

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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July 2005

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CDC in Shambles

For delegates, it was a return to the party machines of the last century. For others, it was a consolidation of power.

San Bernardino was the place the last nail was put into the coffin of the once proud and powerful California Democratic Council. Having just past its 50th birthday in 2002, many members felt like the latest convention was a wake for the organization started by Senator Alan Cranston and other progressive Democrats.

The CDC was the original California Grassroots organization. It preceded groups like Democracy For America and Move On by half a century.

There was a time in history that no Democrat could win the party's nomination without a CDC endorsement. Those days peaked in the late 1960's when the CDC started to lose its cohesiveness as the group's leaders and member clubs splintered over the Vietnam War. Into the early 1990's the CDC survived on the dues and participation of grassroots clubs like Town & Country.

There was a glimmer of hope a few years ago when Jim Clarke, former Secretary of the California Democratic Party, was elected President of CDC

and vowed to bring it back to its glory days as a force to be reckoned with in California Democratic politics. While Clarke made good on many of his promises, he took a job working for Maxine Waters in Washington DC and the stress of running the CDC from the East Coast took its toll. Last year Clarke stepped down and the CDC's Secretary Chris Stampolis was selected to take the reins.

Since Stampolis took over, many clubs, including Town & Country, had received no correspondence of any kind from the CDC's office in Los Angeles. After January, there was no instruction on how to renew the club's membership and no call to convention via mail as was required by the CDC's bylaws.

Last month Mary Longmore, the CDC's Area Vice President, attended Town & Country's membership meeting and announced that the CDC was in trouble. Stampolis had been accused of spending thousands of dollars without permission of the CDC's Board of Directors. Her concern, and the concern of others, motivated Mary to run against Stampolis for CDC President.

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It's July, It's Hot, It's Time for Town & Country's Annual Ice Cream Social



Join Town & Country Democratic Club at its usually annual ice cream social on Wednesday, July 13th at 7:00pm. The social will be at the Deterding Park Clubhouse, 1415 Rushden Dr., at the corner of Rushden Drive and

Somerset Road in Sacramento.

Club business will be kept to a minimum so we can socialize and get to know each other a little better. Of course, there may be some talk of politics!

For more information about the event, contact Kevin Murphy at (916) 944-0669 or via email at skamurphy@hotmail.com

From the President...

While this column is being written just prior to the club's 11th Annual Awards Luncheon, I'm sure we are on the heels of a very successful event.

Just like the Democratic National Committee has experienced in recent years, larger donations/sponsorships came in rather slowly but solidly but the number of smaller donations/sponsorships from individuals was up dramatically. Last year, seventeen sponsors made contributions at the bronze (\$100 level). At this point, just a few days prior to the event, we have twenty-seven proud Democrats at this level—ten more than last year which equates to a platinum (\$1,000) sponsorship! Just as the DNC found in 2004, so we are finding that small contributors can keep up with the big guys, we just need a few more.

While I don't have the exact figure, nearly all of the money we raise goes to the Northeast Democratic Headquarters the club helps to sponsor each election year. We also use the money we raise to support Democratic candidates for local office.

Individual ticket buyers can also take great pride for attending the event. Your contribution of \$35 per person helped with the smaller costs of putting on the luncheon—printing, postage, decorations, etc. While we did not spend the day in picket lines, at a protest or registering voters, everyone should have a sense of accomplishment in coming together for a day of recognizing our hard working peers, supporting our candidates for future office and for generally coming together to get to know ourselves a little better.

Thanks to everyone who sponsored, attended and volunteered at our event. And please, check out page - 4 for some photos and a grateful thanks to everyone who helped put it on!!!

Pratt to be Recognized by Board of Sups

Dr. Fred Pratt, longtime member and past president of T&C, is being honored by his charitable work by the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors.

Using his medical background, Fred has worked tirelessly on behalf of many non-profit groups in Sacramento County and all over the world. Fred has treated countless children and adults with cleft lip and palate deformities free of charge.

Fred is a Clinical Professor of Surgery, University of California, Davis, CA, retired, a founding member of Sutter Cleft Palate and

O r o f a c i a l
Anomaly Panel
and former
president of
Physicians for
S o c i a l
Responsibility
(S a c r a m e n t o
Chapter). He is a
board member of
Uplift International



The Sacramento County Board of Supervisors will recognize Fred's hard work at the Board's meeting on Tuesday, July 26th at 9:30am in the Board's Chamber at 7th and H Streets in Sacramento.

Poll: Bush job approval dips to new low

When it comes to public approval, President Bush and Congress are playing "how low can you go." Bush's approval mark is 43 percent, while Congress checks in at 31 percent, an Associated Press-Ipsos poll found. Both are the lowest levels yet for the survey, started in December 2003.

"There's a bad mood in the country, people are out of sorts," said Charles Jones, a presidential scholar and senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. "Iraq news is daily bad news."

The public also is showing concerns about the direction of the country as the war in Iraq drags on. Only about one-third of adults, 35 percent, said they thought the country was headed in the right direction. Forty-one percent said they supported Bush's handling of the war in Iraq, also a low-water mark.

Gail Thomas, an independent who leans Democratic from Prattville, Ala., said the war in Iraq was a distraction after the Sept. 11, 2001, attack ordered by Osama bin Laden.

"They're not going after the one who did it," said Thomas. "They

were too anxious to go after Saddam Hussein. All they're doing is getting our guys killed."

Car bombings and attacks by insurgents killed 80 U.S. troops and more than 700 Iraqis last month. Pentagon officials acknowledge the level of violence is about the same as a year ago, when they were forced to scrap a plan to substantially reduce the U.S. troop presence in Iraq.

While Bush has gotten generally low scores for his handling of domestic issues for many months, Americans have been more supportive of his foreign policy. Not any more.

The poll conducted for AP by Ipsos found 45 percent support Bush's foreign policy, down from 52 percent in March.

Support for Bush's handling of domestic issues remained in the high 30s and low 40s in the latest AP-Ipsos poll.

Thirty-seven percent support Bush's handling of Social Security, while 59 percent disapprove. Those numbers haven't budged after more than four months of the president traveling the country to sell his plan to create private accounts.

CDC in Shambles con't...

The club did renew its membership last month and was able to find nine delegates to attend the convention on their own dollar. Their reports, presented at the Steering Committee meeting last week, painted a grim picture of the worst politics imaginable: suspension of CDC bylaws, no credentialed delegates list, agendas changed several times, non-delegates literally bussed in from Los Angeles to help rig the votes for new officers, candidates not allowed to give speeches to present themselves, legitimate delegates being shouted down by people with no credentials and no proof of membership, and the list goes on.

When the dust finally settled,

Stampolis and his hand-picked slate were installed without a majority of actual CDC delegates and a new CDC Constitution was approved that now allows an unlimited amount of "at-large" members with no club affiliation. Additionally, there were no CDC officers or representatives elected for Northern California.

"It's a sad day for the CDC," said T&C President Kevin Murphy. "Alan Cranston is spinning in his grave."

Murphy said the rumors are that the CDC's dramatic change is tied to the changes at the Democratic National Committee and the changes foreseen in the structure of the California Democratic Party.

"The scuttle-butt is that Howard Dean is going to be doling out some serious cash in the coming years to grassroots organizations like the CDC as he follows through on his promise to make the party more bottom-up, rather than top-down. It's my understanding that state parties won't qualify for this cash. But with an organization like the CDC in the state party's pocket, the money will flow through the CDC and on to the state party through competitive races the party has targeted. In the meantime, Stampolis has gotten himself a nice new salary since his election."

Indeed, Stampolis was recently voted a salary of \$80,000 per year by the new CDC Executive Board.

Assembly Dems to Seek Death Penalty Moratorium

A group of Assembly Democrats has announced a plan to seek a moratorium on capital punishment in California, citing the possibility of executing innocent people.

Assemblyman Paul Koretz, D-West Hollywood, said Tuesday he would introduce a bill next year to halt executions until January 2009. That's about a year after a report is due from an expert panel

established by the state Senate to examine how capital punishment is applied in the state.

Koretz said California stands "at grave risk of executing an innocent person" unless it first examines a range of issues associated with the death penalty. The debate over capital punishment has in recent years been infused with accusations of uneven

implementation and has been stoked by DNA evidence testing, which has exonerated several convicts in various cases across the country.

"We can't take the risk that we're going to get it wrong again and send an innocent person to their death," Koretz said. "Time is of the essence."

State GOP has 'army' to fight in election

by David Drucker

Building on the strategy President George W. Bush used to lure record numbers of voters to the polls last year, California Republicans are poised to deploy a volunteer army to turn out votes for Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's initiatives and other measures on the Nov. 8 ballot.

The state GOP has spent more than \$2 million to hire full-time, professional staffers for Los Angeles, Ventura and 12 other county parties, originally for Schwarzenegger's anticipated 2006 re-election bid but now to ensure a

policy victory for him in this year's special election.

Local GOP officials said they are bracing for an outpouring of money and manpower from the governor's labor and Democratic opponents seeking to counter their efforts, but say they are prepared to compete head to head for each vote.

"The unions are fighting for their political lives, they're fighting to keep from losing control of the Democratic Party," said Linda Boyd, chairwoman of the Los Angeles County Republican Party.

"For this reason, we have to do everything we can to be as effective

as we were last November, if not more so."

By creating an army of organized, technologically equipped get-out-the-vote volunteers in every precinct, Bush scored close victories in key battleground states and became the first presidential candidate to earn more than 50 percent of the vote since 1988.

The California Republican Party hopes to replicate this system to help Schwarzenegger secure voter approval of three constitutional amendments as well as two measures the governor has yet to weigh in on.

Luncheon Memories



Town & Country Democratic Club wishes to thank all of the following members for their hard work and dedication in making the 11th Annual Awards Luncheon a great success!!! Marianna Bauske, John Bernier, Beverly Crosby, Richard & Louise Einspahr, Kitty Gerwig, Arnie Godmintz, Peggy Gorman, Joan Higgins, Barbara Krings, Krystal Maddox, Margie Metzler, Jim Nakata, Marilyn Nelson, Jane O'Donnell, Laure Olson, Fred & Pat Pratt, Tracy Thurber & Nancy Tronaas. Well Done!

Meeting Minutes from June 8, 2005

President Kevin Murphy opened the meeting by asking guest Mary Longmore to lead the pledge of allegiance and asking for acceptance of the previous meetings minutes and the evenings agenda. Both were accepted.

Treasurer Jim Nakata reported \$7,609.35 was in the treasury.

Legislative Committee report from Joan Lee: the club should contact elected officials to encourage them to keep Social Security as it is; we should urge legislators to support SB 1018 which protects seniors by reporting suspected financial abuses.

Motion made to support SB 840 (Kuehl): "Therefore be it resolved that Town & Country Democratic Club calls upon the California State Democratic Party to support universal access to health care through a single-payer health insurance system; and therefore be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be provided to members of the Democratic Caucus of the CA legislature." Motion seconded and passed.

President Murphy introduced candidate Charles Brown who will be running for the 4th Congressional District next year. In

Q and A, Charlie said all the right things.

The evening's speaker, Mary Longmore, was introduced. Mary spoke energetically about her 58 county plan to turn red counties to blue by concentrating all efforts, forgetting differences, forging alliances and working together.

Pres. Murphy urged members to volunteer as delegates to the issue-oriented CDC conference in San Bernardino June 17-19.

Ralph Cyfers spoke re: the Sac County Democratic Coordinated Campaign. Training sessions are offered every Saturday for voter registration.

The next Awards Luncheon Committee meeting will be at Peggy Gorman's house on June 15.

The Central Committee's fundraiser honoring Sen. Deborah Ortiz will be at the Firehouse, June 30. Motion made/seconded/passed to send \$250 as a Victory Sponsor.

A new publication replacing the Nor-Cal newspaper is the CA Democrat Dialogue owned by Jan McDonald which is now soliciting subscriptions.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Krings, Secretary

Volunteers Needed for State Fair Registration Booth

Town & Country will be staffing the Sacramento County Democratic Booth at the state fair again this year. The club has selected Saturday, August 27th and Tuesday, August 30th.

Shifts are available on Saturday from 10:00am-2:00pm, 2:00pm-6:00pm, and 6:00pm-10:00pm. The shifts on Tuesday are from 12:00pm-4:00pm, 4:00pm-7:00pm and 7:00pm-10:00pm.

Volunteers are provided free admission to the fair but must register in advance. The following information must be provided: your name, date of birth, driver's license or state ID number and your zip code.

Staffing is being coordinated by Tiffany Brown for all days of the state fair, including Town & Country's days. The State Fair runs from 8/12 - 9/5. It will be closed Mondays - except for Labor Day, 9/5

Please contact Tiffany at tcbwriter@sac.sticare.com or by phone at 419-4064 with your information, day and time request.

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 _____

Just for Fun....Thinking!

Thinking. It started out innocently enough. I began to think at parties now and then -- to loosen up. Inevitably, though, one thought led to another, and soon I was more than just a social thinker. I began to think alone -- "to relax," I told myself -- but I knew it wasn't true. Thinking became more and more important to me, and finally I was thinking ALL the time.

That was when things began to sour at home.

One evening I had turned off the TV and asked my husband about the meaning of life. He spent that night at the local bar.

I began to think on the job. I knew that thinking and employment don't mix, but I couldn't stop myself. I began to avoid friends at lunchtime so I could read Thoreau and Kafka. I would return to the office dizzied and confused, asking, "What is it exactly we are doing here?"

One day the boss called me in. He said, "Listen, I like you, and it hurts me to say this, but your thinking has become a real problem. If you don't stop thinking on the job, you'll have to find another job."

This gave me a lot to think about.

I came home early after my conversation with the boss. "Honey," I confessed, "I've been thinking..."

"I know you've been thinking," he said, "and I want a divorce!"

"But Honey, surely it's not that serious."

"It is serious," he said. "You think as much as college professors, and college professors don't make any money, so if you keep on thinking, we won't have any money!"

"That's a faulty syllogism," I said impatiently. He exploded in rage and frustration, but I was in no

mood to deal with the emotional drama. "I'm going to the library," I snarled as I stomped out the door.

I headed for the library, in the mood for some Nietzsche. I roared into the parking lot with NPR on the radio and ran up to the big glass doors...they didn't open. The library was closed. To this day, I believe that a Higher Power was looking out for me that night.

Leaning on the unfeeling glass, whimpering for Zarathustra, a poster caught my eye. "Friend, is heavy thinking ruining your life?" it asked. You probably recognize that line. It comes from the standard

Thinker's Anonymous poster.

Which is why I am what I am today: a recovering thinker. I never miss a TA meeting.

At each meeting we watch a non-educational video; last week it was "Porky's." Then we share experiences about how we avoided thinking since the last meeting. I still have my job, and things are a lot better at home.

Life just seemed...easier, somehow, as soon as I stopped thinking. I think the road to recovery is nearly complete for me.

Today, I registered to vote as a Republican...



Editorial: In Defense of the Status Quo, or Not by Eric C. Bauman

For many months now I have been watching and listening to the debate about the Assembly District reorganization proposal drafted by Garry Shay, Coby King and the members of the CDP Rules Committee.

I have listened, generally quietly (I know, that's hard to imagine), to the 20 various arguments for and against. I have offered my opinions and advice, when asked. But I have for the most part been passive in this debate, until now.

The time has come for me to inject my two-cents worth into the debate.

Many years ago Garry taught me that an organization that found itself endlessly debating and discussing its bylaws was an organization that was troubled.

That is usually true.

This may be the exception, because this is a preemptive debate. The proposal to revise the CDP bylaws and restructure the AD committees is designed to simultaneously respond to new and ever-changing state and federal laws and regulations and to better position the CDP in preparation for the 2006 and 2008 elections.

The proposal is not about usurping power from long-time activists or the newly engaged. It is about repositioning the Party and its various entities in the best way for the future, plain and simple - nothing more, nothing less.

The proposal is about creating structures wherein local activists have greater freedom and control and fewer constraints from on high. Where the local leaders and activists have the autonomy and responsibility to accomplish their work with a minimum of

interference.

Change never comes easy, especially for those of us who have been around a while, but that does not mean change is unnecessary. When the ground-rules are changed, organizations must adapt.

Despite all the circular arguments from all sides in this debate, the facts are really quite simple: The CDP now owns and is responsible for everything its entities (AD Committees, caucuses) do. There is absolutely no independence under law for these existing committees.

If the XYZ AD committee raises money, it is charged to the State Party' limits. If the XYZ AD committee spends money, it is charged to the State Party's limits. If an AD committee violates campaign finance reporting rules, coordination rules, mass communication rules or any other rules, the State Party is responsible.

Period.

Under the BCRA (McCain-Feingold) the State Party and its leadership bear responsibility for all acts of its entities and agents, whether intentional or not. And the penalties are steep, both financially and potentially criminally.

The responsibility is personal, not corporate, as some have inferred.

If you have any doubt about how seriously these matters are being addressed, look at the penalties that have been assessed against Republican Central Committees in California during the past year. The various authorities are exercising their authority, occasionally with great relish.

Here is the bottom line. Under the current proposal, no one is disenfranchised. Caucuses in each Assembly District will elect State Central Committee members. Each chartered AD group (call them clubs, organizations, whatever) will be independent and responsible for its actions. Rules will be set that are open and clear and locally owned, unlike the current practice wherein each of the 80 AD Committees sets their own variable rules.

The status quo works for some of us, we know it, we own it, and we can manipulate it. It is comfortable, like an old shoe. However, even an old shoe must occasionally be replaced.

Change and adaptation is key if we are to succeed in the battles ahead. The other side is not hesitating. Neither should we.

Eric C. Bauman is Chairman of the Los Angeles County Democratic Central Committee.

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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Contribution: The Howling

by John Cory

Sometimes I get so angry I could just spit.

What the hell is wrong with you Democratic politicians? Why do you turn on each other? Why won't you stand by your own words and ideals? Why do you keep apologizing for telling the truth? And why can't anyone see McCain's true colors? Or Lieberman or Biden?

And why in God's name do you expect folks like me to come support you after you turn tail and run?

Senator Durbin apologizes, for what? Telling the truth?

The howling banshees of the GOP and corrupt media sprout hair under a full moon and wail into the sky until the noise becomes unbearable for simpering politicians. And the jackals of right-wing power feast on the carcass of democracy. Warm jelly spine is such a delicacy for these carnivores.

We know the truth out here. We will stand with anyone who stands up for us. Where are you?

This GOP has the moral certitude of Errol Flynn at a convention of underage bargirls in Bangkok. And ethics? Please! Republicans have the ethics of - well - Tom Delay and Randy "Duke" Cunningham. They quote Stalin as a means of dealing with the judiciary or anyone who opposes them, but no one makes them apologize. They call Democrats traitors, and accuse them of aiding the enemy, while at the same time, the GOP ensures their friends profit from the deaths of American soldiers. And yet, these bilious bullies rule the political playground? Give me a break!

If you're a Democrat, I'll give you everything I have—money,

time, whatever; and all you have to do is give me my country back. All you have to do is stand up and face the storm. Expose these hypocrites for what they are and what they do in the name of America. My America.

Let me tell you three things you could do if you really want my support. I'm no corporation, just a working stiff, so I will certainly understand if you pay me no never-mind. But if you are interested in stirring the pot and maybe generating a whole heap of grassroots support, here's my Three-Step Democracy Recovery program:

1. Support John Conyers and the hearings on the Downing Street Minutes and every revelation that comes out of these papers. Hold Bush Co. accountable by making the issue public via the Internet, your own web sites, any newspaper with integrity (not the NY Times or Washington Post - I said integrity), support liberal blogs at every opportunity. Put it on your answering machines.

2. Take a group, a LARGE group of Congressmen and Senators over to Dover Air Base to honor and photograph the returning dead from the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. Do not be deterred by MPs or civilian police, and be willing to be arrested for trespassing. Let the Bush administration arrest a congressional delegation representing the families of the fallen for daring to face the price America pays for Bush's War.

3. Rent a Jumbotron in Times Square and use the Nightline model of the Iran hostage crisis - remember? (Day 152 of "America

Held Hostage") Only this time, the Jumbotron flashes the picture of our young troops with the caption: "Death 1732 - Wounded 15,432 - of the Bush War."

And then as an added bonus offer up this message on the giant screen: Let Us Pray.

"Our Forefathers, who art in heaven, how hollowed have become thy names. The rule of kingdom has come, the Republic is undone on Earth just as they intend to do to Heaven. They give us each day, a daily dread and warn us about our trespasses while they trespass against us - we, the people. Oh, lead us out of wars of pre-emption, and deliver us from one-party evil, for we know there should be no corporate kingdom, only empowerment of the people, and the glory of the common good that is true Democracy for ever and ever, Amen."

And after you have done this - let the howling begin. I'll stand beside you.

John Cory is a Vietnam veteran. He received the Purple Heart and Bronze Star with V device, 1969 - 1970.

Quoting

"Things aren't getting better; they're getting worse. The White House is completely disconnected from reality. It's like they're just making it up as they go along. The reality is that we're losing in Iraq."

- Senator Chuck Hagel
(R-Nebraska)

The Final Word: Reporters Uncover More Abramoff Dirt by Molly Ivins

A jaw-dropping article in *The Texas Observer* (www.texasobserver.org) shows that two lobbying clients of Jack Abramoff paid \$25,000 to Grover Norquist's group for a lunch date and meeting with President George W. Bush in May 2001. Abramoff brought the Indian chiefs to the White House at the request of Norquist, a leading "movement conservative" in Washington. In addition, Abramoff obtained \$2.5 million in contributions from the Indians for a nonprofit foundation run by his wife and himself.

The White House guests were the chiefs of two of the six casino-rich Indian tribes represented by Abramoff and his partner Michael Scanlon, former top aide to House Majority Whip Tom DeLay. The \$25,000 check from the Coushatta tribe of Louisiana is made out to Americans for Tax Reform, an anti-tax group founded and directed by Norquist.

Norquist, Abramoff and Karl Rove have worked together for 30 years, since they were national leaders of the College Republicans. Norquist, DeLay and Abramoff are all key players in the "the K Street Project" to turn the Washington lobby corps into an arm of the Republican Party.

(Obligatory disclosure: The *Observer's* story, "The Pimping of the President," is by Lou Dubose, a freelance writer with whom I have written two books and am working on a third. However, Dubose has never had anything to do with my newspaper column, nor am I involved with any of his journalism. Another reporter who deserves credit on this story is Shawn Martin of the Lake Charles (La.) American Press who has followed it from the end of the local Indian tribe.)

The *Observer's* story comes after a year of denials from the tribe (or

at least the majority on the tribal council and their lawyer, Kent Hance, a major player in Texas Republican circles and former state officeholder).

The *Observer* was too tasteful to crack any jokes about how forgettable a meeting with this Great White Father might be. Dubose reports: "According to a source close to the tribal majority, Chairman Poncho recently 'revisited that issue' of his visit to the White House. He had previously denied it because he thought he was responding to press inquiries that implied he had a one-on-one meeting with Bush. He now recalls that he did in fact go to the White House on May 9, 2001. ... That meeting lasted for about 15 minutes and was not a one-on-one meeting. ... Abramoff was at the meeting."

According to the new version, Bush made some general comments about Indian policy but did not discuss Indian gaming. Abramoff billed the Coushattas \$25,000 for the meeting.

"Norquist has not responded to inquiries about using the White House as a fund-raiser. It is, however, a regular ATR practice to invite state legislators and tribal leaders who have supported ATR anti-tax initiatives to the White House for a personal thank-you from the president. A source at ATR said no money is ever accepted from participants in these events. The \$25,000 check from the Coushattas suggests that, at least in this instance, Norquist's organization made an exception. The \$75,000 collected from the Mississippi Choctaws and two corporate sponsors mentioned in Abramoff's e-mail suggests there were other exceptions. Norquist recently wrote to the tribes who paid to attend White House meetings. His story regarding that event is also evolving."

Norquist now says the contributions were in no way related to any White House event. "That doesn't square with the paper trail

Abramoff and Norquist left behind, which makes it evident they were selling access to the president," Dubose writes.

For an overview of the entire Abramoff scandal and its relation to Tom DeLay and the K Street Project — and what all this means in terms of Washington sleaze — see an article by Elizabeth Drew, "Selling Washington," in the June 23 issue of the *New York Review of Books*. Drew and other students of Washington corruption conclude what we have here is not so much a difference in kind as in degree of corruption — but of a degree that's making a difference in everything.

Drew writes, "The effects of the new, higher level of corruption on the way the country is governed are profound. Not only is legislation increasingly skewed to benefit the richest interests, but Congress itself has been changed. The head of a public policy strategy group told me: 'It's not about governing any more. The Congress is now a transactional institution. ...' The theory that ours is a system of one-person, one-vote, or even that it's a representative democracy, is challenged by the reality of power and who really wields it. (Massachusetts Rep.) Barney Frank argues that 'the political system was supposed to overcome the financial advantage of the capitalists, but as money becomes more and more influential, it doesn't work that way.'"

I doubt there is a more important story in this country today. All reporters who want to be the next Woodward and Bernstein should follow Dubose and Martin to the local ends of this story.

Molly Ivins is a syndicated columnist and hell raiser.



The Calendar



5th AD Democratic Committee
 Monday, July 11th, 7:00pm
 Contact: Ann Wangberg
 (916) 966-3590

Gray Panthers
 Tuesday, July 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, July 12th, 6:00pm
 State Capitol Room 127
 Contact: Rick Wathen, Chairman
 (916) 442-0264, www.sacdems.org

Town & Country Democratic Club's Ice Cream Social
 Wednesday, July 13th, 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, July 27th, 7:00pm
 Location: Kevin Murphy's Home
 4211 Paradise Drive, Carmichael
 Contact: Kevin, (916) 944-0669
 All Members Welcome!
www.tandconline.org

California Democratic Party Executive Board Meeting
 July 29th—July 30th
 Radisson Hotel
 500 Leisure Lane, Sacramento
 Contact: (916) 922-2020
www.ca-dem.org

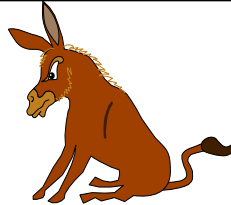
Sacramento For Democracy
 Wednesday, August 3rd, 7:00pm
 SEIU Local 250
 1911 F St, Sacramento
 Contact: (916) 326-5850
www.SacramentoForDemocracy.org

Contract with Working Family's 7th Annual Labor Awards Dinner with Barbara Boxer.
 Thurs., August 4, 5:30pm - 9:00pm
 Radisson Hotel
 500 Leisure Lane, Sacramento
 Contact: CK Consulting
 (916) 456-4098

Candidates Night Carmichael/Foothill Farms Community Council
 Thursday, August 4th, 6:30pm
 John Smith Community Hall
 La Sierra Community Center
 5325 Engle Road, Carmichael
 Contact: Sac County Community Services, (916) 231-0038

Check www.dns.saccounty.net for the Fair Oaks, Arden/Arcade and Rio Linda/Elverta Candidates Nights.

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



Time Value Mail
 Address Correction Requested



Reminder: Town & Country Ice Cream Social Wed., July 13th at 7:00pm - see page 1 for details!!!