This will be my last president’s message for the Democrats of Rossmoor newsletter, as the very capable Pasty Sharaf will be taking over the presidency of the club in January. I will continue to be active in the club and will be assisting Sue DeCarlo in the membership position that Patsy is leaving.

In this last note to our members, I feel it is very important that I thank the board of the DoR that has been so supportive of my leadership. Our board members have specific responsibilities within the club and they are faithful in performing their tasks. This has kept the club running smoothly in the past and it will continue to do so under Patsy’s leadership. The job of the president is really just to coordinate the activities of the board members and I have learned to respect the work of each and every one.

We were able to add two hugely helpful members to the board during my tenure. Jeanne Melaugh has created for us an impressive website which she maintains faithfully and Carol Weed has successfully organized our voter registration efforts. Also Patsy Sharaf has done a terrific job as membership chair, which she kindly took over last year. I cannot praise enough the work of the other long-standing members of the board who were there when I took office.

It has been two years of growth for me. Along with the CIC Committee headed by Cindy Ware, I tried to involve the club more deeply in the political process. We actively campaigned for Tim Sbranti, Joan Buchanan, and Susan Bonilla for California Legislature positions, though unfortunately none was successful.

However, I believe that we made the Democratic establishment in Contra Costa County aware that Rossmoor Democrats were a large block of voters whose voice matters in local and national politics. State Senator Steve Glazer, who spoke at our November meeting, is aware of this.

We now also meet regularly with a representative of the Contra Costa County Democratic Central Committee and most of the other Democratic clubs in the area; in the future we will coordinate our political efforts more with them. In the upcoming election year we will continue to provide opportunities for our

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As I step into the President’s shoes, I’d like to say how much I look forward to getting to know greater numbers of you and your interests, and to finding programs in the exciting election year ahead that we will all enjoy.

As we work our way through the presidential election process, the Democrats of Rossmoor will be there with watch parties for the candidate debates, the State of the Union address, the Democratic National Convention, the presidential debates, and, of course, election night. Many of us look forward to sharing the highs and lows of these events together.

And, of course, we plan to continue our usual speaker series on the serious issues of the day. January brings Dan Jameyson of the Service Employees International Union, the S.E.I.U., who will talk about this lesser-known union, which represents, among others, janitors, nurses, and day-care providers.

California’s water czar Felicia Marcus, chair of the State Water Resources Control Board, will be speaking to us in February about California’s ongoing drought. And in March, Brandon Herd, president of the Walnut Creek Teachers Association, will speak. Please be thinking of questions for each of them.

In the coming months we hope to tackle issues of the Middle East, climate change, election funding reform and, perhaps the most serious of all domestic issues, income inequality. We also plan to focus on our own hometown area, Walnut Creek and Contra Costa County, to get a better picture of both candidates running for local office next November and of local issues.

Meanwhile, unfolding as we watch safely from the sidelines, is what we are told is historically the largest mass migration in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. Let us not forget those very courageous migrants in very dangerous situations, too many of them very young and seeking a safer life. Many charities, among them Save the Children and UNICEF, are trying to cope with the chaos, and I would urge you at year’s end to find one of your own to support.

Happy Holidays,

Patsy Sharaf
DoR Board Members’ Holiday Wishes

Jane Williams

Peace on Earth.

Carol Weed

I wish that Democrats in California and the nation will join together to elect a president and a congress that commits to educate citizens to fill 21st century jobs, protect the environment, ensure economic stability, and respect the dignity of the marginalized. Katha Hartley

Marilyn Davin

…I hope that Millennials, who will inherit this country, will as a group wake up and elect Bernie Sanders for president.

Rose Maggi

I hope that medical care will be available to everyone, and that no one will touch my Medicare except to increase it!

Nancy Meredith

I wish for increased DoR membership by the end of the year to position us for greater voter turnout in next year's important elections.

Patsy Sharaf

…I hope that Catharine Baker is voted out and that Contra Costa County passes its feasibility study for a Community Choice Clean Energy program. Carol Weed

I hope that with lots of push from our Democratic candidates, there will be at long last some kind of federal gun control passed, that the problems of working class and minority peoples being cut out of the economic picture will be addressed, and that there will be stronger measures to provide housing for the homeless.

Jeanne Melaugh

Peace, peace, peace…here and abroad.

Cindy Ware

My wish is for record voter participation on November 8 at the local, state, and national levels: "When voters turn out, Democrats win!!"

Gary Hansen

I hope that the Environmental Protection Agency will continue to forcefully require all 50 states to design and implement aggressive plans to reduce carbon emissions.
On September 24, 2015, the Democrats of Rossmoor (DOR) conducted a Feedback Forum designed to give opportunities to registered Democrats living in Rossmoor to express their views on political issues important to them.

The responses of the participants will be submitted to local, state, and national campaigns in order to inform candidates of the election issues on which Rossmoor Democrats want them to focus.

The Feedback Forum participants identified their four most important issues in ranked order:

1. **Economy** — job creation, funding projects including infrastructure project funding, training/retraining, veteran preferences, tax reform, strengthened regulations on banks/trading companies

2. **Election Reform** — repeal of Citizens United; opposition to voter suppression laws, strengthening of the Voters Right Acts

3. **Education** — high-quality, free, universal education preschool through college/vocational school; student debt reduction; improvement/modification of Common Core; resolution of charter/public school issues

4. **Environment** — mitigation of climate change; drought mitigation; renewable energy, clean water/air

When asked about local issues, the Forum participants expressed the following:

- 100% are in favor of eliminating the influence of money in elections. They demand campaign reform, especially the repeal of Citizens United.
- The Feedback Forum constituency is strongly pro-union with some seeing a need for reform in strike rules and pensions.
- By a slight majority, participants favor teacher tenure but with modifications to the tenure track. A majority expressed concern about “bad teachers” who are difficult to fire. They also support increases in teacher salaries.
- Participants suggested strong Get Out The Vote activities, door-to-door campaigning, financial support for candidates in swing states and in the areas where Democratic Party candidates need help.

The Feedback Forum participants were generally well-educated, well-informed, civic-minded Democrats whose concerns were future oriented. Their four identified priorities reflected support for their children and grandchildren and for the future of the country in general. When considering economic priorities, they ranked strengthening Social Security sixth (Economic Priorities), and Health was the sixth most important general issue.

Additional details about results may be found on the website at democratsOFrossmoor.org.

“We must make our choice. We may have democracy, or we may have wealth concentrated in the hands of a few, but we can't have both.” — Justice Louis D. Brandeis

“If there was one decision I would overrule, it would be Citizens United. I think the notion that we have all the democracy that money can buy strays so far from what our democracy is supposed to be. So that’s number one on my list.” — Justice Ruth Bader
A Big Welcome for our New Members

David Kamansky and Gerald Wheaton are newcomers to Rossmoor but lifelong Democrats. David grew up in Southern California, and Gerald grew up in Detroit. Gerald left for California not long after the riots in Detroit in 1967 and also lived in Southern California, where he met David through David's work.

David was director of USC's Pacific Asian Museum. Gerald trained as a pastry chef in his family's business and later worked as a hairstylist. After retiring from USC, David worked at the University of Capetown, South Africa, for 10 years. Gerald commuted back and forth from Southern California at that time. They both collect Asian art and maintained a Japanese house in Capetown that they still miss.

Looking ahead to election year, David says he'd prefer Bernie Sanders for President but would support Hillary Clinton if she were the Democratic nominee. He's especially concerned about overcoming the gridlock in Congress and encouraging Americans to be more involved in the political process. Gerald says Trump is scary and basically an entertainer. Asked why he thinks Trump has been so popular so far, he said, "People rally behind bullies." In other pressing issues Gerald says he's especially concerned about healthcare and more effective, humane treatment of mental illness and the homeless.

Jerry Neuman has lived in Rossmoor for several years but is new to DoR. A lifelong Democrat, he says he grew up as "a rascally teenager" in NYC and moved to San Francisco when he was 19. He started work at KQED-FM when the station played classical music and stayed on through its transition to news and information. Jerry says he's particularly interested in immigration issues and supports Democratic principles generally. "I'm well disposed toward what Democrats do," he said.

Be sure to say hello and introduce yourselves when you see David, Gerald, or Jerry at our DoR events!

Only in America…

• Can a pizza get to your house faster than an ambulance.
• Are there handicapped parking places in front of skating rinks.
• Do drugstores make the sick walk all the way to the back of the store to get their prescriptions while healthy people can buy cigarettes at the front.
• Do people order double cheeseburgers, large fries, and a Diet Coke.
• Do banks leave both doors open and then chain the pens to the counters.
• Do we leave cars worth thousands of dollars in the driveway and put our useless junk in the garage.
• Do we use answering machines to screen calls and then have call waiting so we won't miss a call from someone we didn't want to talk to in the first place.
Who Reads What and Why

- The New York Times is read by people who run the country.
- The Wall Street Journal is read by people who think they run the country.
- The Washington Post is read by people who think they ought to run the country.
- USA Today is read by people who think they ought to run the country but don’t really understand the Washington Post. They do, however, like their smog statistics shown in pie charts.
- The Los Angeles Times is read by people who wouldn’t mind running the country if they could spare the time and if they didn’t have to leave L.A. to do it.
- The Boston Globe is read by people whose parents used to run the country and they did a far superior job of it, thank you very much.
- The New York Daily News is read by people who aren’t too sure who’s running the country and don’t really care as long as they get a seat on the train.
- The New York Post is read by people who don’t care who’s running the country as long as they do something really scandalous, preferably while intoxicated.
- The San Francisco Chronicle is read by people who aren’t sure there is a country, or that anyone is running it; but whoever it is, they oppose all that they stand for. There are occasional exceptions if the leaders are handicapped minority feminist atheists who also happen to be illegal aliens from ANY country or galaxy as long as they are Democrats.

Pay Membership Dues by January 1, 2016

Membership runs January through December and costs $20 per person.
Check One: [ ] New member [ ] Returning member

Name(s) _____________________________ ___________________________ Date __________
Please print.
Address ________________________________________________________________

Phone ___________ Email ___________________________ ___________________________
Are you a registered voter? _______ Are you a registered Democrat? _______
(We need this information for the Democratic Party, Region Two)

Can you occasionally volunteer for any of the following?
____ Voter Registration _______ Phoning on behalf of Democratic Party candidates
____ Putting together mailings _______ Event set-up

Place your check (made out to Democrats of Rossmoor) and this form in an envelope and:
- Leave it in the Democrats’ mailbox at Gateway during office hours,
- Mail it to Sue De Carlo, 901 Terra California Dr., #6, Walnut Creek, CA 94595,
- Or bring the form/check to the Membership Table at any meeting.