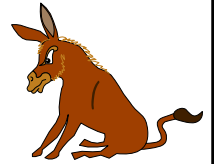


Town & Country Democrat



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

Volume 54, Issue 1

On the Web: www.tandconline.org

January 2006

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The Real Samuel Alito

By Tom McMahon

Soon confirmation hearings for Samuel Alito will begin in the Senate. Already serious questions are being raised about his record on important matters such as civil rights.

As disturbing facts continue to emerge about Alito, Republicans in the Senate flip-flop on whether every nominee deserves an up or down vote - on one hand they were for it, but when extremist Republican activists soured on Harriet Miers, they decided they were against it. Now that the rightwing is popping Champagne corks for Samuel Alito, they are for it once again.

Keep in mind that the Alito nomination has already failed in one regard -- George Bush hoped it would help push his failure in Iraq off the front page. While this administration's botched management in Iraq has rightfully remained front and center, some disturbing trends have emerged around Alito's record.

Here are the facts. When Alito was nominated for his present job on the Court of Appeals, he made a pledge to the U.S. Senate that he would recuse himself from cases where he had a personal interest. On multiple occasions Alito has broken that pledge.

He broke his pledge in 1995 when he ruled on a case that involved his sister's law firm. And he broke his pledge in 2002 when he ruled on a case involving an investment firm where he had a six-figure personal investment.

Still more disturbing has been the series of shifting excuses for these serious ethical lapses. In the case of the investment firm, Alito's sponsors in the White House first claimed that a computer glitch failed to alert Judge Alito of the conflict. When that excuse began to be scrutinized, the explanation suddenly shifted, with administration officials arguing on his behalf that Alito didn't need to recuse himself after all.

Americans deserve a Supreme Court Justice who doesn't need a computer to tell the difference between right and wrong.

And it does not stop there. On a job application for a position in the Reagan

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What Should We Do? Who Will We Support? T&C's Annual Planning Meeting on Jan. 11th

It's that time of year again! A new year and an election year to boot! Come join the new officers and other members of Town & Country as we sit down to discuss our plans for the coming year!

A what an exciting year it is expected to be! The republicans are on the defensive both in Washington and here at home. Nationally, it's time for the

midterms. Here in California, we have a gubernatorial election to gear up for.

We have several great candidates lined up to run - Phil Angelides for Governor and Charlie Brown for the 4th Congressional District just to name two.

Local races will require a concerted

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From the President...

Let me take this opportunity to wish each of you a Happy New Year! As Democrats, we should feel hopeful about the coming year because 2006 offers the promise of, among other things, taking back the California Governorship and the U.S. Congress.

As Town & Country's new president, my goals include the achievement of a solid increase in membership along with a renewed level of activism within the club.

The 2004 election brought out a new generation of Democratic activists and we've seen what we can do by working together toward mutual goals, such as denying Arnold's power grab or making our voices heard with respect to our shared opposition to the war on Iraq.

We all agree that Town and Country Democrats should and will remain in the forefront on these issues and, therefore, should seek to recruit as many of these new activists as possible to join our club. I look forward to working with all of you to achieve that goal.

As a new member of Town & Country, I haven't had the chance to meet many of you. But I look forward to doing so and to hearing your ideas and suggestions as to how we grow this organization in the future while continuing the traditions of those who came before.

It is to my benefit that Arnie Godmintz will continue as vice president. I couldn't have asked for a more knowledgeable "right hand" and will take every advantage of his skills whenever possible. That the club finances will remain in the capable hands of Jim Nakata allows further for a smooth transition.

On behalf of the entire membership, I'd like to thank Kevin Murphy for his leadership during his past two terms as president. I'm personally grateful that he will carry on as Town & Country's newsletter editor and stay involved

as a member of the Executive Committee.

Many thanks also to Barbara Krings for her substantial contributions as club secretary for the past several years; I hope she will continue as an active member.

As an involved Democrat and former English teacher, Laure Olson is a welcome replacement.

Our next meeting is Wednesday, January 11 at 7:00. I hope to see you there!

California Demands Repairs to Software for Voting Machines

From the Associated Press

Election officials have told one of the country's largest makers of voting machines to repair its software after problems with vote counts and verification surfaced in the state's special election in November.

In a letter obtained by The Associated Press, Bradley J. Clark, the assistant secretary of state for elections, threatened to start the process of decertifying machines made by the maker, Election Systems and Software, if senior officials did not address the concerns immediately.

"The California secretary of state is deeply concerned about problems experienced by counties utilizing ES&S voting equipment and software," Mr. Clark wrote in a letter addressed to the company president, Aldo Tesi, nine days after the Nov. 8 election.

Software problems included incorrect counting of turnout figures, a malfunction that prevented voters from verifying that their choices were registered accurately and one machine recording the wrong vote in a test, according to the letter.

Eleven California counties used the company's voting machines in the special election. Election Systems and Software equipment also is used in 45 other states.

The problems in California are similar to ones the company has experienced elsewhere. In a 2004 primary election in Hawaii, glitches with the company's optical scanners led to a miscount

of about 6,000 votes.

It is the second time this week that questions have arisen about electronic voting systems in California. The secretary of state's office also warned 17 counties that machines made by Diebold Election Systems must pass more rigorous security tests to be available for use in 2006. At issue with those machines is the computer language that secures ballot entries and instructs election officials on how to gain access to and tally the votes.

The state's letter to Election Systems and Software said it was imperative that company representatives "take corrective action as soon as possible." Ken Fields, a spokesman for the company, which is based in Omaha, said officials had since met with the secretary of state's office.

"We listened carefully to the issues that they raised, and we've been working to address each of the issues," Mr. Fields said. He said some of the problems outlined in the letter were caused by operator error or misunderstandings about how the software was to be used. None of the problems caused any incorrect votes to be recorded or affected the election results, Mr. Fields said.

A spokeswoman for Secretary of State Bruce McPherson declined to elaborate further on the Election Day mishaps, the problems discussed in the letter or the company's assertion that state officials were pleased with its proposed solutions.

AFSCME Announces Opposition to Judge Alito

On December 19th, the American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees (AFSCME) formally announced its opposition to the nomination of Judge Sam Alito to the U.S. Supreme Court. Irasema Garza, Director of the Women's Rights Department at AFSCME, made the announcement at a press conference on Capitol Hill. Citing Judge Alito's hostile record towards workers and efforts to take away important protections from state employees, Garza said, "Judge Alito clearly wants to drastically limit the power of the federal government to protect individuals who work for state government."

Judge Alito is a staunch advocate of the federalism movement, a movement that poses a tremendous threat to employees of state governments. The federalism movement seeks to limit the power of the federal government to protect individuals who happen to be employees of state governments.

Judge Alito also wrote an opinion

in a Pennsylvania case where he stated that the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) did not apply to state employees. The Supreme Court disagreed, upholding the family care provision of the FMLA. Several courts since then have concluded that state employees should have access to the entire range of protections under the FMLA, thus rejecting Alito's earlier ruling.

As a judge on the 3rd Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia, Alito's extreme views can be seen in his rulings where he consistently limits Congress' authority to pass laws that protect the rights of workers and individuals, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the National Labor Relations Act. And, although the majority of his fellow judges disagreed with him, Alito set a standard so high that victims of all kinds of discrimination would find it virtually impossible to prove their case.

Hearings on Alito begin Jan. 9th.

CDP Seeks Input on 2006 Platform

The California Democratic Party is seeking input and comment to its proposed 2006 Platform. With the tremendous volunteer effort thus far from committee members and staff assistance, the party is pleased to receive your testimonials and vision statements as it continues to craft its new platform.

The CDP has already received hundreds of emails from Democrats across California. This is tremendous grassroots participation -- several of the messages have been very moving; nearly all are soulfully rendered statements of values and principles.

Please submit your testimony online at www.ca-dem.org. and be sure to encourage your friends and family to do the same. Your suggestions are always welcome. Together we will put forward a progressive Democratic agenda that will help lead us to victory in 2006!

Secretary of State "Punts" Diebold Decision

"The Secretary of State shouldn't punt the decision about whether Diebold machines should be used to count ballots in California to the federal government and an 'independent' testing authority that's financed by the voting machine vendors. That decisions needs to be made in the open, right here in California."

That's how Senator Debra Bowen (D-Redondo Beach), the chairwoman of the Senate Elections, Reapportionment, & Constitutional Amendments Committee, reacted to the recent decision by the Secretary of State Bruce MacPherson to send Diebold to the federal government and the Independent Testing Authority for more information before deciding

whether to re-certify the company's touch-screen machines for use here in California.

"The federal testing process is notoriously weak and it's done in secret," continued Bowen. "Plus, these supposedly 'independent testing authorities' the Secretary of State wants to rely on are financed by the voting machine industry and conduct their tests in secret as well."

Earlier, two Florida counties decided to remove all Diebold voting machines from their polling places due to concerns the machine's election results could be manipulated. Here in California, a number of counties bought Diebold

touch-screen voting machines in 2003 and 2004 only to have them decertified after the March 2004 election when the machines prevented thousands of voters from casting their ballots, and Diebold was discovered to have violated state law by installing uncertified software on the machines before the election.

"Basically, the Secretary of State decided not to make a decision, which is certainly better than opting to re-certify the Diebold machines, but at some point, he's going to have to decide whether he wants to make Californians vote on these error-prone touch-screens," concluded Bowen.



Club News—Holiday Party Memories



Thanks to everyone who turned out for the club's annual holiday party co-hosted with the 5th AD Democratic Committee. A great time was had by everyone and many gifts were collected for Western Service Workers Association. Thanks to everyone who made the party a success including, but not limited to, Tim & Tiffany Brown, Ralph Cyfers, Bill Emerson, Arnie Godmintz, Peggy Gorman, Betty Merle, Jim Nakata, Nancy Tronaas, Ann Wangberg, and all the volunteers! Special thanks to Candidate Darrell Steinberg (6th Senate District) for swearing in our new officers! Photos courtesy of Tim Brown & Betty Merle.

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: \$25.00 Individual \$30.00 Family
 \$20.00 Senior Individual \$25.00 Senior Family

Signature _____

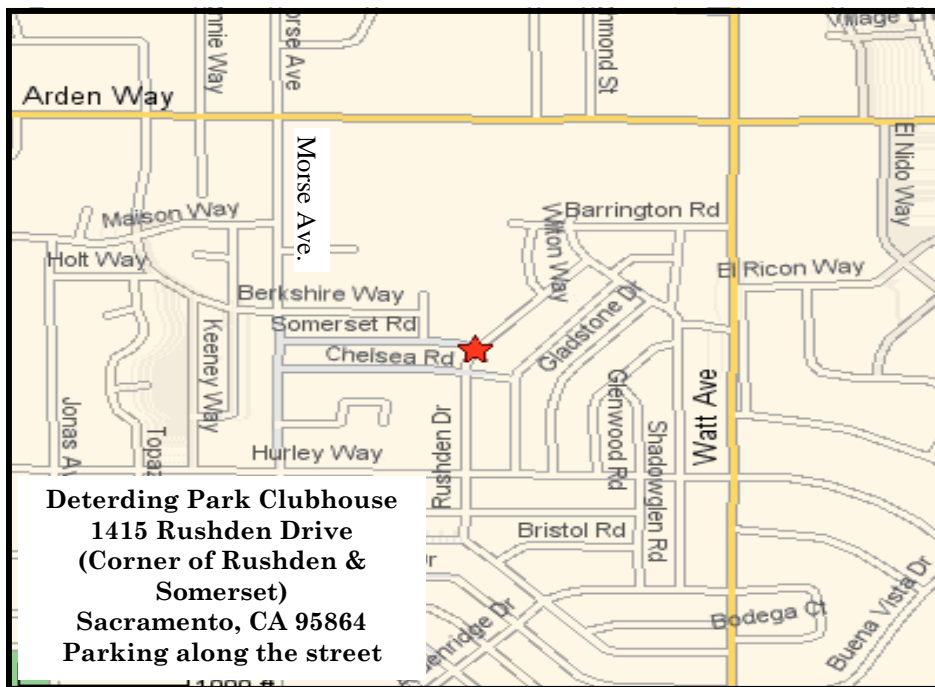
Date _____

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

T&C's Annual Club Goals and Planning Meeting con't...

effort between Town & Country and our Democratic sisters and brothers throughout Sacramento and South Placer Counties. We have a Sacramento County Northeast Democratic Campaign Headquarters to raise funds for! We have our annual luncheon coming up in a few short months! Now is the time for all good men and women to come to the aid of their party!!!

Please plan on bringing your ideas and lending your voice to the very important meeting. Everyone should come with ideas to fight for our Democratic ideals in the coming year! See you at the Deterding Park Clubhouse on Wednesday, January 11th at 7:00pm sharp!



A Few Quotes from Tom Delay

1) "So many minority youths had volunteered, that there was literally no room for patriotic folks like myself."

--Tom DeLay, explaining at the 1988 GOP convention why he and vice presidential nominee Dan Quayle did not fight in the Vietnam War.

2) "Now tell me the truth boys, is this kind of fun?"

--Tom Delay, to three young hurricane evacuees from New Orleans at the Astrodome in Houston, Sept.9,2005.

3) "We're no longer a superpower. We're a super-duper power."

--Tom DeLay, explaining why America must topple Saddam Hussein in 2002 interview with Fox News.

4) "Nothing is more important in the face of a war than cutting taxes."

--Tom DeLay, March 12, 2003.

5) "Guns have little or nothing to do with juvenile violence. The causes of youth violence are working parents who put their kids into daycare, the teaching of evolution in the schools, and working mothers who take birth control pills."

--Tom DeLay, on causes of the Columbine High School massacre, 1999.

6) "A woman can take care of the family. It takes a man to provide structure. To provide stability. Not that a woman can't provide stability, I'm not saying that... It does take a father, though."

--Tom DeLay, in a radio interview, Feb. 10, 2004.

Alito con't...

administration, Alito pointed to his membership in an organization known as the Concerned Alumni of Princeton. During his time at Princeton and when he was still promoting his membership over a decade later, this group made its name fighting integration of women and minorities on campus.

While his job application clearly points out his membership in this organization, he has now reversed course -- his response to questions from Senators last month was, "I have no recollection of being a member or attending meetings."

A person seeking a lifetime appointment to the Supreme Court must be upfront and honest with the Senate -- and with the American people.

Samuel Alito has a lot to answer for -- and sending a letter right now can set the stage for his hearings and ensure that the American people finally get the truth.

For more information, visit <http://www.democrats.org/alitoletters>.

Tom McMahon is Executive Director Democratic National Committee.

Contribution: Power We Didn't Grant

by Tom Daschle

In the face of mounting questions about news stories saying that President Bush approved a program to wiretap American citizens without getting warrants, the White House argues that Congress granted it authority for such surveillance in the 2001 legislation authorizing the use of force against al Qaeda. On Tuesday, Vice President Cheney said the president "was granted authority by the Congress to use all means necessary to take on the terrorists, and that's what we've done."

As Senate majority leader at the time, I helped negotiate that law with the White House counsel's office over two harried days. I can state categorically that the subject of warrantless wiretaps of American citizens never came up. I did not and never would have supported giving authority to the president for such wiretaps. I am also confident that the 98 senators who voted in favor of authorization of force against al Qaeda did not believe that they were also voting for warrantless domestic surveillance.

On the evening of Sept. 12, 2001, the White House proposed that Congress authorize the use of military force to "deter and preempt any future acts of terrorism or aggression against the United States." Believing the scope of this language was too broad and ill defined, Congress chose instead, on Sept. 14, to authorize "all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations or persons [the president] determines planned, authorized, committed or aided" the attacks of Sept. 11. With this language, Congress denied the president the more expansive authority he sought and insisted that his authority be used specifically against Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda.

Just before the Senate acted on this compromise resolution, the White House sought one last change. Literally minutes before the Senate cast its vote, the administration sought to add the words "in the United States and" after "appropriate force" in the agreed-upon text. This last-minute change would have given the president broad authority to exercise expansive powers not just overseas -- where we all understood he wanted authority to act -- but right here in the United States, potentially against American citizens. I could see no justification for Congress to accede to this extraordinary request for additional authority. I refused.

The shock and rage we all felt in the hours after the attack were still fresh. America was reeling from the first attack on our soil since Pearl Harbor. We suspected thousands had been killed, and many who worked in the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were not yet accounted for. Even so, a strong bipartisan majority could not agree to the administration's request for an unprecedented grant of authority.

The Bush administration now argues those powers were inherently contained in the resolution adopted by Congress -- but at the time, the administration clearly felt they weren't or it wouldn't have tried to insert the additional language.

All Americans agree that keeping our nation safe from terrorists demands aggressive and innovative tactics. This unity was reflected in the near-unanimous support for the original resolution and the Patriot Act in those harrowing days after Sept. 11. But there are right and wrong ways to defeat terrorists, and that is a distinction this administration has never seemed to accept. Instead of employing tactics that preserve Americans' freedoms

and inspire the faith and confidence of the American people, the White House seems to have chosen methods that can only breed fear and suspicion.

If the stories in the media over the past week are accurate, the president has exercised authority that I do not believe is granted to him in the Constitution, and that I know is not granted to him in the law that I helped negotiate with his counsel and that Congress approved in the days after Sept. 11. For that reason, the president should explain the specific legal justification for his authorization of these actions, Congress should fully investigate these actions and the president's justification for them, and the administration should cooperate fully with that investigation.

In the meantime, if the president believes the current legal architecture of our country is insufficient for the fight against terrorism, he should propose changes to our laws in the light of day.

That is how a great democracy operates. And that is how this great democracy will defeat terrorism.

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: A Message to America

From John Cleese

To the citizens of the United States of America:

"In light of your failure to elect a competent President of the USA and thus to govern yourselves, we hereby give notice of the revocation of your independence, effective immediately. Her Sovereign Majesty Queen Elizabeth II will resume monarchical duties over all states, commonwealths, and territories (excepting Kansas, which she does not fancy).

Your new prime minister, Tony Blair, will appoint a governor for America without the need for further elections. Congress and the Senate will be disbanded. A questionnaire may be circulated next year to determine whether any of you noticed. To aid in the transition to a British Crown Dependency, the following rules are introduced with immediate effect:

You should look up "revocation" in the Oxford English Dictionary. Then look up aluminum, and check the pronunciation guide. You will be amazed at just how wrongly you have been pronouncing it. The letter 'U' will be reinstated in words such as 'favour' and 'neighbour.' Likewise, you will learn to spell 'doughnut' without skipping half the letters, and the suffix -ize will be replaced by the suffix -ise.

Generally, you will be expected to raise your vocabulary to acceptable levels. (look up vocabulary).

Using the same twenty-seven words interspersed with filler noises such as "like" and "you know" is an unacceptable and inefficient form of communication. There is no such thing as US English. We will let Microsoft know on your behalf. The Microsoft spell-checker will be adjusted to take account of the reinstated letter 'u' and the

elimination of -ize.

You will relearn your original national anthem, "God Save the Queen."

July 4th will no longer be celebrated as a holiday.

You will learn to resolve personal issues without using guns, lawyers or therapists. The fact that you need so many lawyers and therapists shows that you're not adult enough to be independent.

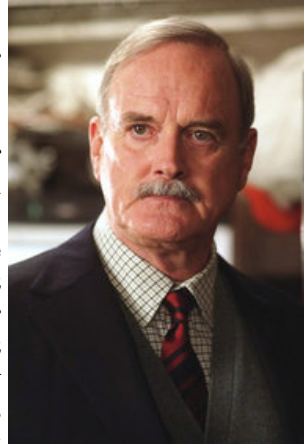
Guns should only be handled by adults. If you're not adult enough to sort things out without suing someone or speaking to a therapist then you're not grown up enough to handle a gun. Therefore, you will no longer be allowed to own or carry anything more dangerous than a vegetable peeler. A permit will be required if you wish to carry a vegetable peeler in public.

All American cars are hereby banned. They are crap and this is for your own good. When we show you German cars, you will understand what we mean. All intersections will be replaced with roundabouts, and you will start driving on the left with immediate effect. At the same time, you will go metric with immediate effect and without the benefit of conversion tables. Both roundabouts and metrication will help you understand the British sense of humour.

The Former USA will adopt UK prices on petrol (which you have been calling gasoline) - roughly \$6/US gallon. Get used to it.

You will learn to make real chips. Those things you call French fries are not real chips, and those things you insist on calling potato chips are properly called crisps. Real chips are thick cut, fried in animal fat, and dressed not with catsup but with vinegar.

The cold tasteless stuff you insist on calling beer is not actually beer at



all. Henceforth, only proper British Bitter will be referred to as beer, and European brews of known and accepted provenance will be referred to as Lager. American brands will be referred to as Near-Frozen Gnat's Urine, so that all can be sold without risk of further confusion.

Hollywood will be required occasionally to cast English actors as good guys. Hollywood will also be required to cast English actors to play English characters. Watching Andie MacDowell attempt English dialogue in "Four Weddings and a Funeral" was an experience akin to having one's ears removed with a cheese grater.

You will cease playing American football. There is only one kind of proper football; you call it soccer. Those of you brave enough will, in time, be allowed to play rugby (which has some similarities to American football, but does not involve stopping for rest every twenty seconds or wearing full Kevlar body armour like a bunch of nancies).

Further, you will stop playing baseball. It is not reasonable to host an event called the World Series for a game which is not played outside of America. Since only 2.1% of you are aware that there is a world beyond your borders, your error is understandable.

You must tell us who killed JFK. It's been driving us mad.

An internal revenue agent (i.e. tax collector) from Her Majesty's Government will be with you shortly to ensure the acquisition of all monies due (backdated to 1776).

Thank you for your co-operation.



The Calendar



An Evening With Senator

John Edwards

Monday, January 9

Mondavi Center for the Arts Davis

Tickets: \$35-\$50

Contact: 1.866.754.ARTS

5th AD Democratic Committee

Monday, January 9th, 7:00pm

Location: TBA

Contact: Ann Wangberg

(916) 966-3590

Gray Panthers

Tuesday, January 10th, 1:00pm

Hart Senior Center

27th & I Streets, Sacramento

Contact: Joan Lee

(916) 332-5980

www.graypanthersacramento.org

Sacramento County Democratic Central Committee

Tuesday, January 10th, 6:00pm

State Capitol Room 127

Contact: Rick Wathen, Chairman

(916) 442-0264

www.sacdems.org

Town & Country Democratic Club

Wednesday, January 11th, 7:00pm

Deterding Park Clubhouse

1415 Rushden Way, Sacramento

Corner of Rushden/Somerset

Contact: Tiffany Brown, President

(916) 419-4064

www.tandconline.org

Town & Country Steering Committee Meeting

Wednesday, January 25th, 7:00pm

Location: Home of Tiffany Brown

5350 Dunlay Dr. #1417, Sacramento

Contact: Tiffany (916) 419-4064

All Members Welcome!

www.tandconline.org

Sacramento For Democracy

Wednesday, February 4th, 7:00pm

SEIU Local 250

1911 F St, Sacramento

Contact: (916) 326-5850

www.SacramentoForDemocracy.org

A Reception for Jackie Speier Candidate for Lieutenant Governor

Wednesday, January 18, 6:00pm

\$50 per person, sponsorships avail.

RSVP required for location

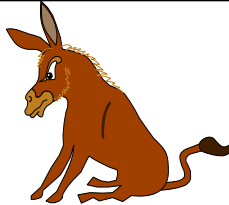
(916) 928-8049 or via email to

rspingarn@aol.com

Town & Country Democratic Club

P.O. Box 1286

Citrus Heights, CA 95611-1286



Time Value Mail

Address Correction Requested



Reminder: Don't forget your dues are due!!! This is your last chance to pay before the price goes up!!!