climate benefit, since natural-gas-fired plants emit roughly half the carbon dioxide of coal-fired ones.

At the same time, opposition to shale gas development is driven by very real instances of localized air and groundwater pollution. Because of intensive shale gas development, the small town of Pinedale, Wyo., has experienced smog concentrations comparable to those of Los Angeles. The industry asserts that hydraulic fracturing does not contaminate water supplies when fluids are shot at high pressure into shale deposits to release gas. But inspection records in several states show that mistakes or accidents in other phases of the process - poor well construction or surface spills, for example - have done so.

These environmental concerns are having a major impact on public opinion. A poll by the Pew Research Center last fall found that 49 percent of those surveyed opposed the increased use of hydraulic fracturing, while 44 percent supported it. These views are leading communities and even states to keep out the industry. In 2010, New York, one of four states sitting atop an estimated 141 trillion cubic feet of recoverable natural gas in the Marcellus Shale formation, became the first state to impose a moratorium on hydraulic fracturing. Last year in Colorado, four cities voted to prohibit it. If opponents have their way, a statewide measure restricting the process will be on the Colorado ballot this fall.

There’s also a growing awareness today of another serious problem with natural gas development: methane emissions, which can undo the potential climate benefit of natural gas. Though it burns cleaner than coal, uncombusted natural gas...
Continued from page 6 (Fracking) is mostly methane, a greenhouse gas 84 times more potent than carbon dioxide in the first 20 years after it is released. Estimates vary widely about how much methane is being leaked or vented during the production and transportation of natural gas, but there is no doubt that methane emissions need to be measured and reduced.

This is essentially a data acquisition and management problem — the kind that we know we can solve. For instance, after New York City’s health department installed 150 air-quality monitors throughout the city in 2008, a startling fact emerged: Dirty heating oil caused more soot pollution than all the cars and trucks in the city combined. The resulting Clean Heat program helped drive down sulfur dioxide pollution by nearly 70 percent and soot levels by almost 25 percent by helping the worst polluting buildings switch to cleaner fuels.

The same data-driven approach can reduce air and water pollution from shale gas drilling, by requiring operators and regulators to identify and correct hot spots. We have the technology to do this. But we can’t manage what we can’t measure.

As temperatures climb this drought summer remember to conserve water however you can...

...and remember to vote June 3 in the state’s critical open primary.

Each year fewer and fewer of our members request hard copies of this newsletter through the U.S. mail. As our world becomes increasingly digital, your DoR board of directors decided it was time for our Club to join this larger digital trend and go to an all-online format for our bimonthly newsletter, starting with the next July/August edition. Doing away with the physical aspects of printing and mailing the newsletter will save our Club several hundred dollars a year. We will continue to have a limited number of black-and-white hard copies at DoR meetings and events.

Please be sure that we have your correct email address to ensure the timely electronic delivery of the newsletter. If you need to update your email address please call Emily Ehm at 943-7610, or email her at rogerandemilyehm@gmail.com.

Thank you and best wishes,

Marilyn Davin and Otto Schnepp
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.

The Rossmoor Democrat  8  May-June 2014