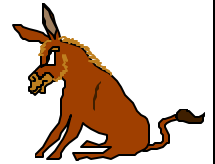


Town & Country Democrat



The Town and Country Democratic Club is affiliated with the California Democratic Council and the Coalition of Democratic Clubs

Volume 53, Issue I

On the Web: www.tandconline.org

April 2005

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Electorate Gives Matsui Big Win

The people of the 5th Congressional District gave a huge victory to Doris Matsui on March 8th in a special election called to fill her husband's former seat.

Matsui had to receive more than 50 percent of the vote in order to avoid a runoff under rules of the special election. When all precincts reported, Matsui had no problem turning in 68% percent of the vote in the low-turnout election.

Former Green Party candidate recently turned Democrat Julie Padilla was Matsui's closest competitor with just over 8% and Republican John Thomas Flynn had nearly 8%).

Matsui, 60, flew to Washington early the day after the election to be sworn in immediately and cast her first vote as a Congresswoman in favor of the House transportation bill that included authorization for Sacramento light-rail projects to the airport and Cosumnes River College.

"We chose to use our diverse backgrounds and diverse ideas to illuminate our common hopes," Matsui told supporters on election night. "I believe we provided an example to Congress and the American people."

Doris Matsui's win capped a condensed six-week campaign in which she immediately began as the front-runner because of the name recognition



and political connections she inherited from her husband.

That advantage was so strong that several prominent local Democrats chose not to run against Matsui in the district's first open race in more than 26 years.

Despite facing 11 opponents, Doris Matsui was collecting the same percentage of votes that her husband received in his last election. Robert Matsui received 71% of votes in November.

Although turnout was higher than the 25% of registered voters the election officials had predicted, that number was not quite 28%. About 74% voted in the November presidential election.

How to Win in the Moderate Suburbs - T&C Welcomes Susan McKee on April 13th

Town & Country will welcome Susan McKee, Chair of the 5th Assembly District Democratic Committee, at its next general membership meeting on Wednesday, April 13th at 7:00pm. Ms. McKee will speak on the topic of how Democrats can win the "moderate" suburbs.

school teacher, Ms. McKee served a brief stint as an attorney in Washington DC. After moving to California, she was bitten by the politics bug. She combined law and Congressional staff work for Tom Lantos, starting in 1980, during his first term. After getting three kids off to

After a brief stint as a junior high

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From the President...

Sometimes it's hard being a Democrat in April. Those of you who pay your fair share of taxes, and then some, know what I'm talking about.

The money you hand over to the government seem like a total waste of your hard work. This is especially true when you have two kids to plan college educations for and probably a couple of weddings to eventually pay for (hopefully not more than one per child).

Of course, you take the good with the bad. Good: taxes pay for the roads we drive on, the schools our children and grandchildren attend and police and fire protection. Bad: taxes pay for the salaries of those idiot republicans in Washington and Sacramento, they pay for easily accessible bankruptcy courts for corporations (notice I didn't say anything about individuals and small business owners), and of course, they pay for the very unpopular war we're fighting.

Taxes also help fund cultural organizations, like museums, that serve to broaden our citizens. Taxes preserve park and recreational land. Taxes also put up those all important stop signs at the intersections where we need them.

Unfortunately, those stop signs may come too late while our tax money is spent on political junkets to Scotland to play golf or jet fuel for Air Force One so Bush can fly around making an ass of himself.

Some things paid by taxes can be good and bad at the same time - oil and farm subsidies, airline and rail subsidies (although the airlines get ten times the amount of rail), and maintaining a strong military.

Ben Franklin said that there were only two things that were certain in this world - death and taxes. Since we never seem to grumble about death, I guess there's no reason to complain about taxes.

Dean to Appear at CDP Convention

Governor Howard Dean, Chair of the Democratic National Committee, will appear at the California Democratic Party convention dinner on Saturday, April 16th.

Dean, who recently won the job in February in a landslide victory is expected to speak on his vision for the future of the Democratic Party.

Volunteers for the convention in

Los Angeles are still needed. If you are interested, please contact the CDP headquarters at (916) 442-

5707 or check out its website, www.cadem.org.



Dean's Money Machine Pursues Gov.

A liberal grassroots network that helped fuel Howard Dean's maverick run for president is crackling back to life to fight Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's ballot initiative drive, another sign that the governor's plans for a special election this year could produce a costly and fiercely partisan battle.

California for Democracy, the state arm of a national group that raised millions of dollars for Dean over the Internet, is planning a high-tech campaign targeting the Republican governor.

The group's re-emergence came as a committee closely aligned with Schwarzenegger began running television advertisements urging voters to seek out signature-gatherers and sign up.

But volunteers from California for Democracy hope to frustrate those efforts. They plan to use the Web and mobile technology to keep roughly 9,000 supporters abreast of the whereabouts of signature-gatherers for Schwarzenegger ballot initiatives. Organizers say volunteers will then head to those locations to distribute the group's leaflets denouncing the planned special election, which opponents note will cost as much as \$70 million.

The group is also poised to raise money to oppose the governor's

agenda.

The strategy took shape last week in a conference call involving 1,000 of the group's members and Assembly Speaker Fabian Núñez, D-Los Angeles, a day after Schwarzenegger launched a signature-gathering drive for three initiatives that mirror proposals he laid out in January.

"One of the questions was: What specific actions can we take? And he (Núñez) said: Educate, tell your friends exactly what's going on," said Michael Faulkner, a member of the group's steering committee. "So that's what people are doing. We'll have a Web site that can be posted to, and we'll have phone trees with cell phones and PDA's with the people that will be involved" to spot signature-gatherers.

The "rapid response team," as Faulkner described it, is one more sign that an extraordinary campaign season is ramping up in what was supposed to be an off-year for statewide elections in California.

In addition to the new effort by California for Democracy, a committee comprised mostly of labor unions representing teachers, nurses, firefighters and police has formed to combat Schwarzenegger.

The group is expected to announce soon which ballot initiatives it will support and begin fund-raising.

Truth and Strength in Numbers

Californians will lose 16 women legislators because of term limits in 2006. But did you know that there are Democratic women in the pipeline for only eight of those seats?

In the Assembly, 25 seats will be open in 2006. Fifteen of those 25 open seats have one or more women running for them.

Of those 15 seats, only seven districts have a single woman candidate. In the other eight districts, there are two or more women candidates competing for the same seat.

Eleven of the 25 open Assembly seats are currently held by women. Fewer than half of those could be filled by women in 2006 because there are women candidates for only five of those seats.

The situation isn't much better in our State Senate, where ten seats will open up in 2006. Five of those ten seats have women candidates running for them. Of those five seats, four districts have

a single woman candidate.

Six of the 10 open Senate seats are currently held by women. In 2006, only half may be replaced by women because women candidates are running in only three of those districts.

Unless we act now, fewer than half the Democratic women leaving the Legislature in 2006 might be replaced by other Democratic women!

This is why the work of The CALIFORNIA LIST is so important. A grassroots fundraising network modeled after EMILY's List, The CALIFORNIA LIST's mission is to elect Democratic women to all branches of the California state government.

Please join The CALIFORNIA LIST to protect these Democratic seats, and women's representation in California. Together, we CAN elect women to California State government!

www.californialist.org

Villaraigosa & Hahn Set for LA Rematch

Paired in a May runoff against a familiar foe, Mayor James Hahn promised to win over droves of voters who snubbed him in the primary and city Councilman Antonio Villaraigosa plunged into battleground neighborhoods where his campaign stumbled four years ago.

Hahn emerged from the recent 12-candidate primary with second place forcing a May 17 rematch of a bitter 2001 race between the two Democrats.

Hahn, trying to shake off allegations of City Hall corruption and a mannequin image, carried a meager 24 percent of Tuesday's vote and narrowly avoided becoming the first sitting mayor to be ousted in more than three decades. Villaraigosa, who could become the city's first Hispanic mayor since 1872, tallied 33 percent.

Democrats Can Win Using Local Issues

When Utah Rep. Jim Matheson spoke recently, Democrats from across the nation listened with more than polite interest.

In Salt Lake City for the Young Democrats of America (YDA) 2005 National Winter Conference, 150 young people listened intently as Matheson, a three-term Democrat, spoke of surviving in heavily Republican Utah and in the 2nd Congressional District, where President Bush logged 69 percent of the vote in November.

Matheson's prescription for political success: broaden the base.

"It's easy to play to our base, but our base is not good enough to get us back in the majority," said Matheson, who won re-election with 31 percent of the Republican vote, 75 percent of the independent vote and 99 percent of the Democratic

vote.

"As a congressman who has a whole bunch of people he values very much in Washington, I can't bring any of them out here to Utah to campaign for me," he told YDA members. "It doesn't help me; it just hurts me. I have to run away from the national Democratic Party image...I can't run with Democrat on my sleeve. I wouldn't get elected if I did."

To win elections, Matheson said Democrats must reach beyond the party to pinpoint issues that resonate with all voters, and then use technology to get their message to the masses. He said John Kerry's mantra in opposing the war in Iraq -- "Wrong war, wrong place, wrong time" -- was preaching to the choir and did not win converts.

"Anybody who thought we

by Mark Eddington

shouldn't have gone into Iraq in the first place was already going to vote for him," Matheson said. "He should have talked about how, since the troops have been in Iraq, the whole thing had been mismanaged."

Matheson said the same holds true with Democratic candidates who say they are for clean air and water. To attract political independents and Republicans, they must localize the issue much as Matheson said he did in Utah by opposing the storage of nuclear waste 75 miles west of Salt Lake City. And when it comes to debates on Social Security and health care, Matheson said Democrats should leave "Just say no" to Nancy Reagan.

"We can't just say no to what Republicans want. We must offer viable alternatives," said Matheson.

Club News

Pelican Earns Spot on Sierra Club's Mother Lode Executive Committee

Longtime T&C member Susan Pelican was recently elected to Sierra Club's Mother Lode Chapter Executive Committee. She took office in March.

Pelican isn't sure what her first order of business will be. "I'm waiting for my first board meeting to see what our challenges will be for the coming year."

Pelican will serve a two year term on the board which governs Sierra Club activity in much of Northern California.



Susan Pelican with husband Howard Beeman

Dems Get Permanent Campaign HQ

Thanks to the campaign of Phil Angelides for Governor, Sacramento County now has a space to operate a permanent Democratic Campaign headquarters.

The office (part of Phil's campaign headquarters) is located at 1331 21st Street and is currently being staffed by Sam Catalano, Treasurer for the

Stonewall Democratic Club.

Already voter registration training has begun with the help of T&C members and former 5th AD headquarters staffer Ralph Cyfers. Classes are available on Fridays at 6:30pm or Saturdays at 9:00am.

Volunteers are needed to keep the office open full time. Contact Sam at (916) 359-1040 or via email at catalanosm@aol.com to help out!

Godmintz To Be 1st Luncheon Honoree

In a unanimous decision, members at the March membership meeting chose Vice President Arnie Godmintz as its first honoree for the club's annual awards luncheon tentatively scheduled for June 25th.

Godmintz has served the club as an officer for five years including a year and a half as President. Additionally, he has worked tirelessly on behalf of the 5th AD Democratic Committee's Campaign Headquarters for the past several elections and led the fight giving each club a vote on the Sacramento County Democratic Central Committee.

Lang-McDonald Resurrects the Nor Cal Democrat

Bev and Roberts Braden published their final edition of the Nor Cal Democrat under a dark cloud—the last election.

Enter Kristine Lang-McDonald.

Kristine, a member of Town & Country and former State Senate candidate, is also a former employee of the news powerhouse Gannett Corporation. Kristine and her husband Jan have set out to bring back the Nor Cal after just a few months absence.

According to Kristine, the venerable publication will be renamed the California Democratic Dialogue. She admits Jan stole the name from the Mark Norberg's Placer County newsletter.

Kristine is looking for volunteers to help get the publication off the ground—she and Jan are hoping to have a copy for every delegate at the state convention this month. If you are interested, please contact Kristine at kristine_lang@yahoo.com.

Angelides Kicks off Run for Governor



Phil Angelides, his wife and three daughters appeared on stage at Alice Birney Elementary School, which Phil attended, to announce his official candidacy for Governor of California. Many T&C members were present at the event including Howard Beeman, Ralph Cyphers, George & Lorraine Bond, Bob Chase, Perry Metzger, Larry Miles, Kevin Murphy, and Darrell Steinberg who introduced Phil and his family.

Meeting Minutes from March 9, 2005

The meeting was opened by Pres. Kevin Murphy who led the pledge of allegiance.

After the approval of the agenda and the previous meeting minutes, Pres. Murphy spoke for absent Treasurer Jim Nakata, stating that \$3,581.97 remained in treasury.

Membership Chair Krystal Maddox announced a name recognition/membership contest. The first person to get an editorial in any media print that states the club's name wins. The prize is a book by Jon Stewart and a calendar with quotes from Pres. Bush.

Peter D'Anna, former Regional Manager for the US Social Security Administration, was introduced as the evening's speaker. Peter addressed the current debate over the future of Social Security. There is no crisis at this time. Privatization is not a good option and we must work to soundly defeat this possibility. Legislators must understand that Social Security should remain a guarantee and not a gamble.

The 5th Congressional District Race was discussed. Lyn Stueve spoke on the right to work and vote for other candidates, not just the most popularly endorsed ones. Pres. Murphy restated that T&C

represents many factions of Democrats and the importance of Democrats retaining the seat.

Luncheon update: nothing definite yet on a keynote speaker. Barbara Boxer, Phil Angelides and Senator Joe Dunn are still possibilities. The tentative date is Saturday, June 25. A motion was made to select VP Arnie Godmintz as one honoree. Seconded and passed.

Bylaws update: the committee revising the bylaws will meet at Kevin Murphy's home on March 16 and 23 (if necessary).

Club goals update: No report due to VP Godmintz's absence.

Motion made to have Pres. Murphy write a letter of support to new SJUSD Board Members. Seconded and passed.

Announcements, Phil Angelides is announcing his candidacy for governor throughout the state. He will be in Sacramento on March 15 at Alice Birney Elementary School.

Susan Pelican is now on the executive board of the Sierra Club Mother Lode Chapter. Anti war rally in S.F., March 19.

Motion made/seconded/passed to e-mail Rick Wathen in support of resolutions.

There being no further business,

Membership Committee Contest!!!

Town and Country membership chair Krystal Maddox recently announced a name recognition/membership contest.

The first member to get an editorial in any media print that states the club's name wins. The prizes are Jon Stewart's new book "America" and a calendar with quotes from President Bush you won't want to forget.

The rules are simple...get published and win!

There is also a contest in the works for signing up the most new members as well. More details later.

For the next meeting we will have a raffle for a gift basket. Be sure to get your tickets at April's meeting. They will be \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00.

We encourage members to donate items for our monthly raffles—they can be books, movie tickets, baskets, etc. Please send any questions or suggestions to increase our membership to Krystal Maddox by e-Mail to KrystalDanielle@aol.com.

Join the Town & Country Democratic Club!!!

Name _____ Phone _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 E-Mail Address _____
 Strengths/Experience _____

The Town & Country Democratic Club encourages the participation of young members.

Please check one box and circle the correct membership below: ? NEW ? RENEWAL

Annual Dues: \$20.00 Individual \$25.00 Family \$12.00 Full-Time Student/Unemployed
 \$12.00 Senior Individual \$16.00 Senior Family \$12.00 Newsletter Only

Signature _____

Please mail to: Town & Country Democratic Club
 P.O. Box 1286
 Citrus Heights, CA 95611-1286

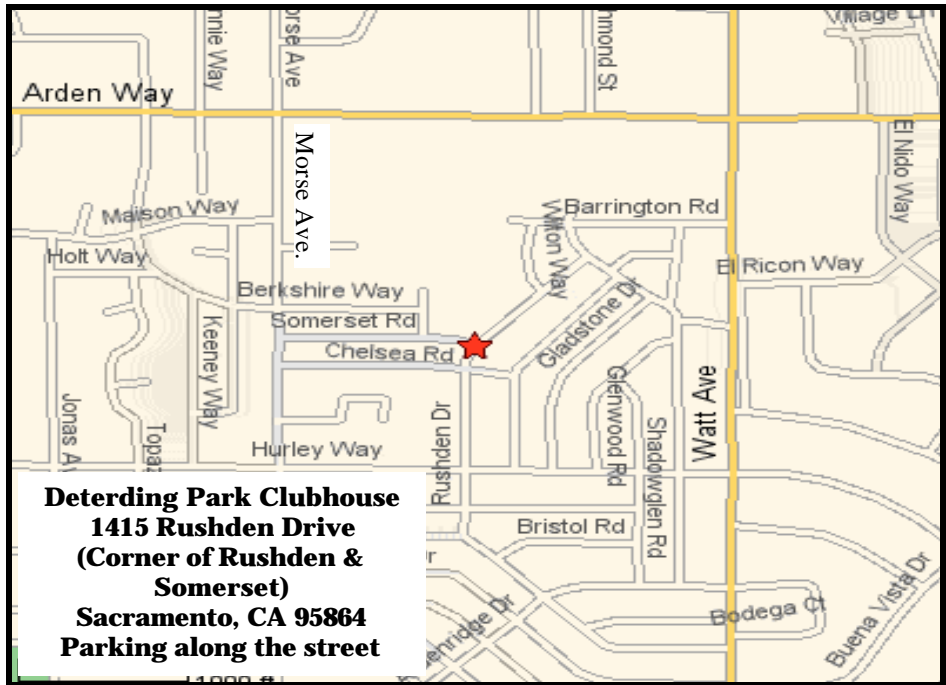
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Legislative Update and Bylaws Vote on April 13th con't...

school, she went back to politics as Field Rep for Vic Fazio, Chief of Staff for Deborah Ortiz, and then District Director for Darrell Steinberg. Presently Ms. McKee serves as Principal Consultant in the Speaker's Office of Member Services.

Also at the April meeting, Legislative Chair Joan Lee will be updating the club with information about legislation moving through the Legislature (or stuck in the Legislature). She will also be briefing the club on the Governor's sneaky initiatives.

Additionally, the Annual Awards Luncheon and the club's bylaws update will be discussed. Also look for a raffle and don't forget to bring your wallet!



Legislative Report

New Primary Schedule?

I just returned from our first meeting of the Presidential Nominating Commission and I am proud to be a member along with fellow Californians like Congresswoman Hilda Solis, President of Rock



the Vote Jehmu Greene, former Clinton/Gore transition team member Vida Benavides, former Clinton Advisor Maria Echaveste, former head of the Small Business Administration under Clinton Aida Alvarez, along with the Governors Kathleen Sebelius of Kansas, Ed Rendell of Pennsylvania, former Governor Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire and President of AFL-CIO John Sweeney among others.

Our role is to determine the nature and timing of the 2008 Democratic Presidential Primary season. I discussed my concerns that the Western states and in particular California are almost

by Sen. Art Torres (ret.)

forgotten in the primary process, other than over \$181 million leaving our state for other campaigns and never being re-invested in California!

There were some preliminary suggestions about a Western States primary, but only for the Rocky Mountain states.

New Hampshire and Iowa stressed their concern to remain first. We will issue a report to Chairman Dean within a year. Any issues that you think I should raise at the next meeting, please let me know. Perhaps California should consider becoming a caucus state at the same time as the Iowa caucuses. Maybe then the presidential candidates will pay attention to California's voting Democrats!

Senator Art Torres (ret.) is Chairman of the California Democratic Party. He may be reached at www

Just for Fun...

The Washington Post's Mensa Invitational once again asked readers to take any word from the dictionary, alter it by adding, subtracting, or changing one letter, and supply a new definition. Here are this year's winners:

1. Intaxication: Euphoria at getting a tax refund, which lasts until you realize it was your money to start with.

2. Reintarnation: Coming back to life as a hillbilly.

3. Bozone (n.): The substance surrounding stupid people that stops bright ideas from penetrating. The bozone layer, unfortunately, shows little sign of breaking down in the near future.

4. Cashtration (n.): The act of buying a house, which renders the subject financially impotent for an indefinite period.

5. Sarchasm: The gulf between the author of sarcastic wit and the person who doesn't get it.

6. Inoculatte: To take coffee intravenously when you are running late.

Editorial - Democrats: MIA

After giving George Bush far too easy a ride in his first term, the Democratic leadership in Congress promised that the second term was going to be different. "This is not a dictatorship," announced Senate minority leader Harry Reid. But three months of watching the Democrats' stumbling, often incoherent responses to Administration appointments and initiatives shows clearly that the party is making the same mistakes that cost it so dearly in the 2002 and 2004 elections.

It's easy simply to blame the GOP majorities in the Senate and House when bad legislation passes those chambers. But too frequently it has been Democratic disorder rather than Republican treachery that has made possible the Bush White House's legislative victories. That's what happened with the mid-March Senate vote on a budget amendment that would have protected the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Seven Republican senators voted to protect ANWR from oil drilling. Had the Democratic caucus simply held firm in support of the amendment, it would have won by a 52-to-48 margin. But three Democrats--Daniel Akaka and Daniel Inouye of Hawaii and Mary Landrieu of Louisiana--broke ranks to back the Administration. But this is hardly an isolated example of Democrats doing the bidding of the President and his special interests.

Consider the February Senate vote on tort "reform," another issue on which Democrats are supposed to be the defenders of the common good against the rapacious Republicans. The battle lines could not have been clearer: Bush and his allies wanted to limit sharply the ability of citizens to file class-action lawsuits against corporations that injure or defraud them. A united Democratic opposition in the Senate could have mounted a

populist challenge that might well have won GOP allies for a fight to preserve the sovereignty of state courts, which will be lost under the legislation. Instead, Democrats helped give Bush the first major legislative victory of his second term. Only twenty-six Senate Democrats opposed the proposal, while eighteen--including serial compromisers Joe Lieberman and Evan Bayh and some who ought to know better, like Charles Schumer and Jay Rockefeller--sided with the GOP. It was just as bad in the House, where fifty Democrats backed the bill, handing Bush an easy win that provides momentum for an agenda that includes proposals to restrict asbestos litigation and curb medical malpractice suits.

Even more disappointing was the mid-March vote on legislation designed to make it harder for middle-class and poor Americans to declare personal bankruptcy, leaving crooked companies like Enron free to declare bankruptcy themselves and thus be protected from claims like those by employees who lost their pensions. The vote on the measure, which had been blocked for years by such progressive Democrats as the late Paul Wellstone and a timely veto from then-President Bill Clinton, passed by an overwhelming 74-to-25 vote. Eighteen Democrats--including Reid and key players like Joseph Biden of Delaware and Jeff Bingaman of New Mexico--aligned themselves with the President and the credit card companies that wrote and promoted the bill.

Apologists for these egregious compromises would have us believe that Democrats, as a minority party, have little leverage. But the Social Security debate belies such claims; with Democrats sticking together against privatization, it is the Republicans who have found themselves under pressure to

from The Nation

compromise. The same goes for the Democratic refusal to give ground on ethics issues, which has done so much to increase pressure on scandal-plagued House majority leader Tom DeLay. Unfortunately, shows of solidarity on Social Security and ethics issues represent the exception rather than the rule.

House Democrats have been even less effective in their opposition than their Senate colleagues. Despite polls showing that the vast majority of Americans opposed federal intervention in the Terri Schiavo right-to-die case, only fifty-three Democrats opposed DeLay's move to override Florida state law and judicial rulings in a rush to satisfy the demands of the GOP's most extreme constituencies. Only thirty-six opposed the Broadcast Decency Enforcement Act, which Representative Jan Schakowsky correctly identified as a move to "put Big Brother in charge of deciding what is art and what is free speech." And just thirty-nine rejected the Administration's demand for another \$81.4 billion to maintain the occupation of Iraq and related military misadventures.

In 2002 and 2003 the Democrats tried the strategy of giving the President blank checks for the invasion and occupation of Iraq and then criticizing how the President spent them. That strategy cost the Democrats any chance to frame the debate about the war and ultimately cost them at the polls. But while some individual Democrats, like California Representative Henry Waxman, have come to recognize the folly of such an approach, the party as a whole continues to cede too much ground to the President--on Iraq and on most other issues.

If Democrats don't define themselves as an effective opposition soon, they could end up being an ineffective one for a long time to come.

Molly: Apology from Senator Byrd Unnecessary by Molly Ivins

In the magical upside-down world of right-wing blogs, it is now an accepted article of faith that Sen. Robert Byrd compared George W. Bush to Hitler last week. Republicans are demanding an apology, many have taken to high dudgeon, and another pointless flapette is on.

Actually Byrd, a noted scholar of the Senate and its procedures, made an interesting speech opposing the "nuclear option" of cutting off Senate debate on judicial nominees. "Rumor has it there is a plot afoot in the Senate to curtail the right of extended debate in this hallowed chamber, not in accordance with its rules, mind you, but by fiat from the chair," said the elderly Byrd. He is also famed for his magniloquent speaking style, a splendid old-fashioned oratory known to older Americans who had to study rhetoric. Byrd tangentially mentioned Hitler, quoting historian Alan Bullock to make the following point:

"Hitler's originality lay in his realization that effective revolutions, in modern conditions, are carried out with, and not against, the power of the state: The correct order of events was first to secure access to that power and then begin his revolution. Hitler never abandoned the cloak of legality; he recognized the enormous psychological value of having the law on his side. Instead, he turned the law inside out and made illegality legal."

A point worth pausing over. Byrd went on to suggest the "nuclear option" ploy is similar in that it involves the same premise: If you can't win under the rules, you change the rules. Certainly a case of rhetorical overreach, but then, that is a hazard of public speaking. The blogger Wonkette posted an amusing collection of Republican politicians comparing this, that and the other to Nazi Germany —

a ruling on abortion, stem cell research, even the Kyoto protocol. In 2002, former Sen. Phil Gramm of Texas managed to find a tax bill like something "right out of Nazi Germany. I don't understand ... why all of a sudden we are passing laws that sound as if they are right out of Nazi Germany." Rhetorical overreach plagues many: George W. Bush once managed to invoke the tragic memory of 9-11 in aid of a capital gains tax cut.

Byrd's really quite thoughtful speech should appeal to conservatives with its emphasis on historical precedent, constitutional responsibilities, and the system of checks and balances. Byrd also made a spirited attack on Franklin D. Roosevelt for his misbegotten plan to "pack" the Supreme Court.

All of this was about Bush's decision to renominate 20 of his choices for the federal bench who never got a vote in his first term because of threatened filibusters. For some reason, Republicans have chosen to treat these rebuffs as though they were World War III, accusing Democrats of the dread "obstructionism." Their own record during the Clinton years of knocking off dozens of President Clinton's judicial nominees gives not the slightest pause.

The 20 retreads include some real dogs. One of these prizes is William G. Myers III, nominated for a lifetime seat on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. His qualifications consist of having spent most of his adult life as a lobbyist for Western mining, timber and oil companies. Bush named him top lawyer in the Interior Department in 2001, apparently on the grounds that Myers once compared the federal government's management of federal lands to the tyranny of King George III.

Another gem is Janice Rogers Brown of California, nominated for the D.C. Court of Appeals, who described the New Deal as "the

triumph of our socialist revolution" and praised an infamous line of Supreme Court cases from 1905 to 1937 striking down worker health and safety laws as infringing on the rights of business. (Of course your employer has a right to kill you — what are you, out of the mainstream?)

Still another prize in this package is Claude A. Allen, who believes abortion rights are causing genocide of black people. A supporter of abstinence education, Allen backed the administration's decision to remove information about condoms from the Web site of the Centers for Disease Control.

My personal fave is Priscilla Owen of the Texas Supreme Court, who is so far out that Alberto Gonzales once denounced one of her decisions as "an unconscionable act of judicial activism."

Then there's William Haynes, principal author and defender of the administration's dubious handling of several torture issues. All in all, a lovely bunch of coconuts, with a collective record showing opposition to human rights, civil rights, abortion rights — pretty much everything but property rights.

Go, Byrd.

Contribution Policy

The opinions expressed in editorials or other contributions do not necessarily reflect those of the membership of the Town & Country Democratic Club. Contributions may be edited due to space or content, are due by the 25th of each month for the coming issue, and can be sent to.....

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The Final Word - More Molly: Screw the Children by Molly Ivins

What's really sad about the budget is that all this damage is being done to real, living children-to save what is, in Washington terms, pennies.

Budgets are the guts of government. That's where you find the answer to the first of the three important questions about who runs a society: Who's getting screwed? Who's doing the screwing? And what the hell will they do to us next?

There was a time when reporters actually read budgets to find out what was going on, but the things are so humongous these days, we've given up on that. Consequently, there's usually a bit of a pause after a budget comes out, while we wait to hear from the various special interest groups that study their own section of a budget in minute detail. Then, the screaming from injured parties commences, and the press presumably sits up and takes note of who's screaming loudest.

With President Bush's proposed budget, may it die in committee, no pause is necessary. Read any overview of the proposal, and you can see exactly who's getting screwed: children.

Good Lord, what a nasty document. The cuts are in health care, childcare, Head Start, nutrition programs, food stamps and foster care. Because budgets are such abstract things-add a little here, cut some there, all produced by the Department of Great Big Numbers - it's hard to see what they actually mean to real people's lives.

In fact, that's something I've long noticed about George W. Bush: He really doesn't see any connection between government programs and helping people. Promoting the general welfare, one of the six reasons the Constitution gives for having a government in the first place, is not high on his list. I refer you back to his

immortal statement while governor: "No children are going to go hungry in this state. You'd think the governor would have heard if there are pockets of hunger in Texas." He'd been governor for five years at the time.

What this budget means, quite literally, is that more kids will be hungry and malnourished. More kids who get sick will be unable to see a doctor, more kids with diseases will go undiagnosed until they get so sick they have to be carried to the emergency room. More kids who need glasses or hearing aids won't get them, causing them to fall behind in school. More kids will show up to start school without being in the least prepared, and they will remain behind for the rest of their days. Less money for childcare means more kids left alone or in unsafe places with irresponsible or incapable people while their parents work. More kids who are being severely abused will go unnoticed, and fewer of them will find safe foster homes.

I always thought House Majority Leader Tom DeLay should be interested in that last item-he had three foster children, now in their 20s, so he must have some interest in the problem. During his 20 years in Congress, between 3,000 and 4,000 Texas children have died from abuse.

Of course, that's because Texas has such a lousy child "protection" system. We're quite famous for being "low tax, low service." Our abuse-prevention workers carry 74 cases each, the highest in the nation (to meet national accreditation standards, the monthly investigative caseload should be 12 to 15), and cutting the federal foster care budget doesn't help any. Nationwide, about 6,000 kids die every year from child abuse, murder and suicide.

Every now and again, a gross case, like the recently discovered Florida couple who starved and tortured five of their seven children, gets some public attention. (Boy, that was a beauty. The kids were kept in chains

in a closet and had their toenails pulled out with pliers, and the 14-year-old twins weighed 36 and 38 pounds.) But it's not enough attention, of course, for any God-fearing, Christian Republican to ever consider voting for taxes (gasp, horrors) to do something about it.

In Texas, whenever there's a budget crunch, the first thing we do is hurt the children-last legislative session, we actually turned down federal money for children's health insurance, leaving almost 170,000 Texas children uninsured, just so the state wouldn't have to put up the matching funds, \$1 for every \$2.60 from the feds. How proud we are to see this fine Texas tradition being exported to Washington by our former governor.

What's really sad is that all this damage is being done to real, living children-not clumps of cells in a petri dish-to save what is, in Washington terms, pennies. Pitifully small sums.

Nothing compared to the \$9.9 billion being squandered on the missile defense boondoggle this year. (Did you notice that the system flunked yet another test this week, at a cost of another \$85 million?) Nothing compared to the two tax breaks in the budget that benefit ONLY the really, really rich - regular folks this time will not even get that little, tiny slice that went to the middle class in the first Bush tax cuts.

But don't get me started.

Quoting

"Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies in the final sense a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed."

- Dwight D. Eisenhower



The Calendar



**5th Assembly District
Democratic Committee**
Monday, April 11th, 7:00pm
Home of Brandon Bell
816 Morton Way, Folsom
Ctc: Anne Wangberg
(916) 966-3598

Gray Panthers
Tuesday, April 12th, 1:00pm
Hart Senior Center
27th & I Streets, Sacramento
Contact: Joan Lee
(916) 332-5980
www.graypanthersacramento.org

**Sacramento County
Democratic Central Committee**
Tuesday, April 12th, 6:00pm
State Capitol Room 127
Contact: Rick Wathen, Chairman
(916) 442-0264
www.sacdems.org

**Town & Country Democratic
Club**
Wednesday, April 13th, 7:00pm
Deterding Park Clubhouse
1415 Rushden Way, Sacramento
Corner of Rushden/Somerset
Contact: Kevin Murphy, President
(916) 944-0669
www.tandconline.org

**California Democratic Party
Statewide Convention**
April 15—17th
Los Angeles Convention Center
(916) 442-5707
www.ca-dem.org

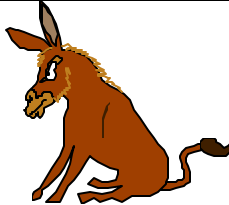
**Town & Country Steering
Committee Meeting**
Wednesday, April 27th, 7:00pm
Location: Kevin Murphy's Home
4211 Paradise Drive, Carmichael
Contact: Kevin, (916) 944-0669
All Members Welcome!
www.tandconline.org

Sacramento For Democracy
Wednesday, May 4th, 7:00pm
SEIU Local 250
1911 F St, Sacramento
Contact: (916) 326-5850
www.SacramentoForDemocracy.org

**Town & Country Democratic
Club**
Wednesday, May 11th, 7:00pm
Deterding Park Clubhouse
1415 Rushden Way, Sacramento
Corner of Rushden/Somerset
Contact: Kevin Murphy, President
(916) 944-0669
www.tandconline.org

**Town & Country Steering
Committee Meeting**
Wednesday, May 25th, 7:00pm
Location: Kevin Murphy's Home
4211 Paradise Drive, Carmichael
Contact: Kevin, (916) 944-0669
All Members Welcome!
www.tandconline.org

**Town & Country
Democratic Club**
P.O. Box 1286
Citrus Heights, CA 95611-1286



Time Value Mail
Address Correction Requested



**Next meeting: "How
Democrats Can Win in
the Moderate Suburbs" -
Wed. April 13th at 7pm.
See you there!!!**