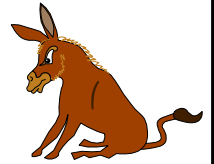


Town & Country Democrat



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

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On the Web: www.tandconline.org

January 2005

Officers

Kevin Murphy
President
(916) 536-4212

Arnie Godmintz
Vice President
(916) 332-5980

Barbara Krings
Secretary
(916) 488-2410

James Nakata
Treasurer
(916) 768-9938

Joan Higgins
Immediate Past President
(916) 745-0198

Kevin Murphy
Newsletter Editor
(916) 536-4212
Fax: (916) 944-4027
E-Mail:
skamurphy@worldnet.att.net

DNC Chair Hopefuls Outline Visions

Eight potential candidates to head the Democratic Party recently pledged a renewed commitment to win votes from churchgoers and appeal to people throughout the South and West.

The next chairman of the Democratic National Committee will become one of the party's leading opponents to President Bush's second-term agenda and a principal planner of the Democrats' strategy to rebound from widespread losses in recent years.

In February, nearly 450 committee members will pick a successor to Terry McAuliffe, a close ally of former President Clinton who is stepping down after four years in the post.

No favorite was evident the weekend of December 13th at an assembly of state party leaders.

In five-minute speeches to the gathering of Democratic officials, the possible contenders did not mention the party's defeated presidential nominee, Massachusetts Sen. John Kerry. But they described many areas where the national party needs to improve.

Candidates called for fresh talent, better communication with voters, new

ways to campaign on values and a strategy for attracting support in rural areas. Democrats must become a more tenacious rival to the GOP, they said.

"We can't be the pussycat opposition," said former Michigan Gov. Jim Blanchard. "We've got to be the hard-hitting loyal opposition. Every Republican member of Congress who voted to have an indicted leader ought to be ousted and defeated."

Blanchard drew a rare interruption of applause for his reference to the House Republicans' recent change to party rules that will protect Majority Leader Tom DeLay's leadership status even if he is indicted as a result of a campaign finance investigation in Texas.

The candidates insisted the party has the values to win broader support, but is not doing a good enough job of conveying that message.

"Too many Americans see our party as a coalition of disparate voices, but they don't understand our basic principles," said former Dallas Mayor Ron Kirk. "That's our fault."

Continued to page - 6

Inside this issue:

<i>In the News</i>	1 - 3
<i>From the President</i>	2
<i>Club News</i>	4 - 6
<i>Membership Info.</i>	5
<i>The Final Word</i>	7
<i>The Calendar</i>	8

Murphy Declares 2005 the "Year of the Club" Come Find Out All About It on January 12th

Club President-elect Kevin Murphy has some new tricks for an old dog. "Tricks that the old dog can learn," he says.

Murphy is talking about retooling many aspects of Town & Country during 2005 when there should be a bare minimum of campaigning and extracurricular activities.

"It's the members' faults," Murphy said recently. "Not only were they foolish enough to send me back to office, they reelected all of the other officers to boot. Easy enough to understand, we were the only ones foolish to run!"

Murphy and the Steering Committee plan to get the ball rolling at the club's

Continued to page - 6

From the President...

Bob Matsui held a special place in my heart. I suspect my heart was not the only one out there - he touched the lives of many.

I first met Bob, early in his House career, at his old office on Capitol Mall.

Myself and several other Boy Scouts were working to earn our Citizenship in the Nation merit badges. Many Scouts visited their representatives' local offices while the reps were in DC. We timed our visit so we could meet him and he was a most gracious host.

I met him again when I was in high school, this time in DC. I was with a group that brought students to DC to learn about government. Bob met us at his office and took us on to the floor of the House. We each took turns sitting in Tip O'Neill's chair. The hour I was with Bob learning about politics was not only the highlight of the week, but served as a seed that has since blossomed into my growing interest in effective government today.

Just a few weeks ago my family received Bob's Christmas card. It was a huge, 11"x17" monster with glossy pictures of his family, every one of them with the family's latest addition - Bob's first grandchild, Anna. Although the size of the card caused my wife to shake her head, I reminded her that when Bob did something big, it was important to him. That was Bob all over - usually under the radar but when it mattered, you knew exactly how he felt and exactly where he stood.

The torch has been passed but the shoes that need to be filled are enormous. Bob's absence leaves a tremendous vacuum. It also leaves a tremendous hole in my heart.



Robert Matsui
1941 - 2005

Shopping Your Politics

Although the holiday shopping season is over, spending your money with companies that spend on Democratic candidates is always in season. As reported by the Center for Responsive Politics, here is a list of some of the top contributors from both sides of the aisle.

WITH US:

* Price Club/Costco donated \$225K, of which 99% went to Democrats;
* Rite Aid, \$517K, 60% to Democrats;
* Magla Products (Stanley tools, Mr. Clean), \$22K, 100% to Democrats;
* Warnaco (undergarments), \$55K, 73% to Democrats;
* Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, \$153K, 99% to Democrats
* Estee Lauder, \$448K, 95% to Democrats
* Guess? Inc., \$145K, 98% to Democrats
* Calvin Klein, \$78K, 100% to Democrats
* Liz Claiborne, Inc., \$34K, 97% to Democrats
* Levi Straus, \$26K, 97% to Democrats
* Olan Mills, \$175K, 99% to Democrats
* Gallo Winery, \$337K, 95% to Democrats
* Southern Wine & Spirits, \$213K, 73% to Democrats
* Joseph E. Seagrams & Sons (includes beverage business, plus considerable media interests), \$2 million+, 67% Democrats.
* Sonic Corporation, \$83K, 98% Democrat
* Triarc Companies (Arby's, T.J. Cinnamon's, Pasta Connections), \$112K, 96% to Democrats
* Hyatt Corporation, \$187K, 80% to Democrats

AGAINST US:

* WalMart, \$467K, 97% to republicans;
* K-Mart, \$524K, 86% to republicans;
* Home Depot, \$298K, 89% to republicans;
* Target, \$226K, 70% to republicans
* Circuit City Stores, \$261K, 95% to republicans;
* 3M Co., \$281K, 87% to republicans
* Hallmark Cards, \$319K, 92% to republicans;
* Amway, \$391K, 100% to republicans;
* Kohler Co. (plumbing fixtures), \$283K, 100% republicans;
* B.F. Goodrich (tires), \$215K, 97% to republicans;
* Proctor & Gamble, \$243K, 79% to republicans;
* Coors, \$174K, 92% to republicans;
* Brown-Forman Corp. (Southern Comfort, Jack Daniels, Bushmills, Korbel wines, Lennox China, Dansk, Gorham Silver), \$644, 80% to republicans;
* Pilgrim's Pride Corp. (chicken), \$366K, 100% to republicans;
* Outback Steakhouse, \$641K, 95% to republicans;
* Tricon Global Restaurants (KFC, Pizza Hut, Taco Bell), \$133K, 87% to republicans;
* Brinker International (Maggiano's, Brinker Cafe, Chili's, On the Border, Macaroni Grill, Crazymel's, Corner Baker, EatZis), \$242K, 83% to republicans;
* Waffle House, \$279K, 100% to republicans;
* McDonald's Corp., \$197K, 86% to republicans;
* Darden Restaurants (Red Lobster, Olive Garden, Smokey Bones, Bahama Breeze), \$121K, 89% to republicans;
* Marriott International, \$323K, 81% to republicans.



BACK IN TEXAS... GOP CAN'T TAKE VO FOR AN ANSWER

For the first time in 32 years, Democrats gained ground in the Texas legislature. The most dramatic story is the success of Hubert Vo, the newly elected Democratic member of the Texas House of Representatives representing southwest Houston.

Democratic candidate Hubert Vo, a Vietnamese immigrant, toppled the powerful Republican state budget chair, a 22-year incumbent and chair of the powerful Appropriations Committee. The margin was tight -- just 33 votes after a recount last week confirmed Vo's victory.

But the Republicans refuse to concede. Refusing to provide any evidence, they are alleging massive voter fraud in minority precincts throughout the southwest Houston district.

The Republican strategy is two-fold:

- 1) Link minority voters and fraud in the public eye
- 2) Contest the election in the Texas House, where the 24-seat Republican majority could uphold

Vo's election, seat Heflin or require Gov. Rick Perry to order a special election.

If the Republicans think that they can ignore the results of elections just because they hold a majority, they're in for a big surprise. Democrats are not going to stop fighting - we'll fight for every State House seat, and in Congressional, Gubernatorial, and Presidential election.

Hubert needs to raise \$500,000 right away to prevail in the face of the unlimited resources the GOP Establishment will throw at their colleague to help him keep his job. Please be as generous as you can by contributing here:

<http://www.hubertvo.com/contribute.htm>.

America needs to know that Republicans are continuing their efforts to steal elections rightfully won by Democrats.



Gay Couples Are "Spouses" When It Comes To Cash

While California's debate over gay marriage will begin in earnest this month with proposed legislation at the Capitol, the state's political watchdog has already weighed in.

The state Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) ruled recently that as far as campaign finance laws are concerned, registered domestic partners are, in fact, "spouses" when it comes to the state's Political Reform Act.

The issue arose after a candidate for the Solana Beach City Council (San Diego County) wanted to know the impact of the soon-to-be-enforced state law expanding the rights and obligations of domestic partners. Candidates and campaigns often must disclose exactly who's related to whom when it comes to where money goes, and where it came from... thus the need to know whether a domestic partner was, in these cases, also a "spouse."

California Weighs Way to Split Electoral Votes

Two Republican lawmakers are introducing a bill that would award California's most-in-the-nation electoral votes by congressional districts, a step they say would make it "the leading battleground state for all future elections."

Democrat John Kerry won California's 55 electoral votes on Nov. 2 by taking more than 54 percent of the popular vote.

But if legislation to be introduced by Assemblymen John Benoit and Tom Harman had been in effect, Kerry and President Bush would have split the state's electoral votes because of Bush's strong showing in the state's inland areas and a few

coastal counties.

Under the bill, a presidential candidate would get one electoral vote for each of the state's 53 congressional districts in which he or she had the most votes. Two electoral votes would be awarded to the candidate who got the most votes statewide.

Two other states, Maine and Nebraska, use the same type of system. Colorado rejected a ballot measure this year that would have divided its electoral votes based on each candidate's share of the popular vote.

Benoit and Harman said their bill would make presidential elections

more democratic, increase turnout and discourage candidates from ignoring California. This year there was little campaigning in the state by either Bush or Kerry because of Kerry's big lead in the polls.

"It's a slap in the face of California voters that our 55 electoral votes, the largest bloc in the country, are given to one candidate without anything more than a token campaign being launched in our state," Benoit said.

But the bill could face tough going. The Legislature is dominated by Democrats. And Democrats have won the last four presidential elections in California.

Club News

Sac Central Committee Sworn In - One Club, One Vote Tabled Again!

On a night of new members and redefined purpose, the Sacramento County Democratic Central Committee found a way to again put off One Club, One Vote.

After conducting new elections for officers, executive committee members and vacant seats from the 4th, and 15th Assembly Districts, a majority of members voted to table the bylaws change that would allow chartered clubs a single vote on the Central Committee.

Committee member Bill Camp, rose to say that while he was now prepared to support the change, he felt new members should have time to review the text of the proposal. A majority of members agreed.

Officers for 2005-06 will be Rick Wathen-Chair, Inez Reyes-Vice Chair, Don Douglas-Secretary, Virginia Moose-Treasurer, Owen Jackman-Finance Chair, and Mark Storm-Parliamentarian. Other positions filled can be viewed at www.sacdems.org.

Dems to Lead Rancho Cordova City Council

Congratulations to newly elected Mayor Ken Cooley and Vice Mayor Robert McGarvey. Both Democrats were recently elected to the top posts of the Rancho Cordova City Council.

Both men ran unopposed in the past General Election and are looking forward to coming year. A top priority for the council includes the 2005-07 Strategic Plan for the City of Rancho Cordova.

Holiday Party—Lots of Fun and Memories to Boot!



Nearly 75 members of Town & Country Democratic Club and volunteers from the Northeast Democratic Headquarters joined for an evening of holiday fun at the Carmichael Park Veterans Hall. In addition to the good food and camaraderie, approximately 50 toys were donated to Western Service Workers Association's Holiday Program for Children. Thanks especially to Peggy Gorman, Margie Metzler, Lynette Stueve for their hard work!

New President for CDC

The California Democratic Council (CDC) recently announced that past President Jim Clarke will be replaced by former CDC Secretary Chris Stampolis. Clarke resigned his position this past summer to take a staff position in Washington DC.

Stampolis is looking forward to taking the reigns of the CDC which is been growing at a strong rate since Clarke took over the CDC four years ago.

CDC is the California Democratic Party's official statewide organization of grassroots clubs. CDC represents the voice and activism of thousands of community Democrats.

All chartered Democratic clubs and county committees are eligible to vote at all CDC meetings. Additionally, Assembly District

Committees may send representatives to CDC gatherings. Affiliated clubs and county committees may receive extra privileges based on affiliation size.

CDC coordinates frequent area and regional meetings to enhance local grassroots activism. CDC's workshops and seminars are open to all Democrats. CDC members are invited to join CDC's annual Lobby Days in Sacramento and local communities, to help to develop CDC's platform, and to participate in e-mail discussion groups and statewide committees.

With Stampolis assuming the role of president, the position of CDC Secretary is currently open. If you are interested in becoming secretary, please contact Chris Stampolis at califdems@aol.com.

Committee Call

Now is the time for all good men and women to come to the aid of their party - no this is not an exercise. It is a call for all members to consider a spot on a club committee for 2005.

The club currently has seven standing committees—Finance, Newsletter, Legislative, Membership, Program, Publicity and Telephone. Additionally, Club President Kevin Murphy will probably add a few “ad hoc” committees including a Luncheon/Fundraising Committee and a Bylaws Committee.

Committees meet when needed and are entrusted to do many important tasks. If you are interested in serving or chairing a committee, please contact Kevin at (916) 944-0669 or at skamurphy@worldnet.att.net.

Local AD Reorganization Meetings Set

Local Assembly District Democratic Committees will be meeting on either Saturday, January 8th or Sunday, January 9th to “reorganize,” that is, to elect new officers and delegates to future California Democratic Party conventions.

The 5th AD Committee will meet at the Deterding Park Clubhouse at 1415 Rushden Drive in Sacramento on Saturday, January 8th at 2:00pm. The 9th AD Committee will also meet on Saturday, January 8th at 10:00am but at the Hart Senior Center located at 915 27th Street in

Sacramento. The 10th AD will meet on Sunday, January 9th at 1:00pm at 9349 Boothwyn Way in Elk Grove.

For more information about these and other AD Reorganization meetings, visit www.sacdems.org.

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

Date _____

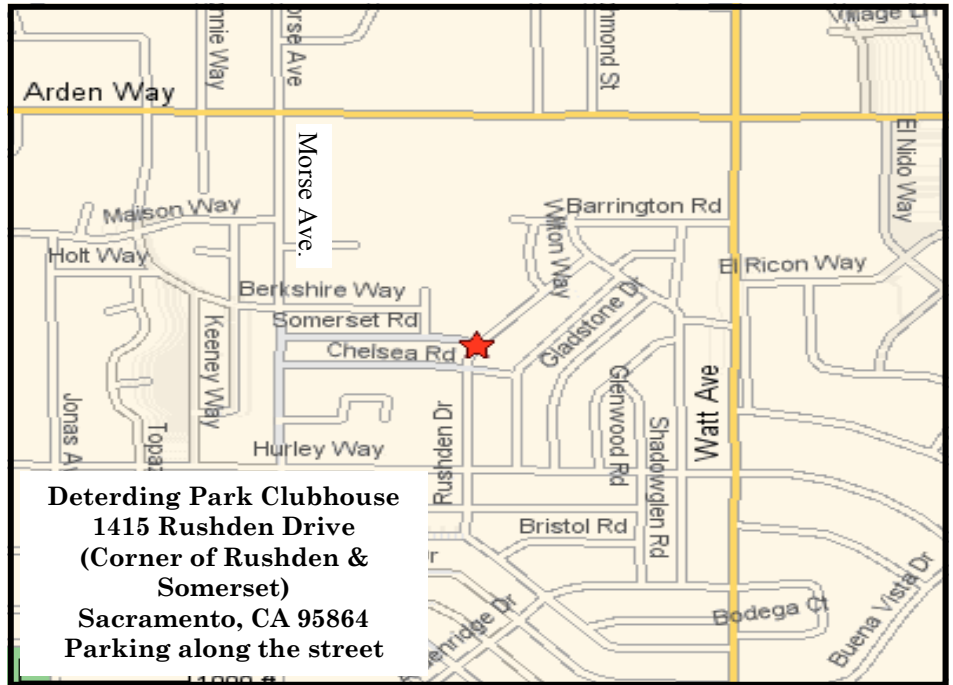
Bring Your Thinking Caps to the January 12th Meeting con't...

first meeting on Wednesday, January 12th at 7:00pm at the Deterding Park Clubhouse - see map at right.

Asked where the club will start it's work, Murphy doesn't hesitate.

"Remember that survey we sent out in November? That's where we are going to start. Then we're going to talk about bylaws, our dues structure, where we meet, how we meet, who talks to us, who doesn't and go from there."

Also on the agenda, after the "new" officers are sworn in, there will be discussion on the club's budget, filling club committees for 2005 and initial discussion about the club's Annual Awards Luncheon. Please join us!



DNC Chair Candidates Outline Their Visions con't...

Nearly every candidate spoke of a "50-state strategy." That is a position popular with the state leaders, a majority of whom represent states neglected by Kerry's campaign.

Kerry concentrated his resources on fewer than 20 states where the race against President Bush was predicted to be close. The Democrat conceded much of the South and West to the Republican incumbent.

But as one of Kerry's rivals during the primaries, former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean, pointed out, Democrats were successful in winning state and local office in many parts of those regions.

"We won in Alabama, we won in Georgia. We won in Idaho, we won in South Carolina," Dean said, mocking his notorious "scream" speech from the night of the Iowa caucus that sealed his defeat in the Democratic primary.

With that election behind him, Dean is considering a run for the national party job. He distributed copies of his book, "You Have the

Power," autographed for every state chairman, along with some Vermont maple syrup and a coupon for free Ben and Jerry's ice cream.

"We won in a lot of states that are so-called red states," Dean said, referring to those states that went to Bush. "There is not such thing as a red state or a blue state. They're all purple."

Aides said Dean wants to make sure he can win before declaring himself a candidate and that he is looking at the possibility of running for president again.

Other possible candidates for the DNC position include:

--Former Denver Mayor Wellington Webb. He promoted his experience in winning elections in the West. He ticked off specific complaints from several states, such as money problems in South Dakota and Republican's Spanish-language advertising in Nevada.

--Texas Rep. Martin Frost, who lost re-election on November 2. He stressed his southern roots and noted that Democrats picked up

seats in Congress while he was leading their re-election effort in the late 1990s.

--Former Clinton adviser Harold Ickes, who talked about his long career in politics and his most recent project -- overseeing more than \$200 million in spending on Democratic issues through new kinds of independent spending groups known as 527s.

--Simon Rosenberg, founder of the centrist New Democrat Network. He urged the party not to cede the debate about values to the Republicans and to look for modern ways to communicate with voters.

--Donnie Fowler, an experienced campaign organizers who has worked on the past four presidential campaigns. He warned the party against letting Republicans define where they compete and called for change in party communications.

The Final Word: The Demise of Democracy by Steve & Cokie Roberts

WE love the House of Representatives. Cokie's parents, Hale and Lindy Boggs, belonged to that body for a total of almost 50 years. Cokie's seventh birthday party was held in the House dining room. As reporters, we both spent many fruitful years covering Capitol Hill.

So it pains us deeply to say that the House is crumbling at its core. Its members have become arrogant and unaccountable. The arm of government designed to be closest to the people no longer has to answer to the popular will.

Here's the problem. Over the last two decades, both parties have conspired to draw congressional districts that protect incumbents or guarantee victory for one side or the other.

Look at this year's election. Outside of Texas, only three incumbents lost their seats, a re-election rate of 99 percent. (Four Texas Democrats were defeated after being thrown into difficult new districts.) In California, with 53 House members, not a single race was even close.

This year's balloting was the least competitive in the nation's history. And two recent episodes demonstrate the corrosive effects of that trend.

House Republicans dropped an 11-year-old rule that requires any member facing indictment to vacate a leadership post. This ethical benchmark was casually dumped overboard to protect one man, Majority Leader Tom DeLay of Texas, probably the most powerful figure on Capitol Hill these days.

Three of DeLay's cronies have already been indicted in a money-laundering scheme back home, and Republicans worry that their leader could be the next target of Ronnie Earle, the Democratic district attorney of Travis County. As Rep. Henry Bonilla put it, Republicans didn't want some "partisan crackpot" prosecutor to determine their leadership.

But DeLay's ethical issues cannot be blamed on partisan sniping. During his long career, Earle has prosecuted far more Democrats than Republicans. More seriously, DeLay has been rebuked four different times by the House ethics committee. That panel is chaired by a Republican, and all five Republican members have joined in condemning DeLay's behavior.

A few Republican voices have protested the rule change. Rep. Chris Shays of Connecticut said: "We were elected in 1994 because we were different. I see a constant and steady erosion in what made us different." Conservative columnist David Brooks of The New York Times accused DeLay of "playing close to the ethical edge for years" and called him "a scandal waiting to happen."

But those critics were brushed aside for a simple reason: Republicans have no fear of electoral retribution. Virtually all of them are in safe seats. They run no risk in abandoning their own ethical standards.

A similar incident occurred recently when two powerful Republican barons, Duncan Hunter of California and James Sensenbrenner of Wisconsin, blocked consideration of a bill restructuring the nation's intelligence services.

No matter that the reorganization was favored by the 9/11 commission, a bipartisan conference committee, and the president. Hunter and Sensenbrenner didn't care.

Even if the country suffers another terrorist attack while Congress dithers, the two lawmakers and their obstructionist allies are completely unaccountable to the voters. Their gerrymandered districts -- and huge campaign war chests -- immunize them from the consequences of their own actions.

This distortion of democracy taints the legislative process as well as the political process. Since members of Congress enjoy such large majorities back home, they seldom have to listen to voters who disagree with them. If they don't fear defeat, they don't have to heed dissent.

The result is a dramatic and damaging polarization, with the Republican Party becoming more conservative and the Democrats more liberal.

Moderates in both parties, the ones who believe compromise and accommodation are noble virtues, find themselves increasingly marginalized.

What can be done? It's hard to imagine that lawmakers who benefit from the current climate will make changes that increase competition and accountability. But more states should follow the example of Iowa, which gives a nonpartisan commission the job of drawing Congressional lines every 10 years.

By a narrow 5 to 4 margin, the Supreme Court voted earlier this year to reject a legal challenge to Congressional lines drawn by Pennsylvania Republicans. But the swing vote, by Justice Anthony Kennedy, held open the possibility that a future court could set limits on the power of politicians to draw safe districts.

Those limits are badly needed. The noblest institution of representative government no longer works. How can America preach democracy to the rest of the world when it does not practice democracy at home?

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.....

Kevin Murphy, Editor
Town & Country Democrat
4211 Paradise Drive
Carmichael, CA 95608
Fax: (916) 944-4027
E-Mail: gbtrotter@aol.com



The Calendar



Casket of Rep. Robert Matsui Lies in State Capitol Rotunda
From Thurs., January 6th, 3:00pm to Friday, January 7th, 3:00pm

Public Memorial Service for Rep. Robert Matsui
Saturday, January 8th, 10:00am
Memorial Auditorium
Corner of J Street/15th Street
Sacramento

9th AD Democratic Committee Reorganization Meeting
Saturday, January 8th, 10:00am
Hart Senior Center
915 27th Street (Corner of 27th & I Streets), Sacramento
Contact: Linda Love via email at spiritualbeing@sbcglobal.net

5th AD Democratic Committee Reorganization Meeting
Saturday, January 8th, 2:00pm
Deterding Park Clubhouse
1415 Rushden Drive, Sacramento
Corner of Rushden/Somerset
Contact: Marty Maskall, Secretary
(916) 967-2472

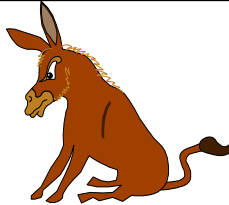
10th AD Democratic Committee Reorganization Meeting
Sunday, January 10th, 1:00pm
9349 Boothwyn Way, Elk Grove
Contact: Katherine Maestas
(916) 684.7632

Gray Panthers
Tuesday, January 11th, 1:00pm
Hart Senior Center
27th & I Streets, Sacramento
Contact: Joan Lee
(916) 332-5980

Town & Country Democratic Club
Wednesday, January 12th, 7:00pm
Deterding Park Clubhouse
1415 Rushden Way, Sacramento
Corner of Rushden/Somerset
Contact: Kevin Murphy, President
(916) 944-0669

Town & Country Steering Committee Meeting
Wednesday, January 26th, 7:00pm
Location: Kevin Murphy's Home
4211 Paradise Drive, Carmichael
Contact: Kevin, (916) 944-0669
All Members Welcome!

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



Time Value Mail
Address Correction Requested



Please keep the Family of Rep. Bob Matsui in Your Heart and Prayers This Weekend!!!